

Where Did the Magic Go?

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Abstract

The transition from primary to secondary education often marks a shift from creative, interdisciplinary learning in primary schools to a structured subject-specific curriculum of secondary schools, raising the question, “Where did the magic go?”. Primary education is typically defined by exploratory learning that engages young people with a variety of subjects through creative projects. However, in secondary education, the focus tends to shift towards a segmented, assessment-driven approach, often resulting in a loss of creative teaching strategies more prevalent in earlier years. This paper investigates the potential for transferring key skills including problem-solving, collaboration, and adaptability from primary into secondary education and beyond. Through classroom observations in both primary and secondary schools, this study explores how creativity is approached in different educational settings from the perspectives of both teachers and students. The research also examines whether these skills are embedded or lost in the context of more formal educational structures, utilising focus groups from both primary and secondary school pupils to gain insights into their experiences. The study highlights barriers to creativity and skill transfer in secondary education and suggests practical strategies and resources for reintegrating creative learning practices, drawing on a teachers specialist knowledge to drive forward an interdisciplinary and real world learning approach. Overall, the paper advocates for the preservation of the creative and collaborative skills developed in primary education, emphasising their importance of fostering lifelong learning and ensuring that young people are equipped to apply these skills throughout their educational journey and into the professional environment.

Keywords: Primary; Secondary; Lifelong-Long Learning; Collaboration; Creativity