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WAYS OF DEVELOPING CREATIVE THINKING AT ENGLISH LESSONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

In modern world, the ability to think critically is more important than ever. Critical thinking empowers students to analyse information, evaluate arguments, and make decisions. It is a fundamental skill that enables academic success, professional achievements, and lifelong learning. Despite its significance, many learners struggle to develop and apply critical thinking skills effectively.

In a secondary school, it is of vital importance to teach students the ways how to generate new ideas by arranging activities that require learners to challenge themselves and tasks that need collaboration and creativity. Teachers should develop and apply innovative teaching methods in the English language classrooms that allow them to motivate, encourage and finally involve students in the creative process.

The aim of this abstract is to analyse the ways of developing students' creative thinking skills and to select the most effective ones for implementation at the English lessons in a secondary school.

The notion of creativity is defined as «thinking, problem solving, inventing and reinventing, and flexing one's imaginative muscles» [1, p. 4]. Franklin and Theall mention that creativity requires flexibility and divergence in thinking – new ways of thinking or expressing oneself; pursuing questions for which there is no single, correct answer [2, p. 3]. It implies an expansion of the students' thoughts and ideas and the development of original insights.

There are two different approaches to creativity in the secondary school classroom. The first one is teaching with creativity which refers to the pedagogic approach used by teachers. Modelling creativity is a very effective way to demonstrate students what is possible for them. For example, a teacher can choose to run a lesson using digital tools only. The other approach is teaching about and for creativity in order to build the creative capacities and competencies of students. Creativity is not a separate subject which lies outside the discipline, and some explicit instruction in one or two of the creativity components is the most effective way to introduce creativity into any subject, English in particular.

The key element of creativity is the creative process, also known as problem solving. It guides students from a question to idea generation, next to idea selection, and the presentation of proposed solutions. One way of generating ideas is for learners to write down everything they know about a particular problem and then to look for links that might demonstrate causality. It may begin with a series of open-ended questions. Exploring the sum knowledge of the group can lead to a more complete picture than showing students' individual understanding. Another creative approach is to utilise a range of methods to record ideas as they are generated – post-it notes and butcher paper may be used in some circumstances, or digital tools in others.

The next stage of the creative process is idea selection. A quick and simple method to do this is a vote. In case of using post-it notes, learners put them into categories and then vote on which of the ideas they believe have the greatest chance of successfully solving the problem. Another way to select the best ideas is categorisation. For example, ideas can be categorised as the most logic, the most effective or the most original ones.

Once students have generated several solutions, the teacher's task is to facilitate a presentation session. Each student or group can present their proposed solutions to the class. The importance of clear communication and effective presentation skills must be emphasized.

At the English lessons, a teacher can encourage learners to think creatively by using visible thinking approach. Its basic idea is to nurture students' thinking by 'externalising' it when they engage with content, by making it visible. Its goal is double, as it deepens content learning and fosters thinking skills and dispositions, such as curiosity, concern for understanding, a creative mind-set, not just being skilled but also alert to thinking and learning opportunities and eager to take them [3].

One of the useful strategies for developing creative thinking is creating 360-degree classroom in which whiteboards and papers are put on all four walls of the classroom, and students are asked to write one question that they want the group to answer on each wall. That generates more diverse groups than the ones of learners sitting in their usual pairs at desks.

Another strategy is silent discussion. The teacher hangs several pieces of large butcher paper around the classroom and writes one key question on the topic of the lesson needed to be discussed. Next, a teacher gives each student a marker and asks them to move around the room writing their responses to each question on the paper. They are encouraged to respond to their classmates' responses, but only in writing. The room has to be absolutely silent. Once everyone has answered every question, the teacher asks the people with «green markers» to gather at one question, the «red markers» at another and so-on. The students read all the responses and prepare a summary to share with the class.

In conclusion, encouraging creative thinking is important as it guides students away from the idea of single, fixed answers, leading to a more active and welcoming approach to learning. This approach improves students' adaptability and encourages a deeper engagement with the learning material, preparing them for complex problem-solving in real-world scenarios.

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