



Kieran Egan's Notion of Imagination as an Effective Model for Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

This essay examines whether Kieran Egan's framework of Imaginative Education (IE) as an alternative way of understanding and organizing teaching and learning in relation to traditional, objective-driven curriculum models grounded in standardized content delivery. By positing imagination, narrative structure, and cognitive tools as the nucleus of educational ideas, Egan challenges mechanistic approaches to lesson planning. Employing critical analysis, this paper explores the theoretical foundations of Imaginative Education, tracing its connections to Dewey, Vygotsky, and Greene, and contrasting perspective such as Piaget's theory of cognitive development, and examines its practicability across Egan's five developmental stages of understanding. Special attention is given to an illustration of Imaginative Education in non-traditional contexts in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, specifically mathematics pedagogy. Critical discussion of Imaginative Education (IE) centers on the relationship between imaginative structures and curriculum structure arguing that Imaginative Education should not be understood as a universal teaching formula or as a replacement for curriculum structure and disciplinary knowledge. its effectiveness depends on teachers' professional judgment, sensitivity to learners 'developmental and cultural contexts. Finally, the paper addresses implementation barriers, including standardized testing structures and teacher training limitations, and proposes pedagogical strategies to foster critical inquiry, emotional engagement, and holistic learning environments.

Keywords: Imagination, Teaching, Learning, Kieran Egan, Curriculum Development, Storytelling.

Introduction

The dominant method of lesson planning which involves identifying and listing of objectives, selection of contents and materials, choosing appropriate teaching methods and decision on evaluation procedures as well as the guiding principle that states that learning proceeds from concrete to abstract, from known to the unknown, from simple to complex, from active manipulation to symbolic conceptualization, is open to questions. Egan is of the view that the objectives-contents- methods- evaluation model can lead to a mechanistic way of thinking about lesson planning and delivery. This approach emphasizes objectives over individual learner experiences and sees knowledge as something that is transmitted from teacher to learner. It assumes that learning ought to follow predictable sequence. This, therefore, means that a teacher will be limited to a stereotype method of teaching, which may not give room for imagination. He also argued that the principles concerning children's learning are, at best, inadequate and leads us largely to ignore imagination, the most powerful tool for learning that learners bring to school daily. Lesson-planning models derive their content from standardized curricula that prioritize content delivery, memorization, and assessment-driven learning. While this approach ensures consistency, it often limits student engagement, creativity, and deep learning. Kieran Egan challenges this traditional model by advocating for an imaginative approach to teaching and learning. His philosophy emphasizes the role of storytelling, metaphor, and narrative in making learning more meaningful and engaging for students.

Despite ongoing curriculum reforms, educational frameworks often neglect the importance of imagination in lesson planning. Many curricula remain teacher-centered, prioritizing content delivery over student engagement and creative exploration. This mechanistic approach results in students who struggle with independent thinking and problem-solving. While Egan provides an important corrective to mechanistic curriculum planning it raises questions about developmental categorization, curriculum implementation, and the relationship between imagination and standardized educational aims. Such questions include: If education requires some common aims and curriculum structures, how much freedom should teachers have to interpret and adapt the curriculum imaginatively?

Foundations of Imaginative Education

Throughout history, educational thought theories and ideas have evolved to address the complexities of cognitive development and human learning. Lev Vygotsky (1934) posited that imagination plays a fundamental role in cognitive

development, enabling learners to synthesize past experiences into novel ideas. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development implies that cognitive expansion occurs most effectively when students engage in creative problem-solving beyond their current capabilities. Building on a similar premise, John Dewey (1938) championed experiential and enquiry-based learning arguing that imagination serves as a vital bridge between student experience and critical problem-solving and critical thinking. Maxine Greene (2005) further expanded these foundations by emphasizing the transformative power of narrative and artistic engagement, which allows learners to challenge established social norms and conceptualize alternative possibilities. Egan (1997) integrates and builds upon these theoretical traditions arguing that imagination should not be treated as peripheral or extracurricular activity but rather as the foundational engine of meaningful pedagogical design. While Vygotsky, Dewey, and Egan frame imagination as an essential catalyst for cognitive expansion and pedagogical design, Jean Piaget offers a contrasting structural perspective. Piaget posits that cognitive development proceeds through universal, biologically determined stages such as sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational where imaginative or symbolic play is merely a transitional phase of preoperational thought rather than the primary engine of intellect. (Piaget, 89-92). Unlike Vygotsky's view that learning through social interaction leads development, Piaget maintains that a child's internal cognitive readiness strictly limits what can be learned, arguing that logical operations ultimately supersede imaginative play as the peak of cognitive maturity (Lourenco 283-85).

Despite these rich theoretical foundations, contemporary educational systems remain heavily constrained by frameworks that prioritizes standardized testing and factual memorization. This teacher-centered approach transmits knowledge in a rigid, hierarchical structure, frequently rendering student engagement passive (Russell, 2000). In contrast, Egan's (1997) imaginative education (IE) model proposes a dynamic paradigm wherein learners actively process knowledge through stories, metaphors, and emotionally resonant cognitive tools. By organizing concepts within narrative structures, educators can cultivate deeper conceptual retention and intellectual curiosity.

To operationalize this approach, Egan (1997) delineates five distinct, sequential modes of understanding that align with cognitive growth. Somatic understanding is found in early childhood, where meaning is constructed through sensory, physical, and emotional interactions with the surrounding environment. Mythic understanding (ages 4-8) relies on storytelling, binary opposites (such as courage versus fear), and metaphors to render abstract concepts available. Romantic understanding (ages 8-15) is characterized by a fascination with heroic figures, real-world extremes, and the limits of human achievement, driving exploratory curiosity.

Philosophic understanding (ages 15-20) focuses on systematic, theoretical frameworks, allowing learners to organize individual facts into overarching, logical structures. Ironic understanding (adulthood) represents and advances cognitive maturity, characterized by the recognition of knowledge limitations, contextual nuance, and multiple analytical perspectives. Across all stages, narrative acts as the core organizing mechanism to structure content in harmony with learners' evolving cognitive capabilities (Egan, 2005).

Fettes notes that incorporating imagination into standard pedagogy has significant implications for cognitive development and academic outcomes. Engaging students creatively enhances higher order thinking skills, including information synthesis, critical evaluation, and contextual problem-solving (2010). Information synthesis can be developed through linking information to cognitive emotional resonance and cognitive tools such as narrative structures, metaphors, dramatic oppositions, and humanized knowledge. Critical evaluation can be sharpened by creating opportunity for learners to become active participant of the learning process instead of being passive by critiquing concepts objectively rather than accepting given truths. Contextual problem-solving skills are harnessed through engagement that prompts students to simulate real world conditions. Narrative based learning frameworks ground complex information in emotional contexts, promoting longer term retention and active classroom participation (Rajagopalan, 2019). Empirical evidence supports these theoretical claims: elementary case studies demonstrate that narrative-centered instruction yields measurable gains in critical thinking and problem-solving compared to standard delivery methods (Judson & Egan, 2013). Similar interventions in higher education reveal enhanced student motivation and conceptual comprehension (English, 2016). These findings highlight the need for continual empirical exploration into the long-term impact of imaginative pedagogy across diverse learning environments. These results underscore the need for further research on the long-term impact of imaginative education across different age groups and learning environments.

The Role of Imagination in Learning

Imagination has long occupied a central position within sociological, psychological, and philosophical discourse. Rather than treating imagination merely as idle fantasy, Egan (1992) conceptualizes it as "the ability to think of the possible rather than just the actual". Under this framework, imagination is a fundamental cognitive capacity that enables individuals to transcend factual recall and engage deeply with knowledge through emotion, narrative, and metaphor. Historically, communities relied on imaginative narrative tools such as myths and folklore to preserve collective history, communicate values, and make sense of complex human experiences. Modern empirical research corroborates this historical reliance: Haven

(2007) synthesizes research suggesting that story structure can enhance the organization, comprehension, and recall of information by providing learners with a meaningful framework through which information can be connected and remembered, while early childhood research in Finland established that imaginative, play-based environments significantly bolster early literacy and cognitive flexibility.

Socio-Emotional and Moral Development: Imagination allows learners to transcend personal biases and cultivate empathy by conceptualizing the inner experiences, fears, and hopes of others. In Egan's view, narrative instruction does not merely convey factual data; it emotionally engages the learner, instilling prosocial virtues such as justice and tolerance that are necessary for peaceful social coexistence. By freeing individuals from rigid habits and conventional assumptions, imagination enables learners to conceptualize possibilities beyond their immediate social reality (Egan, 1988). Imagination therefore plays a very important role in education because of its ability to transcend conventional ideas: Transcending conventional ideas is necessary in constructing one's sense of any area of knowledge. If education is to be taken seriously, the development of imagination should also be taken seriously, and this will rarely sit comfortably with settled conventions. It is in transcending these conventional ideas that new knowledge is acquired, groundbreaking ideas are gotten, and creativity is nursed and achieved.

In considering the role of imagination in learning, Egan said that there has been a long-standing practice of storing and retrieving information through examination and testing. He notes that we have been greatly influenced by technology whereby we tend to believe that human mind works as that of a computer, popularly known as the garbage in garbage out method. He sees a misconception in thinking of learning as a process analogous to recording symbols in the mind for later retrieval. (Egan, 1992: p.49). Testing goes on all the time in schools and the result are taken as evidence of learning, this has happened for as long as possible but there are problems that come with this kind of learning which is that it "ignores what is distinctive about human learning" this leads to people forgetting that the human mind learns quite unlike the way a computer learns. Egan noted that nothing emerges from the human memory in the same form it was initially learned. A lot of activities go on during the process of memorization and retrieval of information such as mixed emotions, connections are made and broken, and all these involves imagination. As Egan puts it "The more energetic and lively the imagination, the more are facts constantly finding themselves in new combinations and taking on new emotional coloring as we use them to think of possibilities, of a possible world." (Egan, 1992: p. 50). An imaginatively engaged learning process gives pleasure and if lesson contents are organized in imaginative way, children will likely be excited to go to school each day. This is not to generalize that there may not be a bad day.

Imaginative engagement with emotions, hopes, fears, and intention, is a necessary condition of educationally valuable learning.

Imagination and memory: It is important to note that treating students like storage devices for knowledge that is meaningless to them should not be uncritically generalized, this is because the role of memorization in imagination cannot be downplayed. Paulo Freire's concept of the "banking system of education" is a critical view of the traditional method of education. He held that the traditional method firstly, lacked critical thinking because it discourages students from questioning or analyzing knowledge received, secondly, he argued that it encourages power dynamics where the teacher holds all the power, and the students are considered empty vessels. Thirdly, Freire argued that the banking system of knowledge is detached from reality, from students' life experiences. After his criticism, he proposes what he called "problem solving model of education" where students and teachers engage in dialogue and learning is a collaborative process (Freire, 2000). Despite the above criticism, Egan said that there is need for memorizing knowledge, facts, chunks of prose and poetry, formulae which is for the stimulation and development of the imagination and that ignorance starves imagination. "The development of students' imaginations will not go forward without learning and memorizing much and diverse knowledge" (Egan, 1992). Following the neo-conservative education that believes that education is tied up with knowledge and that being educated means knowing a lot. Egan says that being educated does not mean just that, but that education is about the meaning knowledge has for the individual. This is where imagination plays a crucial role.

Imagination plays a role in teaching social virtue. Human beings are highly social beings who exist together in a society. This social life entails social virtues such as justice and tolerance. The absence or lack of imagination which helps one to understand that other people are unique, distinct with hopes and fears different from our own can lead to evil in the society. Adopting an imaginative approach of storytelling can help instill virtues that is needed for peaceful coexistence. This is because in Egan's words "The story not only conveys information and describes events and actions but because it also engages our emotions" (Egan, 1992). A good story paints a vivid picture of qualities in which we will want to own and make it ours or part of our lives. He further tells us to note that type of story matters, therefore, a teacher needs to tell the right kind of story.

Imagination and freedom are another key concept that talk about the role imagination plays in freedom of thought. Imagination gives one the power to plan a future different from the past, the sense of being able to see possibilities beyond the actual and so to make choices and to make the world more nearly like what one's heart desires. Being able to change the world around us in ways we find desirable and satisfactory is clearly an important capacity. Enhancing our sense of freedom

will entail strengthening our imagination. A well-developed imagination enables us to feel unsubdued by habit, unshackled by customs. As Egan puts it, imagination is what allows us to envision possibilities in or beyond the actualities in which we are immersed. (Egan, 2008: P. 138).

Pursuit of Objective Knowledge: Paradoxically, Egan (1992) contends that imagination is essential for achieving objective knowledge understanding reality beyond one's subjective vantage point. By projecting oneself into an external subject or system (much like an artisan imagining the internal properties of wood or stone before carving), a learner gains a nuanced, comprehensive understanding of abstract concepts. Consequently, incorporating imaginative strategies transforms passive content delivery into an active inquiry process that develops emotional intelligence, higher-order problem-solving skills, and sustained academic interest. According to Esikot and Ette (2019), teaching students critical thinking and imaginative skills will expose them to a wide array of alternative in conflict situations, fostering their capacity to make informed choices conducive to the common good. The role of imagination in diverse areas of human life cannot be over emphasized.

Application of Kieran Egan's notion of Imagination in Teaching and Learning

Egan holds that children are imbued with the innate ability to make meaning from narratives; to play and imagine; and to construct meaning using the form of "story" (narrative) as a scaffold. This story form means that children perceive events or experiences as having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Each of these stages has predictable features that make them accessible and understandable. Stories also have characters, plots, and settings. By measuring new stories against recollection of old stories, learners move forward in developing new understandings and making new meanings. Egan's counsel to educators is that if learners already come to school with such sophisticated ways of making meaning from things, teachers should capitalize on this and use these innate abilities as planning tools for curriculum and lesson plans. He, therefore, puts forth an alternative model for planning teaching which he calls imaginative Education (IE). Key elements in Egan's imaginative education are cognitive tools, understanding through stages, teaching as storytelling, and engagement over rote learning. This approach moves away from traditional lesson planning by emphasizing the role of imagination in learning. Instead of simply delivering information, teachers use cognitive tools such as, metaphor, imagery, associating with heroes, binary opposite, extremes, and limits to engage learners emotionally and intellectually.

Imaginative Education Illustrated directly in STEM education specifically mathematics, demonstrates how abstract disciplines can be taught through narrative and cognitive tools across the learning lifecycle: In Somatic Stage (Early Childhood), Mathematics is anchored in physical, sensory, and bodily experiences. Learning

relies on rhythm, physical movement, and tactile pattern recognition rather than abstract worksheets. During Mythic Stage (Ages 4–8), concepts are framed through emotional contrasts, narrative arcs, and personification. Mathematical operations are presented as story-driven conflicts (e.g., dramatic narratives balancing odd and even number "factions") to make numerical relationships memorable. In Romantic Stage (Ages 8–15), learning is driven by a fascination with human limits, heroic achievements, and extremes. Mathematical concepts are framed around historical discoveries, records, and mysteries, such as the historical subversion of the Pythagorean brotherhood or the infinite properties of pi. Philosophic Stage (Ages 15–20) focus shifts toward theoretical structures and overarching systems. Mathematics is presented as an integrated system connecting natural phenomena, physics, and historical intellectual shifts (e.g., the independent development of calculus by Newton and Leibniz). During Ironic Stage (Adulthood), pedagogy emphasizes paradox, systemic limitations, and epistemological critique. Students engage with mathematical paradoxes (such as Zeno's paradoxes or Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems) to evaluate the boundaries of formal logic.

Crucially, adopting Egan's imaginative framework does not require discarding foundational instructional techniques. Instead, IE can be integrated with established inquiry-based methods to enhance critical thinking: Open-Ended Problem Design: Posing ill-defined, multifaceted problems that encourage learners to evaluate multiple solution pathways rather than seeking a singular algorithmic procedure. Socratic Dialogue and Metacognition: Utilizing targeted questioning to prompt students to articulate their reasoning, evaluate peer arguments, and reflect metacognitively on their problem-solving approaches.

Balanced Cognitive Internalization: Ensuring foundational mental fluency alongside conceptual exploration. For example, historical educational practices in West Africa such as daily recitation of mathematical tables in mid-to-late 20th-century Nigerian classrooms highlight how automaticity can coexist with conceptual understanding. While modern educational technology offers undeniable operational efficiency, over-reliance on automated tools (such as calculators) in early childhood can hinder the development of internal mental models and numerical intuition.

Critical Discussion of Egan's Imaginative Education

Egan's imaginative education presents a significant challenge to approaches that treat teaching primarily as the transmission of predetermined knowledge through objective, content, method, and evaluation. The concern here is that these approaches neglect the ways learners construct meaning which is through narrative, imagination, emotions, and the cognitive tools available to them. The big question here is, can Imaginative Education genuinely escape the structures it criticizes? Egan criticizes conventional approaches to curriculum planning for their emphasis on

predetermined objectives and procedures. His alternative, however, is not an absence of structure. Imaginative education provides teachers with cognitive tools and principles through which curriculum content can be made meaningful to learners. Egan and Judson identify tools such as stories, images, humour, binary oppositions, mystery, and heroic associations as ways of engaging learners' imaginations. This creates an interesting tension within the theory. If imaginative education is implemented as a fixed collection of techniques, it could reproduce the procedural character that Egan criticizes in conventional curriculum planning. The strength of imaginative education may therefore depend less on replacing one prescribed method with another but on enabling teachers to exercise informed judgment in selecting and adapting cognitive tools to particular learners and subject matter.

Another concern relates to Egan's developmental account of understanding. The five forms of understanding constitute one of the distinctive features of his theory. Egan argues that these forms emerge through the acquisition of cultural and cognitive tools and that they provide different ways of making sense of the world (Egan, 1997). The framework is valuable because it draws attention to the fact that learners' intellectual development cannot be reduced to the accumulation of information. However, the framework also raises questions about how rigidly the developmental sequence should be interpreted. Learners do not necessarily experience educational development in identical ways, and their opportunities for learning are influenced by language, culture, previous experiences, and relationship with others. Consequently, the five forms of understanding may be more educationally productive when treated as expanding possibilities for engagement with knowledge rather than as rigid categories into which learners must be placed.

The emphasis on Imagination also raises a question concerning the relationship between imaginative engagement and knowledge. Egan argues that imagination is not simply an additional activity that can be introduced after the serious work of learning has been completed; rather, it is closely connected to how learners make meaning from knowledge. His approach therefore challenges the tendency to separate affective engagement from intellectual learning. Nevertheless, imaginative engagement should not be confused with understanding itself. A story, metaphor or vivid image may make a concept more memorable or meaningful, but meaningful engagement does not automatically guarantee conceptual accuracy or disciplinary understanding. Egan's approach is therefore strongest when imagination is understood as a means through which learners enter into and interrogate knowledge rather than as a replacement for knowledge, evidence and critical reasoning.

The role of the teacher presents another important issue. Imaginative education requires teachers to understand the cognitive tools available to learners and to use these tools deliberately when planning and teaching. Egan and Judson's

work illustrates how cognitive tools can influence the planning and teaching of subjects such as social studies. This gives teachers an active role in interpreting curriculum content and determining how it can become meaningful to learners. However, teacher agency is always exercised within specific curricula and institutional conditions. Prescribed curricula, assessment systems, available resources and institutional expectations can restrict the extent to which teachers can redesign learning experiences. The implementation of imaginative education therefore raises a broader curriculum question: whether teachers are merely expected to implement a prescribed curriculum or whether they should have sufficient professional autonomy to interpret and reconstruct curriculum content in response to their learners.

A further issue concerns the cultural character of imagination. Egan's theory emphasizes the importance of cultural tools in the development of understanding. Cognitive tools are not simply techniques invented by individual teachers; they are connected to the cultural resources through which human beings learn to think and make meaning. This suggests that imaginative education cannot necessarily be transferred mechanically from one educational context to another. Stories, images, heroes, metaphors, and forms of humour may have different meanings in different cultures. An imaginative approach used in one context may therefore require significant interpretation in another. This is particularly important when considering educational contexts characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity. The strength of Egan's theory may lie precisely in its flexibility to draw upon culturally meaningful cognitive tools, but this possibility requires teachers to exercise sensitivity rather than simply reproduce examples developed in another context.

These criticisms do not invalidate Egan's contribution. Rather, they demonstrate why imaginative education should be understood as a theoretical framework that invites reconsideration of curriculum and pedagogy rather than as a universal teaching formula. Ultimately, the significance of Egan's imaginative education lies not in the claim that imagination should replace curriculum structure, disciplinary knowledge, or systematic teaching. Its greater significance is the possibility of reconceptualizing how these elements are brought together. Imagination can provide learners with ways of entering knowledge, connecting it with emotion and experience, and considering possibilities beyond what is immediately given. At the same time, its educational use requires critical judgment concerning developmental differences, cultural contexts, teacher agency and the demands of disciplinary knowledge. Egan's theory is therefore most compelling when viewed not as a rejection of curriculum but as an Invitation to reconsider how curriculum is interpreted, enacted, and experienced by teachers and learners.

Challenges of Imaginative Education

Despite the evident benefits of imaginative education, several challenges hinder its widespread adoption. One of the primary barriers is the rigidity of standardized curricula, which prioritize content coverage and assessment-driven learning (Kelemen, 2018). Teachers often find it difficult to incorporate imaginative teaching strategies when faced with strict syllabi and standardized testing requirements. Additionally, many educators lack training in narrative-based pedagogy and may feel unprepared to implement storytelling techniques effectively (Norman, 2000). There is also the issue of assessment and current evaluation systems primarily designed to measure factual recall rather than creativity or imaginative thinking, making it difficult to assess students' engagement with imaginative learning (McKenzie & Fettes, 2002). Teachers may find it difficult to plan their unit for teaching using Egan's new model. Planning teaching may become time consuming for teachers because it involves a deeper, more creative engagement with the content for planning lessons incorporating narratives. In McKenzie and Fettes' case study, Time was a constraint for educators using Egan's ideas in practice. For some, this involved a lack of time for planning curriculum units; whereas for others (for example teacher educators), it was the lack of time to read Egan's work. Units must be written in such a way to make it more adaptable to a variety of topics. Secondly, the study also showed that using Egan's ideas made meeting curriculum related requirements at their school more difficult. Thirdly, evaluation becomes a problem, how to evaluate in a way that is consistent with Egan's ideas because much of what we are trying to evaluate is abstract and subjective. Fourthly, they observed that in children's preference, their background was to be considered, culturally based differences exist among learners and their impact on putting Egan's ideas into practice.

Addressing these challenges requires a shift in educational priorities, beginning with curriculum reform. Policymakers should consider integrating imaginative education principles into national curricula, ensuring that storytelling and narrative-based learning become core components of lesson planning (Munir, 2022). Teacher training programs must also be revised to equip educators with the skills necessary to implement imaginative teaching techniques effectively. Professional development workshops can provide teachers with practical strategies for incorporating storytelling, metaphorical thinking, and creative exploration into their lessons (Klein & Metzker, 2012). Moreover, assessment methods should evolve to measure creativity alongside traditional academic performance. Alternative evaluation techniques, such as project-based assessments, reflective writing, and creative problem-solving tasks, can provide a more comprehensive measure of students' cognitive and imaginative abilities (Gallant, 2006).

Conclusion

This paper has examined Kieran Egan's imaginative education as a framework for reconsidering the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, imagination, and learning. Egan's critique of conventional lesson planning draws attention to the limitations of approaches that organize teaching primarily around predetermined objective, content delivery, methods, and evaluation. Such approaches may provide structure and consistency, but when applied rigidly, they can give insufficient attention to ways learners construct meaning through imagination, emotion, narrative, experience, and cultural tools. The discussion has shown that imagination, in Egan's framework, is not simply an activity reserved for creative subjects or additional technique to introduced after the transmission of knowledge. It is cognitive resource through which learners can connect knowledge with experience, emotion, possibility, and inquiry. Narrative, metaphor, binary oppositions, heroic associations, extremes, mystery, and other narrative tools can therefore provide teachers with ways of making disciplinary knowledge more meaningful and intellectually engaging. The application to mathematics also demonstrates that imaginative approaches need not be restricted to the humanities or the arts; they can be used to introduce learners to abstract concepts while maintaining opportunities for conceptual reasoning, problem solving, and critical inquiry.

At the same time, the critical discussion indicates that the value of imaginative education should not lead to an uncritical acceptance of Egan's framework. The five forms of understanding can provide useful ways of thinking about changing modes of engagement with knowledge, but they should not necessarily be treated as rigid developmental categories. Learners' experiences are shaped by culture, language, prior knowledge, social relationships, and educational opportunities. Similarly, imagination cannot substitute for disciplinary knowledge, evidence, conceptual accuracy, or critical reasoning. An imagination story or metaphor may deepen engagement with a concept, but it does not by itself guarantee understanding. The role of the teacher is therefore central. Imaginative education requires teachers to interpret curriculum content and exercise professional judgement in selecting cognitive tools that are appropriate to particular learners, subjects, and contexts. However, such teacher agency operates within real institutional conditions. Standardized curricula, assessment requirements, limited preparation time, insufficient teacher training, available resources, and culturally diverse classrooms can make the implementation of imaginative approaches difficult. These challenges suggest that the question is not simply whether teachers should adopt Egan's model, but how educational systems can create sufficient space for teachers to interpret and adopt curriculum meaningfully.

Ultimately, Egan's contribution is better understood not as a rejection of curriculum structure or conventional educational practices, but as an invitation to

reconsider how those practices are enacted. Imaginative education can complement rather than necessarily replace established approaches such as inquiry-based learning, problem solving, dialogue and the development of foundational knowledge. Its significance lies in bringing imagination, emotion, and intellectual engagement into closer relationship with curriculum and pedagogy. When applied critically and sensitively to developmental, cultural, disciplinary, and institutional contexts, egans framework offers a useful perspective for thinking about how learnrs can move beyond the passive reception of information toward more meaningful engagement with knowledge and the possibilities that knowledge makes available.

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