

Creativity in the English Language Classroom

edited by Alan Maley and Nik Peachey

British Council 2015

978-0-86355-767-5

So, what is creativity? Well, I think it would be fair to say that it has become somewhat of a buzzword in ELT, as the tendency to move away from dependency on methodologies has become increasingly popular and teachers strive to become innovative in their teaching practice. For some, creativity comes naturally, but for many, being imaginative and coming up with original ideas can be extremely difficult. The great thing about creativity, however, is that it has no boundaries and is appropriate for all teaching contexts, learner styles, ages and levels.

Creativity in the English Language Classroom is a kaleidoscopic collection of practical ideas and articles about creativity in ELT, edited by Alan Maley and Nik Peachey. The book is comprised of 18 chapters, each written by a different author: some experienced professionals and others new to the field. A variety of global teaching contexts are represented which encapsulate a range of ages and levels, and low-resourced learning environments are also included.

Each chapter has the same structure:

- It begins with an introduction by the author to their interpretation of creativity and the focus this manifests in their teaching practice.
- The author gives case study examples of tried and tested personal experiences and a selection of suggestions and activities to try out in the classroom.
- A short conclusion is provided, together with references.

The book provides a plethora of practical ideas for how to become creative teachers by exploring ideas and generating opportunities to extract creativity from our learners. The focus of the chapters changes throughout, but the

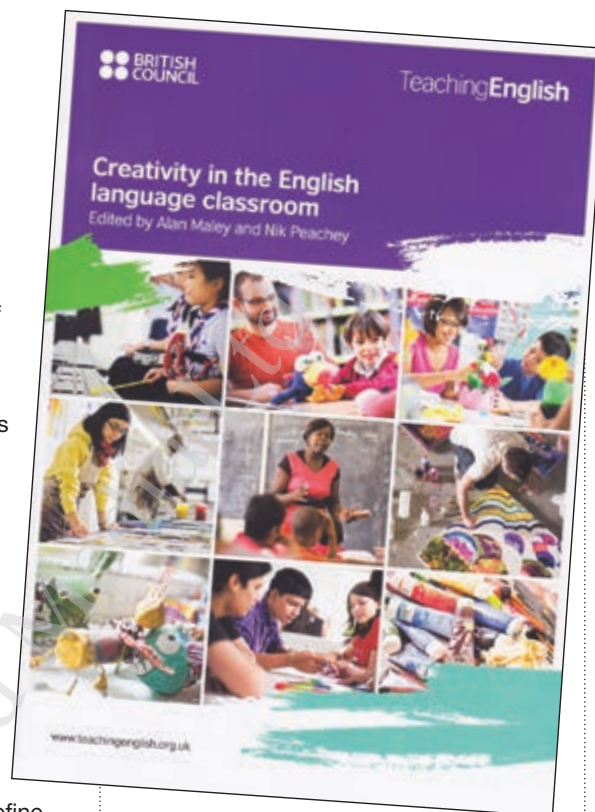
objective is always the same: to encourage creativity amongst teachers and learners.

Some examples of the topics covered in the chapters are:

- Oral creativity, including storytelling and improvisations.
- Written creativity, in the shape of drama and creative writing.
- Project-based learning, which includes model-building activities for children, and problem solving.
- Suggestions for using 'the learner as the creativity resource', providing a range of activities that derive from cooperative learning by harnessing the social skills required to realise activities.
- 'A framework for learning creativity' which sets out to 'redefine what it means to be creative', by breaking down what creativity consists of, and outlines ways to exploit it in teaching and learning.
- The ongoing educational technology debate, and whether it 'is killing or boosting the creativity of our students'; this is written from the perspective of a low-resource context where there is no access to technology, so the author creates a blended tool from drama and creative writing.
- New concepts such as 'Visible thinking'.
- Big 'C' and little 'c' creativity.
- Seven pillars of creativity in primary ELT.

There is something to cater for all learners and to motivate all teachers to experiment with. There are plenty of practical examples of possible modifications of coursebook activities, and there is even a chapter on teaching grammar creatively. Despite the paradox, the authors argue that '*creativity thrives on constraints*'.

If I were asked to define creativity, I would probably say thinking outside the box, flexibility in the classroom and



imagination. After reading *Creativity in the English Language Classroom*, however, I would have to say that *inspiration* is the key word. This book is an inspiration to break the rules, to have fun and to experiment and explore with your *teaching* and your students' *learning*.

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A free download of this book is available at
<http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/books-resource-packs/creativity-english-language-classroom>

Write to be Read!

by Tim Richardson

Meon Valley Press 2015

978-1-51146-568-7

This is a book which addresses the need of everyone – from college students to professionals in any field whatsoever – to be able to write coherent English prose, whether that be an email, a blog, a press release, a company brochure or any other text that someone else is expected to read. The focus is on communicating a