



University of Tikrit

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Women

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Name of Instructor: Assist. Prof. Elaf Subhi Abdullah(Ph.D.)

**Title of Lecture : The Relationship between Creative Learning Environment
and Teaching Literature**

Email : elafsubhi1979@tu.edu.iq

Introduction

Scholars and educators have acknowledged the importance of the learning environment, especially the creative learning environment. A creative learning environment can stimulate students' creative outcomes in the classroom. However, designing literature learning when selecting the content and organizing the learning process can be enriched in constantly changing modern learning environments by using drama, theatre, museum visits, publication of students original literary work. This matter tends to recreate students' interest and motivation for reading and comprehension of literature as a means of personality development and identity building.

Teaching literature in the language class can enhance language learning because the cognitive processes of learners are particularly dealing with narrative structures; also, literature written in the target language or translated into the target language may give learners insight into other non-target language cultures, and finally literature's contents may well be truer to life and more relevant to learners than typical textbook topics.

1. Creative Learning Environment

Creativity is becoming increasingly important in modern society (Richardson and Mishra, 2018). Creativity is generally conceptualized as individual's ability to generate new ideas (Amabile, 1996). More recently, researchers have begun investigating the role of the classroom environment (Tsai et al., 2015). In building a model linking a creative learning environment and creativity, this model deals with a theory of creativity (Amabile and Pratt, 2016), which suggests that desirable contexts can induce creativity by influencing multiple personal motivations and behaviors.

Scholars have acknowledged that when students are sharing their knowledge, they tend to utilize the knowledge based resources in the classroom and after class to facilitate their creative activities (Yeh et al., 2012). Since creativity theoretically requires various types of knowledge and information (Amabile, 2012). So, improving university students' creativity is based on knowledge-management, which involves the process of converting knowledge and creating new knowledge (Van Den Hooff and De Ridder, 2004).

In addition, creativity can be stimulated by contextual factors (Kozbelt et al., 2010). Among such factors as classroom interaction and teachers' positive behaviors and attitudes (Beghetto and Kaufman, 2014), an important characteristic of teachers is strong facilitation skills. As a result, teachers can encourage students to learn and think creatively (e.g., taking risks, building free and open communication

channels, supporting creative ideas, and allowing more freedom and choice while students complete their assignments).

Consistently, scholars suggest that creative learning is a key element in the creative process (Chappell and Craft, 2011); thus, students need to be provided creative learning opportunities in the classroom environment (Richardson and Mishra, 2018). For example, researchers found that when studying in a creative learning environment at school, students are likely to continue to develop their skills and professional knowledge, which significantly spurs the development of their creative responses (Davies et al., 2013). As a result, students have more creative achievements (Mishra, 2018).

2. The Design of Creative Learning Environment

An effective learning environment must consider both physical and psychological need of the built environment. According to Hsu (1999) learning is an interactive process and product of student and teacher activity within a specified learning environment. Nottingham (2017) also observes that learning is an active, collaborative, and social process that hinges on people and from a student-centered perspective. However, there is a relationship between these two aspects and creativity because students' learning needs to be both physically and mentally supported and enhanced for better outcomes. So, this relation can be illustrated as follows:

2.1 Creativity and Physical Considerations for Design of Learning Environment

Creativity may be defined as the process of developing and expressing new ideas which will probably be used for innovation and organization, and facilitating communication rather than directly enhancing creativity (Leonard and Swap, 1999). According to Zuger (2016), creative learning spaces are often messy and loud and they look different from what we think of as a "successful" formal classroom, where everyone is working silently and independently on identical sheets of paper—but that doesn't mean learning isn't happening. With the use of natural light, plenty of student work on display, flexible arrangement of furniture, and use of color of walls and furniture. Decorations on the wall, including student work, can serve the purpose of prompting student creativity.

Technology and furniture play a big role in enhancing students' creativity. Van Note Chism (2002) observes that in the school environment "Room design influences the social context of the classes, student-instructor and student-student relations, instructional design options, and the overall effectiveness of instructional technology".

2.2 Creativity and Psychological Considerations for Design of Learning Environment

A creative space is a subjective experience of various psychological responses which can possibly influence creativity (Hunter, Bedell, and Mumford, 2005). Klenz (1987) describes creativity as the result of some qualities of good thinking processes and that it is definitively a part of human cognition. According to Feldhusen and Treffinger (1980), there are ten recommendations to establish a creative climate within any environment. They suggest that the learning space:

- (1) Should be able to accept any unusual ideas and responses from students;
- (2) Should help students realize errors and meet acceptable standards within a supportive atmosphere;
- (3) Can make students aware of their interests;
- (4) Should provide sufficient time for students to think and develop their creative ideas;
- (5) Should be able to establish a climate of mutual respect and acceptance from student-to-student and students-to-teachers;
- (6) Should acknowledge that creativity happens in all curricular areas and disciplines;
- (7) Should facilitate divergent learning activities;
- (8) Should create a warm, supportive atmosphere which provides freedom and security in exploratory thinking;
- (9) Should offer students choices and involve them in the decision-making process; and
- (10) Should demonstrate the value of involvement by supporting students' ideas and solutions to problems and projects.

Warner and Myers (2010) also note that in order to facilitate communication, collaboration and engagement, space should make face-to-face and online discussion possible, within as well as beyond the classroom. Therefore, students' emotion reaction during the creative thinking process can be stimulated in order to obtain more creative ideas (Lau, 2010).

3. What is the Status of Literature?

When describing the status of literature as a subject, students have lost interest in

literature and their interest has continued to decline, and that this is related to the marginalization of literature in the whole field of communications (Rikama, 2004: 129). Thus, society influences the curriculum and the curriculum influences the society. Accordingly, the selection of a subject and how it is taught has crucial meaning, because it reflects the recognized values of that society (Läänemets, 1995:85).

So, the goals listed in the literature syllabus for students emphasize that students will understand the social, historical and cultural meaning of literature. The role of literature is considered essential as a factor developing personality and establishing relations between the self and the world. Also, it has particular importance for developing identity as part of the cultural environment. (Mihkelev, 2011: 103).

4. Why Teach Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom?

The literature component in English is aimed at enhancing students' language proficiency, and it is also dealt with the purpose of generating the aesthetic part of the language that is personal response from students. The aim of literature is not only meant to address the interpersonal, informational aesthetic value of learning but also the learning of the English language in general. So, the objectives of the introduction of literature component into the English language syllabus are to enable students to improve their proficiency through reading, respond to text, draw lessons and insights from slices of life, understand and appreciate other culture, relate to events, characters and own life as well as expose students to models of good writing. Therefore, the primary aim of incorporating literature into the English Language syllabus is to improve students' language ability.

In addition, the program of teaching literature is aimed to help students improve their English through reading simple fiction, to provide a continuum for the literature component introduced in school and university, and to create an enjoyable learning environment.

The benefits of teaching literature in the FL classroom have been illustrated by a variety of authors, such as Lazar (1993:15-9) suggests that literature in the FL classroom motivates, offers access to cultural background, encourages language acquisition, expands language awareness, develops students' interpretative abilities and educates the whole person in so far as it enhances our imaginative and affective capacities. Burke and Brumfit (1986:171-2) state that literature promotes literacy, critical and analytical ability, social skills and the use of the imagination; ethical and humanitarian attitudes, respect for the imagination, respect for literacy and cultural tradition; and provides information about literature, literary traditions and language.

In short, teaching literature in the classroom is used as a useful means to reach to the end of acquiring linguistic and cultural competences.

5. Teacher's Approaches in Teaching Literature

This section focuses on teacher's approaches that employed and encountered in the teaching of literature. Carter and Long (1991) state that there are three models in the teaching of literature: (1) The Cultural Model which views literature as a teacher-centered and source of facts where teacher delegates knowledge and information to students, (2) The Language Model which allows teacher to employ strategies used in language teaching to deconstruct literary texts in order to serve specific linguistic goals, and (3) The Personal Growth Model where the focus is on a particular use of language in a text and in a specific cultural context. These models have been incorporated in various approaches in the teaching of literature. There are six approaches in the teaching of literature. They are the (1) Language-Based Approach, (2) Paraphrastic Approach, (3) Information-Based Approach, (4) Personal-Response Approach, (5) Moral-Philosophical Approach, and (6) Stylistic Approach.

Literature in Education consists of the teaching of prose which involves novels and short stories, teaching of poetry and also the teaching of drama. Thus, the syllabus of literature is aimed to develop students' ability to read, understand, and respond to literary texts. Literary texts are probably the most authentic means to integrate language and content, and engage students in creative and critical use of language. Therefore, Lazar (2009:15) recognizes literature as a highly motivating material for its intrinsic quality to "expose students to complex themes and fresh, unexpected uses of language". Also, he justifies that the use of literary writings are expanding students' language awareness, developing their interpretative abilities, and educating the whole person. So, literature is too important not to be ignored in the second language classroom. Students benefit from literary texts in several ways. In this regard, pedagogy has a vital role to play, since it is the pedagogy that determines the extent to which students can exploit literary resources for their benefit.

Conclusion

Researchers and educators should be more concerned about building creative learning environments and helping students in their development of creativity. In other words, the role of literature in the development of an individual, ethnic group or nation has always been significant." (Mihkelev, 2011, 103). So, teachers will use variety of approaches and activities in order to ensure students' understanding of literary text. The incorporation of using translation of L1 is considered as an option for teachers to help

weaker students to understand the text, and thus, to guide them to analyze the literature element of the text. This can be seen as to support students who have limited proficiency in the language to learn literature.

In some schools for example, teachers' communication was mainly on Q and A comprehension activities. Teachers are used list of questions provided in the text to ensure student understands the learning. Students are instructed to utilize all materials provided by teachers and to finish the task in time. Less exploration of thinking abilities is enhanced during the learning. Accordingly, literature should be taught in a way out of examination oriented. Thus, students will have an opportunity to express out their thinking abilities creatively and critically.

