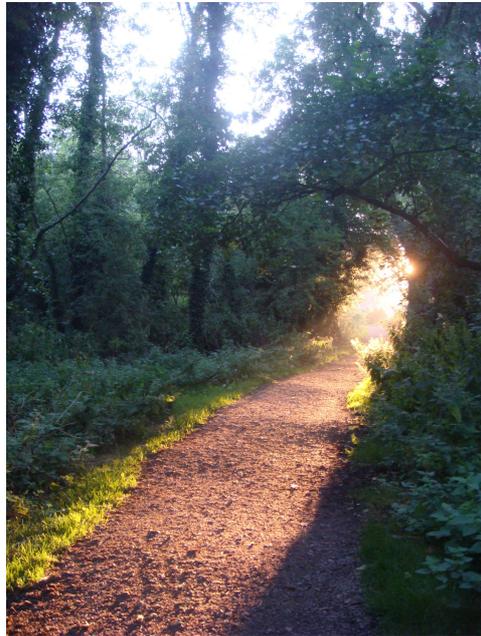


Teaching Creatively

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Chapter one

It's a great honor and a precious chance to join in the two-week course in Cambridge Homerton College. One of the main purposes of this course is to enhance teachers' teaching efficiency. Hopefully our students would benefit from teachers' learning. Moreover, teachers could always learn and share more and more from each other's experience. There were practical classes and many exciting workshops in the course. Progress is what we've been looking for. It's a fantastic opportunity to know more about English teaching in an excellent British English environment and to experience so much in different Culture.

This report is based on the workshop I've attended on August 23 this summer. The subject I'm mostly interested in is the "Creativity for Teachers" by Chaz Pugliese. I would particularly like to share the part "teaching creatively" and what I've experienced in the process.

Chapter Two

There are three parts I would like to share from the "Creativity for Teachers" workshop: **Creativity, Flow and Spark.**

Teaching English in New Taipei City is such an environment with diversities. Teachers are with different learning background. Students also have huge difference, such as different

levels of learning motivation, learning abilities, learning styles, different environment...etc. How could we English teachers work passionately and inspire students continually? How could students keep on learning and how could they achieve higher as we expect? The idea of creativity might solve some of those problems.



Creativity in teaching is the derivation and application from the Multiple-intelligence theory. Here are some briefs from Chaz's talk.

1. There's a small **c type** which happens every day. In this type, students' motivation would cause students' higher results. Students' higher results would cause more motivation. Then more creativity would come out every day and then recycle to the beginning: students are motivated.

2. There are four assumptions about creativities:

- a. **Creativity is not genetic.** It's in each of us.
- b. **Creativity can be developed.** We can have it more and more.
- c. **Everyone is potentially creative.**
- d. **Creativity is a must for teachers.** Teachers need to attract students' attention. Or they are not ready to learn.

It's always a big question to get students' attention and to keep them maintain their attention on their learning. There are four factors to gain students' attention: novelty, meaningful, emotion, perceive the needs.

A strategy I experienced in the class: **simplicity**. Less teaching aids, more people. Simplicity tells us teachers to design exercises by using students as our primary resource. Focus more on students. There are some more strategies mentioned in this book "Being Creative" written by Chaz Pugliese. They are **combinational creativity**, **the ability to play**, and **risk taking**.

The second part I'd like to share is "**Flow**". Get our students in the state of flow. If they are in the flow, they are ready to learn.

Flow is a theory developed by a Hungarian psychologist Csíkszentmihályi. It described that people are most happy when they are in a state of flow. 'It is a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter' (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990). It is a mental state while we're doing something, we totally forget anything else. It says while we are totally immersed in what we're doing, we would completely forget everything around us, concentrating ourselves all on what we're doing. So let's give our students a chance to focus, to flow.



If you run through the field, jog across the gate, you might be in the state of "flow".

The third part is "**Spark**" from John J. Ratey and Eric Hagerman. 'SPARK is a groundbreaking exploration of the connection between exercise and the brain's performance that shows how even moderate exercise will supercharge mental circuits to beat stress, sharpen thinking, enhance memory, and much more.'⁽³⁾ There are immense clinical experiments and results between physical exercise, attention, learning, pressure... which are clearly stated in this book "Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain"

The results reform some of my thinking about physical exercise towards learning. Although many science terms are not easy to understand, the information is quite necessary for teachers to know.

One example in simple: with some proper physical exercise, students' brain will get more oxygen to a better metabolism while they're learning. Physical activities could be a medicine for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) students without side effect. Some adults also share their experience some certain working plan. Sports increase attention and improve mood.

With this information, I've been using some songs in the beginning of a class.

Chapter Three

Activities I learned from the class:

1. As and Bs: As start to talk in every sentence begins with as a teacher, I . Bs listen without interruption. Then Bs speak with the sentence: You are someone who

Variations: change the topic, the sentence patterns.

2. As and Bs: As say one, Bs say two, A says three...

Variation: whispering instead of saying, replacing one to a clapping, changing 123 to different three-word chunk, writing down how much they could remember. Say the words and do the action....

3. Relay between As and Bs: reading, speaking, singing, spelling, reciting words or sentences, writing, drawing.

Variation rules: from zero challenge to reconstruction a text, memorize all.

4. As try to catch Bs with other activities: chanting, echo reading between As and Bs.

5. Teacher tells a story and students say some certain words between teachers' sentences.

Variations: pre teach some words before the story. Then ask students to listen and do the action while they hear the words.

6. Give a topic and invite students' questions. Recheck questions to answer after the story.

Variation: Students retell the story to their partner. Relay to tell frequently by giving a signal.

7. As ask Bs same question repeatedly. Bs try to answer in different ways or different words to extend words learning.

8. Pair work: I'm good at....

Variation: Replace saying activities to acting. Activities into things they like: I like

9. Tapper and listener: As tap a song with their hands and sing the song in mind, Bs try to guess out the song. Exchange their roles.

Variation: changing tapping to knocking, replacing a song to an article or a sentence.

10. Using rubber band to teach word stress.

Variation: balloons.

11. Using marching to learn sentence.

Variations: Draw circles under each word in a sentence.

More activities worthy to share:

1. Auction: for sentences and words.
2. Follow a video to learn to do something: draw a cartoon face.
3. Put words or sentence in order.
4. Pizza making: speaking: Have you got ...on your pizza? Draw and chant. Find partner with same taste.
5. Information gap: find the differences.
6. Review puzzle: words of the week.
7. Use sound effects: Like traditional Taiwanese Puppet show.

Chapter Four

There are impacts in me during the stay in Cambridge. They are not only in English teaching but also in basic attitude.

1. "We take no responsibility for anything beyond our control."

Everyone knows how relaxing and comfortable it is in traditional England countryside. People could jog and walk their dogs freely. I saw a birthday party on a field in Sunday afternoon. There are also many public footpaths and tracks. On the mid way of one public footpath nearby, there's a sign to tell people that it might be dangerous. The basic idea is: it's your option to go or not. But they don't lock up the way unless it's private.

The same idea also works between teacher and students there. A teacher from British Council shares what happened while he was in England? If students won't hand in their homework, teachers won't spare their time to force them to do it.



2. The course there gives learners more choices to make, more space to fill in learner' time schedule. Learners decide what they really want. It takes time to learn to consider and arrange all these. I respect this. Learning to arrange one's learning is learning how to plan. On the first day I'm a little lost in the information on the bulletin board. While the classe starts, everything works peacefully. Learning is like a stream flows. I felt learning in Taiwan bustle more in noise and excitement.



3. Wooden spoon: In a competition, those who got the last place would get a wooden

spoon. On the spoon, it says “LOSER”

In the evening pop-quiz game, my team got the wooden spoon. What a special experience to get the “wooden spoon”! Before the game, we were told better not to stay with people from the same country in the group. Do it or not, they respect our choice. So it happened. People from more different countries could answer more questions. Here are the morals: Always take the old people’s advice. After a race, what do we teachers expect our students could learn from it? I learned to accept everyone, even the last.

Ways to think positively: 1. I didn’t win today. 2. Take the advice. 3. I’m not good at this. 4. Ask myself: what should I do now? Three brains are better than one. 5.

Cooperate learning.

There is immense gratitude to those who are involved in this plan. Thanks to them I have the chance to learn and share all these. Learning and sharing is such a beautiful experience, a life-long activity. Let’s enjoy ourselves in our class and our life.

References:

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3. <http://www.johnratey.com/newsite/index.html>