

## Creative abilities development of future engineers by means of drama at foreign language extracurricular activities

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**Abstract.** One of the challenges of modern education is to strengthen the fundamentals of science, develop students' communication and teamwork skills, critical and creative thinking skills. The approach presented in this paper outlines the benefits of drama while teaching a foreign language. Drama has the potential to make the learning process funny and memorable for students, gives opportunities for developing their communication skills, builds confidence in foreign language speaking, encourages self-expression, develops curiosity and creativity. The paper represents the authors' experience of using drama at foreign language extracurricular activities while teaching technical university students.

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### Introduction

*Don't think. Thinking is the enemy of creativity.*

*It's self-conscious,*

*and anything self-conscious is lousy.*

*You can't try to do things.*

*You simply must do things.*

*Ray Bradbury*

Nowadays many educational establishments face the challenge of rethinking teaching methods, curricula and syllabi. This is due to the fact that modern society, technology and competition in the market make a lot of demands to alumni of technical universities.

Universities must hold students to the highest standards in their studies and prepare them for professional activities. Thus alumni have to:

- demonstrate basic mathematical, engineering knowledge;
- be aware of advanced concepts in their field;
- choose and apply appropriate analytical and design methods;
- find necessary literature, databases and other sources of information;
- know how to plan and conduct an experiment, explain data and draw conclusions;
- work individually and in teams;
- use creative approach to elaborate original ideas.

Creativity is an inherent quality for engineering. Creative potential of an engineer is a high degree of brain building, its flexibility and

originality, ability to generate ideas, quickly change methods of action in accordance with new requirements and business conditions. In short, to design new products, engineers must be creative and innovative.

Researchers give weight to engineers' creativity development as it becomes one of key factors of modern society destined to cope with ongoing and future problems [1, 2]. Moreover, engineers perceive innovation and creativity as vital and commonly found for their profession [3]. Lack of creativity may set back professional engineering career [4]. What is more, employers have an interest in dealing with creative engineers who can produce and develop innovations [5]. There is no denying that education should identify the potentialities of learners and encourage their creative abilities [6]. All indications are that creativity in engineering education is one of the critical issues for universities [7].

Creative personality education is hardly possible without the use of such an effective means as artistic expression. At this point drama takes a special place because it can acquaint with universal moral values, set artistic attitude to activity, promote self-actualization and self-fulfillment of future engineers. The use of drama facilitates intercultural awareness [8]. Moreover, drama provides countless advantages while foreign language teaching. It:

- encourages intelligence development;
- develops mental flexibility, independence;
- promotes self-expression;
- contributes to emotional understanding of the play;
- provides students' confidence and foreign

language proficiency;

- helps to overcome resistance to the foreign language speaking and the fear of making mistakes;

- helps to enlarge the language knowledge and practice it;

- gives opportunities to practice pronunciation, speaking tone, stress;

- teaches to work in groups and builds new friendship;

- provides students with experience through which they overcome cultural barriers.

Beyond any doubt, acquired skills of creative work will help graduates to adapt to future professional environment, climb career ladder, look at problems from different perspectives, work in an inter- or multi- disciplinary team.

While foreign language teaching it is essential to develop communicative competence and provide language practice [9, 10]. Being a powerful teaching tool, drama encourages and promotes communication [11]. Drama as a teaching tool helps learn foreign language grammar and vocabulary [12]. Students get mileage out of being challenged with language that is somewhat beyond their independent level of comprehension [13].

At our foreign language extracurricular activities we use role-plays, dialogues, discussions and drama. We use drama to foster language skills development and develop creative abilities of future engineers. After the performance students share their impressions, give advice to actors, discuss the play and do various tasks prepared well in advance.

Choosing a text for dramatization we have to take into account its difficulties as they lead to disappointment and frustration [14]. This time we staged a cut version of "Othello" by William Shakespeare. Besides we prepared simple costumes and decorations. After the performance, the audience was given the following quiz:

1) Where does the tragedy "Othello" begin?

- Florence
- Venice
- Verona
- Milan

2) Who is Brabantio?

- Othello's lieutenant
- Desdemona's father
- Othello's servant
- Desdemona's cousin

3) What is the name of Desdemona's suitor?

- Roderigo
- Montano
- Graziano
- Iago

4) What is Othello?

- soldier
- sailor
- general
- captain

5) Where does the duke send Othello to aid in the defense against the Turks?

- Egypt
- Cyprus
- Syria
- Crete

6) Who finds Desdemona's handkerchief on the floor?

- Cassio
- Bianca
- Iago
- Emilia

7) Who wounds Cassio in the ambush?

- Iago
- Lodovico
- Roderigo
- Graziano

8) Who says:

"But words are words; I never yet did hear  
That the bruised heart was pierced through the ear"?

- Emilia
- Duke of Venice
- Roderigo
- Brabantio

9) Who says:

"O! beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on"?

- Cassio
- Othello
- Iago
- Desdemona

10) Who says "Have you prayed tonight, Desdemona?"

- Othello
- Gratiano
- Emilia
- Cassio

Answers: 1 b; 2 b; 3 a; 4 c; 5 b; 6 d; 7 a; 8 d; 9 c; 10 a.

Later we discussed the quiz results and the tragedy (e.g. What was the tragedy about? Do you admire or disapprove characters? What sort of character is ...? What would you do if ...? Did you learn anything new? etc.).

Thus creativity plays an important role in the success and creative thinking becomes an essential part of an engineering profession. Our experience has shown that it is possible to use drama for engineering students with the purpose to teach creative thinking, flexibility, openness and team-work skills. Drama at foreign language extracurricular activities helps not

only improve the language skills but also teaches interaction, encourages communication, empowers confidence and stimulates imagination.

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