

## Creativity as an urban term in the contemporary smart cities' education

Conf. univ. dr. Sebastian CHIRIMBU  
Departamentul de Cercetare, Facultatea de Științe,  
Universitatea Wales România, Universitatea Spiru Haret, București

**Abstract.** *Today, when the quantity of information that we have at our disposal in every domain of knowledge is huge, and the quality that we can achieve is particularly high, creativity is a major cross-curricular goal in education. The optimal management of the gigantic pool of information that we have available and the creation of new associations between ideas, new concepts can not be accomplished in the absence of creativity. In this context, within the foreign language class, creativity can play a double role, of the premise and the objective to be attained. Relying on the creative potential of children, the teacher can imagine contexts and activities to facilitate the learning of language structures and vocabulary related to the children's familiar universe and daily activities. At the same time, it is precisely such contexts that can positively influence the development of the creative potential of small learners who are making their first steps towards discovering a new languages and civilisations.*

**Keywords:** creativity, pre-school children, foreign language teaching, creative potential.

*“Creativity is as important as literacy.”  
(Ken Robinson)*

### **Introduction**

Educating and enhancing creativity depends on the algorithms that describe educational methods and processes but also on the conditions which facilitate the educational process. „At the dawn of the third millennium, talking about education means adopting a new epistemological perspective that enables a holistic understanding of the complex problems derived from economic, political and socio-cultural globalization. Achieving the conditions that facilitate creation, including the development of creative potential, is one of the fundamental aims of contemporary education. As a retort to the old idea that 'the best thing you can do for a creator is not to let him be troubled by anything', research has advanced in the spheres of personality traits and the climate of collective work.” (online source: <http://www.globaleducationmagazine.com/internet-everything-case-barcelona-smart-city/>)

Today, when the quantity of information that we have at our disposal in every domain of knowledge is huge, and the quality that we can achieve is particularly high, creativity is a major cross-curricular goal in education. The optimal management of the gigantic pool of information that we have available and the creation of new associations between ideas, new concepts can not be accomplished in the absence of creativity. In this context, within the foreign language class, creativity can play a double role, of the premise and the objective to be attained. Relying on the creative potential of children, the teacher can imagine contexts and activities to facilitate the learning of language structures and vocabulary related to the children’s familiar universe and daily activities. At the same time, it is precisely such contexts that can positively influence the development of the creative potential of small learners who are making their first steps towards discovering a new languages and civilisations.

### **Barriers to creative production**

In concrete situations, both younger and older students can be made aware of and learn to overcome the barriers to creative production.

It is considered that these are of three types:

a) perceptive barriers, causing difficulties in the delimitation of problems, in solving problems which need generalization, in defining terms, using multiple meanings in the observation of facts, investigating facts and distinguishing cause from effect.

b) cultural barriers, such as over-evaluating competition or cooperation, over generalizing situations, trusting reason and logic excessively as well as statistics, possessing too much or too little knowledge in a certain area.

c) emotional barriers such as: fear of error, using only the first idea that comes to mind, fear of peer (colleagues) judgement, rigidity of thinking, desire to solve a problem quickly.

Creativity is an integral dimension of a human being's personality involving imagination, but being by far more than a simple imaginative processes; it involves intelligence, as well, requires motivation and willpower, but cannot be explained solely by these issues.

A major goal of school today is to obtain specific educational outcomes, based on creativity, being its direct responsibility to stimulate the creative potential of the students in the following areas:

- identification of creative potential of students creating the gnoseological pre-conditions of a free and conscious creative activity of the human being (a conception of the world which shall give meaning to the creative work);
- development of individual possibilities of communication, which shall facilitate the dissemination of the results of creation;
- development of the individual's creative potential, defined as the appropriate recognition of talents and cultivation of creative attitudes, in particular those which constitute the main factors of creativity;
- ensuring ethical support to creative behaviours.

Thus, creativity tests highlight a number of personal characteristics in relation to the instrumental factors of creativity. Such creativity tests require, for example, the subject to produce over a determined period of time as many original drawings as possible starting from certain given data, to imagine titles for these drawings, to find multiple uses of an object, to imagine another end of known stories etc.

Through well-chosen exercises, the teacher can educate the students' confidence that each of them possesses the ability to be creative, that it can develop through learning new techniques for thinking. For these goals, the classroom should have a format defined by the following: students' questions are handled carefully, their ideas are received with respect; the teacher constantly reinforces the belief that ideas are valuable; for a certain period of time students can work without being conditioned by evaluation criteria; the teacher works alternatively with the whole class, individually or in small groups.

Developing the spirit of observation, thinking and imagination, developing characterial skills in the direction of a creative personality (integrative correlation of interests and creative abilities) ensures originality in foreign language exercises. A radical restructuring in the methodology of learning, as well as the

creation of a creative atmosphere during the foreign language class are key elements to promote communication in the learning activity. Flexibility and originality of thought, finding new solutions and satisfaction of finding them can be cultivated by all educational disciplines, but in particular, can be used for this purpose resources offered by the study of English.

Flexibility in terms of adapting the content to the specific development and the interests of students, as well as placing the emphasis on procedural learning, leading to strategies and structuring their own procedures for problem-solving exercises, exploration and investigation, develop interest and motivation for the study and application of English in different contexts.

In obtaining a creative environment the following factors are of high importance:

- stimulating divergence-inciting class in giving as many solutions to the same problem set, leaving time for generating responses;
- responsiveness-leniency, patience to listen to all the students' answers, without interrupting them by formulas of immediate appreciation thereof, with the same confidence to all students;
- accepting questions instead of immediate solutions, with the aim of clarifying the issue placed by students;
- positivity-endeavors to find during the evaluation-an intake in each of the solutions or questions formulated;
- pupils' co-participation in the assessment of answers.

The narrative is used in the educational process, as a means to practice the spirit of observation and language development.

If the topic of the lesson is a more complex one, then its richness can give birth to various issues that the student take effortlessly, turning them in a form according to his/her own creativity and private expression.

Creativity can be fostered in all classes with the help of appropriate strategies. It can become a way of learning with multiple benefits for students. They are downright excited to be given the chance to express their thoughts and feelings in many varied ways and original creativity games are the optimum setting for this purpose. The problem that arises is that of the effort that will be made both by the pupils and the teacher in the achievement of the objectives.

The lessons of English offer real possibilities for organizing and conducting multiple activities designed to develop the students' creative ability. Among these may be mentioned: the communication on topics of general interest, using words and expressions with frequent use, such as: family environment, relationships with others, the school and the workplace, the changing of information along with a description of the aspects of the past and of daily life, as well as the ability to write letters, e-mails and drafting letters, drawing up a text with familiar themes and statements of personal interest, being able to describe different events and

personal experiences, fluent and spontaneous expression in that language by using the language developed, formulating ideas and opinions.

An important role in language development and active use of the vocabulary of oral teaching learning activities also offer students not only the joy and satisfaction of play, but there are also a real opportunity to develop oral expression abilities and at the same time the development of creative capabilities.

New methods are based on all forms of organization of work (individual, pairs, and front group), the class of students becoming a learning community in which everyone contributes both to their own learning and collective learning process. Students are invited to turn to those sources that helps to solve problems and are involved in the learning experiences of complex, real-life projects that develop their knowledge and skills.

### **Creativity and the need of communication in the context of the educational reform**

In the context of modern society, it appears that the need, from the earliest age, that children should be able to communicate in a foreign language of international use, English being the most used of them.

The educational reform in Romania is oriented towards stimulating interactive approaches that lead to greater efficiency of school and learning at the student's placement in the center of the Education Act.

The mastery of English opens new gates towards knowledge for students, who will have access to information on a larger scale. The language is one of the most important skills they acquire ever since the age of pre-school child; it is also a key element in the provision of good education in school and later in the University environment.

Language development includes the following aspects: development of the phonetical, lexical, grammatical and semantic aspects. It is known that pre-school children are excellent conversation partners – not only do they ask a lot of questions, but they also like conversation very much. This feature greatly helps parents and educators in the development activities of the vocabulary and communication skills in children.

If by the age of 3 children understand by far more words than they can reproduce, the situation begins to change at pre-school age, when the language is developed in conjunction with thinking and the former baby manages to replicate nearly all known words. Vocabulary and communication skills gained in children depend for the most part of the development environment-stimulating the child's conversations with adults. Language development in the pre-school period is characterized by changes in pronunciation and grammatical structures, by increasingly clear speech and gestures turned into verbal communication.

Based on these objectives the teaching of foreign languages, English most often, is started without difficulty at this age. The use of verbal games, rhymes and songs are particularly successful. Using activities similar to those developed during other classes (drawing for example) while switching to English when talking to the children, helping them elicit short answers in English, building a routine of the lesson (such as saying hello, saying how we feel, greeting other children, talking about the weather) will lead to the enrichment of the children's active vocabulary.

*Pronunciation.* Learning a foreign language requires the formation of auditory and articulatory skills that develops only in part based on the sounds of the mother tongue. It should be noted that at the pre-school age the auditory and articulatory skills in mother tongue are generally formed. Learning a foreign language is not possible without good pronunciation skills formed first.

*Vocabulary.* Whereas the appropriate vocabulary is an integral part of the study of language, it must be given enough time. In explaining the lexical material not only translation should be used but also facial expressions, gesture, which will help in naming objects, and the suggestion of meaning through different actions.

Thinking in concrete terms is dominant in pre-school child. Therefore, it is absolutely indispensable for the teacher to use intuitive material in the explanation and the assimilation of the linguistic data. Words shall always be placed in a situational context meant to stimulate the child's thinking and to arouse interest.

Learning English can seem too ambitious a plan for preschool age, but at this age, the operational structures and mental malleability, still unfinished, may constitute an advantage for a talented educator. In fact, a foreign language is not "taught" in a year, and the purpose is not that preschool children shall speak fluent English. All we want is to develop the correct pronunciation of specific sounds and know some basic elements of expression in the foreign language. Among the main goals that an educator can set when teaching English to pre-school children are the following: correct pronunciation of sounds and sound complexes; knowledge of some basic elements of expression, to develop the spirit of observation, of reproductive and creative thinking, reproduction of a verbal message heard; identifying the elements of the familiar universe; acquiring notions relating to the numeral, vocabulary enrichment using songs and poems, stimulating the willingness and affective qualities, use of dialogue with colleagues practicing phrases learned, stimulating interest in another culture and civilization.

At the same time, the English class is the perfect environment for stimulating the children's creative spirit which can manifest itself when: participating actively in the process of training and learning, adopting an interactive attitude, critical thinking and critical thinking skills are put to work, total freedom in acting in the choices they make is given to children; children

explore the environment and find personal solutions, children exercise their free will, children trust them-selves and have self-improvement desire and when children develop unique and original intellectual products.

### **Conclusion**

Knowledge of a foreign language, means an improved ability to communicate, wider access to sources of documentation. It open the gates to the history, geography, culture and spirit of other Nations. Mutual knowledge, understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity are thus facilitated in every smart society, village or educational system.

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