

CREATIVE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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Great teachers have certain traits and attributes that leave gratitude and endearing moments in their students. They have many essential virtues, and the most important one being creativity. An English language teacher should possess the ability of creative teaching. A creative teacher will not be afraid to take risks. He / she will be willing to experiment and will try to be innovative by attempting new things. A creative teacher “thinks out of the box”. The creative teacher uses numerous activities which include experiments, role-plays, simulations, cooperative learning activities, group projects, technology (Internet Research and PowerPoint presentations). He / she does not stick to the syllabus but would rather prefer teaching for the betterment of the student’s life. This type of teacher would consider himself / herself as a facilitator who facilitates and makes English a fun to learn.

As a facilitator, the creative teacher propagates learner autonomy. He / she help the student to explore and learn new things. For example, in an ESL class when a student asks a question like-“What is a blind person?” an ordinary teacher would reply, “A person who cannot see”. But a teacher who facilitates learning and believes that creativity develops multi-sensory approaches of the student, closes his/her eyes and tries to find a piece of chalk or pencil on the table. These actually help the student feel the situation emotionally and intellectually. The learner would have been put into a real blind situation and would have derived the meaning of the word ‘blind’ from a direct experience. Through this, the teacher would have helped the student to explore the hidden meaning of a given word.

A creative teaching follows the creative process which involves: preparation, incubation, illumination, elaboration, and verification. And the teacher, who prefers creativity in teaching, plays the role of an explorer, an artist, a judge, and a warrior in the creative process. These roles enable the teacher to study the psychological mindset of the students in the class. In a class, a teacher may come across various students. Some would be quick learners, some slow learners, and a few would be poor learners. When the teacher takes up the above mentioned four roles, he/she will be able to cater to the needs of all the students. Though the Indian classroom structure and academics do not provide a chance for innovation, an efficient teacher will use the same materials of the curriculum to be taught in the class but will take ownership of it, and make it his/her own.

Creative teaching of LSRW skills:

We are in an era of globalization. And in this era, it is necessary for the ESL students to learn to express their views and ideas by Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in English to be successful professionals. Having this in mind, a creative teacher teaches these four skills of English Language in a creative manner. Now let us see how an English teacher can be creative in teaching these four skills.

Creative Teaching of Listening Skill:

Listening is the evaluation of a message. And learning this skill has become very essential for student's development. Teaching this skill hones the attention and concentration skills of the students. By hearing a sound, processing that sound in the brain, and then figuring out the right response helps the student to be good professionals in life. Moreover, listening in English helps the student speak in English. And since listening is not a skill that develops automatically, a teacher should teach how to listen to a particular sound or message carefully and attentively.

But things become more complicated when we teach this skill to students for whom English is a second language. If the English teacher is creative in his / her teaching methodology, the students can surely master the skill of listening. In order to help the students to learn the skill of listening in English, the teacher can use task-oriented materials such as:

i. Listening and performing actions:

This can be done through the "Simon Says" activity. Here the teacher can ask a student to assume the name "Simon" and ask the other students to perform whatever Simon says.

ii. Listening and performing operations:

Here the teacher can describe a figure or map verbally and ask the students to construct the description in a picture or put it down in words.

iii. Listening and solving problems:

Here the students can be asked to solve riddles, numerical, spatial or chronological problems.

iv. Listening and transcribing.

In this activity the student can be asked to transcribe a telephone message or write notes on a particular lecture that they had heard recently.

v. Listening and summarizing information:

Here the teacher can give students certain information on topics related to their curriculum and then ask them to summarize that particular information in writing or by speaking.

Creative Teaching of Speaking Skill:

Speaking, in English is a very important part of the language. But a second language learner finds it very difficult to express his / her views in English. Hence he/she develops a fear to speak in English. First, a teacher should help the student overcome this fear. This can be done through motivation and morale boosting. The teacher should first make the students feel 'at home' when he/she helps the students speak in English. This can be done through various fun filled activities.

Activities like: Group Discussions, Debates, Role Plays, Hot Seat game, Brainstorming, Developing a story from hints given, Picture Narrating and Mock Interviews can be conducted to improve the speaking skills of the student. Moreover activities like miming, character study, interpretations and improvisation generate the "need to speak in English.". The activities like Group discussions and Debates help them to be good members of a team and also develop the team spirit which is very essential to work successfully in the corporate industry. Thus the teacher would not only have honed the speaking skill but also would have trained them to be successful professionals in their respective field of specialization.

Creative Teaching of Reading Skill:

Reading is nothing but the understanding of a given text. It involves both perception and thought. The reading process consists of comprehension and word recognition. The former refers to the relationship between written symbols and spoken language and the latter is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Reading helps a student improve his/her vocabulary, develops the comprehension ability and increases the language style. The teacher should take this into consideration and help the student master the skill of reading.

In order to inculcate the habit of the reading skill in the students the teacher can ask the students to read film reviews, sports columns, gossips about their favorite movie or sports stars. Following this they can be asked to pick out difficult words from the text of reading. Then the student should be asked to derive the meaning of those words from the context. This helps the student improve their vocabulary and also comprehend a given passage without the help of a dictionary. The teacher can accompany the students to the college library where they can be introduced to various journals and articles both in their branch of study as well as some which deal with general issues.

Creative Teaching of Writing Skill:

Writing skills are specific abilities which help students put their thoughts into words and mentally interact with the message. Francis Bacon in his essay 'Of Studies' says, "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man." So if a teacher wants to mould his/her student into an exact human being, and make them think creatively he/she must first teach the student the skill of writing. But in our Indian scenario, most of the students detest the writing activity. This is due to their weakness in vocabulary,

fear of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. It is the teacher's responsibility to remove this weakness from the mind of the student. This can be done only if the writing skill is taught in an innovative manner.

The most important aspect in writing is that the student must be personally involved. To bring about this personal involvement in students, activities like story writing, narrating a personal experience in writing, or writing a descriptive essay about a person or place they had recently come across. The teacher can also ask the students to write an article on a recent issue: for example, Obama's visit to India. Students will surely come out with numerous ideas. But their writing is sure to have errors. But it is the teacher's responsibility to point out those errors and help the students correct the errors. And for sure students will gradually learn the art of writing in English and will be able to express their views and ideas effectively in writing.

Thus the teacher can play a vital role in developing the four skills of English language in their students.

Teacher and Technology:

Apart from teaching the above mentioned skills in a creative manner, a teacher should be very spontaneous in his/her teaching. Simply standing before the class and lecturing has become obsolete. The present generation is dominated by the audio-visual media. They expect the same in their classroom too. The students of the 21st century hate the Gurukul Teaching Methodology. So a good teacher must be able to wear many hats and sync with the young minds.

Rather than sticking to the black board and chalk, the teacher can use modern technology in the class. He/she can prepare Power Point presentations for the lecture session. The teacher can introduce the e-learning method in the class. The use of multimedia, Internet and digital technologies will have a greater effect on the students. This will enrich the learning environment of the language classroom.

Conclusion:

Teaching English as a Second Language is a great challenge. As discussed in the paper, if this language is offered in a creative manner will develop the multi-sensory approaches of the students. The learning of the English language would have also become fun because of the various creative teaching methodologies adapted by the teacher. Creative teaching is something novel and useful. And all that is useful stays for life. As English has become the language for business and global communication it is high time that, as teachers of English language, we took necessary steps to change the way we teach this funny language in a fun-filled way.
