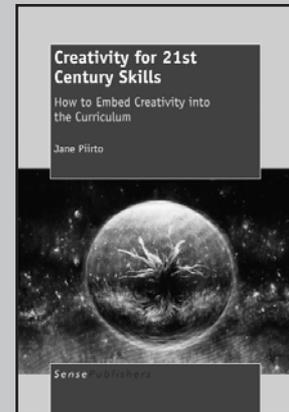


Review

Creativity for 21st Century skills

Title:	Creativity for 21st Century skills
Author:	Jane Piirto
Publisher:	Sense Publishers
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Reviewed by:	Dr David Spendlove
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It is very tempting when you are immersed in a subject to become more selective in your reading and in doing so narrow down your reading options. This is particularly true in relation to creativity and design and technology in that there is so much literature within the subject, linking these two areas, that it may be tempting to simply 'read within the subject'. Yet the danger is in doing so that we develop a corporate 'D&T' view of creative practice and paradoxically we become less creative in our thinking about creativity.

In many ways this is now where we are in D&T in that we often can be seen to uncritically eulogise about how creative design and technology as an activity is, but often use a very narrow view of creativity when doing so. So whilst I am often told of activities in design and technology that are 'creative', on reflection, many such activities are pseudo creative that are merely giving the appearance of creativity and often represent simple embellishments which reduce student thinking to choices of colour or shape.

In many ways this is why I enjoyed reading Professor Jane Piirto's book – Creativity for 21st Century Skills as there was no mention of design and technology, no focus on products and it offers the reader a broader and refreshing insight into creativity from a different perspective. The book is divided into six concise chapters and is a practical approach, largely based upon established theories, to developing creativity in schools. In attempting to cover so much in such a short space the book lacks depth as it passes over many topics in a fleeting manner, however there are many supporting notes and a good list of references to support further reading. Throughout the book there are also consistent references to models and constructs and whilst I was not always sure how rigorous these ideas were they might prove useful in supporting and drawing the readers ideas together. So five core

attitudes, the Seven I's and the pyramid of talent may just be what a teacher needs to provide a conceptual framework for delivery of creativity in their classroom.

Although as indicated the book has six chapters, they do not need to be read in a linear way as each chapter is self contained with each chapter largely being based around a set of principles or conceptual framework. So the book is an easy read for a busy teacher but may leave researchers doing Masters or PhD work wanting a little more. I would therefore recommend this book to those fairly new to creativity and who want to develop their practice through using defined approaches.

If there is one criticism that I have of the book, it is that although the title suggest the book is forward looking, even though we are living in the 21st century, it does little to challenge orthodox thinking about creativity and perhaps needed to be more speculative than sedate. The areas of neuroscience and psychology are offering new insights into creativity and it would have been useful to see an increased presence of these important areas of development. So whilst it may be a book for the 21st Century it is a based upon the needs of the early part of this century and not an agenda for the future. Regardless of this I am sure those developing their interest in creativity will be able to take something useful away from reading this book.