Выступление на международной научно-практической конференции

«Югра, Сибирь, Россия: политические, экономические социокультурные аспекты прошлого и настоящего».

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**Teaching for development and creativity while working at reading skills**

*“The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change”, Victor Hugo*

With the introduction of Federal government educational standards (ФГОС II), Russian education is now facing the biggest challenge it has ever faced. The priority goal of our society and education system is to develop young people’s abilities basing on their mastering the ways of mental activities. And the result of education is “measured” by the students’ experience in acquiring the ways of gaining knowledge. So the task for the teachers is to turn the process of *learning* into the process of acquiring the ways of *discovering* knowledge, only this way we can teach our students think differently and be innovative.

The question is: “How to make teaching developing and creative? What technology can be useful?”

What is development? It is “the act or process of growing or causing something to grow or become larger or more advanced”. (6) We can teach students self-developing, self-improving by means of conscious and active acquisition of new social experience.

To start with, due to Benjamin Bloom’s Taxonomy, technology of developing critical thinking, we, at least, have knowledge and a tool of how to make the teaching process developing. As for creativity, it still remains a bit vague. We have some technics but still no technology. So what is creativity, and what to observe when organizing a creative process? Is there a joining these two aspects point?

What is creativity? Sir Ken Robinson, an internationally recognized leader in the development of creativity, innovation, and human resources, defines creativity as “The process of having original ideas that have values”. (5) So it is a *process*, not an event, *originalideas* imply imagination and inspiration, *valued* means useful. So creativity is what we plan, make it happen, putting our imagination to work.

According to, wiki’s definition “creativity is an intellectual process of human activity that creates a new product.” (6) “*To be creative means finding a special look at ordinary things and everyday tasks”*. (5) So, we see that the joining point of teaching for development and creativity is the ***process*** concept.

What to observe or assess when organizing a creative learning process? There is a wonderful CLA -creative learning assessment developed by our American scholars with the help of which we can “view children’s learning through a different lens: **‘the doing’**- listening to them as it happens, and the product**- ‘the done’**.”(1)

1. confidence, independence, enjoyment: developing pleasure and enjoyment, emotional involvement, self-motivation;

2. collaboration and communication: works effectively in a team, contributes to discussion, makes suggestions, listens and responds to others , overcomes problems, communicates and presents ideas;

3. creativity: is imaginative and playful, generates ideas, questions and makes connections, risk-takes and experiments;

4. strategies and skills: plans and develops a project, demonstrates a growing range of artistic/creative skills, uses appropriate subject specific skills with increasing control;

5. knowledge and understanding: uses subject specific knowledge and language with understanding;

6. reflection and evaluation: responds to and comments on own and others’ work, analyses and constructively criticizes work, reviews and evaluates own progress. (1)

The framework gives me the idea what to aim at. The scale has made me more aware of planning time for reflection, evaluation and commenting on others’ work. It is a tool to answer the questions: ‘In what ways are children able to take risks and experiment in their learning?’, ‘Do they generate ideas, questions and make connections?’, ‘Are there examples of responding to and commenting on their own and other people’s work?’

The main blockages that keep our Russian students’ creative ideas from fully developing, to my mind, are the following:

* ***traditional position of a recipient***,
* teachers’ control and negativism,
* pressure and ***imposing teachers’way*** of thinking and perception,
* students’ fear of failure and ridicule (especially those who are academically successful),
* lack of commitment,
* laziness,
* ***no*** team work.

What ‘ingredients’ make a good lesson?

And the students’ answers were the following:

* When teachers feel positive about us and what we can achieve.
* Where we get a sense of achievement.
* Where we have fun.
* Where we can talk our ideas through.
* Where we can feel safe to try things out and get them wrong.
* Where we get a variety of things to do.
* Where we do most of the work – rather than the teacher talking all the time.
* When we know what we should be doing and it links up to what we should be learning.

So, when giving a task, students should know what they are doing it for, what skills they will acquire, what are the objectives and outcomes. E.g. by doing the task: “identify at least 2 strengths in our essay and to make up at least 2 improvements that need to be made”, the students should know that they experience personal growth, development, independence. By doing the task: “interpret the text using a table”, they acquiring new skills of reconstructing wording into tables. By doing the task of exploring the arguments for and against, the students explore attitudes.

Moreover, if we want learners to get better, they need to be the ones doing the heavy lifting. This means that the less you do while they are working, the better. By the time the task starts, you need to move around and get a sense of whether they have got started in the right way. “This should be done through observation, not though enquiry, as enquiry distracts learners from their partners and the task at hand, and focuses them on you”. (4) Furthermore, it should be kept in our mind that “a task without post-task feedback is like a day without sunshine”. (4)

So, what should we do to stimulate students’ creativity? Undoubtedly:

* provide a supportive atmosphere, that is the right climate for the hidden “seeds”;
* develop goodwill on the part of the teacher and reject any criticism of the child;
* encourage for original ideas and statements ;it's perfectly appropriate to say, "We're interested in new and original ways you can approach these issues."
* provide opportunities for practice through organizing different activities;
* use a ***personal example*** of the creative approach to teaching;
* give children the opportunity to *ask* questions actively. “Thinking is driven by questions, not answers” (Richard Paul , Foundation for Critical Thinking);
* accept “collaboration, diversity, the exchange of ideas, and building on other people's achievements ***as the heart*** of the creative process”. (5)

There are different techniques and technologies that meet these needs and help solve these problems and one of them which is a relevantly new one is Active Methods of Teaching Technology. It is designed to encourage students, as well as their teachers, to think creatively, to experiment, to innovate and it doesn’t aim to give students all the answers but gives them the tools they need to find out what the answers might be.The “Active Methods of TeachingTechnology” is developed by T. Lasarev and I. Arefieva.

There are two basic technology components: 1. Structure. 2. Contents

**The structure**of the whole educational event, in accordance with the technology, is logically divided into 3 phases or stages, and related steps:

1 STAGE. The Start, with 3 steps:

1. Initiation (greeting, introduction)
2. Immersion into the subject (the definition of lesson objectives).
3. Defining students’ expectations (planning personal meaning of the lesson and the formation of a safe learning environment)

2 STAGE. Working on the topic, with 3 steps:

1. Consolidation of learned material (discussing homework)
2. Interactive lecture (explanation of new information)
3. Contents study (group work on the topic of the lesson)

 3STAGE. Completion of educational activities, with 2 steps:

1. Emotional discharge (warming-up)
2. Summary (reflection, analysis and evaluation of the lesson)

**The Contents,** according to the technology, represent an ordered set of active teaching methods (АМО- активные методы обучения) stimulating students’ activity and diversity of thought and practice throughout the educational event. Each stage is a full section of educational activities determined by the theme and the objectives of the lesson.

**Principles of AMT technology** (АМО технология- технология активных методов обучения) - practical orientation, play action, the creative nature of learning in a variety of interactive communication: dialogue and polylogue, the use of learners’ knowledge and experience, the team form of work,mental activity approach to learning, movement, reflection and self-assessment, all senses involvement.

*Developing reading skills workshop model*

**Team division can be done in different ways:** making up a sentence, according to a type of the question the main idea is that the contents is based on the material to be studied.The team work has lots of advantages, students learn socializing and experience working in different social groups, it raises stimuli of learning together, and at the same time for some students it is a chance of revealing their cognitive abilities, for others is a chance of learning to be helpful.

**1st STAGE. The Start: with 3 steps:**

1. **Initiation:** greeting/introduction.

The АМT method, which I call “Life-River”, as we are different the way the river is: “you can’t enter the same river twice”, e.g. “I’m a very *curious* person today as I enjoy reading”. The students have to describe themselves what they are like at the lesson choosing appropriate adjectives.

“The dearest WORD”- your NAME: it can be adjectives to the letters of the name, or a story “how the letters met to name the girl/boy”. It can be a home task; still it stimulates children and teaches them to be creative and initiative, as it is an additional task.The teacher should always appreciate initiative.

1. **Immersion into the subject** (the definition of lesson objectives).

The АМT method is “Starry sky”. “3Qs” or 6Qs”: the students define what they want to explore, research, investigate by asking questions on the theme of the lesson using Bloom’s taxonomy of thinking levels.

**Defining students’ expectations.** (planning personal meaning of the lesson and the formation of a safe learning environment).

Removing fear АМT method is “Step by Step”.The students put down their “fears” on shits of paper anonymously; we mix them up, and then in groups discuss how to overcome the difficulty. Sometimes it is left till the module has been studied, in the end we analyze whether the fear has been removed and which way. A simpler and less time consuming is method “I shouldn’t”, when students say what each of them personally shouldn’t be or shouldn’t do at the lesson to be able to achieve the goals they want.

The first stage helps me and my students be different at every lesson and turn traditional ‘warming ups’ into creative activities and at the same time a revision of any grammar item.

Working in teams stimulates and motivates students to be initiative, sociable, supportive and responsible for the whole learning process at the same time playful, emotionally safe and enjoyable.

**2 STAGE. Contents study: with 2 steps:**

**1. Interactive lecture-INPUT (explanation of new information).** READING. State Exam Test 1, 3 level, “Abseiling”.

2.1.1 First, to understand the taxonomy, I asked the students to work in pairs and think about where each task would most likely be performed in Bloom’s Taxonomy: judge, label, complete, examine, imagine, translate, design, prioritize, illustrate, categorize, predict, match. (2)

2.1.2. Ask students if they can remember any short stories they have read in their own language. Do they like short stories? Why/why not? Do they have a favorite short story?

2.1.3. Ask students to raise their yellow, green or red card according to what they think about the statement and give reasons for their opinion. Anticipation Pre-Reading АМT method is “FACT / OPINION / NOT SURE” statements. The students’ task is to acquire the way of making arguments justifying their choice.

e.g. 1. It’s cold/sunny/raining today (note: start with something that most people would say is FACT); 2. Birthdays are always exciting; 3. A birthday cake is delicious; 4. People get disappointed if they don’t get presents; 5.Abseiling is dangerous; 6.men are better than women at abseiling; 7. Women are more careful than men; 8. Abseiling is spelled a-b-s-e-i-l-i-n-g; 9. Rock climbing is more popular than abseiling; 10. All extreme sports should be banned; 11. Risk is wonderful; 12.A sense of achievement builds character.

2.1.4. Tell students that they are going to read an extract of the story. Ask them to read the list of the people in the story. What type of story do they think it will be? Where is it set? What do you think it will be about?

* + 1. Ask students what they know about abseiling, where abseiling is widely spread. Has anyone tried it yet?
		2. Show them pictures of new vocabulary: a harness, a helmet, a rope, abseiling, rock climbing, introduces the following key items of vocabulary: steep, hide, to put at ease, admit, edge, waist, to thread. Ask the students to do matching.

**2.Contents study (team work)**

**Initial Reading**

2.2.1.Ask students to read the text ask the questions using two levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy of six kinds of questions:

***Remembering*:** How old did Anna turn to be? Why was she disappointed when her Uncle Alan turned up at her birthday party? What did he suggest doing? What was the present? What did Anna know about abseiling? What equipment did she use? Which way did she do abseiling?

***Understanding*:** Tell me in your own words what you should do when going abseiling. What does it mean: “She put me completely at ease”.Find 6 facts describing Anna’s character. Describe Anna’s feeling. What is the main idea of the story?

* + 1. Multiple Choice Test. Choose the right answers to the tasks A14-A20. Justify your answer giving the statements from the text.

**Rereading**

* + 1. Ask students to reread the text to answer the questions. Use two other levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy of six kinds of questions:

***Application****:* What would you do if you were invited to go abseiling? Would you have done the same as Anna? If you were there, would you scream with fear? How would you solve the problem of coping with the fear? Find information about abseiling and write a short paragraph describing abseiling activity.

***Analysis:*** What things would you have used to do abseiling? In what way rock climbing and abseiling are similar /different? What things could have happened? What kind of person is Anna? Uncle Alan? What caused Uncle Alan to give Anna such an unusual present?

**After reading work**

* + 1. Ask the students to do evaluating and creating tasks.

***Evaluation:*** Would you recommend reading the story? Why? Why not? Select the best passage of the story. Why is it the best? What do you think will happen to Anna then? Why do you think that? Rank the events in order of importance. Which character would you most like to meet? Why? Was the present good or bad? Why? Did you like the story? Why? What do you think the message of the story is?

***Creation:*** What would it be like if Anna failed to do the attempt? Pretend you are Anna, what would have happened to you? Would you have tried it? Why/why not? Tell/write a different ending.How does the story make you feel? Working in groups make up “Cinquains.” “Put on” six de Bono’s thinking hats express feelings about the story making up 3-5 sentences or questions.

**3 STAGE. Completion of educational activities, with 2 steps:**

**1. Emotional discharge (relaxing)**

**2. Summary** (self-reflection, analysis and evaluation of the lesson). AMO “How/Why”. Students speculate on: “I have achieved my goals. How? I haven’t achieved my goals. WHY?”

New conditions of the development of our society indicate that the ability to detect, classify, observe and describe, evaluate, distinguish knowledge from skills, draw conclusions from analysis of the activities, etc. are becoming more and more relevant. And we – the teachers, in turn, are aware that we need to restructure educational environment and use such educational technologies that base on students’ experience and develop these competencies.

**Teaching for creativity tasks:** here are our top ideas for taking ANY text and using it in class with the least amount of preparation time on your part. Enjoy!

Expand. Reduce. Reconstruct. Match. Transform. Deduce. Quiz. Word partnerships. Reactions. Character guessing. Make a time-line of events. Cinquain. Talk about the text: “I was reading this (story) the other day and it was really interesting. What it said was…”“Putting on” six de Bono’s thinking hats. Comment on the favorite passage. News reporter’s broadcast of the story. Make a jeopardy game about the story. Compare two characters. Write a story for others to guess. Write a sequel to the story. If you could be in this story, decide which person you would be and tell why. Prepare a commercial to sell this book. Write the author telling him your opinion about the book and why.

It may be worthwhile to put these activities on cards and let students select which activity they will do. Track these throughout the year to ensure that students have had a chance to complete at least 10 of the 20 suggestions on the various books they read.

Ultimately, “it is not we, who define thinking; it is thinking that defines us”. In order to be able to act in a rapidly changing world successfully, students should learn “sifting” information and make their own determination of what is and what is not important today. Students must learn not only to evaluate the information critically, thus, reasonably and efficiently, but most importantly, learn its management.

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