

## CREATIVITY IN TEACHING

*У статті представлено деякі аспекти креативності в роботі вчителя. Описано постать сучасного ефективного вчителя та його риси. На думку автора, іноземні мови повинні викладатися в атмосфері креативності, що позитивно впливає на ефективне набуття знань під час уроків іноземної мови.*

*Ключові слова: креативність, ефективний учитель, успіх у викладанні.*

Enjoying success in teaching is an important objective in teacher's work. Satisfaction from students' achievements, good co-operation with them in terms of teaching and personal matters affect comfort of teacher's work and achieved results. An ability to reach students' minds and understand their needs proves today to be a challenge which teachers do face. Students constitute a group for whom technological developments, electronic equipment and virtual environment are very helpful in the process of knowledge acquisition. Whilst joining the university society, students decide to acquire knowledge in a very conventional manner, i.e. through a direct contact with a person who conducts a course, participation in practical classes, and following teacher's instructions, complying with his guidelines. For classes to be attractive to students and participation in these classes to prove enjoyable and give satisfaction from learning, a teacher, as a creative being, definitively plays an important role. Today's role of an academic teacher is not only to convey knowledge, but perhaps most of all ensure an atmosphere of creativity, creative work and creative problem solving.

A success in teaching will not be achieved without an attitude of creativity and a good organisation of work with students. Not only are foreign language teachers required to possess professional qualifications, experience in work with students, ability to deal with difficult and stressful situations, or communicate effectively, but, most of all, they should provide for authentic organization of teaching process. Therefore, what efforts should we make to ensure authenticity at foreign language classes? May a creative teacher increase learning effectiveness?

In this publication, there will be presented certain aspects of creativity in teacher's work. A profile of a contemporary effective teacher will be presented, with indication of his characteristic features which are of assistance when achieving teaching objectives. In our opinion, teaching a foreign language should go in an atmosphere of creativity which positively affects work at class, knowledge acquisition and increases work effectiveness.

Taking advantage of relevant teaching methods, applying appropriate materials and teacher's attitude do guarantee success in teacher's work. One of the competencies which proves most difficult for foreign language teachers to acquire involves a competence of creativity, as teacher's work does not only involve transmission of knowledge or checking abilities, but shaping some specific attitudes and open-mindedness to new: "A teacher should possess various abilities involving his own creativity competency, an ability to create something new, original, as well as an ability to develop and improve certain predispositions to creativity with his students" (Szempruch 69).

Where should we draw inspirations? What methods should we apply to become creative?

**1. Foreign Language Teacher and his Role.** A teacher is expected to possess a broader and broader range of competencies, e.g. acceptance, emphatic understanding, focus on students, open-mindedness, authenticity, ability to listen, create an atmosphere of safety and conflict solving and mitigate disputes, as well as an ability to communicate (Wosik-Kawala 97-98). The accumulation of problems which a teacher has to face sometimes results in putting the set teaching objectives aside. A failure to deal with stress or conflicts sometimes may disrupt a lesson and has an adverse effect on an atmosphere in a group, student-teacher contacts, spoils relations, and has an adverse effect on work. A self-confident teacher who possesses innovative, advisory and teaching abilities has a chance to be successful, and guarantee students a feeling of professional approach to teaching. Numerous definitions of a competent teacher include, among other things, an animator, inspirer, diagnostician, specialist, consultant, trainer, expert, model to follow, promoter. We do believe that a competent and creative teacher is a teacher – innovator who applies the latest strategies at work with students; he creates new reality, transferring his mentees into new dimensions (e.g. during role-plays); he is a teacher-advisor who participates in planning an educational and professional trail of a student; a teacher, as a transmitter of knowledge, is a person who possesses extensive professional qualifications (in a specific area), he is also a guide who points out to new professional opportunities and explicitly indicates correlations between teaching objectives and everyday work at classes.

**2. Atmosphere of Creativity.** A teacher's creative attitude is related to a regular improvement of professional qualifications, development of his abilities of a teacher, and creative approach to work. One of the creative method which deserves attention to this extent and which may be used during foreign language practical classes involves active language training. A teacher acts as a trainer, a coordinator of a teaching process who is responsible for smooth use of language abilities and selection of appropriate teaching methods. Therefore, it should be emphasized that there is no one and only teaching method which would be appropriate for all students. A teacher trainer knows his students well and has established a good contact and atmosphere during classes. A teacher – creativity trainer is expected to prepare classes to make them interesting, design appropriate teaching tasks whose aim would be to effectively use time during classes. A formula of language classes should, to the best of our belief, remind of a sports training. A student and a sportsman are expected to repeat certain activities with the aim being to improve their abilities. The language training

improves mostly the level of concentration during classes, makes them dynamic, whereas students are positively motivated and willing to work. Active training proves to be an effective form of material repetition; it is an element which makes a teaching unit more dynamic.

To this extent, it proves necessary to emphasise that a foreign language teacher enjoys his own unique teaching style, using methods which should comply with fundamental forms of learning, i.e. visual (through eye contact), auditory (hearing) and kinaesthetic (emotional and movement) (Scannell, Cain 28), as maintaining balance between shaping an ability of understanding from hearing, writing, reading and communicative competencies proves necessary to fully acquire a foreign language.

Drama appears to function as another creative method. “The essence of drama involves active participation of students in role-plays. Students act as film directors, commentators” (Zegnałek 179), and they become active participants of a teaching process and may develop their abilities. This activity shapes their ability to play roles, develop arguments, objections, prepare presentations and defend their positions. It requires students to possess language abilities which allow them to hold discussions on a specific topic, provide references, engage in and maintain a dialogue. It should be pointed out that, apart from language abilities, learners have an opportunity to prove knowledge of non-language techniques; what we mean is an ability to hold control over a group of speakers, ensure control over a pursuit of intentions during discussion, ability to quickly respond during a vivid conversation.

**3. Non-Language Competencies of a Creative Teacher.** Creativity in teacher’s work also relies upon appropriate use of non-linguistic competencies. Such non-linguistic competencies include, for example, techniques which allow for the transmission of language knowledge through visualization, i.e. a technique of direct demonstration. What it also employs is the perception of a function of non-verbal communication in the process of transmission of language knowledge. The fact is that teachers face a truly significant challenge, i.e. transferring positive stimuli and establishing and maintaining creative atmosphere during foreign language classes, using non-language tools. Whilst considering non-language components of a teaching unit, it is a teacher and his personality that come to the forefront.

**3.1. Teacher’s Personality.** Teacher’s personality is reflected in non-verbal communication (Wieckowski 131). Therefore, it appears important for non-verbal messages sent by a teacher to be true and follow the style of classes he conducts. In his work, a teacher should go beyond currently established rules; he should break down the routine when giving classes.

**3.2. Para-Linguistic Messages.** Paralinguistic messages have a positive effect on the perception of classes by learners, introduce constructive and creative atmosphere, and they may reduce the distance in student-teacher relation, and motivate to work effectively. Non-verbal messages sent by a teacher are of a spontaneous nature, they are not taught.

An important element of non-verbal communication involves environment and an ability to appropriately behave there (Balachowicz, Rowicka 33). The selection of place, established attitude, the fact whether a teacher sits or stands during classes determines his relationship to listeners.

A voice timbre proves to be another important paralinguistic element. A strong and loud tone and dynamic pace of speech without any faltering and pauses increases reliability of a person who pursues classes in the eyes of listeners.

An eye contact affects the quality of relations, as, if appropriately maintained, it motivates to speak in a foreign languages and constitutes an expression of approval and acceptance. Specialists do believe that eye-contact should be preferably maintained for approximately 30%-60% of the duration of the discussion. If an eye-contact does not exceed 30% of such time, it may mean that something is being concealed, whereas if lasts longer than 60% it may mean that speakers are more interested in themselves than in discussion.

**4. Dimensions of Creativity.** Creativity involves opening to something new, breaking down the routine and going beyond the established rules. It is a condition of mind, it means inventing and discovering new ideas, experimenting and searching for new solutions, “opening to new ideas and situations” (Day 109). A creative teacher is not afraid of new challenges, faces difficulties he is encountering on his way. A creative teacher does not follow ready behaviour models; whilst challenging an unpredictable situation, he knows how to respond in an appropriate manner.

In terms of interpersonal skills, a creative teacher:

- believes in abilities of his student, he is open and friendly;
- allows to freely communicate in a foreign language, in a convenient and non-stressful atmosphere;
- stimulates conversation asking additional questions, motivates to discussion;
- acts as an observer during discussion, corrects mistakes in a manner which does not incite guilt in a student;
- helps develop language abilities with his students;
- constitutes one homogenous team with students.

In terms of teaching and methodological aspects, a creative teacher:

- can focus attention of his students and maintain atmosphere of creative concentration;
- applies methods which are appropriate to his students’ profiles, and duly addresses teaching material to kinaesthetic learners, visual learners and auditory learners;
- can maintain a dynamic pace during classes, uses various materials and forms of conveying his message;
- while working, he follows a strictly established plan – tasks are smoothly performed. During classes, components are logically continued;
- teaches through action – during classes he introduces elements which activate all the learners; he create situations which release emotions, activities which develop imagination, role-plays and scenes.

A foreign language teacher should develop an attractive manner of communication with students. His straightforward behaviour may be expressed in non-verbal communication, through using sympathetic gestures, voice variation, smile and verbal communication expressed through a good sense of humour, personal examples, using words “we” and “our” (Brophy 38). This manner of communication provides for a favourable condition for an atmosphere of open-mindedness and mutual understanding. A creative attitude of a teacher towards the organization of a teaching process is related to the updating of the features like “fluidity understood as a spontaneous reaction during classes which require an immediate modification of an action plan, following the student’s reasoning and adjusting any further procedures, whereas flexibility of thinking assumes an ability to perceive specificity of a group, individual features of students” (Sobanska-Jedrych 56). The teacher as a person who creates and organises a teaching unit should possess leader’s features. Gaining a position of a group leader provides for an opportunity to arrange undisturbed work without any communication misunderstandings. Learners are given precisely formulated instructions, do the tasks in an effective and efficient manner, as the classes are characterised by “well-thought and clear structure. Tasks are done in a friendly environment, where mistakes can be made without any unfavourable consequences” (Urban 35). Therefore, it should be emphasized that a creative teacher should enjoy the features of a reflective practitioner. The concept proposed by Malgorzata Taraszkiewicz (Taraszkiewicz 19) provides that this is a being which constantly learns and improves his qualifications, studies and examines his teaching techniques, introduces changes and some time or another revisits his “beaten tracks”, breaking down routine and habits. Getting rid of habits and routines, teaching in harmony with himself, as well as appropriate selection of methods do guarantee a high comfort of work in a well-motivated group, where due to teacher’s creativity a teaching success is achieved, as expressed in satisfaction of students and achievement of teaching objectives.

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### CREATIVITY IN TEACHING

Anna Szafernakier-Świrko

Department of Applied Linguistics, Warsaw National University, Warsaw, Poland

#### Abstract

**Background:** The research of effective teaching is an actual problem of modern linguistics because of active promotion of its unequal manifestations and amplification of the functional load in various sectors of society.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the analysis is to determine the qualifying and classifying features of creative and effective teacher.

**Results:** A foreign language teacher should develop an attractive manner of communication with students. His straightforward behaviour may be expressed in non-verbal communication, through using sympathetic gestures, voice variation, smile and verbal communication expressed through a good sense of humour, personal examples, using words “we” and “our”. This manner of communication provides for a favourable condition for an atmosphere of open-mindedness and mutual understanding. A creative attitude of a teacher towards the organization of a teaching process is related to the updating of the features like fluidity understood as a spontaneous reaction during classes. The teacher as a person who creates and organises a teaching unit should possess leader’s features. Gaining a position of a group leader

provides for an opportunity to arrange undisturbed work without any communication misunderstandings. Learners are given precisely formulated instructions, do the tasks in an effective and efficient manner. Therefore, it should be emphasized that a creative teacher should enjoy the features of a reflective practitioner. Being which constantly learns and improves his qualifications, studies and examines his teaching techniques, introduces changes and some time or another revisits his “beaten tracks”, breaking down routine and habits. Getting rid of habits and routines, teaching in harmony with himself, as well as appropriate selection of methods do guarantee a high comfort of work in a well-motivated group, where due to teacher’s creativity a teaching success is achieved, as expressed in satisfaction of students and achievement of teaching objectives.

**Discussion:** The theory of effective teaching is generally replenished with new methods, techniques and research methods in statics and dynamics. The problem of good teachers and success in teaching its theoretical understanding and practical expression requires the coverage of different aspects and establishing of spatial fillings of teaching with its active and passive discover.

**Keywords:** Creativity, effective teacher, success in teaching.

#### **Vitae**

Anna Szafernakier-Świrko is Doctor of Philology, is working in faculty Applied Linguistics at Warsaw National University. His areas of research interests include functional linguistics, cognitive linguistics, comparative linguistics, glottodidactica and methodica.

**Correspondence:** [a.szafernakier@uw.edu.pl](mailto:a.szafernakier@uw.edu.pl)