

Creative Approach to Language Teaching: Theory and Practice

This paper presents a newly developed method, a Creative Approach to Language Teaching (CALT), with the aim to offer a practice-oriented insight into the approach and into corresponding shifts in roles of teachers and learners in the academic environment.

A fusion of creativity-related theories - organic system curriculum change (K. Robinson), system models (M. Csikszentmihalyi), lateral thinking (E. de Bono), divergent thinking (J.P. Guilford), community of practice (Lave, J. and Wenger, E.) and holistic approach to experiential programme development (Krouwel, B.) - was applied in the action research method in nine different courses in English, Czech, Spanish and French in the 2009-2013 period. Course syllabi, activities, students' work and feedback were analysed and compared to non-CALT courses. Our findings indicate that teachers using CALT prefer adopting roles of language facilitators, guides and advisers to maintaining traditional hierarchically justified authoritative positions. They tend to share negotiated responsibilities with the rest of the learning community-of-practice and create a more flexible and dynamic learning environment. Students exposed to CALT, on the other hand, usually become natural co-authors and actively engaged creators of learning activities.

Results of this pedagogical practice confirm that Creative Approach to Language Teaching enriches personal teaching styles, fosters autonomous learning and encourages flexibility of language courses across disciplines and languages. There, however, continues to be a need for research regarding its effectiveness potential and optimum balance between CALT and non-CALT methodologies.