

Combating Contraflow to Creativity Amongst Preservice Teachers in Teacher Arts Education

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Abstract : Teaching the creative arts in preservice teacher education can be challenging. Some students find artistic self-expression and its related creative processes overwhelming. Low creative self-efficacy levels and creative habits of mind can impede their levels of motivation, engagement and persistence. For some, creative arts engagement can induce a state of anxiety and distress as opposed to flow. Flow theory posits that learners are happiest when they are learning in a state of flow. During the flow state, students feel, think and perform their best. They become so involved in the learning experience that nothing else seems to matter. The creative flow state is a crucial conduit of artistic processes to enable learners to explore and produce their best work. Despite the research conducted on flow state across several contexts, the phenomenon of personal flow state remains quite elusive. While some research has examined flow in relation to characteristics, conditions and personality traits, no research has investigated individuals' personal experiences of flow in a visual and tangible manner nor explored a relationship between flow state and teachers' artistic development. This explorative case study explores preservice teachers' impressions of flow using an arts-based approach. It identifies, categorizes and discusses patterns of commonality and difference. Grounded by theory concerning flow, self-efficacy and creative habits, this study ponders how emerging findings regarding flow impressions might aid teacher arts educators in helping preservice teachers who struggle with creative self-expression.

Keywords : creative arts, flow theory, presence, self-efficacy, teacher education

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