

In Search of Creativity

Alan Maley

Abstract Creativity is widely regarded as a valuable attribute. It is at the centre of learning. Sadly, it is rarely at the centre of education, where it is often suppressed by institutional constraints. The chapter has five sections: (1) What is Creativity? This comprises a review of attempts to define creativity. (2) Why is it valuable? Emphasis is placed on the survival and motivational value of creativity. (3) How can we foster it? This includes a discussion of how new ideas are generated. (4) Examples of creative activities. These include activities to promote linguistic, methodological and classroom creativity. (5) Challenges and constraints. This reviews issues such as the challenge of technology, institutional constraints and fear of change.

Keywords Creativity • Learning • Constraints • New ideas

1 Introduction

Creativity is widely regarded as a desirable and estimable quality in many domains, including the arts, literature, science, architecture, technology – and in finance and business. There is a firm belief that creativity is essential for our technological, economic, cultural and even personal survival (Robinson 2001).

There is, however, a tension, even a paradox, within the educational domain. Creativity is at the heart of learning. But it is rarely at the heart of education. Institutionalized education depends on control, measurement and conformity. Creativity (rather like its close relative, Critical Thinking) is anathema to systems based on control. However much they claim to be promoting creativity, institutions are dependent on a control paradigm, and thus resistant to anything which threatens that control.

There are essentially two main conceptions of education. One views education as a natural process which can be guided but not controlled. The function of the teacher

A. Maley (✉)
Independent Consultant, Writer and Lecturer, Kent, UK
e-mail: UK.yelamoo@yahoo.co.uk

in such a view is to act as a stimulus and support for learning. The other views education as an institutionalized process which can (indeed must) have predetermined outcomes. The function of the teacher in this view is to act as a technician ensuring that the “delivery systems” function. Eisner sees this as a factory and assembly-line metaphor of education:

Such an image of education requires that schools be organised to prescribe, control, and predict the consequences of their actions, that those consequences be immediate and empirically manifest and that they be measurable. (Eisner 1985, pp. 356–7)

Like education in general, the foreign language teaching field, on the whole, rates rather low on creativity. Teaching is, by its very nature, a conservative profession. The institutionalization of teaching into regular classroom hours encourages the development of relatively comfortable routines. Examinations further encourage conformity. And, in the present global economy, market forces tend to discourage publishers from taking creative risks. This is not to deny that ELT in particular saw some significant instances of creativity and innovation in the last quarter of the twentieth century, including the paradigm shift from structural-situational to communicative approaches. But creativity, though ostensibly desirable, is in practice widely discouraged.

One of the major benefits creativity can bring to language education, then, is to counter the currently prevailing, so-called “scientific”, approach to language learning, with its emphasis on objectives, detailed curricular prescription, predictable outcomes, testing and assessment, bureaucratic control, and the rest.

2 What Do We Mean by Creativity?

One of the problems with buzz-words such as “creativity” (“communicative”, “culture” and “identity” are similar in this respect) is that they acquire a large number of different meanings through widespread and often indiscriminate use. It is therefore worth attempting to winnow out the core components of the concept of creativity. What is clear from the literature is that creativity is not a simple, unitary concept: “...a clear and sufficiently detailed articulation of the creative process is not yet possible” (Amabile 1996, p. 33). Generally we are able to recognise creativity readily when we meet it but we are less able to describe it. For this reason, it perhaps makes better sense to adopt Wittgenstein’s idea of a “family resemblance”, where any given instance of a complex phenomenon may share some but not necessarily all of a cluster of characteristics (Wittgenstein 1958, pp. 31–2).

3 Some Features of Creativity

An analysis of some of the vast literature on creativity theory yielded the following ten semantic clusters, which help us get closer to a clearer definition of this elusive term.

1. **“Newness”**: original, innovative, novelty, unusual, surprising. When we call something creative, we recognize that something new has been brought into being. Yet all creative ideas owe a debt to what has gone before. It is their ability to use the past to frame the present in a new light which characterizes creativity. We also need to distinguish between mere novelty and true creativity (see 9 below).
2. **“Immediacy”**: sudden, flash, illumination, spontaneous. This is sometimes described as the “Eureka” moment. Many creative geniuses report that their insights came to them in a flash of sudden clarity. However, it is rare that an idea comes fully worked out. The initial flash of insight usually needs to be worked on and elaborated before it is fully realized. Michelangelo may “see” the statue hiding inside the block of marble but he has a lot of chipping to do before it emerges fully.
3. **“Respect”**: awe, wonder, admiration, delight, aaah! The truly creative act usually evokes feelings of pleasurable recognition on the part of others. A typical reaction would be, “Why didn’t I think of that?” Or in the case of coming upon one’s own work at a later date, “Wow! Did I really write that?”
4. **“Experiment”**: exploration, curiosity, preparedness, tacit knowledge, puzzle, problem-solving, play, heuristic. Creativity usually seems to involve some kind of “playing around” with things, with asking the question “What if . . .?”, and the ability to think outside the box. But curiosity alone is rarely enough. Being prepared, in the sense of well-informed, about an area is an essential prerequisite. As Louis Pasteur (1854) reminds us, “Fortune favours only the prepared mind”. This state of preparedness is often based on “tacit knowledge” (Polanyi 1967; Schon 1983) or “mastery”, which expert practitioners seem able to call upon effortlessly. In fact, such expertise is based on multiple past experiences, which have been internalized, and can be effortlessly retrieved. Often heuristics are used to save time, heuristics being general procedures or rules of thumb such as “consider the negative”, “do the opposite”, “make it bigger/smaller” “start from the end”, etc. “Heuristics are used to prune the search tree. That is, they save the problem-solver from visiting every choice point on the tree by selectively ignoring parts of it” (Boden 1990, p. 98). Such playing around is done within a given conceptual space. “In short, nothing is more natural than ‘playing around’ to gauge the potential – and the limits – of a given way of thinking. This is not a matter of abandoning all rules, but of changing the existing rules to create a new conceptual space” (Boden 1990, p. 46). This playful attitude seems to be one of the essential characteristics of creativity, and is especially important when applying creativity to teaching and learning (Carter 2004; Cook 2000).

5. **“Divine”**: intuition, insight, imagination, inspiration, illumination, divine spark, gift, hunch, mysterious, unconscious. The belief that creativity is a mysterious, unknowable gift from God is widespread and ancient. Very few contemporary writers on creativity would subscribe to this idea, however, preferring instead to investigate how creative acts actually come about. There is, however, broad agreement that much creative activity is largely unconscious.

The belief that creativity is a God-given quality encourages the unhelpful idea that only a few, chosen, people are endowed with this gift. A more reasonable and humane view is that everyone is capable of creativity in varying degrees. It is true that H (Historical) creativity, which involves producing something no one in history has ever created before, is the stuff of genius, as with Mozart, Hokusai, Picasso, Einstein, Tolstoy, Shakespeare, Berners-Lee. But P (Personal) creativity is available to everyone; it involves individuals making creative discoveries which are new to them, if not to history. Carter rightly claims, “linguistic creativity is not simply a property of exceptional people but an exceptional quality of all people” (Carter 2004, p. 13).

6. **“Seeing relationships”**: connections, associations, combinations, analogies, metaphors, seeing in a new way, peripheral attention, incubation, reconfiguring. There is general agreement that an important component of creativity is the ability to make new connections, often between apparently unrelated data. Koestler (1989) called this *bi-sociation*. The surrealists used it as a principle for generating new artistic creations. It has also been used by some writers on teaching, such as Gianni Rodari (1973) and Jacqueline Held (1979). In order to see new relationships, however, it may be necessary to suspend conscious attention, so that material which is on the periphery of our attention may gain access to the unconscious layers of mind. The idea that these ideas are stimulated by a period of incubation, while the conscious mind occupies itself with other things, is a constant theme of writers on creativity.
7. **“Unpredictable”**: randomness, chance, serendipity, coincidence, spontaneity, chaos. It is a paradox of creativity that it cannot be predicted, or consciously invoked. It apparently comes about partly through chance happenings. Crick and Watson’s double helix, Fleming’s discovery of penicillin, Newton’s apple and Archimedes’ bath are all instances. Yet chance discoveries are usually only made by those able to recognize what chance has put in their way. There is a sense too in which we can only discover or create something when the time is ripe for it. This perhaps explains the phenomenon of simultaneous discovery, when the same creative event happens at about the same time in different places (as with Darwin and Wallace and the Theory of Natural Selection). With respect to language, the unpredictable nature of the teaching event and the need to find a creative, spontaneous response to it (Underhill and Maley 2012) are particularly significant.
8. **“Constraints”**: borders, discipline, limits, economy. Creativity is not about “anything goes” or “letting it all hang out”. On the contrary, creativity loves constraints. “Those who think outside the box need a box to think outside of” (Houstmans 2014). It seems that when we are forced to work with limited

resources, or within a rigid set of rules, we are stimulated to find creative solutions. This is nowhere more true than in language. We need only think of tweeting, where we are limited to just 140 characters. Or in poetry, where some of the greatest works are those with the greatest formal constraints, such as sonnets. Without the net, there is no game of tennis. One reason that constraints help creativity is perhaps that they provide a framework which also acts as a support. And this is particularly true in language learning.

9. **“Acceptability”**: recognition, relevance, significance, value. However innovative a creation may be, it is unlikely to be taken up unless it is recognized as relevant to the field in which it occurs. It is not enough for an idea to be innovative or surprising. Going to class without any clothes on would certainly be strikingly innovative but it would probably not be considered creative in any but the most trivial sense. Creative ideas must therefore be historically apt and relevant, as well as merely novel. “Even P-creativity requires that systematic rule-breaking and rule-bending be done in domain-relevant ways” (Boden 1990, p. 254). It is also true that some ideas are simply too difficult to implement because the infrastructure which would support them is not yet in place. Leonardo da Vinci designed an aeroplane and a submarine but the materials available at the time were insufficient to realise them, and the fuel they needed to function had not yet been discovered.
10. **“Flow”**: relaxed attention, effortless effort, being “in the zone”, absorption. It is claimed that creativity is facilitated by being in a particular mental state, which has been called “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi 1988, 1990). Flow states are characterised by an effortless, total absorption in the task in hand. When we lose ourselves in a book, or in a piece of writing, or in playing or listening to music, or in playing a game, in painting or making a sculpture, or in a conversation, then we are in a state of flow. For as long as it lasts, we are unaware of anything except the intense engagement in a timeless present. People engaged in creative activities often exhibit this quality. And, if we can find ways of establishing flow states in our classrooms, creative outcomes are more likely to ensue.

4 Some Approaches to Creativity

Creativity has long attracted the attention of theorists. Gardner (1993), picking up on Francis Galton’s nineteenth-century work on geniuses, has investigated biographical aspects of creativity in a number of H-creative people, hoping to find common factors among them. Significantly, he has chosen geniuses from all seven of his types of intelligence (Gardner 1985). His concentration on H-creativity may not help us very much, however, if our main concern is creativity as a widely-distributed attribute in the human population.

Csikszentmihalyi (1988) takes a multidimensional view of creativity as an interaction: individual talent, operating in a particular domain or discipline, and judged by experts in that field. This helps to explain why some ideas, though creative, do

not emerge until the time is ripe, as in the example of Leonardo da Vinci given above. Csikszentmihalyi also has interesting observations about the role of “flow” in creativity: the state of “effortless effort” in which everything seems to come together in a flow of seamless creative energy (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). He further explores creativity through analysing interviews with 91 exceptional individuals, and isolates ten characteristics of creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi 1997).

Both Koestler (1989) and Boden (1990) have sought a cognitive psychological explanation for creativity. Koestler (1989), in his monumental *The Act of Creation* – takes up Helmholtz and Wallas’s idea of creativity as a four-stage process. Given a “problem”, “puzzle” or “conceptual space”, the creative mind first prepares itself by soaking up all the information available. Following this first Preparation stage, there is a stage of Incubation, in which the conscious mind stops thinking about the problem, leaving the unconscious to take over. In the third stage, Illumination, a solution suddenly presents itself (if you’re lucky!). In the final Verification stage, the conscious mind needs to check, clarify and elaborate on the insights gained. Koestler cites many examples, especially from science, to support his theory. He goes on to suggest that the process operates through the bi-sociation of two conceptual matrices, not normally found together. The juxtaposition of hitherto unrelated areas or factors is held to facilitate a sudden new insight.

By contrast, Boden (1990) takes an AI (Artificial Intelligence) approach to investigating creativity. She asks what a computer would need to do to replicate human thought processes. This leads to a consideration of the self-organizing properties of complex, generative systems through processes such as parallel distributed processing. For her, creativity arises from the systematic exploration of a conceptual space or domain (mathematical, musical, linguistic). She draws attention to the importance of constraints in this process. “Far from being the antithesis of creativity, constraints on thinking are what make it possible” (Boden 1990, p. 82). And she goes on to say that:

It is the partial continuity of constraints which enables a new idea to be recognised, by author and audience alike, as a creative contribution. The new conceptual space may provide a fresh way of viewing the task domain and signposting interesting pathways that were invisible – indeed impossible – before. (Boden 1990, p. 83)

Chaos theory (Gleick 1987) tends to support her ideas. Boden’s approach is richly suggestive for language acquisition and materials writing, in that both are rooted in complex, self-organizing systems. Some of the implications of complexity theory for language acquisition have been explored by Larsen Freeman (1997).

Amabile (1996) approaches creativity from a social and environmental viewpoint, claiming that previous theories have tended to neglect the power of such factors to shape creative effort. Her componential theory rests on three main factors: domain-relevant skills (i.e. familiarity with a given domain of knowledge), creativity-relevant skills (e.g. the ability to break free of “performance scripts” – established routines, to see new connections, etc.) and task motivation, based on attitudes, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic constraints and rewards, etc. The social and environmental factors discussed include peer influence, teachers’ character and

behaviour, the classroom climate, family influence, life stress, the physical environment, degree of choice offered, time, the presence of positive role models, and the scope for play in the environment. These factors clearly have relevance for language learning too.

One of the most recent attempts to offer a comprehensive overview of the whole field of creativity is Kaufman and Sternberg's, *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity* (2010). Their final chapter, *Constraints on Creativity*, is an admirably concise summary of the factors which come in the way of creativity. They are particularly critical of the way academic education, with its emphasis on conformity, and learning measured through tests, has a negative effect on creativity:

Academic knowledge and skills as taught [...] will be inadequate to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world [...] creativity is more important than ever. [However] the greater the emphasis is on high-stakes assessment, the less is the emphasis on creativity. (Kaufman and Sternberg 2010, p. 475)

Much the same point is made by Ken Robinson in *Out of Our Minds* (2001), and it is a chilling reminder of the institutional obstacles put in the way of any attempt to introduce creative ideas in the educational domain.

5 Why Is Creativity Important?

1. It is *psychologically* inevitable, given the nature of the human mind, which, as a complex system, is predisposed to generate new ideas. What distinguishes humankind from other genetically similar species is precisely the ability to make creative adaptations and discoveries and to pass them on to succeeding generations.
2. It is *necessary for survival*. The context in which language teaching and learning take place is constantly evolving under the pressure of other forces: changing demands, changing technology, changing economic needs, etc. We are obliged to respond to this by changing ourselves, and at an ever-accelerating rate (Gleick 1999; Robinson 2001). Creativity tends to accompany change, as we seek adaptive solutions to new opportunities and constraints.
3. It is also *inevitable historically*. As Kuhn (1970) has shown, any given domain tends to follow a cyclical pattern of development. After a period of dominance by one paradigm, accepted by all, with knowledge and procedures routinized, there comes a period of questioning, the discovery of new insights and ideas, which then supplant the old paradigm. The cycle then continues. In language teaching, we can consider the nineteenth-century Reform Movement as one such paradigm shift, and the Communicative Approach in the 1970s and 1980s perhaps another. Creative adaptation to the new technologies may well prove to be yet another.
4. Creativity *stimulates and motivates*. Teachers who actively explore creative solutions tend to be more alive and vibrant than those content to follow a routine. Students given the opportunity to exercise their own creativity tend to respond

positively. Their self-esteem is enhanced as they realise how much they can do on their own. In a creative classroom, students are more deeply engaged in their learning. The materials writer who approaches the job creatively is likely to produce more interesting materials (Pugliese 2010).

5. *Language use – and language learning – are inherently creative processes.* Several recent books (Carter 2004; Cook 2000; Crystal 1998; Lecercle 1990) have drawn attention to the fact that much natural language use is not merely utilitarian and transactional, nor merely interactional. People indulge in vast amounts of creative language play, through punning, riddles, jokes, spoonerisms, insults, deliberate ambiguity, metathesis, unusual collocations, mixed metaphors, mimicry, games with names and irreverence. Likewise, children learning their first language play around with it a great deal, constantly testing its limits creatively: “not all play is creative but all creativity contains play” (Gordon 1961, p. 121). I would argue that these features should at least be given some space in teaching materials. Literature is the supreme example of linguistic playfulness, and along with drama, clearly has a key revitalizing role to play here.

6 How Can We Foster Creativity?

6.1 Heuristics

Heuristics are basically simple “rules of thumb”. They work by asking the question, “I wonder what would happen if we...?” The best-known heuristic in our field was provided by John Fanselow in his book *Breaking Rules* (1987). He urges us to “do the opposite.” If we want to bring about change in our classroom practice, we should do the opposite from what we currently do, and observe the results carefully. For example, if we habitually conduct our class from the front of the room, we should try teaching from the back. If students always sit in the same place, we encourage them to sit with someone different in each lesson. If we use a predominantly cognitive style, we try some affective activities instead. Fanselow (2014) argues that it is only by systematically breaking the unwritten rules (or habits) in our classrooms that we can discover new and possibly better ways of doing things. This is indeed a powerful heuristic, and highly generative of new ideas – some of them worth retaining.

There are of course other possible heuristics which can be applied. For example, “reverse the order”. To offer two illustrations of how this might work, consider dictation and reading. Normally, in dictation, the students only get to see the text after the dictation. If we reverse the order, they could be given the text before the dictation. It would then be taken away during the dictation, and given back afterwards. In reading, it is normal to read a text from beginning to end. An alternative, working on the “reverse the order” heuristic, would be to read the text from the end backwards towards the beginning (something which experienced readers often do).

Other heuristics might include “change the pace”, “change the mode/manner”, “combine unrelated items randomly”, “repeat differently”, or “withhold information”.

Heuristics have played and will doubtless continue to play an important role in generating new ideas and activities by stimulating us to look anew at the activities we use and the ways in which we use them.

6.2 *Re-explorations*

A second major source of new ideas is the re-exploration of well-established or traditional practices with a view to finding new, different, more effective, more motivating ways of conducting them.

One of the best examples would be dictation. Dictation is still very widely practised, however, it is also commonly regarded as a boring and tedious task with dubious learning pay-off. Yet Davis and Rinvoluceri (1988) managed to find 74 variations on the practice of dictation, thus bringing alive an activity long regarded as retrograde and semi-moribund.

A more recent example would be homework. Like dictation, homework tends to be regarded as a necessary evil – a chore for the teacher and the student alike. Yet by submitting it to careful examination, Leslie Painter (2003) offered 101 activities for making homework both more motivating and more effective.

Other re-explorations to date include letter-writing (Burbidge et al. 1996), storytelling (Heathfield 2014; Wright 2008; Wajnryb 2003), vocabulary teaching (Rinvoluceri and Morgan 2004), pronunciation (Underhill 1994), and reading (Bamford and Day 2004).

Areas ripe for re-exploration could include: repetition, questions, translation, rote-memorisation, textbook dialogues and drills (Maley 2013), and improvisation (Johnstone 1999; Underhill and Maley 2012). Helgesen (2012) offers us some engagingly new ways of looking at dialogues and drills.

6.3 *Feeder Fields*

“Feeder fields” are areas of inquiry outside ELT which have a potential for exploitation within ELT. A good example of this would be voice training for the theatre. The disciplined training of the voice can be a fertile source of “new” activities in the classroom. It transcends mere pronunciation and offers the students a resource they can carry into their lives in any language (Maley 2000).

Other feeder fields which have been harvested for new ideas would include NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming et al. 2005), Multiple Intelligences (Gardner 1985) and Drama (Maley and Duff 2005; Wilson 2008). There is also increasing interest

in ways of applying work in critical thinking to language teaching (Clandfield and Robb Benne 2010).

Fields which have not yet been tapped to a great extent include music. I am not referring here to the use of pop songs, but to the rhythmic and melodious qualities of music. Music is of course, integral to Suggestopedia as a medium for changing the brain waves of students. The rhythmical qualities of music have also been used by Carolyn Graham in her *Jazz Chants* (Graham 1976, 2006). A great many ideas are beginning to emerge applying music to language teaching (Hill and Rouse 2012; Paterson and Willis 2008).

The same can be said of Art. Again, I am not referring here to the use of visuals/pictures, which are in common use already. Rather, I am referring to the potential of “serious” art for building language teaching activities (Grundy et al. 2011; Keddie 2009), and for the arts in general (see Goldberg 2006; Maley 2009, 2010).

Other fields which suggest themselves would include Chaos Theory (Gleick 1987), Creativity theory (Carter 2004; Pope 2004), Memory studies (Baddeley 1993; Bilbrough 2011; Winston 2003), the Psychology of Consciousness (Damasio 2010; Dennett 1991; Ramachandran 2003, 2005), Philosophy (Cohen 1999) and Extra-sensory phenomena (Sheldrake 2003). Though some of these may seem far-removed from language teaching concerns, they are all rich fields worth at least considering if we wish to generate “new ideas” for teaching. Hopefully, we can break out of the self-imposed isolationism of ELT and benefit from the rich array of ideas to be found in other disciplines and fields.

6.4 *New, Developing Areas*

I am referring here to areas which are in some cases already included within our ELT perimeter but which continue to unfold and develop as we probe them more deeply.

One of the most topical of these areas is information technology – encompassing everything from computer-based corpora to the use of the Internet for research, on-line publications, and the many varieties of on-line interaction (e-mail, chat-groups, discussion forums, etc.) (Crystal 2001; Dudeney and Hockley 2007; Stannard 2015). Corpus studies are already yielding new information about the nature of the language, which can be incorporated into new types of materials (Hoey 2005; McCarthy 1991; McCarthy and Carter 1995). There are many challenges – ethical, technical, logistical and pedagogical – related to the effective use of this rich resource. There can be no doubt, however, that we shall see a number of “new ideas” emerging from this area.

Other content-related areas are also a fertile field for exploration. Literature, for long the Cinderella of ELT, has made a comeback (Lutzker 2007). Ideas continue to be generated as we probe the limits both of texts (including, for example, the “new literatures”, with their complex array of cultural issues), and of techniques for exploiting them. The extent to which literary devices and “playfulness” permeate

“ordinary” language is also being revealed and exploited as never before (Cook 2000; Duff and Maley 2007). The related area of creative writing with students is also being belatedly developed (Spiro 2004, 2007).

A second content-related area is Global Issues. Here too the opportunity to give a relevant content to language teaching is being taken up enthusiastically. Increasingly, Global Issues are being seen as a way of raising awareness of some of the blatant inequalities brought about by so-called “free markets”, and of introducing critical thinking in a concrete way (Jacobs et al. 1998; Sampedro and Hillyard 2004). One of the attractions of Global Issues as a resource for generating new ideas is that this field links to almost everything – the Internet, a great variety of text-types, including literature, TV and film, music and folklore, history, geography, philosophy... the world we live in, in fact.

One last area I would earmark for development is that of “atmosphere”. Classroom atmosphere has long been recognised as an essential element in generating motivation and successful performance (Maley 1996). Relatively little has been done however to investigate exactly which elements contribute to “flow” experiences (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 1997). One recent exception is Dörnyei’s (2001) work on motivation. If we were to take the creation of “flow” (or positive atmosphere) as a focus, it is certain that a number of new ideas would emerge. This offers a project for aspiring materials writers and a rich area for action research projects.

7 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have tried to clarify what creativity is, and why it is so important. I have also given a few pointers to ways it might be implemented. More concrete ideas can be found in Maley (2006, 2009, 2001).

To conclude, let me address two areas, one positive, one negative:

1. We should think of creativity as *permeating every aspect* of what we do. It is not confined to wacky new activities. We can think of more creative ways of managing the class (for example, making students responsible for some of the teaching, finding new ways to transfer learning out of the classroom, bringing the world into the classroom through local speakers with expert knowledge, even new ways of taking the attendance register, etc.). We can create new patterns of group dynamics (Dörnyei and Murphey 2003). We can focus on developing creative responses to what is happening in the present, unpredictable moment in class (Brown 2013; Underhill and Maley 2012; Underhill 2014). We can find new ways to set homework assignments (Painter 2003), give feedback and conduct assessment (Phuong 2014; Stannard 2014). We can experiment with new ways of motivating our learners (Dörnyei 2001). We can explore innovative ways of using time and space (Almond 2007, 2013). And, of course, there is technology, though we need to ensure that we use it to solve learning problems rather than simply being mesmerised by its technical wizardry – and develop an understand-

ing of its potentially negative effects (Carr 2010) as well as its undoubted positive advantages (Dudeny and Hockley 2007).

2. There are many *enemies of creativity*. These include the control paradigm inherent in many institutions, fear of change among administrators and teachers alike, teacher training programmes which prepare teachers only for the predictable features of their work (Brown 2013; Underhill and Maley 2012), conservatism, apathy, settling for less than 100 % (Scrivener 2014). So embracing creativity requires courage, enthusiasm, effort and persistence. It will never be an easy thing to achieve. But that does not mean we should give up!

Questions for Reflection on Future Teaching Practice

1. How free do you feel to introduce and implement creative ideas in your teaching? Which institutional constraints most often prevent you from doing so?
2. What for you are the most important features of creativity? How would you define them?
3. In your own context, how would you justify the inclusion of an element of creativity in your work?
4. Can you think of concrete instances when you have implemented creative ideas in your class? How successful were you?

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