

## TAKING CREATIVITY INTO CLASSROOM

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**Abstract:** we need Creativity into classrooms because each time a language teacher enters a class, a silent experiment in hope and creativity is taking place: hope that the lesson will make a difference to at least one of its learners in some way; creativity in that teachers strive to give the lesson something of their own that goes beyond imitation or compliance. On this regard, this article is dedicated to provide readers a clear explanation of what is creative teaching, and why we need creativity inside the classrooms.

**Key words:** assignments, creativity, critical thinkers, encourage discussion.

## ПРИНИМАЯ КРЕАТИВНОСТЬ В КЛАСС

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**Аннотация:** мы нуждаемся в креативности в классных комнатах, потому что каждый раз, когда учитель языка входит в класс, происходит молчаливый эксперимент в надежде и творчестве: надеяться, что урок каким-то образом изменит, по крайней мере, одного из учеников; творчество в том, что учителя стремятся дать на уроке что-то свое, что выходит за рамки имитации или соответствия. В этой связи данная статья посвящена тому, чтобы дать читателям четкое объяснение того, что такое креативное обучение, и почему нам нужна креативность внутри классных комнат.

**Ключевые слова:** назначения, креативность, критические мыслители, поощрять дискуссию.

Development in thinking requires a gradual process requiring plateaus of learning and just plain hard work. It is not possible to become an excellent thinker simply because one wills it. Changing one`s habits of thought is a long-range project, happening over years, not weeks or months. The essential traits of a critical thinker require an extended period of development. How, then, can we develop as critical thinkers? How can we help ourselves and our students to practice better thinking in everyday life?

Critical thinking is a set of skills or abilities that you can develop over time. It doesn't necessarily have to be

negative, but is about developing your own conclusions based on evidence. It's the process of gathering information about something, and then thinking about it and coming up with your own views. Words that are associated with critical thinking include: analysis, evaluation, comparison, making judgments, drawing inferences, problem solving, developing an argument.

Sir Ken Robinson, PhD, and an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation and human resources, states that rather than nurture and enhance creativity, the current educational system actually stifles it. In his many books, papers, and lectures, he states that the system is based on the intellectual culture of the enlightenment, and the industrial revolution. The need for trained workers to work in factories became a driving force behind public education, a system based on production lines, the ringing of bells, and educating kids in batches by age rather than skills and abilities. In other words, it is a system based on conformity, a system that believes in one right way or answer for every problem. But environments that enforce conformity destroy creativity, according to Robinson [1, p. 96].

In his popular TED talk, Ken Robinson made the powerful point that most of the students doing work in your classrooms today will be entering a job force that none of you can visualize. Academia has started to embrace providing courses in creativity. Many of the biggest and most successful businesses in the world now practice the 20% rule – the commitment to allowing employees to devote 20% of their work time to thinking creatively and exploring new ideas. But this trend toward valuing creativity goes beyond the big tech companies that have long treated “innovation” as a buzzword. A 2010 survey of over 1,500 executives found that creativity is valued as the most important business skill in the modern world.

Compiling and assimilating a large amount of creativity research in his book, “Creativity, Theories and Themes: Research, Development, and Practice,” Runco explains that within the current system, setting up an unconventional classroom of 30 to 40 kids in order to breed creativity remains a challenge. Teachers cannot possibly teach within situations where nonconformity breaks all boundaries, where completely unstructured classrooms lead to chaos.

However research also suggests that although teachers say they support creativity and its eccentricities, in reality they do not. They strongly prefer students who are highly conformist, who are punctual, complete all assignments, and politely follow the norms. Runco cites research that teachers across all cultures view the behaviors and personality traits of creative children unfavorably. And the traits of these children are completely opposite those of the “ideal” student.

Runco suggests a solution: A balance between the traditional, highly structured classroom environment, and one that fosters creativity - in other words, a compromise. He states that an intermediate level of openness and unstructured situations might add enough opportunities for creativity's requirements of self-expression and autonomy. Some tasks require more structure, for example, and others less so. Those activities or projects requiring less could be optimized for more creative thinking. Runco cites research conducted during the 1980s that children in less formal and “intermediately structured” types of classrooms scored higher on divergent thinking skills than those in more formal classrooms [2, p. 103].

However, given the current climate for higher test scores (the one right answer) and more standards, teachers already feel overwhelmed. Some experts trying to marry the concept of higher test scores and creativity suggest taking current teaching methods and integrating creative teaching methods.

**Creativity is no longer seen as just being for artists and musicians (not that that view was ever accurate). It is a crucial skill for everybody to master**

### **5. Ways to Bring More Creativity Into the Classroom**

Introducing more creativity into your classroom and assignments does not have to make your job harder. It can actually make it a lot more interesting. Having to go home to a stack of dull papers to grade was never anyone's favorite part of teaching. Giving assignments that require more creativity will likely result in more

engaging work for your students, and a more entertaining grading process for you.

### **1. Do not limit assignments to one format**

You can provide them the subject to cover, but give them some freedom in how they complete it. Some students will get more out of creating a video or drawing a comic strip than writing a paper. Even better, have them mix and match formats. Your students could analyze a relevant film by creating a podcast about it. They could collect famous images that represent important themes and make a short video that discusses their common relevance. When you start allowing more formats in the way students create and learn, they will have more opportunities to engage with the work they do and will become more invested in it.

### **2. Set time aside for creativity**

Take a cue from the 20% rule practiced by businesses. Work a “genius hour” into the school day. The amount of time is really up to you, but deciding to devote time to encouraging your students to explore new ideas and be creative can pay off. You can provide them with some tools to enable their creativity – crayons, clay, notebooks, iPads, or even just access to the library or internet (within reason). They can choose to create, or they can choose to do some digging into a subject of interest to them. Encourage collaboration in these times, but do not force it. Allowing students the chance to follow their own interests and passions is the whole point and they should be given some leeway in what that looks like.

### **3. Use tech to broaden your idea of assignments**

Tech literacy is almost as important to succeeding in the world today as creativity. And conveniently the two go hand in hand. You can teach students about geography alongside history, literature, or any numbers of other subjects by having them map out a road trip in Google Maps. You can teach students how to make new contacts, conduct interviews, and turn what they learn from their interviews into a well-researched paper by making use of Google Hangouts or Skype. Students can take more ownership over their work by keeping a blog or making their own educational videos on their smartphones. And they can work more collaboratively with the help of social media.

While all of these ideas teach students skills that will benefit them in finding jobs later in life, that is far from all they accomplish. They make them better learners, better thinkers, and give them more incentive to care about the work they do.

### **4. Introduce unconventional learning materials into class**

Have you ever seen a student excited when you assigned a chapter in a textbook? How about if you assigned TED Talks instead? Or educational (and entertaining) podcasts like Radiolab and StarTalk? Many of the people creating a lot of the entertaining pop culture out there have embraced the boredom that pop culture used to shun. As a result, teachers have a ton of options for bringing more interesting and cool explorations of educational subjects into their classrooms.

### **5. Encourage discussion**

Debates get kids involved and actively engaged with the topics they’re discussing. The Socratic seminar method provides a lot of different benefits:

- ✓ It gets students thinking more critically about the material.
- ✓ It helps them learn to better communicate their ideas and opinions.
- ✓ It challenges them to listen to other students’ opinions and think critically about their contributions and ideas.
- ✓ It gives them the opportunity to challenge each other intelligently and build off of each other’s ideas.

Obviously, finding ways to get your students to be more creative requires some creativity on your part too. Every invention, both practical and whimsical, was the product of creativity. The car you drive, the clothes you wear, the music you hear, some television shows you watch, the books you have read, medicines that have cured your ills—all these came from a creative mind, someone who could take existing information and knowledge

and tweak it slightly to make something totally new and original.

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