Creative Classroom Climate Assessment for the Advancement of Foreign Language Acquisition

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Abstract. The creative process contributed greatly to the development of human civilization and society. But its relevance today has tendency to develop. Europe needs to boost its capacity for creativity and innovation for both social and economic reasons. That is why the Commission has adopted a proposal to declare 2009 the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

The research indicates that creativity is central to language learning and language teaching as well. What is more, the creative strategies significant for learning a new language or trying to communicate in a foreign language are transferable skills that benefit other areas of learners' lives and society as a whole. The ability to communicate in several languages is a great advantage for individuals, organizations and companies. It breaks cultural stereotypes, encourages thinking "outside the box", and can help to develop innovative products and services. These are qualities and activities that have real economic value. The goal of education is to provide a country with skilled and creative people, capable not simply repeat what other generations have created but - are able to create something new. As creativity is essential in an increasingly competitive world, the ability to develop climate that nurtures creativity is crucial. However, it does not occur spontaneously: teachers need to take responsibility to establish the right environment and to incorporate a creativity strategy for better language performance.

The study aims to investigate the students’ studying at the Lithuanian University of Agriculture perceptions of their classroom climate with regards to creativity. It uses the self-adapted questionnaire model relying on the works of Ekvall (1971, 1987, 1999), Isaksen (1995, 1998) and Amabile (1988, 1989, 1997) in order to establish to what extent the internal climate factors are favourable for the development of creativity. Creative climate has been extensively researched mostly from organizational perspectives whereas our investigation focuses on higher education settings. The research is based on the results of the creative classroom climate assessment questionnaire and provides some implications for supporting and encouraging the creative class climate to facilitate the advancement of foreign language teaching/learning.

Key words: creative climate, creativity, assessment, questionnaire, foreign language.