

# Creative Thinking: Negative Attitudes that Block Creativity in Class

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this article is to show the importance of creative thinking and to bring into attention the negative attitudes that block creativity. Some creative ideas are great, brilliant, while others are just plain, good, and practical. Everyone has creative abilities. However, just as often, teachers and parents think that being creative has to do with the ability to write a poem or an inspired composition. If we consider creativity as a gift that we are born with, we justify ourselves and think there is little to be done to develop it. However, the ability to create is much broader. Teachers should provide all the necessary tools and create an atmosphere where creativity is build and developed.*

**Keywords:** creative thinking, negative attitudes, abilities, atmosphere, gift

## 1. Introduction

What is creative thinking? We often talk about creative thinking and its development in school. What is creative thinking? A simple definition is that creative thinking is the ability to imagine or invent something new. *"Creativity is not the ability to create from nothing, but the ability to produce new ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas."*

Most scientific research in this area suggests that we all have the ability to think deductively and creatively and that these two thinking processes are clearly distinguished between them. They are differently described as vertical and lateral thinking. In everyday life, we use vertical thinking almost automatically. Nevertheless, to create and give ideas we use lateral thinking. Since we usually follow the same defined line of thought, we become clumsy in our thoughts. Lateral thinking means making new connections not made by us before.

*"In the psychological and social literature the ability to create is defined as the ability to do something new, to invent, to put the elements in such a way that they have never been placed before in order to add value and beauty to them. It is also the ability to overcome old ways of dealing with problems with more useful and effective models. It is about originality, the ability to adapt and to fulfill."*

According to Santrock *"The ability to create is the ability to think about something in a new and unusual way as well as to come up with unique solutions to problems."* Creative people do more than just break old patterns. They do more than finding alternatives. They take from popular models and bring new solutions. They break the laws to rewrite them. They make difficult decisions about what to include and what to eliminate. Creative people are innovative. They aim towards the cloud. This can be seen in many directions.

## 2. Objectives

- To highlight the importance of being creative nowadays in class and in life.

- To help students think creatively.
- To help students apply their knowledge and skills inside and outside the class.

### The importance of being creative

Today life requires creative people, capable of finding better solutions to life problems in order to live together in a complex world that is changing rapidly. Therefore, students need to be able to create hypotheses about their lives as well as discover and study their emotions and human relationships. School or qualifications obtained from an individual are not sufficient for life. Students of all ages are talented and creative. We need to give them the opportunity to develop their creative potential, to synthesize and apply their knowledge and skills by creating an invention, or a new idea to solve a problem, as a "real inventor would do." Encouraging creative thinking is done in the classroom and in the family. The teacher plays the main role. Acquisition of high level teaching knowledge is one of the goals of education and very necessary, but it should not be turned into a goal in itself and the ultimate goal of education. They should become a strong basis for the development of creative thinking that is related to critical thinking as well as students' creative abilities. Nevertheless, in the times we live in, when developments are so frequent and unpredictable, it is imperative to educate students in the skills of critical thinking, the ability to analyze arguments and make logical decisions, and the skills of creative thinking. Much needed in order to develop lifestyle alternatives and make the right decision.

### Creative students

Highly creative students have some distinguishable characteristics such as: the ability to make connections and associations between seemingly unrelated and very distant ideas. They have the ability to reorganize parts of thought and create new thoughts. They have problem-solving skills, vivid fantasies. Creative students are interested in improving existing thoughts and outcomes, have a keen and unusual sense of humor, ask lots of questions and have a lot of curiosity. It is very common for them to challenge teachers

and come up with strange and unexpected answers. These qualities can be developed in class by teachers.

### Creative methods

There are many methods to produce creative results. Different teachers choose different methods. Below are listed some of the methods that I personally find the most interesting:

#### Development

This is a systematic improvement method. New ideas flow from previous ideas, new solutions from the previous ones, so the new improves on the old. Many of today's sophisticated things have been achieved through a systematic development. For example, if we refer to technological products, in each new model improvements have been made, each new model is built based on the previous model. So creativity here lies in systematic improvements rather than in something very new. "This method reminds us of the critical rule, any problem that has been solved can be re-solved in a better way. *"The philosophy of a creative person is not, if it is broken, do not fix it, but it is, there is nothing better than a small improvement."*

#### Synthetic side

With this method, two or more existing ideas are combined into a third. For example, the combination of a magazine and a CD gives the idea of a newspaper that you hear that can be useful for the blind people.

#### Revolution

Sometimes the best idea is totally another different one. For example, if a teacher were to ask, "How do I make the best lesson?" a revolutionary idea could be "why not stop teaching and let students learn each other working as a team?"

#### Reapplication

To look at something old in a new way. Looking beyond labels. Find out how something can be reapplied. A creative person should be able to create even from small and insignificant things. "The key is to look beyond what it is, to look for ideas, solutions."

#### To change direction

Many creative achievements occur when attention shifts from one side of the problem to another. This is called creative interior side.

A classic example is: *"The Department of Roads set up a fence to prevent children from skateboarding on that part of the road, but the children went again. Then they built a stronger fence and the kids pop a hole and got in. Then they posted a threatening note to keep the children away but neither of them worked. Finally, someone said to change direction and someone asked what the problem really was. The problem was that the kids wanted to skate board exactly on that part of the road. So how could they prevent this? The solution was to pour cement to create the sharp corner so that the children could not play there. In this way the activity was stopped as it was impossible to carry out there."*

Therefore, what we understand from this example is that the goal is to solve the problem, not to implement a certain solution. When one solution does not work, find another. Defining a path can sometimes be a problem only for those who do not understand it; they are connected a lot to a path that does not work. Therefore, it has nothing to do with a particular path but with a specific purpose.

#### Negative attitudes that block creativity

The reaction to a problem is often greater than the problem itself. Many people avoid problems or deny them until it is too late. A problem is an opportunity. Happy people often welcome them and even look for them as challenges to make things better.

*"A problem is: (1) making a difference between what you have and what you want, (2) to believe that there is always something better than the actual situation, or (3) an opportunity for a positive act. Searching for problems increases confidence, happiness, and gives us better control over life."*

#### This thing cannot be done

We often hear that from students. This attitude is to surrender before the battle. By thinking this way, people give power to a problem. Teachers should be there to encourage and teach students how to believe in themselves. If we were all 'skeptics': people would never fly, diseases would never be fought.

#### I cannot do it

*"Some people think that maybe the problems are solved by some experts but not by us because we are not very smart, or we are not specialized of that field"*. People in the relevant fields have not made the greatest discoveries. Therefore, we must always know that we can do something even if it is to improve the situation.

#### The fear of being ridiculous

Even when we find the courage to do something creative, we are withdrawn from the fact that we might look ridiculous. We do not shift our attention in the results but instead focus on the difficulties of this process.

#### Prejudices

A major barrier to critical thinking is prejudice. We all have prejudices because we have different ideas about what is true, false, wrong, and right. Our prejudices relate to patriotism, race, gender, class, and the way we think. Being a critical thinker does not mean that you have no thoughts, but it does mean that you are resilient to ideas and can change your mind. We foreign language teachers must always be aware of the data, information, and evidence to answer prejudices. There is an essential rule: when ideas are thrown in, critical comments are not allowed. All ideas are written. We must be analytical, practical. There is a social pressure to be ordinary and not creative. Here is one example: A creative person says, *"I like to add water to orange juice to make it less sweet."* The average person says, *"You're weird, you know?"*

What this example show is that we always think about what others will say. If we do not leave aside prejudices, we cannot move forward.

### **Fear of failure**

Students, people, colleagues, relatives that because of fear of failure they instead quit rather than try something new, surround us. *"Fear or failure is one of the main obstacles to creativity and problem solving. The cure is to change your attitude about failure. Failures are simply tools that teach us and help us on the path to success".*

If we shift our attention from failure to what we really learn from each situation we will see that in the end there are more things that we have learned rather what we have not.

This is what we should try with our students, encouraging them to try new things, ideas because only in this way things are improved.

### **3. Conclusion**

As a conclusion, we can say that we have a lot to do to teach, encourage and develop students' creative thinking and creative skills. The role of the teacher in developing creative thinking is to equip students with these skills. They are not skills in the hands of the teacher and he just gives them to students. The teacher advises and helps students make decisions, gives them work habits and skills to enable them to explore and develop creative thinking. To achieve the above goals for the development of critical and creative thinking skills, teaching methods and tools related to these goals should be reviewed. The role of the teacher is in defining and developing teaching activities, tasks and lessons that include aspects of creative thinking in the subjects they teach. This should be done in such a way that they rely on the skills, interests and experiences of the students themselves as well as on their previous knowledge. Creativity is an infinite phenomenon and a person can be creative in an infinite number of ways.

However, what we can do as teachers is to work on negative attitudes that block creativity. We should provide a comfortable environment where students can feel free and be creative.

Their creativity is not only important in class but it is a skill that is going to be useful in their lifetime. As we said before, nowadays world need creative people to face the challenges of the changing world.

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