

CREATIVE LEARNING

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Plenty of researches tell us that creative approach to learning improves results. If students have an awareness of how they learn and an interest in the learning process, they take more care and control of their work. It gives them a sense of ownership over their work; it becomes personal.

And we all know that as soon as you care about something personally, you focus better on it and perform better as a result. In terms of student learning, they call it improving their learning performance: their focus, energy, enthusiasm, comprehension and academic results.

The article is designed to provide practical ideas for getting creative learning and teaching techniques right in both the classroom environment and in the whole school environment.

You are creative. No excuses, it's official. Creativity is something we all have; we now know that it is a skill that can be learned. It is not simply a gift given to the Mozarts and Einsteins of the world. You might not be as in touch with it as you once were as a child. You might never have had nurtured in you the creative touch that others seem to have. Or maybe you know there's a creative genius in you that is itching to be let free in the classroom. But take a moment to consider just how creative you and all those people around you actually are.

Think about it - surely a single parent is creative? Managing to cope when one person is doing what two people would normally do. What about your pupils when they go skateboarding or when they're getting excited about things that have happened to them? Surely they've connected with their right brains? What about when you need to work out the solution to a problem?

Do you just sit and stress or do you think around the problem to find your solution? What about when you teach? It takes a certain amount of creativity to stand up in front of a class, hold students' attention and deliver a lesson. No matter how much more creativity you want to inject into your lessons, you should give yourself

some credit here and appreciate what a good job you already do. How many people have told you that they couldn't do what you do? They have the greatest respect for your profession/relentless optimism/bravery and it is down to a certain amount of creativity and perseverance that you have already realized and they have yet to.

Tapping into natural creativity and harnessing it is an excellent way to solve the problems of our twentyfirst- century lives. Now more so than ever because our world today is full of uncertainties - just think of terrorism, increasing awareness about child behavioural issues and the possibilities of technology - all of it makes life in the Western world at once more exciting and scary.

This is a fundamental reason behind the modern ethic that suggests that students today must learn how to learn.

If they do so, the theory suggests that students in their adult lives will be better placed to handle the twenty first century's advances and regressions with a creative independence. It is clear that people today no longer learn a trade at school or university and gain a job for life in that field. Everything is constantly evolving, and individuals need to evolve at the same time in order to keep up. Creativity is the key to successful independent learning, and it is through creative teaching that students will best get a feel for creative learning. Creative teaching can have many benefits, but it's not just a case of making students' learning experience more fun, about 'edutainment'. You can do a great deal to make your students' future much brighter by empowering them to know how they learn, and how to learn independently.

Of course, it is not always easy to feel like being creative in the classroom. You might feel tired instead; you've just gone through a pile of marking.

Knowing how to learn can unlock all sorts of possibilities in students. If they learn the study skills of how the brain processes information, how they can participate more actively in the learning process, what their preferred learning styles are, and how to revise effectively, then they can be empowered to take more interest in and responsibility for their work and there can be real improvement in students' learning performance. We've already touched on a bit about the reticular activating

system (RAS) and the right (creative) and left (logical) parts of the brain. But how does the brain actually learn?

This is important in creative teaching on two counts: for your own English learning and to develop your students' English learning. Schools that aim to develop their students' emotional and social awareness will focus, among other things, on enabling students to recognize their emotional states, developing empathy by identifying non-verbal clues as to how someone feels, managing stress, understanding what motivates and demotivates them, improving listening skills and learning and applying conflict resolution strategies.

Literature:

David Starbuck. Creative Teaching. 2006. P. 144