TO BE CREATIVE, OR NOT TO BE CREATIVE; THAT IS THE QUESTION!

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Abstract:
Creativity is the lifeblood of organizations, currently becoming an increasingly important determiner of survival; success; and performance. This commentary, as such, is intended to explore what creativity is whilst focusing on creativity-related issues within higher education contexts.

INTRODUCTION:

A number of researchers advocate the idea that creativity is a key area which plays a role in determining the success or failure of any organization (see for example Anderson et al., 2014; Bowen et al., 2010; Friedrich et al., 2010; Ko, 2008; McDaniel, 2005). What is creativity though? Wright (2014, p. 3) states that creativity is 'making something which has not quite existed before'. Sternberg (1998, 1986) asserts that creativity is comprised of three forms of thinking; namely, analytical, practical, and creative.

In Farid, El-Sharkawi, and Austin's view (1993, p.11), creativity leads to generating useful and novel ideas, or to the integration of existing ideas into new and useful concepts in order to meet a requirement. Amabile (1996) is also of the opinion that creativity results in generating new ideas, methods, processes, products, and outcomes. Maslow (1974) classifies people's needs starting with essential basics such as food and ending with self-realization which necessitates experiences where one realizes inner potentials.

According to the author of this commentary, creativity is concerned with genuine novelty, involving intra-individual cognitive processes. The processes employed by creative people are comprised of five sequential steps: acquisition of background knowledge, exploration of new knowledge, learning by discovery; illumination and verification, enhancement of talents and skills, and achievement of unique outcomes.

With today's ever-changing requirements and aspirations in mind, university students need to embrace the four Cs: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration (Al-Alami, 2018). Excluding the discussion to creativity in particular, it is the author's conviction that creativity is there in all students usually unused or unrecognized. Some students, however, tend to make more use of their potential if given a chance to be creative.

As far as teaching creativity is concerned, teaching practitioners have to first understand what creativity means and entails. One might wonder though whether creativity is influenced by nurture or nature; in other words, whether it can and should be taught or not. If creativity is mainly a matter of inheritance and genetic impact, then it might not be possible to promote creative skills whilst teaching. Knapp (2003) argues that around 15% of a human's creative skills is inherited. What is more, culture can play a role in nurturing one's tendencies. For example, cultural approaches towards how to deal with uncertain issues can positively or negatively influence people's tendency to be creative (Javidan et al, 2006; Hofstede, 1983). Horan (2009) claims that the brain's functions, and thus creativity, may be modified via means of meditation to arouse awareness and motivation.

Creativity is an important feature of a successful language classroom. Since the author's specific major is English Applied Linguistics, this part of the commentary portrays creativity within foreign language classrooms with particular focus on university education. Listed below are twenty two points which university instructors need to consider in relation to ensure creativity. It is worth mentioning that the points listed below are presented according to alphabetical order rather than any other considerations such as degrees of importance.
*Awareness of the variety and power of form
Using the power of form to convey ideas effectively should be balanced by its power to mislead and restrict. To be creative is to challenge frequently used forms. Some examples here are metaphors, rhyming, and acrostics.
*Being personal
It is important for foreign language learners to establish a direct personal link with the new language. A foreign language should be experienced as an alternative language associated with new fields of experience, personal expression, and a whole range of different situations that matter. Instructors, therefore, need to implement activities which assist the learner in using the foreign language to ensure both creativity and successful

communication. An appropriate activity here is for students to classify all the words they know into functions such as intellectual, descriptive, content, grammatical, sensual and the like, associating with each word concepts and values.

*Collaboration

Some students excel when offered a chance to work with others. Some of the activities that can be applied to enhance creativity while students work in groups are group brainstorming, letter exchange, group-created story, class-created story, and movie making.

*Engagement by content

Useful content is expected to promote creativity whilst augmenting language skills. Equally important is interesting content which would normally contribute to arousing motivation and enhancing creativity. Ensuring provision of interesting and useful content requires meeting students' interests and needs. Some examples here include highlighting personal experiences, using provocative statements, and emphasizing the element of surprise.

*Getting out of a rut

True it is that most instructors get into a rut, finding ways of doing routine things without trying new ways. A main disadvantage here is that they lose interest which obviously will affect their students negatively. Moreover, instructors may become resistant to change even when necessary. Suggested solutions here could be to take a risk and try something new, go further and deliberately do the very opposite of what one has planned, and initiate a methodology change.

HYPOTHESIZING

One cannot necessarily be creative by being told what to do, but rather by seeking to sort things out. Instead of giving students a grammatical rule, for instance, instructors can refer them to examples of texts in which the language feature occurs and ask them to hypothesize a rule. It is worth mentioning in this context that instructors' guidance always remains beneficial.

*Insisting on ritual

Rituals can offer a safe known frame in which to work. Rituals can also be experienced as having a mysterious power that can help students to access the deeper parts of themselves which normally lie hidden. An example to be considered here is for the instructor to always place the chairs in a *U* shape neatly.

*Instructors' attitudes

To foster a culture of creativity, instructors themselves must be convinced that creativity is essential for students' overall development in general as well as for language acquisition in particular.

*Teaching styles

Recognizing the idea that each student has a style of perceiving; learning; and communicating should be stressed, since this is clearly central to creativity as instructors appreciate that creativity and individuality go together. Instructors, therefore, need to widen the range of types of perception and teaching styles. Some of the preferred ways people learn for creativity include auditory, kinesthetic, visual, logical, being funny, and collaborating with others.

*Making and telling stories

Stories are one of the most essential arts within the family of creativity. Some examples of creativity in relation to stories are shaping a story, re-telling a story expressively, re-telling and making changes, re-telling through a different medium, and re-telling which springs from adverts and pictures.

*Making new connections

Making new connections may be considered a definition of creativity amongst other definitions. Collocation changing, chain associating, comparing and contrasting, opposites and reversals, text substituting, and text expanding are some examples that can be used in the foreign language classroom to emphasize creativity.

*Particularizing

A hallmark of creative work is the feeling that it is both universal and particular at the same time. An activity which can be conducted here is encouraging the students to create places, situations, and characters in universal stories which are highly specific.

*Planning

Instructors need to plan their lessons, allocating space for creativity to be born, and for the lesson plan to be abandoned if necessary.

*Positive responses to restricted contexts

That artists can be free is a relatively new idea. Restrictions of medium, length, content, requirement, and method might sometimes be helpful.

*Publishing and performing

Obviously, it is highly motivating for most people to present their work to a broader audience rather than to the class teacher. Some examples here include displaying poems and stories, and using information captions and leaflets for local institutions such as local buses, local museums, and the like.

*Redefining

A very careful identification and examination of aims, methods, and approaches can often result in a new individual answer. An activity which can be used here is redefining a situation where two problems arise and students should brainstorm alternative ways of looking at them, so that they are no longer major problems.

*Traditional activities

With emphasis on creativity in mind, it would be quite wrong not to recognize the need for traditional activities like drill exercises as a springboard for creativity.

*Utilizing arts

Instructors need to emphasize the use of different arts creatively. Drama of voice, graphics, illustrations, and typography can be used to become part of something very much bigger. Some other examples of arts can be vocal, musical, visual, poetic, story, audio tape, and video performances.

*Valuing feelings

Feelings are an integral part of humans' daily life. Instructors, therefore, should seek to make enough of *richness of feelings* whilst teaching. Role plays are an example which would allow the students to convey a wide range of emotions rather than merely the transactional purposes of communication.

*Visualizing

The power to visualize is a gift some people are endowed with. It may not be given much importance by most instructors as it is non-verbal, and therefore it does not belong to the typical academic settings which prioritize logic and words over pictures. Instructors are advised to

create positive frames of mind towards different things that exist in life. They can also help the students to visualize a place or person whilst making use of the five senses.

*Wandering and wondering

Wandering and thinking without clear goals may be more important than linear thinking if the instructor wants students to discover new things. Brainstorming is an example of wandering and wondering as it is not linear and there are no right or wrong answers.

WORKING IN AN AMBIANCE OF CREATIVITY

Creativity as a key aspect of commendable behavior entails working in an ambiance of *creativity* in which students believe that creativity is important. An instructor is a key person in creating ambiance. He/she therefore should make it clear that there are times when students need to take risks to be as creative as possible, and that this is far more important than accuracy at those times.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, fostering creativity is a must rather than an option for organizations so as to cope with technological advancements, diversity, and universal issues (Egan, 2005). Educational institutions' ultimate goal need not simply be to understand creativity, but rather to be creative in relation to thinking styles, teaching methodologies, leadership patterns, and evaluation methods. Additionally, for an educational institution to be creative, the institution's leaders should not merely emphasize creativity. Instead, they have to fully operationalize creativity both practically and sensibly (Friedrich et al., 2010).

On a final note, higher education is continually subject to change due to globalization issues and technological advancements amongst other factors. To explore why creativity may or may not be integrated into university curricula, it would be helpful to revisit and bridge the gap between academics and practitioners (Glassman & Opengart, 2016). Future research, therefore, should lend itself to exploring a number of issues with respect to creativity education. For instance, whether there are any significant relationships between university courses on creativity and graduates' success and productivity in the workplace, whether university courses on creativity have any impacts on organizations' achievements, and whether universities need to offer creativity courses as an integral construct of each major.

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