

# 'Design' in B.Arch retreat into creativity

A.B. Reddy and Mithila Deshpande



Creativity, an essential feature to be cultivated within students of architecture

**D**esign is an important subject in Bachelor of Architecture course in Indian universities. Out of total credits, 40 % credits are earmarked to design subject. In general, the students when joined in I year, they are not taught about the Creativity, an unusual step towards designing and they will be in confusion without knowing where to start and how to end the design problem. The concerned lecturer dealing

with the design subject lacks sufficient inputs to guide and inspire creativity to address the design problem.

In this article, an attempt is made to highlight the ways and means to inculcate the creative ability in the lecturer dealing with the design subject as well as the students facing it.

The course overview of the Basic Design in I year elaborates it as the framework for understanding de-

sign as a new language by sensitizing students to the conceptual, visual and perceptual issues involved in the design process. The course provides knowledge of the design and the design elements. Exercises complement the lecturers and ensure that students learn to develop a series of compositions in two and three dimension. The course also prepares ground for the students to gain an understanding into the fundamental issues in architectural design and develop the skill to create architectural solutions for the simple problems.(1)

Unfortunately, the required inputs in creativity are not provided to the students at the expected levels in teaching

'Design' subject in architecture course in most of the colleges of Architecture.

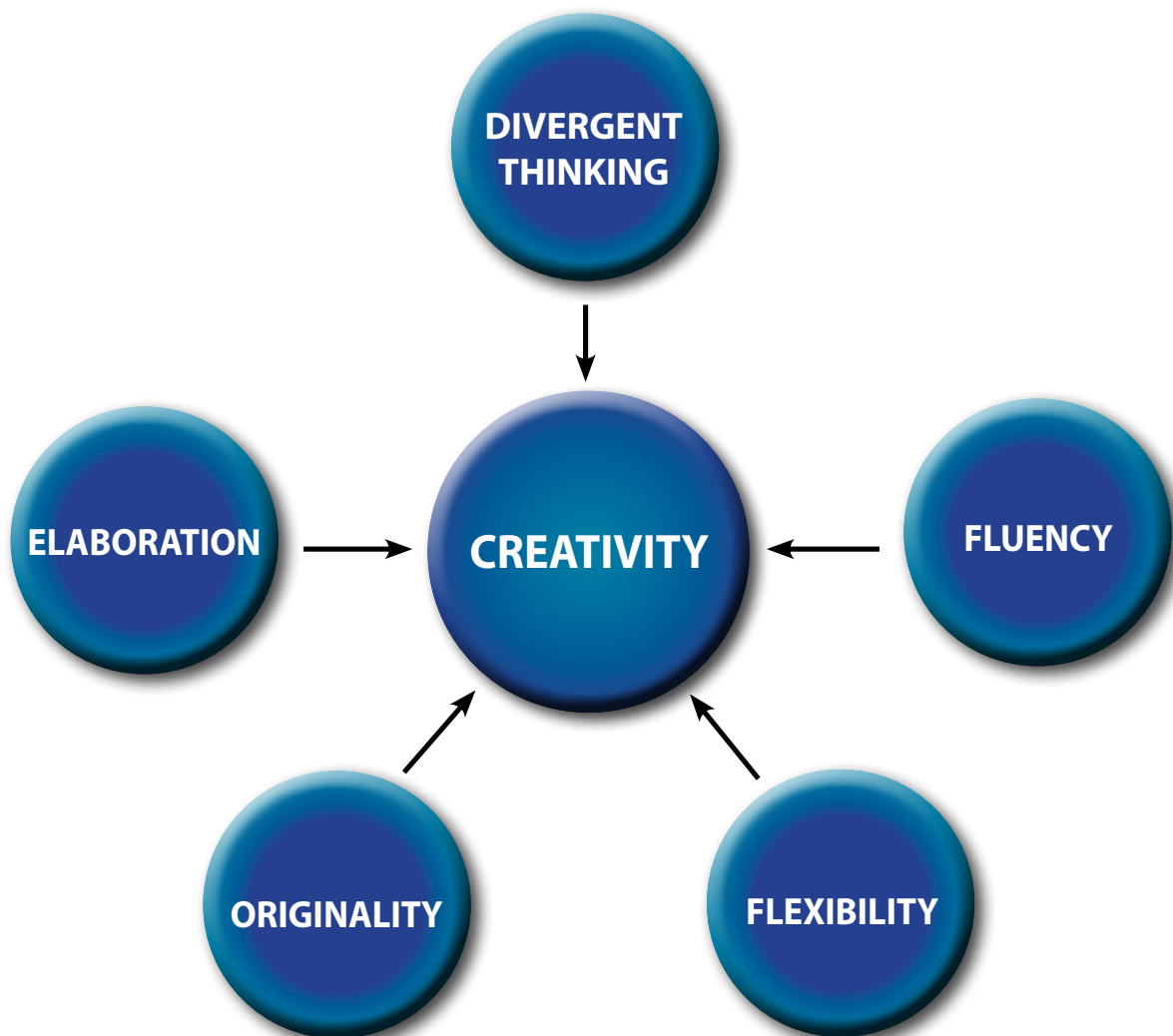
The architecture students when trained to think creative, they do much better performance in terms of generating of new ideas than those who are not given any kind of training in creativity. When an architecture student comes to college with full eagerness and curiosity, his capacity of wondering has no limits. But he has to change himself to the commands of his lecturers and the expectations of his peers.

### WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

Creativity is a mental process involving the discovery of new ideas or concepts, or new associations of the existing ideas

or concepts, fueled by the process of either conscious or unconscious insight. From a scientific point of view, the products of creative thought (sometimes referred to as divergent thought) are usually considered to have both originality and appropriateness. Another adequate definition of creativity, according to Otto Rank, is that it is an "assumptions-breaking process." Creative ideas are often generated when one discards pre-conceived assumptions and attempts a new approach or method that might seem to others unthinkable.

'CREATIVITY is an ability to break away from the usual sequence of thought into an altogether different pattern of thought, as a result some



thing new is brought to the existence which is novel and previously unknown to the producer'.

Creativity is operationally defined 'as a group of mental abilities underlying the divergent thinking operation of intellect which involves chiefly the abilities of *fluency, flexibility, originality* and *elaboration*, the measurement of which is possible with the help of creativity tests, both verbal and non-verbal.'

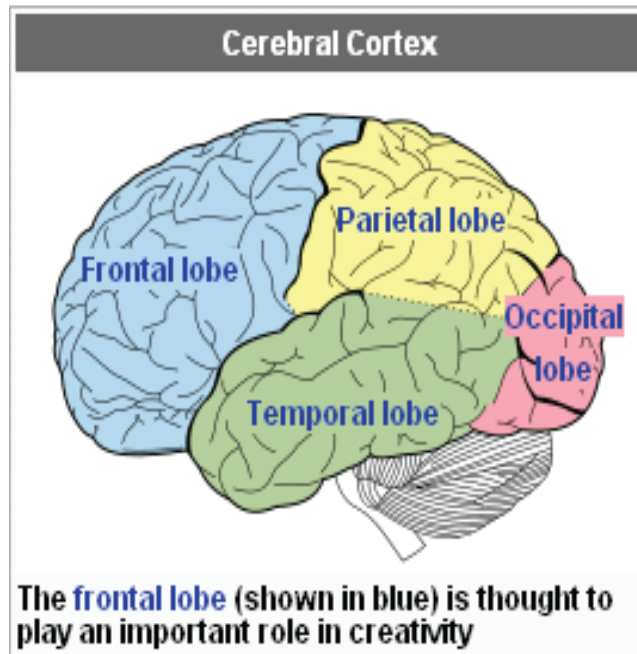
The key terms of above definition are:

- a) Divergent thinking: it is a process in which a person thinks in a different direction to create something new. When divergent thinking acts upon figural content, it results into non-verbal creativity.
- b) Fluency: is an ability to think number of solutions to a problem. It refers to the quantity of output given at a time.
- c) Flexibility: is an ability to think in different ways, it refers to variety of output.
- d) Originality: is an ability to think unusual solutions. It refers to the quality of output.
- e) Elaboration: is an ability to think in complete detail of an idea. It refers to the quality of output.

Creativity has been associated with right or forehead brain activity or even specifically with lateral thinking.

## CREATIVITY AND INTELLIGENCE

There has been debate in the psychological literature about whether intelligence and creativity are part of the same process (the conjoint hypothesis)



or represent distinct mental processes (the disjoint hypothesis). Evidence from attempts to look at correlations between intelligence and creativity from the 1950s onwards, by authors such as Barron, Guilford or Wallach and Kogan, regularly suggested that correlations between these concepts were low enough to justify treating them as distinct concepts.

Some researchers believe that creativity is the outcome of the same cognitive processes as intelligence, and is only judged as creativity in terms of its consequences, i.e. when the outcome of cognitive processes happens to produce something novel, a view which Perkins has termed the "nothing special" hypothesis.

A very popular model is what has come to be known as "the threshold hypothesis", proposed by Ellis Paul Torrance, which holds that a high degree of intelligence appears to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for high creativity. This means that, in a general sample, there will be a positive correlation between creativity and intelligence, but this correlation will not be found if only samples of the most

highly intelligent people are assessed. Research into the threshold hypothesis, however, has produced mixed results ranging from enthusiastic support to rejection.

## HOW TO DEVELOP CREATIVE THINKING?

Creativity though cannot be created, but it can certainly be cultivated. In other words, creativity which is latent is capable of being developed. If creativity is capable of being developed, it can be taught also. Just as teachers are trained by developing their teaching skills, students can also be trained to

think creatively by developing creative thinking skills.

There are three broad approaches to develop creative thinking among students in class room environment:

- i) **Provide creative climate:** (Parnes, 1967) Creativity can be developed by providing a climate which is conducive to creativity. The five principles for inducing creative thinking are:
  - a) Treat unusual questions with respect.
  - b) Treat unusual ideas with respect.
  - c) Show children that their ideas have value.
  - d) Provide opportunities for self-initiated learning and give credit for it.
  - e) Provide period of non-evaluated practice.
- ii) **Using creative teaching methods:** To develop creative skills in students, Torrance has emphasized important teaching skills:
  - a) Recognize and acknowledge the potentialities of the students.

- b) Being respectful of questions and ideas.
  - c) Asking provocative questions.
  - d) Recognizing and valuing originality.
  - e) Developing creative reader.
  - f) Applying scientific approach in solving a problem.
  - g) Using unevaluated practice and experimentation.
  - h) Guiding planned experiences.
- iii) **Training creativity directly:** students are given instruction on the nature of creative process and creative thinking abilities. They are given practice and training in creative thinking skills. This is the most direct approach in teaching creativity. It also makes use of different techniques as already discussed in creative teaching.

## INDIAN PERSPECTIVE ABOUT CREATIVITY

At the same time, the thought of great Indian philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti (3) about creativity' is also to be understood by the students and lecturers of architecture course. He states, "what we call happiness or ecstasy is to me, creative thinking. And creative thinking is the infinite movement of thought, emotion and action. That is, when thought, which is emotion, which is action itself, is unimpeded in its movement, is not compelled or influenced or bonded by an idea, and does not proceed from the background of tradition or habit, then that movement is creative, so long as thought is circumscribed, held by a fixed idea, or merely adjusts itself to a background or condition and therefore, becomes limited, such thought is not creative.

Creative thinking ceases when mind is crippled by adjustment through influence, or when it functions with the background of a tradition which it has

not understood, or from a fixed point, like an animal tied to a post. So long as this limitation, this adjustment exists, there cannot be creative thinking, intelligence, which alone is freedom.

To think creatively is to bring about harmony between mind, emotion and action. That is, if you are convinced of an action, without the search of a reward at the end, then that action, being the result of intelligence, releases all the hindrances that have been placed on the mind through a lack of understanding."

In his discourse, another Indian philosopher, Shree Sadguru (4) explained that "today, modern science is providing that the whole of existence is just a reverberation of energy. It is you generate a powerful thought and let it out, it will always manifest itself. To create what you really care for, first, what you want must be well manifested in your mind. Once you maintain a steady stream of thought with out changing direction, definitely this is going to happen in your life. It will definitely manifest as a reality in your life."

In order to expose the students of architecture of Indian universities, it is necessary to arrange guest lectures to teach the knowledge of creativity keeping in view of the global contest, by the experts in the Indian philosophy. The teachings of the Indian philosophers may lead the students to develop further a different perspective in 'design thinking'.

Further, in order to develop the society it is necessary to provide knowledge and skills. The importance of knowledge cannot be denied but knowledge alone is not enough. As Barquer Mehdi (5) remarks, "if education today is to give something to its future citizen, it is not knowledge or information which is imparted in the classroom, not the certificates or the

degree which they receive at the end of their schooling as a passport for their future employment, but a creative mind which would enable them to adjust and readjust themselves in the fast changing world".

## FOOT NOTES

1. SPA, Hyderabad JNTU, Course Structure and Syllabus, 2000- 2001 onwards.
2. S.J. Parnes (1967) the Literature of Creativity (Part II), Journal of Creative Behavior 1967, Vol.2, pp. 191-239.
3. "The Speaking Tree", The Times of India- 27.05.2009.
4. "The Speaking Tree", The Times of India- 09.10.2007.
5. Barquer Mehdi. The Background Pape, in Barque Mehdi (ed.) Creativity in Teaching and Learning. Report of the Workshop Conducted at the Regional College of Education, Mysore from 27th Jan to 1st Feb., 1975, RCE, Mysore, NCERT, New Delhi, 1975. pp.1-4.

## REFERENCES

P.K. Gupta, Education For Creativity, Cosmo Publications-2004. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creativity> ■

---

**A.B. Reddy was Chairman of IIA AP Chapter (1992-1994). M-Arch in Environmental Design 1984.**

**P.G. Diploma in Urban and Metropolitan Planning (1979), G.D. Arch (1972). Past Principal of HITS COA, Hyderabad and MNR COA, Hyderabad.**

**Mithila Deshpande is a student of M-Tech (Planning) 1st semester in Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture & Fine Arts University, Hyderabad.**

**Photograph: Courtesy the Authors.**

---