

НОВІТНІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ В ОСВІТІ: ОГЛЯДИ ТА ОБГОВОРЕННЯ

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ACTS OF CREATIVITY IN ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL: A HANDBOOK REVIEW

Liubashenko, O., & Drahinda, O. (2024) *Enhancing students' oral and written creative language: A teacher training handbook*. Publishing and Polygraphic Center "Kyiv University". (in Ukrainian)

This review of the handbook by Olesia Liubashenko & Olha Drahinda, "Enhancing Students' Oral and Written Creative Language," is intended for English-speaking readers interested in the achievements in the development of creative oral and written language skills among secondary school students in Ukraine. It is aimed at university students who have been trained to teach the Ukrainian language to secondary school students, with a particular focus on fostering creativity in both oral and written expression.

The authors' training is based on the investment theory of creativity. According to this theory, creativity is defined as generating ideas that reflect the success of human capital investment. This implies that even a common notion, a well-established truth, or information that has been repeatedly conveyed retains the potential for creative transformation. A mere alteration of perspective, a revision of analytical techniques, or an examination of what may initially appear to be implausible is sufficient to trigger creativity.

Accordingly, the book presents a teaching strategy that integrates the creation of oral and written texts with the acquisition of the Ukrainian language, its genres and the stylistic standards outlined in the school curriculum. It includes Ukrainian translations of English fiction, non-fiction, and academic texts, providing resources that foster such an important type of thinking as lateral thinking. The authors offer a set of classroom-ready tools to equip pre-service teachers with the skills to design engaging lessons, unleash their own creativity, and inspire their students to engage in creative pursuits within the context of a modern, multicultural, and multilingual educational environment.

Keywords: oral and written language teaching, acts of creativity, secondary school, lateral thinking, teaching strategy.

Creative Speaking and Writing: An Educational Challenge

It is becoming increasingly challenging to disregard the exponential growth of information exchange, which is accelerating with each passing decade. The globalisation of school education has resulted in the targeting of information available to students towards the achievement of educational objectives. As McCulloch (2020) observes, the internet has profoundly transformed the way language is used, and school curricula have been adapted to reflect this. Nevertheless, the use of natural language

appears to be declining in this context. With the rise of text messaging, schools are facing a critical lack of language practice among young people, who are increasingly reliant on digital communication to express themselves, show their personalities, and convey their unique thoughts, in both spoken and written forms.

It is frequently observed that teacher training is largely oriented towards ensuring that graduates are able to respond in accordance with the standards and expectations set forth by the programme and their teachers. Students are required to

memorise and repeat grammar rules, identify types of speech or sentence structure, and listen to and produce texts entitled "composition" or "statement" without any awareness of the genre. They are expected to choose the correct answer in tests and exams (both oral and written), describe topics suggested in textbooks, summarise texts that were not particularly inspiring, write about subjects that were not engaging or relevant, and act out scripted dialogues that lack a sense of reality.

Therefore, pre-service teachers express a need for resources that foster creativity in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. They seek instructional materials that will facilitate the development of creative language skills in their students. These future educators are looking for pedagogical resources that offer a structured methodology for teaching oral and written expression as a creative process within the framework of the teaching profession. The handbook *"Enhancing Students' Oral and Written Creative Language"* has been specifically designed for these prospective teachers. Recognising the significance of creativity theory in education, the authors have designed this handbook as a professional training guide on developing students' creative language skills in Ukrainian. Presented in a format that is both accessible and engaging, it offers a comprehensive and practical resource for educators seeking to integrate creativity into their pedagogical practice.

The book is based on the investment theory of creativity (Sternberg, 2006, 2012), which suggests that creativity is the result of wise investment in human potential: a creative individual "buys low" and "sells high" (Sternberg, & Lubart, 1996, 679). A creative individual is able to perceive new ideas, resist the influence of biases and stereotypes, and ultimately brings value to ideas that were previously dismissed as uninteresting or unappealing. This is consistent with Ellis's concept (2016), which emphasizes the crucial role of creativity in generating language output by combining

new elements in novel and innovative ways. For students, this means that language lessons should be structured as workshops wherein they can develop fundamental intellectual abilities through:

- viewing problems or tasks from new angles and thinking beyond the usual limits;
- identifying effective ways to express ideas;
- choosing potentially effective options for language use;
- persuading others of the value of their innovative approaches.

Consequently, students are expected to demonstrate acts of creativity through:

- original text transformations;
- personal interpretations of various authors' works;
- a unique language style;
- thoughtful choices of rhetorical techniques.

It appears that scientific research is assisting schools in their effort to address the challenge of teaching language as a creative process. The cognitive factors that underpin creative spoken language are defined as follows: divergent fluency in thought, convergent depth of thinking, and the speaker's openness to new language experiences (Suzuki et al., 2022). The techniques for enhancing creative writing skills are the subject of ongoing and comprehensive research (Fitria, 2024). These techniques involve reading a wide range of literary works, engaging in regular writing practice, experimenting with different writing styles, stimulating the reader's imagination, and developing research skills. Nevertheless, it's difficult to say that students leave schools as well-rounded, creative communicators.

In the course of their teaching careers, the authors of the reviewed handbook have observed that younger students frequently exhibit a greater degree of creativity in their language abilities. As students grow older, however, this potential tends to be dampened – both by the expectations of educational institutions and, more broadly,

by societal norms that encourage conformity in language through numerous restrictions, norms, and conventions. For this reason, developing creativity in language should be a model for any other activity. By overcoming limitations in text creation and expressing original ideas, students can transfer these skills to other areas of life and learning.

Handbook Structure

The following handbook includes:

- Curriculum requirements for Ukrainian language classes as defined by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education, organized by grade level from 5th to 9th.
- Student tasks tailored to lesson topics and genres of oral and written expression.
- Teacher training activities that facilitate the practice of designing assignments, employing methods to stimulate creative and lateral thinking, and exploring one's own creative abilities and teaching skills.

The training exercises encourage students to adopt the role of a Ukrainian language teacher during a language development lesson, utilising their creativity to ensure the lesson is engaging, relevant and highly effective for secondary school students.

The handbook consists of two main sections: the development of oral language and writing. Each section is comprised of five units designed for students and teachers in grades 5th to 9th. Each unit for a specific grade includes tasks for students and for teacher training, allowing them to supplement exercises, outline explanatory and illustrative materials, and diversify discussion topics. Some tasks are intended to be universally applicable. To illustrate, the theoretical material is presented in the form of *reference guides*. For instance, teachers are advised to supplement the guide, entitled "How to Stress and Pronounce Sounds and Sound Combinations in Ukrainian", with additional relevant rules in order to assist their 5th-grade students in mastering pronunciation norms. In the 6th-grade unit, pre-service teachers should prepare a guide

to help students master the norms of polite dialogue to enhance their oral communication skills. For the 7th and 8th-grades, they need to provide guides such as "How to Prepare a Public Speech" and "The Culture of Official Business Communication" to improve the students' stylistic competence.

In the section on teaching written language, the development of guides covers punctuation, syntax, and text composition. For instance, "Narrative, Its Features and Structure" presents the reference guide for 5th-graders on developing a narrative; the guide on written reflection will help the 6th-graders to meet the challenge of writing a reflective essay; "Writing a Nonfiction Text" reference guide section provides the 7th-graders with practical description of steps to follow to write a nonfiction text; the 8th graders will be exposed to appropriate blogging and rules to follow to create a viral post; the paragraph for the 9th-graders includes the reference guide "Compound Sentences. Punctuating Compound Sentences. Punctuation in Direct Speech."

The book emphasizes the creation of *mini-glossaries*, in which teachers should explain terms while considering the students' age-related characteristics. For example, a mini-glossary of stylistically colored vocabulary introduces students to the concepts of hyperbole and simile, while a mini-glossary for scientific texts clarifies the meanings of terms, professional jargon and key words; other mini-glossaries define the names of parts of a literary text, categorise the elements of a reflective essay, distinguish genres of written language, types of reviews and peculiarities of a nonfiction text.

Each unit includes tasks focused on mastering lexical and grammatical topics. Specifically, in teaching oral language, these tasks include:

- categorizing nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and forms of address used in a dialogue;
- replacing incorrect forms of active participles with the correct ones;

- correcting misused numeral forms.

Teaching writing section pays much attention to literacy and syntactic competence, comprising tasks to:

- specify the word building patterns;
- determine which part of speech the underlined words in the text belong to and syntactic functions they perform in the sentence;
- use the particular structural type of sentences in one's writing;
- punctuate sentences of different types of coordination or subordination, provide transitions.

Each unit for each grade comprises tasks for students, along with guidance for teachers to create specific methodological extensions. To illustrate, to assist 7th-graders in developing expressive oral communication skills, the teacher training section includes activities like analysing contemporary TEDx speeches and teaching students about nonverbal communication techniques. It also suggests hosting a speech competition in class as part of the UNESCO school forums, where students' speeches can be evaluated based on criteria such as vocabulary choice, adherence to nonfiction style, fluency, and the use of intonation to engage the audience. Additionally, the unit provides examples of different types of speeches for teachers to prepare:

- a humorous speech to wrap up the school year

Figure 1

A humorous speech to wrap up the school year



Source: <https://www.thegrablegroup.com/speakers/funny-speakers/>

- a motivational speech before exams

Figure 2

A motivation speech before exam

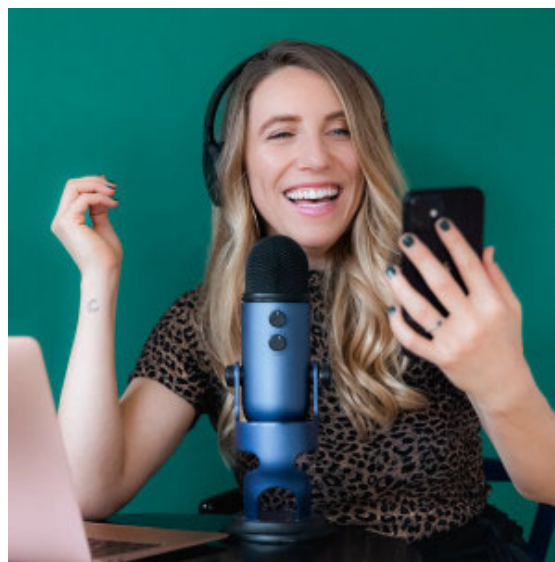


Source: https://www.canstockphoto.com/images-photos/motivational-speaker_2.html

- a speech about gadgets that incorporates youth slang

Figure 3

A speech about gadgets that incorporates youth slang



Source: <https://www.gigsalad.com/Motivational-Speakers/Speaker-Motivational/BC/Abbotsford>

In the section on the development of written language, the methodological extension suggests tasks to select: an episode of a film adaptation of one of the children's bestsellers (about Harry Potter, Willy Wonka, Matilda, Crunchy the Alligator, Miss Piggy, etc.) to watch with students or,

alternatively, listen to an excerpt from an audiobook and formulate tasks for 5th-graders after watching or listening to the book; additional materials on neologisms, and youth slang, their origin and exercises on their use in the Ukrainian language for the 8th and 9th-graders; explanations and assignments on

writing quotes, direct speech, dialogue lines to include into a written text; develop criteria and scales for evaluating reviews and comments. For instance, one of the assignments for the 5th-graders suggests making a plan to tell the story of the event depicted in the following photos.

Figure 4

An example of 6 pictures for 5th graders suggesting making a plan to tell a story



1



2



3



4



5



6

Source: <https://bigkyiv.com.ua/na-naberezhnij-irpenya-vidkryly-skej-t-park-yevropejskogo-zrazka-foto/>

Meanwhile, the students are supposed to write a sample narrative 'Surprise for the city' on the part of a participant in the event based on the information posted by the online media about Kyiv and the capital's agglomeration on the website (<https://bigkyiv.com.ua/na-naberezhnij-irpenya-vidkryly-skejt-park-yevropejskogo-zrazka-foto/>), and help the schoolers in class to analyse the sample in terms of the plan they have previously made, its structure, logic, composition, and compliance with the requirements of the literary style.

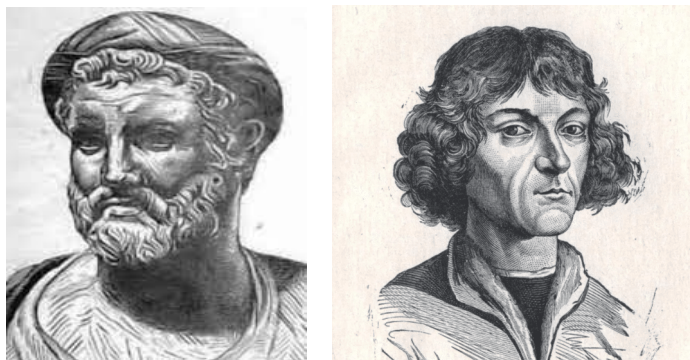
The training materials for teachers and the activities for students emphasize lateral thinking techniques designed to stimulate students' imagination and foster inventive language use. Teachers are encouraged to model acts of creativity themselves – engaging expressions, completing unfinished sentences, and suggesting dynamic dialogue topics. For instance, with 8th-graders,

discussing Somerset Maugham's story "A Friend in Need" offers an opportunity to apply lateral technique "Assumption scenario" to oral discussion. Teachers may gather students' interpretations of this quote, encouraging diverse insights: "In books on logic, they will tell you it is absurd to say that yellow is tubular or that gratitude is heavier than air; but in that mixture of incongruities that makes up the self, yellow may very well be a horse and cart and gratitude the middle of next week".

For 9th-graders, there's an activity to create a list of microtopics that famous scientists and inventors might debate in a hypothetical dialogue. This exercise will involve lateral thinking technique "Simulated conflict of assertions", where students imagine scientists from different eras meeting and discussing their contrasting ideas. The list of topics for these student dialogues may include the following:

Figure 5

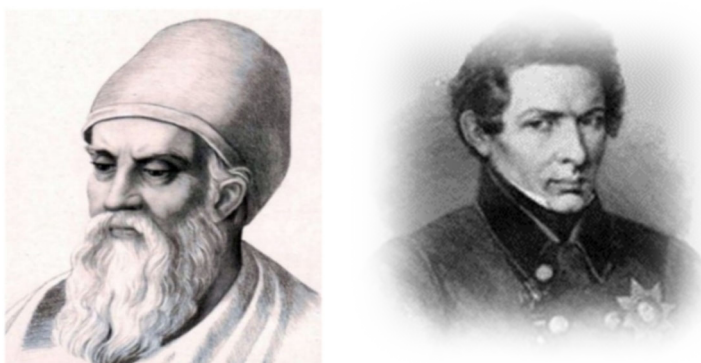
Anaximander's Geocentrism vs. Copernicus's Heliocentrism



Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6hjR73iRkk>; <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/node/653>

Figure 6

Euclid (Euclidean Geometry) vs. Lobachevsky (Hyperbolic Geometry)



Source: http://novopetritvskoe-osoba.edukit.mk.ua/vidatni_matematiki/

Figure 7

August Schleicher (Family Tree Model of Languages) vs. Johannes Schmidt (Wave Theory of Language)



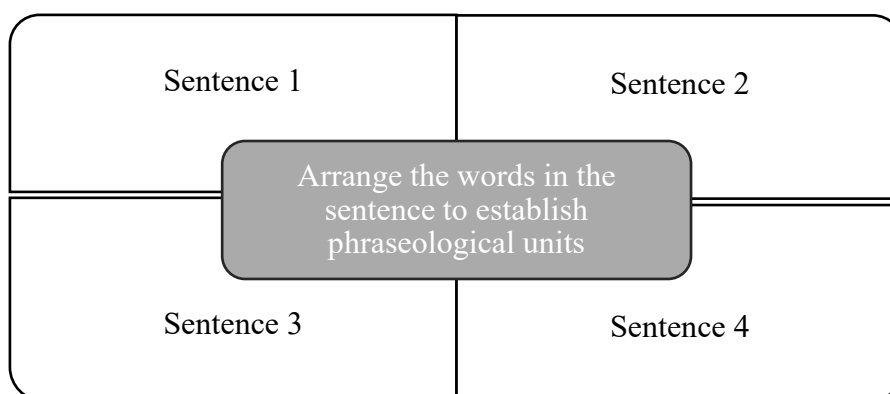
Source: <http://surl.li/bekqnh>

In teaching writing section, an example of the use of the lateral techniques is presented when discussing the steps students need to take to write a story: "If you were to imagine these steps as steps of a staircase, which one would you stumble or even fall on?" (The lateral technique of the "Provocative Questioning") or to develop a nonfiction essay entitled "Polite discourtesy: where and when is it necessary?" (the lateral technique of "Linguistic Paradox"). When completing the list of topics for social media posts, pre-service teachers are suggested to use the lateral technique of

"Alternative Focus" to select topics related to changes in the perception of life values in the context of current war in Ukraine, for example, "What I am going to tell my children about the war", "Volunteering is a way to be a part of the resilient nation", "Animal rescue at war", "Conscious use and improvement of the Ukrainian language I speak". The image below (Fig. 8) illustrates the lateral technique of "Restructuring and Reorganizing," where students are tasked with arranging the grammatical components of an idiomatic expression that has been presented to them in a random order.

Figure 8

The lateral technique of "Restructuring and Reorganizing"



Working with the English-language texts translated by prominent Ukrainian translators should inspire both students and teachers to engage in creative activities related to working with translated texts. These texts reflect the distinctive

features of the authentic language. As students create their own texts in Ukrainian, they also explore the process of translation as a learning activity. In the process of enhancing their speaking skills, 7th-grade students should demonstrate

that Malala Yousafzai's speech, as a young advocate for equal rights, falls under the nonfiction style (Sebag Montefiore, 2024)

Tasks that encourage this include:

- Organize an online search for information about Malala Yousafzai and the actions that led to her receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.
- Create a dictionary of journalistic genres.
- Host a competition for the most grammatically correct interview questions for Malala Yousafzai, formulated using different verb forms (indicative, conditional, imperative).

The introduction of quality translations by prominent contemporary Ukrainian professionals illustrates to students the

essence of the language, which lives and evolves with its speakers, draws intercultural parallels, and gives the students a sense of belonging to the global village of teen culture. Students feel confident and engaged as they complete written language development tasks based on extracts from "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone", "Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul" and "Coraline". For instance, having read the translation of an excerpt from the famous novel "Pollyanna Grows up" and having done language-related exercises, the 7th-grade students are instructed to imagine Pollyanna as the main character of their own stories and to describe her appearance, character, and abilities/skills based on the illustrations for the different editions of the novel series and use infinitives to formulate their ideas.

Figure 9

An example of four pictures of Pollyana



Source: <https://pictures.pibig.info/37773-pollyanna-illustracii.html>

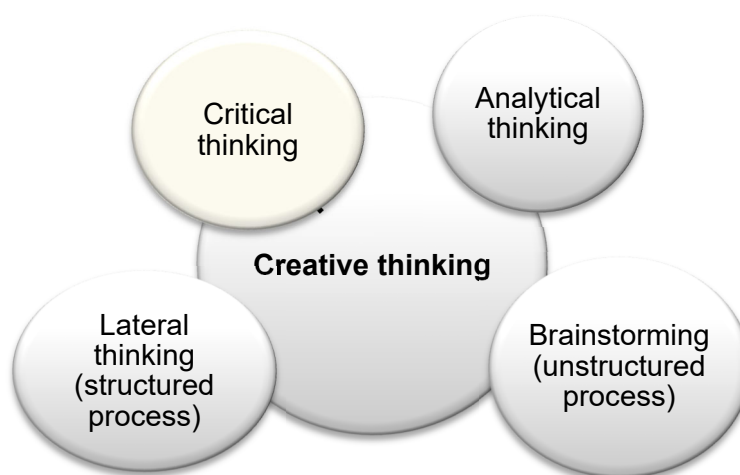
Innovations by the Authors

Enhancing students' language skills is impossible without fostering their thinking; this is a fundamental principle of language education. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages relies on various types of thinking: creative, critical, and analytical (Council of Europe, 2007). These types of thinking form the foundation of integrated language learning. Furthermore, many secondary schools often incorporate Edward de Bono's ideas

on implementing lateral thinking strategies into their teaching, which are also well known to educators in the field of the English language education. However, the Ukrainian language teachers often have to navigate definitions on their own and integrate thinking skills into the school process of language acquisition. This is why the authors of this publication have attempted to systematize these definitions for teachers in Ukraine after analyzing various scientific sources (Fig. 10)

Figure 10

Developing Thinking Skills While Learning a Language



Drawing on the insights of Birgili (2015), the authors emphasize that mastering a language requires stimulation for both critical and creative thinking. Such stimulation can come from unstructured classroom activities, such as brainstorming. As Wuttke (2017) aptly notes, brainstorming isn't an alternative or unconventional teaching method; it's a completely natural way of thinking for humans. As any skill, it can be developed: the more you practice, the better you get at tackling challenges. At the same time, stimulation should also be provided through structured activities in the lateral techniques (Liubashenko & Kavyska, 2020)

Thus, the authors believe that fostering lateral thinking structures in students is a prerequisite for the development of other types of thinking. This is why the concept of this handbook challenges the skepticism

that surrounds the possibility of teaching lateral thinking in schools. Lateral thinking defined as a mode of thought that is lateral, serendipitous, and unplanned, as exemplified by the discovery of penicillin. It is important not to lose hope when creative ideas don't come to mind and to recognize that there are ways to address this.

Building on de Bono's foundational ideas on lateral thinking (De Bono, 1967, 1969, 1970), the authors have compiled a list of lateral techniques suitable for fostering students' creative language skills (see Table 1).

By employing these techniques, students can deviate from the conventional requirements of language exercises. Such techniques allow students to explore different language models and to draw upon their experiences of a range of languages.

Table 1. Lateral Thinking Techniques in Creative Language Teaching

Language-oriented	Communication-oriented
Unconventional Metaphor Hyperbole Verbalizing Hypothetical Models Visualization and Generalization Assumption Scenario Restructuring and Reorganising Translation Variants Linguistic Paradox	Alternative Focus Conflict Scenario Drawing Analogies Surprising Situation Unexpected Choice Disproof Scenario Provocative Questioning Manipulative Information Simulated Conflict of Assertions Removing Limitations Association Development

It is evident that the authors of this handbook work in alignment with the curriculum standards, as the handbook has been designed for students undergoing training to become the Ukrainian language teachers. However, the educational material is organized to address some of the variability found within the curriculum. The aim is to create a foundation for skills in one grade that can be further developed in the subsequent grade, effectively anticipating the requirements and advancements of educational programmes. To illustrate, 5th-grade students are already introduced to the analysis of popular science texts (excerpts), with the curriculum planning for more in-depth study in the 6th grade. The authors posit that the listening of texts that describe historical or cultural landmarks, typically intended for the 8th grade, can also be integrated into 6th grade lessons focused on narrative monologues.

Furthermore, this educational resource seeks to eliminate the formal barriers between grade programmes. For example, tasks such as writing an essay or summarizing a text are included in the curriculum at all grade levels. Furthermore, the handbook provides illustrative examples of how to instruct students in the creation of texts in diverse styles of the Ukrainian language, encompassing belles lettres, scientific, nonfiction, and formal business discourse.

Another distinctive feature of the handbook is its incorporation of texts

translated by Ukrainian translators from the English-language authentic texts, with the objective of enhancing students' oral and written language skills. Given that Ukrainian language lessons are often linked to Ukrainian literature, it is thought that including English-language literary sources will provide a novel and engaging perspective that will stimulate students' interest in working with texts. This approach also underscores the importance of translator creativity, enriching the overall learning experience.

In this handbook, the authors rely upon their extensive experience in multilingual education, innovative teaching methods and a novel perspective on the secondary school learning process. A selection of texts translated from English to Ukrainian has been included, with the objective of initiating an intercultural dialogue and prompting students to reflect on the creative language choices translators make. The exercises, examples, and illustrations in this handbook are designed to engage students and demonstrate the most exemplary traditions of Ukrainian educational publishing, thus making it a valuable resource for teachers.

Authors' contributions: O. Liubashenko – analysis of the theoretical framework and methodological concept of the handbook, conclusions; O. Draginda – assessment of the manual's compliance with educational standards, and evaluation of its structure.

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АКТИ ТВОРЧОСТІ В НАВЧАННІ УСНОГО І ПИСЕМНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ В СЕРЕДНІЙ ШКОЛІ: ОГЛЯД ПІДРУЧНИКА

Огляд підручника Олеси Любашенко та Ольги Драгінди "Розвиток усного і писемного творчого мовлення учнів" призначено для англомовних читачів, які цікавляться досягненнями у царині формування креативних навичок усного та писемного мовлення в учнів середньої школи в Україні. Підручник задовольняє запити студентів університетів, які готуються викладати українську мову школярам. Авторки пропонують навчальні стратегії, які засновані на інвестиційній теорії творчості. Згідно з цією теорією, творчість передбачає генерування ідей, які відображають успіх інвестування людського капіталу. Це означає, що навіть звичайна думка, відомий факт чи традиційно повторювана інформація завжди мають потенціал для креативної трансформації в мовленні. Все, що потрібно, – це акти креативності, зміни перспективи, оновлення аналітичних інструментів або висловлення того, що спочатку здавалося неможливим. У книжці цю теорію втілено в навчальній стратегії, яка інтегрує креативні акти, техніки, прийоми для створення текстів українською мовою з урахуванням жанрових і стилістичних стандартів, зазначених у навчальній програмі. Зразками мовної творчості слугують англомовні художні тексти в українському перекладі, а також науково-популярні й наукові

тексти, що сприяють розвитку важливого різновиду мислення – латерального. Авторки пропонують набір дидактичних прийомів, які можна використовувати в класі. Це дасть змогу вчителям-філологам розробляти цікаві уроки, розвивати власну мовну творчість і надихати її у своїх учнів, розвинути їхнє мовлення в сучасних умовах мультикультурності й багатомовності.

Ключові слова: усне і писемне мовлення, акти креативності, латеральне мислення, навчальна стратегія.

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