



Battling Disinformation and Historical Distortionism through Education

Isabel Pefianco Martin, Ateneo de Manila University

Two big ideas

1. Creativity and critical thinking skills are good weapons for battling disinformation and historical distortionism.
2. Creativity and critical thinking skills can be developed only if children have acquired foundational skills.

Creativity and Critical thinking

- Creativity and critical thinking are two distinct, but related skills.
- Creativity and critical thinking both require higher order cognitive processes.
- The goals of creativity and critical thinking differ.

Creativity

- “... the way of thinking that leads to the generation of valuable and original ideas.” (OECD, 2022)
- Output: an innovative, novel, and appropriate idea or product
- Requires divergent and convergent thinking

Critical thinking

- To “carefully evaluate and judge statements, ideas and theories relative to alternative explanations of solutions so as to reach a competent, independent position—possibly for action.”
- Inquisitive, rather than imaginative

Rubric on creativity and critical thinking

	Creativity	Critical Thinking
Inquiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel, empathise, observe, describe relevant experience, knowledge and information• Make connections to other concepts and ideas, integrate other disciplinary perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand context/frame and boundaries of the problem• Identify and question assumptions, check accuracy of facts and interpretations, analyse gaps in knowledge

Rubric on creativity and critical thinking

	Creativity	Critical Thinking
Imagining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore, seek and generate ideas• Stretch and play with unusual, risky or radical ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and review alternative theories and opinions and compare or imagine different perspectives on the problem• Identify strengths and weaknesses of evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs

Rubric on creativity and critical thinking

	Creativity	Critical Thinking
Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce, perform, envision, prototype a product, a solution or a performance in a personally novel way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Justify a solution or reasoning on logical, ethical or aesthetic criteria/reasoning

Rubric on creativity and critical thinking

	Creativity	Critical Thinking
Reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reflect and assess the novelty of the chosen solution and its possible consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluate and acknowledge the uncertainty or limits of the endorsed solution or positionReflect on the possible bias of one's own perspective compared to other perspectives

Foundational skills of reading and numeracy

- Developing creativity and critical thinking is dependent on strong foundations.
- Global learning crisis
- Are students really learning?

Foundational skills of reading and numeracy

- 32 low- and middle-income countries with generalizable findings
- Research setting: education during the pandemic

Low mastery of the fundamentals

- A majority of children have not mastered foundational skills by the time they reach Grade 3.
- These skills are (1) reading, and (2) numeracy.

Low mastery of the fundamentals

- **Reading:** Can read 90% of words accurately, answer two literal and three inferential questions about the text
- **Numeracy:** Can read numbers aloud, identify the bigger numbers, do simple addition questions, and recognize patterns of numbers in a sequence

Low mastery of the fundamentals

- **Reading:** Only 30% of Grade 3 children have foundational reading skills
- **Numeracy:** Only 18% of Grade 3 children have foundational numeracy skills.

Factors that affect learning outcomes

- Gender, urban-rural location, household wealth, disability (or functional difficulty status), and child labor status
- Language of instruction, parental involvement in their children's education, and the home environment.

Slow pace of learning

- Schooling does not automatically guarantee learning.
- 50% of Grade 8 children do not have foundational reading skills.
- The median number of years of schooling needed to develop foundational skills is seven.

Digital divide

- Children with the lowest rate of internet access at home are also the same children with the lowest rates of foundational reading skills.

Concluding remarks

- Education in a VUCA world has become immensely challenging.
- Education needs radical reforms to prioritize the development of creativity and critical thinking skills.
- Educators must ensure that foundational learning skills are acquired in the early years of schooling.

References

- Vincent-Lancrin, S. et al. (2019). Fostering Students' Creativity and Critical Thinking: What it Means in School. Educational Research and Innovation. Paris: OECD Publishing. Accessed at https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/fostering-students-creativity-and-critical-thinking_62212c37-en
- United Nations Children's Fund. (March 2022). Are Children really learning? Exploring foundational skills in the midst of a learning crisis. Accessed at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/are-children-really-learning-foundational-skills-report/>



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