

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Abdullaeva Farangiz Olimjon kizi,
Kimyo International University in Tashkent
Senior teacher, Tashkent

Abstract: Creativity and innovation have already become an integral part of our lives. These concepts go hand in hand with one another, and it is quite impossible to create something without innovation or innovate something without creativity. It is important to note that creativity and innovation are supposed to be integrated and cultivated in teaching English. Practical ways of incorporating creativity and innovation into language teaching will be suggested in this thesis.

Key words: Creativity, innovation, Bloom's taxonomy, Suggestopedia, banking education, design thinking

“Electricity is not only present in a magnificent thunderstorm and dazzling lightning, but also in a lamp; so also, creativity exists not only where it creates great historical works, but also everywhere human imagination combines, changes, and creates anything new” [Vygotsky, 1930/1967, cited in Smolucha, 1992, p.54].

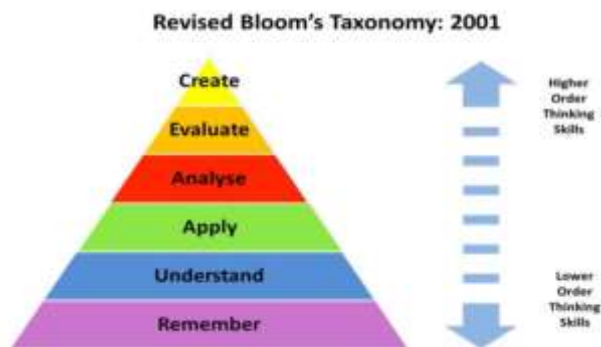
Innovation can be generally defined as a novel idea, a new or different method and approach to look at things, products or services. Creativity can be described as an active process that is both implicitly and explicitly associated with innovation. Creativity is the ability to generate novel, unique and useful ideas [Runco & Jaegar, 2012], whereas innovation is a practical implementation of creativity, which means introducing new ideas, solutions, processes, products or services. Sokolova [2015] argues that creativity is an impetus for innovation and the incorporation of perceiving things from different angles free from constraints by rules and written and unwritten norms. Both creativity and innovation are crucially important in the lives of people in order to make changes, develop and

improve, particularly in education sphere where creativity can be fostered. Being an educator myself, in this thesis, I will explicate several ways of promoting creativity and innovation in education, particularly in teaching English as a foreign language.

Firstly, relaxing atmosphere should be provided for learners so that they can develop creativity and innovation in themselves. It can be implemented in different ways and most effective approach can be using the method of Suggestopedia developed by a Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov in the late 70s of the previous century. Richards [1990] and Hornby [2015] state that students feel relaxed, engaged and positive when this method is implemented because teacher uses music visual illustrations, conversations, situations and relaxation exercises to make the process of learning more comfortable and efficient. It means that students, who are prone to face psychological barriers when it comes to learning, generating new ideas or creating effective solutions, will be able to use optimal conditions for coming up with innovative ideas. For instance, schools seem boring or full of strict regulations for students and they tend to restrict students' imagination. As a result, majority of students will be able to use only 2% of their creativity before finishing schools. However, by implementing four stages of Suggestopedia – presentation, active concert, passive concert and practice, psychological barriers of students will be minimized whereas their mental power will be maximized [Rustipa, 2011].

The second proposal can be creating a student-centered classroom as opposed to traditional classes where teachers are the focus of the lesson. According to Freire's "banking education" theory, students used to be considered as empty vessels that need to be filled in with knowledge. However, students are not unfilled ships, they are full of creative ideas and they need to express their opinions freely. The teacher in one classroom is no longer the center but the facilitator who should direct students. Students must be encouraged to regularly ask questions and take risks. This can be carried out by following Bloom's taxonomy. Krathwohl [2002] revised Bloom's original 1956 taxonomy in which creativity is placed at the top of

the taxonomy over evaluation as a higher order thinking skill. It denotes that creativity can be cultivated once students are able to use their higher order thinking skills of analysis, evaluation and creativity built on lower order thinking skills of understanding, applying and remembering. When students are usually asked open-ended questions; engaged in discussions, and take risks, they will practice their skills of creativity not only in their imaginations but also in real life.



The third way of fostering creativity and innovation can be done by using more authentic materials in classrooms. Authentic materials introduce real discourse, and as a result students will be exposed to real-life situations and problems from an early age. Having been exposed to reality, students' mental power make them think about the causes of the situations happening around them, like air pollution or consumerism society, and possible, innovative and creative solutions. This can be best implemented when Problem-based Learning and Project-based Learning approaches are incorporated in classes. Both methods keep students motivated and interested in learning by doing, creating, innovating or solving. Both approaches require students to come up with either a set of solutions or products that can tackle particular issues. It means that students are developing their creative thinking skills. According to Kampliyis and Berki [2014, p.6] "Creative thinking is defined and the thinking that enables students to apply their imagination to generating ideas, questions and hypotheses, experimenting with alternatives and to evaluating their own and their peers' ideas, final products and processes". For example, teacher can introduce authentic articles, videos of earth related topics and then make students engaged in discussions by either asking them to work on a project or suggest possible solutions to existing problems for Earth

Day on April 22. Students will experience the four-stage model of creative process including preparation, incubation, illumination and verification [Wallas, 1926].

Last but not the least, implementing design thinking process in all classrooms will lead to inevitable success in fostering innovation and creativity. Five phases of design thinking process, namely, discovery, interpretation, ideation, prototyping and testing, become strategies for students to empathize the situation, identify challenges, collect data, come up with possible solution, evaluate ideas and test them. Students will experience all stages of this process which will lead to original and practical ideas or solutions. This process is not only valuable for its result, but the ongoing process also teaches students crucial skills. For example, in the empathy stage students are required to put themselves in the shoes of others so as to fully understand the situation, which will help learners to identify the causes and effects. Additionally, ideation stage is invaluable part of the process that can make students practice their divergent thinking skills. People feel lack of creative ideas because they may be afraid of generating any possible ideas, but in ideation all ideas regardless of their practicality, are welcome. Creativity is built on ideas suggested using divergent thinking that will be later on evaluated utilizing convergent thinking skills. In my opinion missing any of these two important skills will not lead us to creativity. Moreover, as Brown [2009] stated that design-thinking is a creative and innovative human-centered approach to solve everyday problems.

In conclusion, creativity and innovation are interrelated concepts that are necessary to make changes and improve the lives of people. Creativity and innovation can be fostered in all spheres of life effectively, especially when it starts with education. The most effective ways of cultivating creativity can be maintaining relaxed atmosphere in classroom, conducting student-centered classes, making use of authentic materials that carry real-life discourse, encouraging working in collaboration and cooperation, developing growth mindset and incorporating design-thinking process. I think every teacher regardless of the

subject matter, can try implementing these ideas which will certainly promote creativity and innovation in classrooms.

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