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ENHANCING CREATIVE WRITING ABILITIES IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract. Creative writing is the most effective way of communicating ideas, thoughts, feelings and opinions. It enriches our vocabulary, develops imagination, and improves expressiveness, all of which help us achieve fluency in a foreign language. Apart from academic benefits, creative writing contributes to the development of one's personal qualities such as confidence, self-respect, responsibility, and critical thinking skills, making us feel comfortable with our words on paper. Realizing the importance of creativity in both, professional and personal aspect, specialists try to adopt the most effective strategies in order to exploit their students' creative potential, being convinced that it will open up tremendous career opportunities.

Keywords: creative writing, strategies, skills, innovative, communication.

ÎMBUNĂȚĂȚIREA ABILITĂȚILOR DE SCRIERE CREATIVĂ ÎN PROCESUL DE ÎNVĂȚARE A LIMBILOR STRĂINE

Rezumat. Scrisul creativ este modalitatea cea mai eficientă de a comunica idei, gânduri, sentimente și opinii. Creativitatea permite îmbogățirea substanțială a vocabularului, dezvoltarea expresivității artistice, precum și îmbunătățirea rapidă a competențelor verbale, toate acestea contribuind la o exprimare fluentă și corectă. Înafara beneficiilor pe plan academic, scrisul creativ contribuie la dezvoltarea calităților personale precum independența, responsabilitatea, respectul de sine, încrederea, spiritul de echipă, toate împreună promovând o mai bună însușire a limbii. Realizând importanța creativității pe plan profesional și personal, specialiștii încearcă să adopte cele mai eficiente tehnici și strategii de dezvoltare a potențialului creativ al studenților fiind convinși ca aceasta le va deschide posibilități sigure de afirmare.

Cuvinte cheie: scrisul creativ, strategii, competențe, comunicare.

Creative writing is considered to be one of the most elaborate forms of expressing thoughts and ideas on paper. It turns out to be a hard nut to crack because it requires the ability to think freely and express ideas and experienced feelings from the bottom of our hearts.

Teachers nowadays are aware of the fact that good creative writing skills are extremely valuable not only in the educational context but also for life and career success. As writing creatively is not an easy task, more and more instructors try to find the best strategies and adopt various techniques that would enhance their students' creative writing abilities and help them become productive creative writers.

Sternberg, R. J. and Wright, W. M. both believe that some creative potential exists in all human beings, but there is the possibility to be "blocked". They emphasize three kinds of blocks that prevent students from enhancing their creative abilities.

Strategy Blocks: The individual uses the wrong strategy in order to solve the problem

or has no strategy at all.

Values Blocks: The individual has certain principles and holds firmly to them. This creates a negative way of thinking that makes him/her unable to accept a new set of values even if there is a sound reason to do it.

Self-image Blocks: The individual is convinced he/she is not clever enough to write certain things; therefore, no effort is made to find solutions to the existing problem.

As a result of these blocks, learners are constantly hesitant to write something artistically or innovatively. They are afraid of using their imagination to create new ideas and original thoughts, in this way, limiting themselves to be dependent on others' viewpoints. On this subject, **Shaughnessy M.** suggests that the best way of getting rid of writers' blocks is to brainstorm because brainstorming helps writers let their thoughts flow freely, and come up with different types of creative ideas and inventive thoughts" [3].

Writing his book "**How to Develop Students' Creativity**", **Wright W. M.** suggests various ideas that teachers should try while intending to develop their students' writing abilities. According to **Wright W. M.** "The most powerful way to develop creativity in your students is to be a role model. Students develop creativity not when you tell them, but when you show them" [5]. This means that teachers should keep in equilibrium teaching content with teaching students how to think about the content. **W.M. Wright** asserts that "a teacher cannot be a role model for creativity unless he thinks and teaches creatively himself". So, teachers should think very carefully about their values, goals and ideas about creativity and illustrate them in their actions.

The second suggestion made by **Wright W. M.** is to build self-efficacy in students. He states that "The main limitation on what students can do is what they think they can do. All students have the capacity to be creators and to experience the joy associated with making something new, but first, we must give them a strong base for creativity" [5]. Sometimes teachers involuntarily limit students' imagination by sending messages that imply limits on their activity. Instead of this, teachers should encourage students and make them believe in their own abilities to be creative.

Referring to the subject, **Katrina Crosbie**, asserts that "The key to original and creative writing is to get in touch with subconscious mind" [1]. She gives extreme importance to dreams, considering that dreams have significant imaginative powers that can prompt lots of interesting ideas for producing creative works. Another technique that she strongly recommends as a means of improving students' creative writing abilities is to keep a writing journal. She advises students who encounter difficulties in finding ideas for their works to have a journal at hand and to write some brief narratives in it on a daily basis. They should not focus on style, mistakes, and in general, the way they write, they should just write down the first things that occur in their mind. "The main idea is to keep the hand moving and to feel a growing sense of inspiration and confidence", states **Katrina**

Crosbie [1]. In the course of time, students will become proficient in writing and more than this, they will find their journal notes a rich source of inspiration and ideas.

On the other hand, **Sternberg R. J.** claims that “One of the best ways of enhancing creativity is to seek stimulating environments” [4]. He thinks teachers should allow students to pick their own topics for writing, to choose their own ways of solving and sometimes to decide again if they discover that their choice was a mistake. When students write about a topic they really love and which suits their true interests, they are not afraid to reveal their hidden thoughts and feelings and demonstrate their special talent. Giving students latitude in making choices, teachers help them develop taste and good judgment, both being essential elements for creativity.

Another means of enhancing creative skills suggested by **Sternberg R. J.** is to encourage idea generation. Students may understand that some ideas are better, and others are worse, but teachers should not be critical, on the contrary, they should praise students for producing ideas, even if some of them are not so related to the topic.

Psychologists and educators firmly believe that creative writing brings many benefits to students. The survey of different theoretical sources on creative writing showed that, first of all, it is a perfect means of developing imagination, offering students the possibility to be innovative, develop new ideas and see a situation in a fresh and original way.

Second, creative writing contributes to the enrichment of students' vocabulary and to the development of their artistic expression. As we know, while working creatively, students combine the most sensitive images and describe them through a wide variety of stylistic devices.

Third, creative writing fosters the development of critical thinking skills, which in consequence, encourages students to explore and face social reality. While writing creatively, students do not simply put down on paper the ideas that come first to their minds. First, they reflect upon the ideas they have, then analyze and compare them, and finally make decisions about the content of their paper in order to produce a meaningful text. As a result, while writing creatively, students learn to think critically about a topic, using their imagination and reasoning at the same time [2].

Apart from producing gains in the academic context, creative writing contributes to the development of learners' personal qualities. It was discovered that creative writing fosters independence, self-reliance and self-worth. Through creative and writing, students acquire the habit of self-reflection, self-expression and develop a greater sense of self-responsibility.

All in all, we can conclude that writing and especially creative writing is the best way to communicate successfully ideas, feelings and thoughts, allowing less room for errors and much more room for meditation. By writing creatively on a regular basis, students can define their language and communicative competence, acquiring an increasing ability of

expressiveness in a wide variety of spoken and written settings. Last, but not the least, creative writing gives students a sense of ownership, making them comfortable with their words on paper and increasing their self-confidence in communicating ideas.

Therefore, teachers who want their students to be competent in using the target language should necessarily have them write more, and not simply write, but write creatively. Practice makes them better writers, better thinkers and more important, better learners.

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