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DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS’ CREATIVITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOMS IN  
NARVA PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
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## **PREFACE**

Nowadays, people have achieved many accomplishments in many different branches of science. Our world is developing rapidly, and so is our education. We live in the era of media revolution, which heavily influences our lifestyles, the way of communication and thinking. For that reason, it is necessary to reconsider many aspects of today's education, to improve the learning process, which is aimed at meeting a modern person's needs, at the social and professional development of students as future specialists and members of society. Education is an essential part of human society, and we have to find ways to improve our teaching and ways of acquiring new knowledge. Our future, the quality of people's lives, their job satisfaction, social status and much more depend on how people are educated. There are many skills, and creativity is one of them, that we need to improve to be more successful in our lives.

The aims of the present study are to analyse and systematise information on the development and support of students' creativity in primary school in general and in English lessons in particular; to find out how the development of students' creativity is supported in official Estonian documents on education; to examine if and how primary school students' creativity is encouraged in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classes in Narva primary schools.

The paper consists of an introduction, two core chapters and a conclusion. The introduction reveals the relevance of the study, gives an overview of the key terms and previous research in this area. Chapter I provides an overview of official frameworks and documents (Estonian National Curriculum, Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020) in terms of the development of creativity and an overview of activities which promote the development of students' creativity in EFL classes. Chapter II presents and analyses the results of an empirical research into whether and how English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers support and develop students' creativity in Narva schools at the primary level. The conclusion summarises the results of the research and comments on the research questions.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Today, the English language has become one of the primary means of communication for people of different nationalities. Unlimited expanses of the Internet, overseas travelling, different types of entertainment, reading foreign literature in the original language and much more are open for people who know English. But learning a foreign language might be quite a wearisome and uninteresting process for young learners. Therefore, methodologists and teachers are faced with the question of how to make English lessons interesting and exciting for children, so that it can improve the quality of the educational process and make it more effective. Moreover, foreign language lessons can and should contribute to the development of students' creative abilities. Creative activities in EFL (English as a foreign language) lessons can give students wide opportunities to explore their talents and develop their skills.

Higher-educated people are often more likely to have better job offers than less-educated people. Consequently, education makes people more competitive in the job market. According to the article "The 10 skills you need to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution" by Gray (2016), the skills that are required in today's workforce have changed. Creativity, critical thinking and complex problem solving take the first three places in the top 10 skills that employees will need and employers will be looking for. Businesses are going to use computers, robots and artificial intelligence to do work that was previously done by people. Many workers may lose their jobs because of being replaced by computers and advanced robots. Therefore, if the world is becoming more and more computerised, employees should be more creative than before to take advantage of these changes, because machines are not as creative as people yet. In such a way, educators, governments and business leaders need to be proactive in skill improvement and re-education of people so that they could be more competitive than machines.

### **What is creativity?**

There are several key terms that are closely related to creativity, such as critical thinking and thinking outside the box, lower and higher-order thinking skills, and problem-solving. According to the Cambridge dictionary (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary Online, 2020), creativity is "the ability to produce original and unusual ideas or to make something new or imaginative". This skill could help a person to take a fresh, different look on a current

situation or problem whether it is a problem in personal life or at work. The development of creative thinking happens in childhood or adolescence. A person with creative and non-standard abilities can create and isolate something new from accustomed and well-established things. At present, the study of creativity goes in two different directions: connection with the intellect and personality. J. P. Guilford (1954) was the first who gave his assessment by highlighting 16 intellectual features that characterize the ability of creative thinking according to the following criteria: the speed of the thinking process, thinking flexibility, originality, intellectual curiosity, ability of developing hypotheses, etc. But exploring the ability of our intellect and the concept of creativity by using classical intellect tests to give an assessment, scientists have come to contradictory conclusions. They could not get a definite answer to the question whether the level of the intellect and the ability to create are connected to each other. (Gurevich, 1997)

A creative person should be also able to think critically. That means that a person can think carefully about a subject or idea without it affecting his/her feelings or opinions. That skill could help us to be more attentive to details, to find weaknesses in our and other peoples' arguments, to work with concepts and to express thoughts clearly and reasonably. Critical thinking as an academic discipline is based on the rules of formal logic, theory and practice of argumentation, rhetoric and scientific epistemology. One of the most prominent scholars in this area was Karl Popper (*Objektive Erkenntnis*, 1973), who considered that critical thinking is a basis of rationality. According to Popper, knowledge does not exist without the practice of advancing a hypothesis, its substantiation or refutation.

Another very important term which is closely related to creativity is thinking outside the box. Merriam-Webster dictionary explains it as “exploring ideas that are creative and unusual and that are not limited or controlled by rules or traditions” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2019). It means that people need to be more open-minded and think not as they are expected or accustomed to but in different and divergent ways.

The concept of higher-order and low-order thinking skills is the subject of heated discussion by many educators. This concept was first used by Benjamin Bloom in his book *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* (1956), where the author demonstrates educational goals and intended abilities of students in the form of a pyramid. It

is the best-known description of thinking skills, which includes six thinking skills structured from the most basic to the most advanced level. The top three levels of the pyramid – create, evaluate and analyze – constitute the “hot three” of higher-order thinking skills. Higher-order thinking involves acting by using knowledge. So, knowledge is important, but it stands at the bottom of the pyramid. Higher-order thinking is a broad concept that includes different types of thinking: analytical, creative, evaluative. The main goal of formation of this type of thinking among students is advancement of the thinking process for an effective solution of scientific, practical and social problems. Lower-order thinking is the basis of skills which are required to carry out activities requiring higher-order thinking skills. These lower-order skills are usually taught in schools very well and include such activities as remembering, understanding and applying.

Another important term is problem-solving. It means the process of finding effective solutions to different issues. People are faced with problems all the time, and this skill is essential not only in every employment sector, but it also is beneficial and useful in personal life. It is often identified as a separate skill, but it also involves many other different skills such as communication, active listening, analysis, creativity, decision making, researching and analytical skills, finding facts and a lot more. Problem-solving skills can help people achieve what they want to achieve without major obstacles. This method of finding solutions consists of identifying and defining a problem, generating alternative solutions, evaluating and selecting the best alternative, and implementing the chosen solution.

The result of the PISA test in 2018 showed that students in Estonian schools are ahead of their peers in most other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in terms of developing reading and science literacy skills enough to make it to the top of the ranking. Estonia entered the top five with a total score of 1592 points, behind only the Chinese BSJZ region (Beijing-Shanghai-Jiangsu-Guangdong), Singapore, Macau and Hong Kong, and ranked first among European countries (Education GPS, OECD, 2018). Without a doubt, the results are outstanding. However, very often students today study in order to pass school-leaving exams, and the focus is not on how to create or invent something new. However, many of the jobs that the current education systems were meant for are now disappearing into oblivion. At the same time, entirely new forms of work are emerging,

especially as a result of the powerful transformative influence of digital technology (Robinson, Aronica, 2016).

The US-based consortium Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which brings together nineteen states and thirty-three corporate partners, stands for a comprehensive approach to curriculum design. They developed a P21 framework for the 21st Century Learning. It was developed “with input from educators, education experts, and business leaders to define and illustrate the skills, knowledge, expertise, and support systems that students need to succeed in work, life, and citizenship.” (Partnership for 21st Century Skills Core content integration, 2016) Learning includes the following 21st-century student outcomes:

- 1) Interdisciplinary topics: global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, environmental awareness
- 2) Learning and innovation skills: creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communication and collaboration.
- 3) Information, media and technology skills: information literacy, media literacy, ICT (information, communications and technology) literacy
- 4) Life and career skills: flexibility and adaptivity, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills Core content integration, 2016)

As can be seen, this framework is an excellent example of outcomes and competencies which students should nowadays develop. Most of the outcomes to a greater or lesser extent are associated with the concept of creativity, aimed at developing the student as a creative person. It gives a picture of what a 21st-century person should look like, which skill he/she needs to succeed nowadays. By no means all of these skills are exclusive “skills of the 21st century”. These skills have always been relevant, and today they have become especially in demand. Proponents of the educational standardisation movement claim to consider them essential too, but the methods and approaches it stands for, in fact, do not leave room for these characteristics (Robinson, Aronica, 2016: 42).

Reforms in the field of education are not a new phenomenon. It has always been a topic of discussion what are the goals of education and how children should be taught. Today, the movement for the standardisation of education has become truly global. Since 2000, student



performance ratings, conducted within the framework of PISA, have been the strongest impetus for the education standardisation movement. These ratings are based on standardised tests in math, reading, and science (Robinson, Aronica, 2016: 14). Yet, Robinson (2013) considers that tests should not dominate the education field and one of the main task of educators is to awaken and support the creative abilities of students.

Similar features characterize creativity in all spheres of human activity. In any creative activity, we go beyond the boundaries of the known to explore new possibilities, but at the same time use the acquired skills. In the early stages of the creative process, ideas, schematic sketches, and improvisations on a specific topic arise. Creativity can start with a half-thought and half-word - with a sketch, plan, melody theme, or a hint of a solution to a problem. Creativity always implies work, which means that it requires the use of some means of expression. It can be a physical material: steel, wood, clay, cloth, or food; it can be a means of sensory influence: sound, light, voice or body; it can be cognitive means: words, numbers or symbols. Whatever the ways and forms of expression, they will always be in the closest connection with the idea transmitted with their help. Creativity is not only generating ideas but also forming judgments about those ideas. This process includes a detailed elaboration of initial ideas, their research, improvement and even rejection in favour of other ideas that arise along the way. Value judgment – which ideas work and which do not – stems from critical thinking. Evaluation and criticism can occur throughout the creative process and include breaks for reflection (Robinson, 2013: 169-170).

### **Development of creativity in primary school**

At the beginning of primary schooling, children develop an interest in learning without realizing its importance. When their interest in achieving a result begins to form, then interest in acquiring knowledge increases. In such a way, the child has a motivation to learn. Educational activity will be successful if the motives of young learners coincide with the content of the subject. There are three groups of motives: cognitive, social and personal (Sapogova, 2001). Cognitive motives are aimed at acquiring knowledge and learning skills. Social motives refer to students' understanding of the importance of learning, their effort to establish relationships with others and to get their approval. Personal motives could be good grades, praise by parents and teachers.

Primary school students are actively involved in various types of activities: playing, studying, doing sports, art and others. Different types of educational activities involve the development of mental processes of cognition and perception of the surrounding world (Astrahantseva, 2018). Imagination develops especially intensively during the ages of 5 to 15 and needs a special focus on it. And if imagination is not purposefully developed at this age, a rapid decrease in the activity of this function may occur in the future, so that person's ability to think creatively, being interested in arts, science and other disciplines may decline (Muhina, 2012). Also, as young learners have a lack of real-life experience and need to learn abstract material, imagination comes to the aid. Thus, the significance of imagination in mental development is colossal.

A foreign language (in this case English) as a general educational subject can and should contribute to the development of students' creative abilities. Learning foreign languages is the way people can develop their knowledge in different areas of life, science, art, which is essential for general education. In foreign languages lessons students expand their knowledge and ideas they have received in other academic subjects. The development of creativity is one of the most important aims of basic education, because this process goes through all the stages of formation of a child's personality: children learn how to be independent, to take initiative, to express themselves (Bim, 2002).

In order to develop creativity among younger students, certain conditions are necessary. Teachers should be also creative to promote students' creativity development. Teachers should create a safe learning environment for students, which includes quick information, democratic personal, competitive, suitable materials and healthy social psychological environments (Yang, 2004):

- “Quick information environment: it includes quick and broad information exchange and fast network connection. This also requires the teachers be well informed and receive new technology in time” (Yang, 2004: para 5);
- Democratic personal environment means that students can freely express their ideas and talk about their thoughts without a fear of being judged;
- Competitive environment implies that competition helps people to find new solutions. Competition can lead to amazing ideas and new discoveries;

- Suitable material environment. Students need some material support, which corresponds not only to the topic of the lesson, but also arouses interest among student, develops their creative skills.
- Healthy social psychological environment is a place where students could feel confident, relaxed and supported.

According to Gering (2018), the development of creative abilities in primary school is most effective under the following condition:

- an alternative is suggested, the tasks are aimed at using imagination;
- activities should be aimed at developing the abilities of each child individually;
- active use of technologies for the development of creative thinking;
- friendly environment;
- positive attitude from the teacher;
- mental support and lack of criticism;
- different equipment which supports the development of students' curiosity;
- positive feedback on the expressions of original ideas;
- providing a platform for the implementations of creative abilities;
- use of a personal example of a creative approach to problem solving;
- providing the student with the opportunity to be interested and consulted (Gering, 2018).

So, in order for creative abilities of students to develop, a special atmosphere should be created to involve students in a real creative process. Also, teachers should be creative as much as students. "A creative teacher is the one who encourages reasonable risks and unpredictable situations, while reinforcing creative activities. A close relationship with students and a motivating class environment should also be both in harmony with a good scientific background of the teacher and with her/his ability to be challenging at the cognitive level." (Morais, Azevedo, 2011: para 6).

Teaching children today teachers should find different ways to present study material, use modern technologies, take children's needs and interests into account, be patient and sensitive. Cox (n.d.: para 2-5) states that creative teachers have a passion for learning, which means that teachers also should develop their skills and improve their knowledge, because

the world of education is always evolving. Additionally, using different teaching strategies to teach the same concept is a good way to reach each individual student. Creative teachers are creative not only in teaching, but also in other fields, they have their own interests and passions, which they bring into the teaching process. Also, teachers should show to students real-world connections, to highlight how the study material connects with the real world. In addition, Cox (n.d.: para 6) mentions that creative teachers never stress over standards but use them as guides to create innovative ways to reach students. Undoubtedly, it is not that simple to implement because creative education implies higher requirements to teachers. Teachers should improve their skills and knowledge, and have more experience to face any kinds of questions and doubts of students (Yang, 2004: para 20). Lessons should be more thoughtful, well structured, contain fairly diverse activities that will captivate students, as well as cover their interests. That means that the teacher should keep up with the times, know new world trends, develop digital competences, because nowadays students are increasingly using modern technologies for communication, studying or entertainment.

To summarize the above, it could be said that the initial stage of education is very important and helps to lay the foundation in the development of creative abilities. The development of individual creative abilities is very important, since it develops initiative and decision making, self-expression, and self-confidence. A special atmosphere should be created, first of all, to involve the student in a real creative process. It is also important for the teacher to pay attention not only to the development of students, but also develop themselves. After all, the teacher is also an example to follow. The teacher must keep up to date, use modern technologies in the classroom activities, employ different teaching methods and techniques. A safe classroom environment should be created so that children feel relaxed and free, and could express their opinions without fear of being judged by others and especially the teacher.

### **Aims of the thesis and research questions**

The aims of the present research are to analyse and systematize information on the development and support of students' creativity in primary school in general and in English lessons in particular; to find out how the development of students' creativity is supported in official Estonian documents on education; to examine if and how primary school students' creativity is supported in the English as a foreign language classes in Narva primary schools in Estonia.

The research questions are:

- Is the development of creativity supported in Estonian official documents on education?
- How can creativity be developed in primary schools in English lessons (e.g., materials, resources and techniques)?
- How is creativity developed in Narva primary schools in EFL lessons?
- What issues might EFL teachers experience in terms of primary school students' creativity development?

# **CHAPTER I. DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' CREATIVITY AT SCHOOL**

## **1.1 Analysis of official documents**

In order to reveal how and whether creativity is mentioned in the Estonian framework documents on education, the following documents have been analysed, paying special attention to the sections that mention creativity and concepts closely linked to it discussed in the Introduction: Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools, Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, Estonian Educational Strategy 2021-2035. The results of the analysis of the documents are summarised below.

### **1.1.1. Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools**

The national curriculum is an official governmental document which consists of a set of standards and requirements. It is used by primary and secondary schools to provide general education. The national curriculum for basic schools establishes the national standards for basic education. It shall be applied in all general education schools of the Republic of Estonia which provide a possibility of acquiring basic education (National curriculum for basic schools, 2011). The curriculum sets certain general goals of education and more specific requirements for every school subject. In what follows, I will analyse the general competencies at the first and second stage of study outlined in the National Curriculum.

General competencies include value, social, self-management, learning to learn, mathematics and entrepreneurship competences. All of these competences, to a greater or lesser degree, imply the development of students' creativity. The first is value competence, which includes not only the evaluation and sense of "one's ties" with people, nature, culture and identity, but also involves the appreciation of arts and shaping the sense of aesthetics, which is closely related to creative skills. Also, the self-management and learning to learn competences confirm the idea that creativity is very important, because it involves such skills as problem-solving, higher and lower-order thinking skills and critical thinking. Arguably, entrepreneurship competence ties in very well with the development of students' creativity because it involves an ability to create new ideas and carry them out.

By the end of the first stage of study (3rd grade) students must have a certain set of skills. The first stage competences are more focused on students' adaptation to school, their behaviour and self-perception of the student in the society; respect for the country, nature and society in which he or she lives. And also, first stage competences are aimed at the formation of basic (lower order) skills, such as: counting and ability of using measuring instruments, reading, using and understanding learned expressions in a foreign language, finding and understanding information in a text. But no less important is also that students should be able to compare and classify objects, notice and describe differences and similarities between them, which leads to the development of higher order thinking skills. As far as creativity is concerned, it is also mentioned that children should be able to assess and notice the beauty around them, appreciate creativity and enjoy participation in creative exercises and activities, and also be able to self-express. At this stage, however, it is necessary to pay more attention to the development of creative skills, because, as has been already mentioned, the development of creativity occurs effectively in childhood or adolescence.

At the second stage of study (grades 4-6) students are already adapted to the school life. So, basic skills that were acquired at the first stage of study are further improved and advanced. The emphasis of learning at the second stage is on becoming more independent and responsible for actions, words, behaviour and making own decisions. Now students should realize his or her role as a member of different sectors of the society: school, family, friends and partners. In that way, students develop socially. He or she should know how to plan the time for work; can see their mistakes and correct them. What is more, students should learn how to express him or herself, to be aware of his or her weaknesses and strengths. At this stage, less attention is paid to the development of children's creative potential, but it implies involvement of a student as an individual, and as part of the society.

### **1.1.2 Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools, Subject Area: Foreign Languages**

According to the National Curriculum (2011), learning of foreign languages nowadays should be more focused on communicative needs, based on the learner and his/her communication goals. Knowing the structure of the language is not as important as knowing how to use the language, the ability to understand and explain the content which is presented in foreign language orally and in writing. Students develop correct use of the language

through long term practice. Communication competence is developed through the development of the four sub-skills of the language - listening, reading, speaking and writing. These sub-skills are taught in an integrated way.

Foreign language learning requires an open and flexible methodological approach to adapt learning to the needs of the student. The essential principles in learner-centred teaching of foreign languages are:

1. students' active participation in the process of studying, their intelligent and creative use of foreign languages and formation of learning strategies;
2. accordance of the content of the study materials used in language teaching and learners' interests;
3. implementation of various forms of active learning (including pair work and group work);
4. the change of the role of the teacher from intermediaries of knowledge to a partner for a student and a guide in the acquisition of knowledge;
5. versatile study materials, their adaptation and supplementation on the basis of the student's goals and needs.

In the EFL classroom students learn to understand and accept different value systems based on cultural specificities. Social and citizenship competences are closely related to value competences. Different forms of learning (e.g. group work, project learning) and active participation in cultural programs support language learning and contributes to the development of social and civic competences. Self-awareness competence develops through topics used in language learning. Self-reliance and interpersonal issues are represented in foreign language lessons through discussions, role-plays and other learning activities that help students to gain a deeper understanding of themselves. Assessing one's strengths and weaknesses promote the development of learning to learn competence. Learning to learn competences are constantly developed by applying different learning strategies (e.g. searching for information from foreign language sources, using a dictionary, self-reflection and analysis of learned knowledge and skills).

As was previously mentioned, communication competence is essential in language learning. Well-developed self-expression skills, text comprehension and text creation are prerequisites



for successful communication. Along with communication skills, the learner develops the ability to compare the similarities and differences between one's own and another's culture, to understand and value the peculiarities of other cultures and languages, to be tolerant and to avoid prejudice against a foreigner. Entrepreneurial competence is first and foremost about the confidence and courage that a person's foreign language skills give. Coping in a foreign language environment broadens the learner's opportunities to implement his / her ideas and goals and creates preconditions for cooperation with other peers and likeminded individuals who speak the same foreign language.

Foreign language learning is also linked to mathematics, science and technology competence through communication competence. At the beginning students learn to calculate in a foreign language, and when the language skill increases, to understand texts from different walks of life and activities, including information graphics or other types of visual information. While students create, correct and present different types of text, they learn to use technological tools. The acquisition of foreign languages should be combined with the use of integrated language learning materials in cooperation with other subject fields. Integration subjects are language and literature, math, natural science and social subjects, art subjects, technology and physical education.

There are eight cross-curricular topics which are lifelong learning and career planning, environment and sustainable development, citizens' initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural identity, information environment, technology and innovation, health and safety, values and morality. The aim of these cross-curricular competencies is to develop students as emotionally, socially and physically healthy members of society, with respect for others and own culture, with understanding and acceptance of social values and moral principles of different people, who is capable of self-analyze and able to use modern technologies, work and normally communicate with others.

According to the curriculum, teachers should use different teaching methods and techniques such as role plays, discussions, project-based learning, etc. The learning environment should also support language acquisition. Diverse learning environment is provided by museums, exhibitions, theatres, cinemas, concerts, computer / multimedia classes, student exchange, study trips, meetings with native speakers of the foreign language.

At the first stage of study (1-3 grades) there are up to three lessons of foreign language per week. At this stage in language learning games are essential, songs and poems are broadly used. The main emphasis is on such sub-skills as listening and speaking. Primary vocabulary is acquired. Students learn to distinguish the sounds of a foreign language and acquire the correct pronunciation. The main learning strategy is to repeat and relate what has been learned.

At the second stage of study (4-6 grades) there are three lessons per week. The teacher encourages students to communicate in a foreign language, increasing the amount of writing. In addition to listening and speaking, reading and writing skills are also becoming important including orthographic skills and creativity.

At the third stage of study (7-9 grades) there are three lessons per week. All sub-skills are developed equally. The development of writing skills is facilitated by different forms of creative work (e.g. poems, short compositions, personal letters, messages, notices, short reports). Attention is paid to developing students' creativity both in oral and written self-expression. Students learn to understand cultural differences, to acknowledge them and to take them into account; to appreciate the diversity of ways of thinking, to express an opinion and to see and consider different points of view.

To summarize the above, the learning outcomes that the students must achieve by the completion of each stage of study are more focused on the development of communicative competencies, and imply that the student understands a foreign language, can maintain a conversation on different (previously studied) topics, can write and read. Language learning enriches thinking, develops the ability to express oneself accurately, create texts and understand them. The curriculum does not imply the development of creativity in the broadest meaning of the word. According to the document, the development of creativity mainly comes down to the ability to write non-standard texts, the ability to express personal opinion and lead a discussion. Using methodological keys, such as visiting museums, listening to songs, watching a movie, project-based learning, contribute to the development of creativity, but learning outcomes are mostly aimed at developing core competencies, such as: grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing and reading. In such a way it could be

said that the curriculum for foreign languages does not sufficiently support the development of students' creativity.

### **1.1.3. Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020**

Estonia is a small country and there is a common political and societal tendency to acknowledge the importance of continuous learning, of being creative and proactive in order to be successful. During the period of 2009-2011, civil society organizations, the Estonian Cooperation Assembly and the Educational Forum, the Ministry of Education and Research cooperated to give a start for the project “Five Challenges in Estonian Education – Education Strategy for 2012-2020”. The document was officially adopted by the government only on February 13, 2014.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy has five strategic goals which are change in the approach to learning, competent and motivated teachers and school leadership, concordance of lifelong learning opportunities with needs of the labour market, a digital focus in lifelong learning, equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning.

1. *A change in the approach to learning.* Nowadays teachers are not just a “source of information”, but their work includes many aspects such as creation of connections and shapes value judgments, development of creative and critical thinking, ability to work in a team, written and oral communication skills. By implementing this approach, the individual or social development of each learner will be supported as well as their learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship.
2. *Competent and motivated teachers and school leadership.* The main point of this goal is to change the image of our educators in the society. The evaluation of such professions as a teacher or school leader and their pay should correspond to their professional qualifications and effectiveness.
3. *Concordance of lifelong learning opportunities with needs of the labour market.* The goal of this aspect is to make qualified and flexible study opportunities available to people of different age groups and regions, which also take into account the need of the labour market.

4. *A digital focus in lifelong learning.* The aim is to adopt and use modern digital technology to learn and teach. This approach could also help to improve people's digital competences in general.
5. *Equal opportunities and increased participation in lifelong learning.* Equal opportunities to education should be given to people of different age groups, social statuses and special needs, but there are also a lot of linguistic, social, economic, regional and also gender-related barriers that restrict them. (Estonian Lifelong Strategy 2020, 2014)

This strategy aims at developing the educational system of Estonia, giving people more opportunities to get a better education, and in the future a better workplace with better conditions. The increase in the level of work satisfaction among teachers, as well as improving their qualifications will motivate them. Teachers will be able to use their new acquired knowledge and skills in their further work. Using new techniques for conducting lessons, individual or social development of each student, as well as students' creativity and entrepreneurship skills will be better supported.

#### **1.1.4. Estonian Education Strategy 2021-2035**

The Educational Strategy 2021-2035 is a follow-up to the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, which sets educational goals for the next 15 years. This strategy is based on vision documents prepared by experts, results of education strategy working groups, research and analyses and the input of consultations with stakeholders.

The main strategic goal is to equip Estonian people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to fulfil potential in their personal lives, work and society, and support the promotion of quality of life in Estonia and global sustainable development.

According to the strategy, by 2035, the percentage of people with a low level of education, aged 18 to 24, should decrease from 11.3 to 7.5. The number of adults with vocational education (25-64 years old) should increase from 73 to 80 percent. Adult participation in lifelong learning should reach 25 percent (currently 19.7). For 2035, the proportion of students with advanced skills (Level 5 or 6 in the PISA test) in reading will increase from

13.9 percent to 20 percent, in mathematics from 15, to 25, and in science from 12.2 to 20 percent.

There are also three strategic goals that support the main goal. The first goal is that learning opportunities should be plentiful and accessible, and the education system allows for a smooth transition between levels and types of education. The second goal is that the approach to teaching and learning is forward-looking and learner-centred, as well as a new generation of teachers provided. And the last strategic goal is that learning opportunities are in line with the development of needs of society and the labour market.

Since this Master's thesis is aimed at studying the development of students' creativity, a more significant goal in this context is the second strategic goal, which implies approaches to teaching and the development of the teacher's profession. To improve learning efficiency and continually support student's development, curriculum design and implementation and student assessment should follow the principles of modern learning and develop intelligent teaching materials and methodologies. To achieve this goal, the following actions are planned:

- to modernize the teaching process, create curricula that follow the principles of sustainable development;
- to place more emphasis on general skills in addition to subject knowledge, including self-directed learning and student's development as a citizen;
- to apply more practical learning (e.g., problem-based and project-based learning), to make learning tasks more meaningful and to develop the ability to solve challenges in a creative, collaborative and innovative way in personal life, learning and the society;
- to make the assessment system supportive of the learner's development, to create conditions and opportunities at all levels and types of education, so that the development and assessment of practical and general skills would be a natural part of learning alongside subject and professional skills;

- to support the development and implementation of diverse teaching methods and methods (including digital pedagogy). (Estonian Education Strategy, 2019)

According to this strategy, the changes that must take place in the educational system will support the development of students' creative abilities to a much greater extent. The popularization of the teaching profession, as well as the encouragement of teachers, should greatly affect the quality of teaching. Education in Estonia is changing in accordance with the demand in the labour market, and also aims to develop skills of the 21st century, such skills of students as creativity, problem-solving skills, self-determination. New methods and approaches are being introduced into teaching, such as project- and problem-based learning.

### **1.2. Supporting creativity in the EFL classroom in primary school**

Learning a foreign language is effective if students are actively involved in the process. There are different ways to motivate and stimulate students to learn, for example, play, art and research. Games are a major part of learning English in primary school, which is also confirmed in the Estonian National Curriculum (2011). Games have many advantages for both learners and language teachers. Games contribute to intense language practice. They can be used at the beginning of the lesson or at the end to stimulate, reduce stress after the test. It is important that games help in learning the language (Gozcu & Caganaga, 2016).

In modern methodological literature on teaching foreign languages special attention is paid to non-traditional forms of lessons. These types of lessons are taught in unusual, non-standard ways. Such lessons include different types of activities, such as lesson-performance, lesson-project, lesson-holiday, an interview lesson and other forms (Gering, 2018). Unconventional lessons are more interactive and conducive to developing students' creativity. They can help to develop students' self-esteem and self-confidence, because students learn how to present their own opinion to others, speak in front of public, respect each other; develop a sense of responsibility; contribute to initiative-taking; develop students' imagination, their abilities to think outside the box; help students become better problem solvers, not to be afraid of difficulties.

Gering (2018) describes 12 strategies for developing creative potential of students. Using these strategies and principles in the lessons may help the teacher to develop students creative potential and be creatively savvy. The principles are:

1. teacher should be a role model for students;
2. if the child questions the accuracy of the opinion of the majority opinion, he/she should be encouraged;
3. making mistakes is normal;
4. to encourage taking a reasonable risk;
5. to create such activities which allow students to demonstrate their creative abilities;
6. to test study material in such a way that students have an opportunity to apply their creative abilities;
7. to encourage students to find solutions and solve problems;
8. to approve and reward creative ideas and their results;
9. to give enough time so that students could show their abilities and creative thinking skills;
10. encourage tolerance for incomprehensibility and uncertainty;
11. to teach children to be prepared for the fact that a creative process involves some difficulties;
12. to find a correspondence between the environment and the creative person (Gering, 2018)

According to Wright (in Maley, Peachey, 2015) teachers should engage students in the EFL lessons, by challenging students, inviting them to hypothesize, create and share, and showing students that teachers care about their contribution more than about the accuracy of the language forms. Tomlinson states that teachers should use coursebooks “as a resource rather than follow a script” (in Maley, Peachey, 2015: 24) to adapt activities for developing students’ creativity. Many coursebooks contain tasks that imply only one correct answer. However, tasks of this kind do not contribute to the comprehensive development of students, do not allow them to use their imagination and a creative approach in completing the task. Creative activities that allow for more open-ended and freer forms of expression motivate and stimulate learners, encourage them to take risks and engage more deeply with language and exceed students’ current language abilities. Creativity plays an important role in learning

the target language. Jill and Charlie Hadfield (in Maley, Peachey, 2015: 51) explain it as “by thinking up new ideas of their own in the foreign language, students begin to make a personal investment in the language and culture. In a way they begin to “own” part of it, so they are no longer “foreigners””.

### 1.2.1. Activities to foster students’ creativity

As mentioned in the Introduction, creative teachers know and use different kinds of creative tools/techniques/methods to develop students’ creative abilities. This section gives an overview and some examples of different activities, techniques and approaches which can be used in the EFL classroom in primary school to develop students’ creativity, thinking outside the box, critical thinking, problem-solving.

These activities have been compiled from various methodological sources and listed in a table below (Table 1) to demonstrate which key concepts/skills that are closely related to creativity each activity engages. The cross in the table marks the skills that this activity may help to develop (as discussed in the Introduction):

- critical thinking - the ability to think carefully about a subject or idea without it affecting any feelings or opinions;
- problem-solving - the ability to find effective solutions to different kinds of problems;
- divergent thinking/thinking outside the box - the ability to think in another way not as expected, to be more open-minded;
- higher-order thinking skills - the ability to analyze, evaluate and create;
- creative skills understood here as visual arts, music, performance, acting etc.

A more detailed description of each activity is presented below the table.

**Table 1.** *Language learning activities that support students’ creativity*

Activities	critical thinking	problem-solving	divergent thinking /thinking outside the box	higher-order thinking skills	creative skills	producing sth new and original	imagination	speaking	writing	listening	reading	vocabulary	grammar
It happened yesterday		x	x				x	x				x	x



Visualization			x	x			x	x		x			
Frisbee	x		x				x	x				x	
Shaped poems					x	x			x				
Words in a story	x	x		x			x	x				x	
My opinion of a story	x		x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Make a book	x	x	x		x	x	x		x			x	
Simon says				x	x		x			x		x	x
Platform 17	x			x			x	x					x
Students make a game/exercise using a familiar framework		x	x		x		x				x	x	
Students invent a game			x	x	x	x	x		x			x	
Drawing elements			x		x		x					x	x
Lesson-project		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Lesson-performance		x	x		x	x		x		x		x	x
Lead-in text	x			x			x			x			
Discovery activities		x		x			x	x	x		x	x	x
Readiness activities			x	x			x	x		x			
Peer activities		x	x	x		x	x		x		x	x	
Dramatization	x			x	x	x	x	x		x		x	
Drawing interpretations instead of answering questions			x		x	x	x						
Interview with a character from the text	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Re-writing or continuing a story	x		x			x	x		x			x	x

Students develop challenging questions for others	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x
Magical content			x				x			x		x	
Making use of the master			x	x			x	x		x		x	x
Creating modern art	x		x		x	x	x	x		x		x	
Building a machine	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x	
Personal mind maps	x		x				x	x	x	x		x	x

This section gives an overview and descriptions of the above activities and techniques that can be used in the EFL classroom to develop students' creative abilities and other skills connected to creativity.

- 1) “*It happened yesterday*” (Read, 2007: 68). Children should split into groups and the teacher gives them cards with clue verbs which children use to make an imaginary story of their previous day. In such a way, kids learn English past tense, collaborate with others, and develop their problem-solving skills and imagination.
- 2) “*Visualization*” (Read, 2007: 24). Children close their eyes and relax. They should try and imagine the scene that is being described by the teacher, for example: “*It is a beautiful, sunny day. You are at the beach. The sun is shining, and the sea is deep blue-green. You are lying on a towel on the sand. You can feel the sand with your fingers – it is warm and soft. You hear the sound of waves – splash, splash, splash...*” When the teacher finishes the story, students should be given a few moments to come back from their fantasies into the classroom. After this, the teacher could ask some questions about children's visualizations, such as “Where were you? How did you feel? What could you see or feel there?”
- 3) Activity “*Frisbee*” (Read, 2007: 39), which focuses on developing creative thinking skills. By doing this task, children are encouraged to think flexibly and to develop their imagination. The sense of achievement and “ownership” of extraordinary ideas helps to build self-esteem and make learning enjoyable. The teacher is showing the object he/she

has chosen for the activity, e.g. a frisbee. The teacher suggests a couple of things that could be done with this object, for example: *You can use a frisbee as a plate*. After that the class should be divided into pairs or small groups. Teacher explains that children should think of ten or more options of how to use this object in a non-standard way. Time should be limited (5-7 minutes). If children do not know the word in English, they can use their mother language. When children are ready, teacher goes around the class getting one idea from each pair in turn. Words which children wrote in L1 should be written on the board, then teacher asks the children to use bilingual or picture dictionaries to find these words and report back to the class.

- 4) Activity “*Shaped poems*” (Read, 2007: 79-80) trains students’ writing skills as well as allows children to be creative with minimum linguistic competence. The task is to write a shaped poem, which is written and laid out in a shape of a picture of what it describes. To exemplify what children should do, the teacher prepares his own shaped poem as an example.
- 5) Activity “*Words in a story*” (Read, 2007: 117) helps children to develop their imagination and express their ideas freely through hypothesizing what the story is about. The procedure consists of introducing and writing a selection of key vocabulary from the story on a board. For example, it could be a story about an imaginary witch, teacher could use the words: *witch, poison, magic, castle, cat* etc. Also, flash cards or pictures on the board could be used as support material. Then teacher asks students to predict what happens in the story based on the vocabulary on the board and listens to children’s suggestions. Then teacher offers to listen to the actual story and to find out what happened. Then children could compare what happens with their predictions.
- 6) Activity “*My opinion of the story*” (Read, 2007: 135). Using this activity children are encouraged to develop their critical thinking skills and confidence in expressing their opinion. Children learn not only to share their own opinions, but also to respect other people’s opinion. Activity should be used when children have completed work on a story. Teacher explains that children should think about their personal opinion of the story they have read. It is better for teacher to prepare a “My opinion of the story” form or it could be done on a board so that children copy it. Then children should write or draw pictures with their opinion. At the end, teacher organizes a brief class discussion, children exchange and listen to each other’s opinions.

- 7) Activity “*Make a book*” (Read, 2007: 229). The activity is aimed to develop confidence and self-esteem, creative thinking skills. The task is to make a book with their own stories or reconstruct stories or poems, it also could be a book of favorite songs, etc. Of course, teacher should prepare an example book for children. Books can be of any type, such as a basic book, zig-zag book, flap book and origami book.
- 8) Activity “*Simon says*” is a very popular action game. It is a good way to activate students’ memory. It could be used in every part of the lesson. Students not only move in the classroom but also remember the words which they do not know. Words could be related to any topic, for example, winter. Teacher says to the class “*Simon says to play with snowballs*” students act like they are playing snowballs. If a teacher says a phrase without “Simon says”, students should not move. If somebody moves, then he lost. But, of course, in this game could play without a score. While students are doing this task, they remember new words by acting, and also develop creative thinking and listening skills. (Slattery, Willis, 2001)
- 9) Activity “*Platform 17*”. This is a good way to learn grammar in a creative way. The teacher finds an atmospheric picture of people who wait on a station platform, prepares the questions and the poem patterns for display on the board/screen. Students get the picture or teacher displays on the screen. Teacher asks students a few questions to familiarize them with the picture, for example, *Can you find someone who is texting? Can you find someone who is reading?*. Then students work in pairs or small groups and choose one of the people on a platform at the picture. The teacher asks them to discuss the following questions: *What job do they do? Are they happy? Are they catching the train or waiting for someone? What is on their mind at the moment?* The activity develops students’ higher-order thinking skills and creative thinking (Maley, Peachey, 2014: 56).
- 10) Judit Feher suggests that teachers can use the word cards to devise games and exercises. They may include matching and dominoes (e.g. matching word to a definition, word to picture, collocations, two parts of words etc), snap, miming competition, crossword puzzles, word search, snakes and ladders, gap-filling, multiple choice.
  - *Students make a game/exercise using a familiar framework.* Teacher puts students into small groups, gives them a selection of word cards. The task is to create their

own game/activity using given words. When everybody is ready, groups swap games and play each other's games.

- *Students invent the game.* It could be a challenging activity for students which may be a part of regular lessons, competition or projects. Learners should be divided into groups of 6 (preferably). The teams should write up the rules and make all the tools for playing. Activity develops creative abilities, problem solving skills and imagination. (Maley, Peachey, 2014: 66)

- 11) Teachers can use *drawing* elements in different stages of lessons, for example, when studying grammar. If children represent grammar not only in the form of printed or handwritten text, but also in the form of drawings, mastering the material is easier and turns into a game. For example, by studying the verb *to be* and telling a fairy tale about the three brothers *is, am, are*, you can ask students to depict these characters, as they represent them in their imagination, and decorate them in different colors (Gering, 2018). Depicting new English words through drawing helps students more easily switch from their native language to a foreign one since now a new unknown word will be associated not with the L1 analogue, but with the image of this concept.
- 12) *Lesson-project.* Students work together on a creative project. The topic of the project can be related to one subject area or have an interdisciplinary component. When a teacher selects a project topic, he/she should focus on the interests and needs of students, their abilities, the practical significance of the outcome of work on the project. Finished projects can be presented in a variety of forms: article, album, collage, and other ways. The presentation forms of the project are also varied: report, conference, competition, celebration, performance (Gering, 2018).
- 13) *Lesson-performance.* Students stage a play in the foreign language, which contributes to the development of students' creative abilities and interest in foreign literature, thinking and speaking skills, interest in learning about another culture. Students also develop a large amount of active and passive vocabulary (Gering, 2018).
- 14) Tomlinson (in Maley, Peachey, 2015: 24-28) introduces different ways to open up closed activities in order to foster students' creativity. All of these methods help to engage students to closed activities, which usually bore and demotivate them. Most of these techniques develop communicative skills, critical thinking, imagination, ability to express and share opinions, create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom:

- *Lead-in text.* Before reading the text from the coursebook, the teacher tells a relevant and ideally bizarre “personal story” connected to the story from the coursebook.
- *Readiness activities.* It is such kinds of activities which get students to think about their own experience and activate their minds in relation to a topic. For example, before reading a text, ask students some questions which are connected to the topic, ask them to look at pictures and think about what the text is going to be about, discuss it with a partner.
- *Discovery activities.* These kinds of activities stimulate students to discover things for themselves about language features in the course book. For example, instead of asking ‘What are the comparatives and superlatives of the adjectives in the table?’ a teacher can divide students into pairs and ask to find examples of words which are comparing things in a text. Also, students could use personal examples to write about different ways of forming comparatives. For example: *Anya is taller than me. She is the tallest girl in a class.*
- *Peer activities.* This is a good way for students to demonstrate their creative abilities. Students are asked to develop activities for their classmates in relation to a text in the passage, which should be challenging and interesting. Tomlinson gives an example “one group asked another group to turn the description in the coursebook of a robbery in a mall in New York into a scene from a film set in their town”.
- *Dramatization.* Teacher could act out a text from the coursebook. Also, teacher may ask students to do the same task but in their own way. After acting out the teacher asks students questions from the course book, but instead of questions about the characters from the story, the teacher asks students as if they were the main heroes of the story. These little changes can help students rethink the text and regard the experience learned from the story as their own.
- Drawing interpretations instead of answering questions.
- Interview with a character from the text.
- Re-writing or continuing a story in a different perspective.
- Teacher divides students into groups, which should develop challenging questions for others.

- 15) *Magical content*. Watching magical movies or reading magical books may serve to expand learners' imagination and help them to develop creative thinking skills (Subbotsky, Hysted, Jones, 2010).
- 16) In the article "The learner as creativity resource" (in Maley, Peachey, 2015: 123-133) Rosenberg states that teacher should give students more space to express their ideas and creativity, to set tasks which enable them to contribute their thoughts and experiences. She also notes that teachers often underestimate students' abilities. Teachers should create more situations when learners can contribute and create. "It is also vital that we do not think of our learners as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, but as fertile fields which can be cultivated and harvested" claims Rosenberg. Activities, which she describes in her article, could be used without any preparations, with any group and anywhere. Here are some of them:
- *Making use of the master*. The task for learners is to imagine themselves in a picture which they use to elicit feelings and emotions. The only material that teacher will need is different pictures (better if it is works of famous artists), which show scenes and people. Each student chooses one of the pictures and then in small groups they express the feelings they experienced by imaging themselves in the pictures. Other students should guess which picture it was.
  - *Creating modern art*. Author suggests using modern art drawings created by learners. Teacher starts to draw a line and asks learners to do the same. When the line drawing is finished, ask students to colour it by using different colours. When learners finish drawing, the teacher asks them to describe their drawings with sentences, for example "What could this be? This reminds me ...." etc.
  - *Building a machine*. In this activity students should use their bodies to create the movement of a machine. As a material a picture or drawing of a machine is required. First of all, students will take a look at the pictures and share their ideas about the purpose of the machine. Learners are divided into small groups and try to act out the process of how the machine works. Using words is not allowed, but sounds can be used. Other groups should guess the purpose of the machine. Then children can act out the machine one more time and now they should use words to express what exactly is taking place to reinforce the language.

- *Personal mind maps.* Teacher asks each student to draw a personal mind map. Firstly, they write their names in a circle in the middle of the paper. Secondly, learners draw 6-8 lines from the middle circle to other circles. These other circles should be filled with some personal information such as dates, abbreviations, words and names. When the mind map is ready, students exchange them with partners and interview each other about the meanings of the words in the circles. After that they introduce each other to the rest of the class. This task motivates learners to be creative with their own personal information. The activity awakens interest in the stories of other classmates.



## **CHAPTER II. FOSTERING CREATIVITY IN THE EFL LESSONS IN NARVA SCHOOLS**

### **2.1. Aims of the empirical research and research questions**

The aim of the empirical research is to examine if and how primary school students' creative abilities are supported in the English as a foreign language classes in Narva primary schools in Estonia.

The research questions are:

- Is students' creativity developed in Narva primary schools in EFL lessons and how?
- What issues might EFL teachers experience in terms of students' creativity development?

### **2.2. Methodology and sample**

There are two lower-secondary schools (grades 1-9) and nine upper-secondary schools (grades 1-12) in Narva, eleven schools in total. Ten of these schools (with the exception of the upper-secondary school for adults) offer primary education (grades 1-6), which includes English as a foreign language lessons. According to the information available on the websites of these schools, there are 51 English as a foreign language teachers in total working in the schools, whereas not all of these teachers work at the primary school stage. To answer the research questions stated above, an online questionnaire aimed primarily but not exclusively at English language teachers working at the primary school level (representing a purposive expert sample) was developed based on the list of activities and techniques compiled in Chapter I (see Appendix 1 for the questionnaire). The questionnaire was distributed via email sent to the secretaries, administration, and EFL teachers (if their emails were available on the websites of the schools) of all ten Narva schools that provide primary education in March and May 2020.

### **2.3. Results**

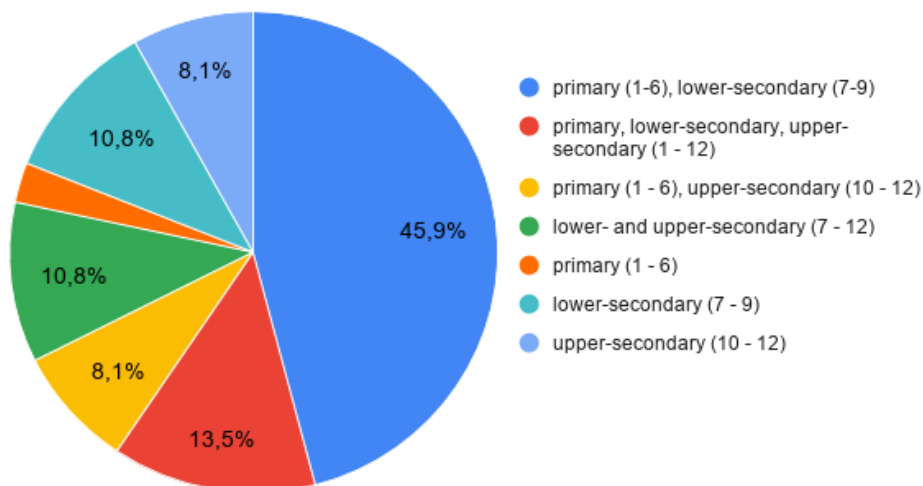
#### *Number of respondents and grades in which they teach*

The questionnaire was answered by 37 EFL teachers working in Narva schools. The table below (Table 3) shows the respondents' answers about the grades they teach in. The survey showed that 45,9% (out of the total of 37) work in both primary and lower-secondary school. Also, 13,5% of the respondents teachers work in both primary, lower-secondary and upper-

secondary school. The amount of teachers who work only in lower-secondary school and in lower-and upper-secondary school is equal, which is 10,8% each. There are 8,1% of teachers who give lessons both in primary and upper-secondary school. Based on the teachers' answers, it can be seen that approximately 73% of the respondents work in primary school and the remaining 27% are not connected with primary school teaching.

**Table 2.** *Grades in which the respondents teach*

Grades you teach at:



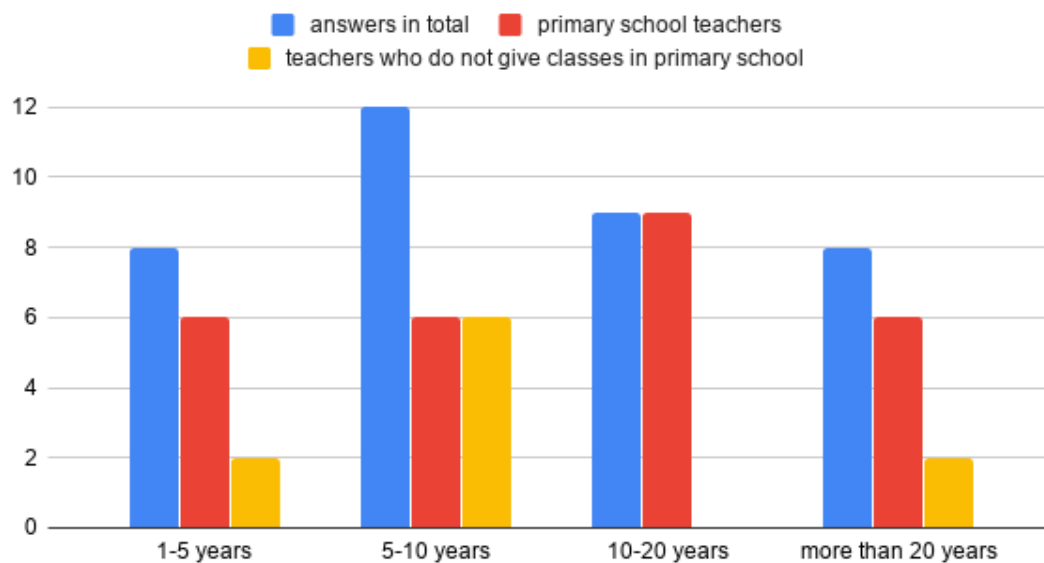
### *The respondents' teaching experience*

The table below (Table 3) gives an overview of the professional experience of the respondents. Their answers may help to identify whether the teachers' experience affects the development of students' creativity in English lessons. According to the survey results, the majority of the English language teachers have 5 to 10 years of work experience, which is 32.4% of the total number of respondents. The number of teachers who have been teaching for 10-20 years amounts to 24,3%. The number of teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience is equal to the number of teachers with 1-5 year experience, each 21,6%. According to the results of the previous question, there are 27% of the respondents who do not work at primary school level and the remaining 73% teach English in primary school. The largest number of primary school teachers have 10-20 years of experience, which is approximately 33%. The work experience of the remaining teachers was equally divided among the remaining professional experience criteria, which means that each of the remaining categories includes approximately 22% of the respondents. The majority of

teachers who do not give lessons in primary school have 5-10 years of work experience, which is 60%. There were no respondents with 10-20 years of experience among teachers of third (grades 7-9) and fourth (10-12) stage of study. The number of teachers with 1-5 years of experience and more than 20 years of experience was divided equally, each accounting for 20%.

**Table 3.** *The respondents' teaching experience*

Your teaching experience:



### *Understanding of creativity*

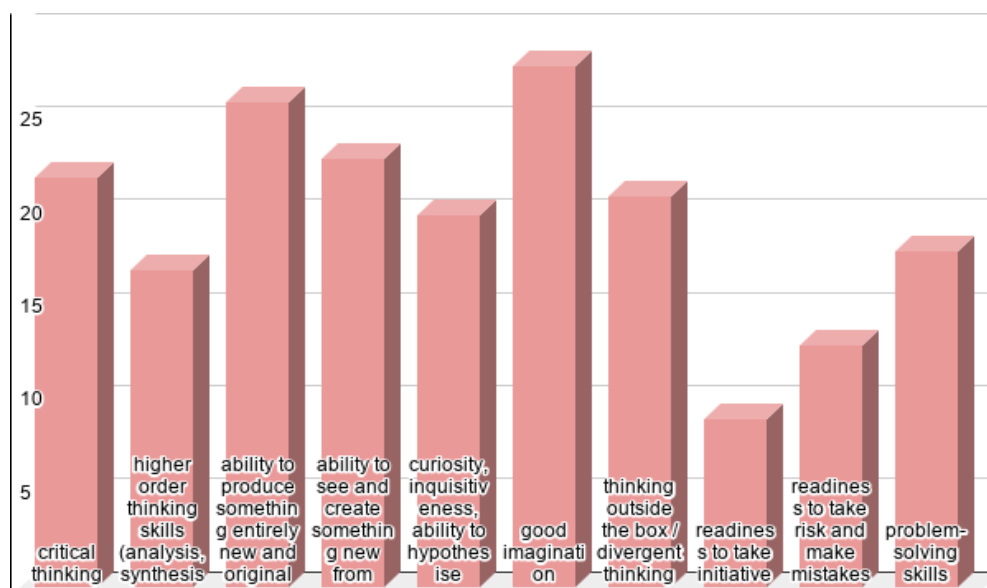
In this question, teachers were presented with a list of various skills that have a direct correlation to creativity. The respondents could choose which skill, in their opinion, defines creativity most accurately or relates to it most closely. It was also possible to choose more than one skill and to provide personal definition as well if something was missing from the given list. The suggested answers were as follows:

- problem-solving skills
- readiness to take risk and make mistakes
- readiness to take initiative
- thinking outside the box / divergent thinking
- good imagination
- curiosity, inquisitiveness, ability to hypothesise

- ability to see and create something new from customary and ordinary things
- ability to produce something entirely new and original
- higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creation)
- critical thinking

According to the survey results, the most popular answer is “good imagination”. 75,7% of the respondents believe that this skill most accurately defines creativity. The answer about “ability to produce something entirely new and original” was also widespread among the teachers. This skill was noted by 70.3% of the respondents. The third place takes “ability to see and create something new from customary and ordinary things” for which 62,1% of the English teachers voted. Such skills as critical thinking, curiosity, inquisitiveness, ability to hypothesise and thinking outside the box received roughly the same number of votes (from 54,1% to 60%). Less popular answers turned out to be problem solving (48,6%) and higher order thinking skills (45,9%). Teachers believe that readiness to take risks and make mistakes is less related to creativity. 35.1% of the respondents voted for this answer. Such a skill as readiness to take initiative turned out to be the least determinant of creativity. Only 24% of the respondents ticked this skill.

**Table 4.** *The respondents’ understanding of creativity*



*Skills that are supported and developed in English lessons*

The aim of this question is to find out what skills teachers place more emphasis on in their lessons. It was possible to choose more than one skill and to provide personal options as well.

The question has the following choice of answers:

- lower-order thinking skills (memorisation, comprehension, application of new material);
- higher-order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation);
- creative abilities such as doing arts, music, performance, producing something original, etc.;
- thinking outside-the-box;
- problem-solving skills;
- critical thinking;
- imagination;
- self-confidence;
- taking risks and showing initiative.

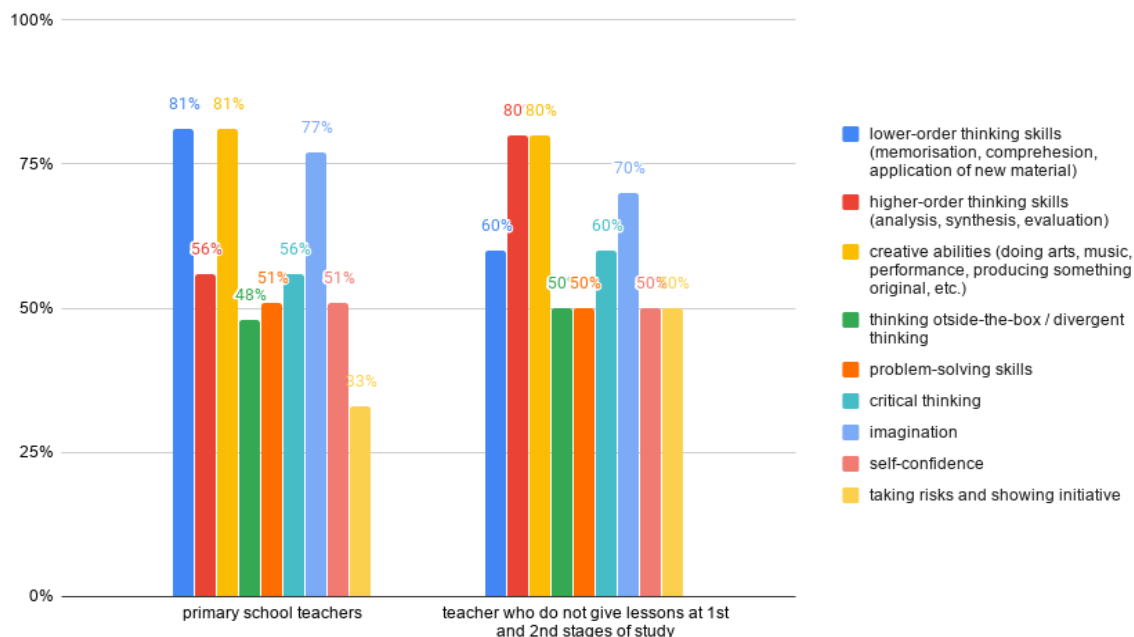
All these skills are closely related to the concept of creativity, though lower-order thinking skills are pre-requisite to higher-order thinking skills. By examining which skills are targeted by the learning activities that the teachers conduct, we will be able to assess how well different aspects of the students' personality develop in schools, whether they develop creative abilities.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that lower-order skills are usually developed well in school. According to the survey results, these skills were noted by 72% of the teachers. The greatest number of the respondents' votes received the answer "creative abilities", from which it follows that 81% of the teachers use in the classroom various tasks related to creative skills, where children can create and produce something, perform, sing, act, and the like. A large number of teachers also indicated that they use activities that involve imagination. This skill was noted by 75% of the teachers surveyed. 62% of the teachers consider it important to develop higher-order thinking skills. According to 56% of the teachers, it is equally important to pay attention to developing students' ability to think critically. An equal number of teachers noted in their questionnaire that they also use activities aimed at developing problem-solving skills (51%) and developing students' self-confidence (51%). Almost half

(48%) of those surveyed added the ability to think outside-the-box to their answers. The least popular response was taking risks and showing the initiative.

Below is a bar graph (Table 5) showing the answers of those teachers who work and do not work in the first (grades 1-3) and second (grades 4-6) stage of study, which constitute primary school. Thus, it is possible to compare and find out which skills are emphasized by primary and secondary school teachers. According to the survey results, primary school teachers put more emphasis on three skills, which are lower-order thinking skills (81%), creative abilities (doing arts, music, performance, producing something original, etc.) (81%) and imagination (77%). In contrast, teachers who work with adolescents place less emphasis on lower-order thinking skills (60%) and focus more on higher-order thinking skills (80%). This difference may be due to the fact that at the first and second stages of study in schools, much attention is paid to the lower-order thinking skills, and these skills must be mastered by the transition to the third stage of study. It can be noted that about the same emphasis is placed on the development of creative abilities both in primary and secondary school. The following skills, such as divergent thinking, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking, are given approximately the same attention at different school levels. 50% of the teachers working in the third and fourth stage of study noted that they emphasise such skills as willingness to take risks and take initiative, while only 33% of primary school teachers focus on the development of this skill.

**Table 5.** *Skills developed by the respondents in English lessons at primary and secondary school*



#### *Activities used by the respondents to foster students' creativity*

In this section, teachers are presented with a list of activities and techniques taken from Chapter I, which have been briefly described in the questionnaire for better understanding by the teachers. The respondents were asked to choose those activities that they use in their work, and this list could be supplemented with their own ideas optionally. The table below (Table 6) shows how many percent of the teachers use the listed activities in their work.

- “Words in a story” (62%) turned out to be the most used by the teachers. This activity develops speaking skills, ability to think critically, evaluate, analyse and create, enriches vocabulary.
- Readiness activities (60%) came second; these activate thinking, involve reflection, train imagination and such language sub-skills as speaking and listening.
- “Discovery activities” ranked third in popularity among teachers (59%). While students discover things for themselves about the foreign language or some content material, they develop communication skills, train memory and also learn grammar. In addition to this, students learn to analyse and isolate the necessary information, develop problem-solving skills.
- 57% of the teachers answered that they use cards with clue words for students to work individually / in groups and create a story and activity “My opinion of the story”.

Both activities are aimed at developing communication skills such as speaking, listening and writing, increasing vocabulary. Moreover, children learn critical thinking and develop imagination. Group works can help improve students' self-esteem, as well as teach them how to express their opinion in front of others and respect other opinions.

- Project learning (51%) and the use of drawing elements and the production of visual aids (41%) were selected by approximately the same number of respondents. While projects involve almost all the necessary aspects for the development of creative abilities along with communication skills, the production of visual aids and drawing elements involves fewer skills, however, it develops motor skills well, and contributes to the fast memorization of the study material.
- “Visualization”, which was chosen by only 43% of teachers, can be used to develop imagination, analytical skills, listening and speaking skills. This exercise can be easily done in the classroom without much additional preparation.
- An equal number of teachers (41%) chose the following activities: “Simon says”, students create a game/exercise, re-writing or continuing a story from a different perspective, debates and discussions, creating videos and other visual content. The main skills that these activities develop are communication skills, memory, imagination, divergent thinking, initiative and risks taking, problem solving skills.
- 38% of the respondents state that they use exercises when students develop challenging questions for others based on the text they read. It is not only a good way to open up closed activities in order to foster students' creativity, but also by using this kind of activity where students create some kind of exercise for their classmates, it may increase the motivation to learn the language. Students not only develop basic language skills, but also learn to take initiative, develop imagination and thinking outside the box, higher-order thinking skills. Tasks of this type allow learning the language in a playful way and are a kind of challenge to do something unusual and non-standard.
- Such activities as personal mind maps, interviews with a character from the text and lesson-performance are used by 35% of the English teachers. The first two activities are very good for developing language skills, but they also include a creative moment when the student can do something new and unusual (play the role of a character,



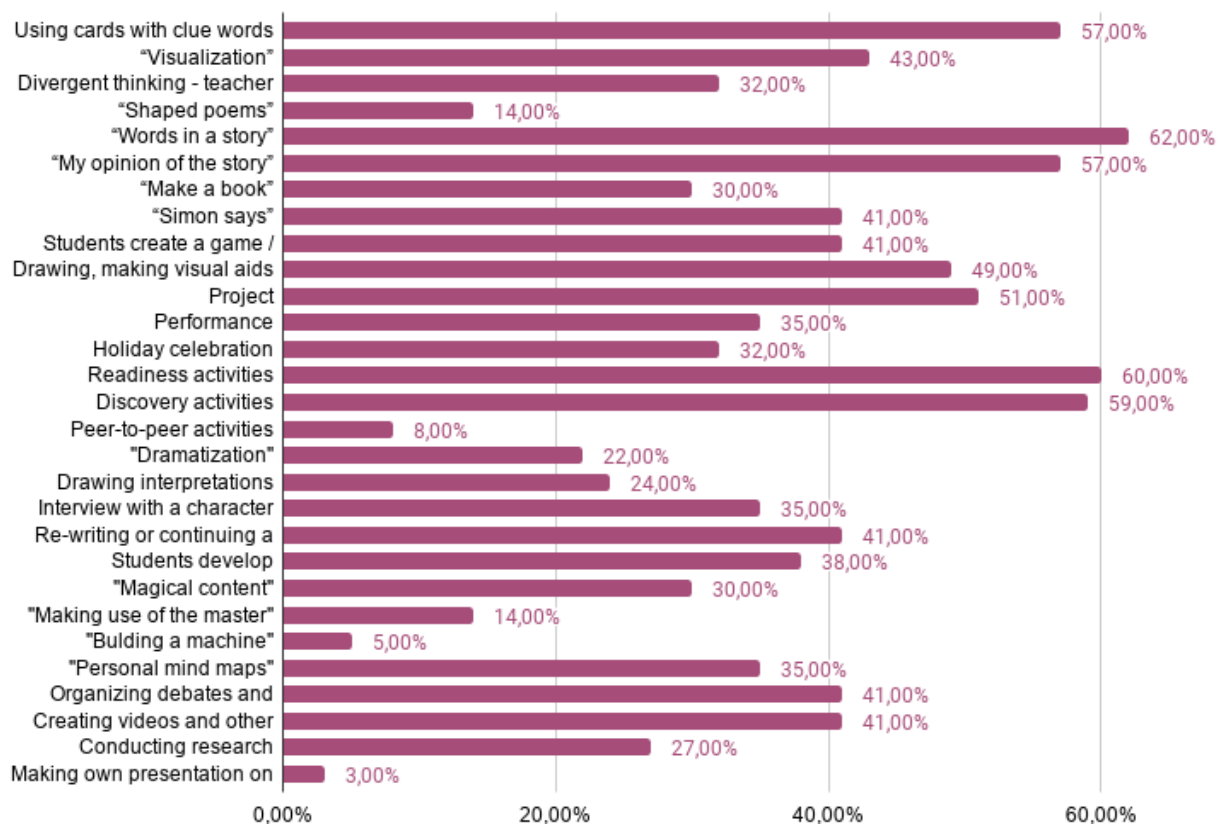
create an original mind map, etc.), and spark an interest in learning about another culture. To conduct these activities in the classroom, the teacher does not require much preparation, while to prepare a lesson-performance, the teacher may need a lot of time and effort to organize it. However, doing this type of lesson may help increase students' interest in language learning. Moreover, organizing a lesson-performance, teachers support the development of students' creative abilities (acting, singing, divergent thinking, ability to produce something new and original, imagination). Students also develop a large amount of active and passive vocabulary.

- According to the survey results, holiday celebration, “divergent thinking” activity (game “Frisbee”), “make a book”, magical content in teaching (books, films, videos, music, pictures, stories etc) are used by approximately the same number of teachers (around 30-32%).
- Less popular were activities such as conducting research (27%), drawing interpretations instead of answering questions verbally (24%), and “dramatization” (22%). Conducting research provides an excellent opportunity to develop higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving skills, as well as, depending on the type of research, communicative skills. Drawing interpretations instead of answering questions orally stimulates memory and develops students' creative abilities (e.g. visual arts). This activity is suitable for better memorization of new words, however, it develops speaking skills to a lesser extent, therefore this activity cannot be used too frequently in a foreign language class. Using dramatizations in the lesson can help students rethink the text and regard the experience learned from the story as their own. By acting out and answering the question as the main character of the story students' develop not only imagination and acting skills, but it also teaches students to apply their findings to situations and problems in real life, which subsequently develops problem-solving and analytical skills.
- Only 14% of the teachers use “making use of the master” and “shaped poems” activities. Imagining themselves as a person from the picture they use to elicit feelings and emotions will help children learn to express their feelings and emotions in front of the public, to live through and analyse a certain situation and know how to cope with it in the future. Using “making use of the master” activity, the lesson acquires a playful moment, increases interest in learning the language and develops

speaking and listening skills. “Shaped poems” activity allows students to be creative with minimal linguistic competence and also develops their writing skills and supports the vocabulary enrichment.

- The least popular answers are peer-to-peer activities (8%) and “building a machine” (5%). Peer-to-peer activity is a good way for students to demonstrate their creative abilities. This exercise develops a large number of skills such as higher-order thinking skills, divergent thinking, problem solving skills, and helps to develop basic communication skills. The “building a machine” activity is more suitable as a game that can be played in the lesson so that children can relax and take a rest after completing a difficult task. The main purpose of this activity is to develop imagination, the ability to work in pairs or groups and to analyse a situation.
- Making a presentation on the topic in a way chosen by students (including form and possible partners), analysis of favourite songs, bringing up a piece of art which is associated with the topic – these options were suggested by one of the respondents. The teacher gives the students freedom of choice in what form they would like to make a presentation of the topic, which increases learning motivation, develops independence and ability to make decisions, and stimulates students to take initiative. The teacher takes into account the interests of the students and gives them the opportunity to analyse their favourite songs, which also helps to increase motivation. By completing this task, students develop reading and writing skills, as well as higher order thinking skills. Creating a piece of art associated with the topic helps develop students’ creative abilities, develop imagination and thinking outside the box.

**Table 6.** *Activities used by the respondents to foster students' creativity*



### *Problems associated with supporting and developing students' creativity in EFL lessons*

The purpose of this question is to determine what difficulties can prevent the development of students' creativity in English as foreign language lessons. A list of possible issues (appendix 1) that teachers may experience in their teaching was suggested for the respondents. The teachers' task was to tick all possible options that apply to their teaching situation and add their own answers, if needed.

The answers to this question are presented in the table below (Table 7) showing three scales. The blue scale shows how many times teachers have ticked an answer in total. The answers of the teachers who do not work in primary schools are marked in yellow. Primary school teachers' answers are marked in red. There are 73% of the respondents who work at primary school level and the remaining amount of respondents do not teach at the third and second stages of study.

The study found that the most common problem is a large number of students in the lesson. This issue was noted by 54% of the respondents in total.

Many teachers, specifically 49%, are under pressure to cover the curriculum and demonstrate concrete results in terms of grammar, vocabulary and communication skills.

The third most popular were three issues that teachers of all school stages experience in terms of students' creativity development – these are that coursebooks do not have any / a variety of activities aimed at developing creative skills; lack of time to prepare lessons and assignments to foster students' creativity; students' unwillingness to express themselves, which are approximately 46% each.

According to the results, 38% of the respondents noted that the issue they face is lack of study materials. The same number of respondents believe that the lack or low motivation of students to learn the language prevents the development of creativity.

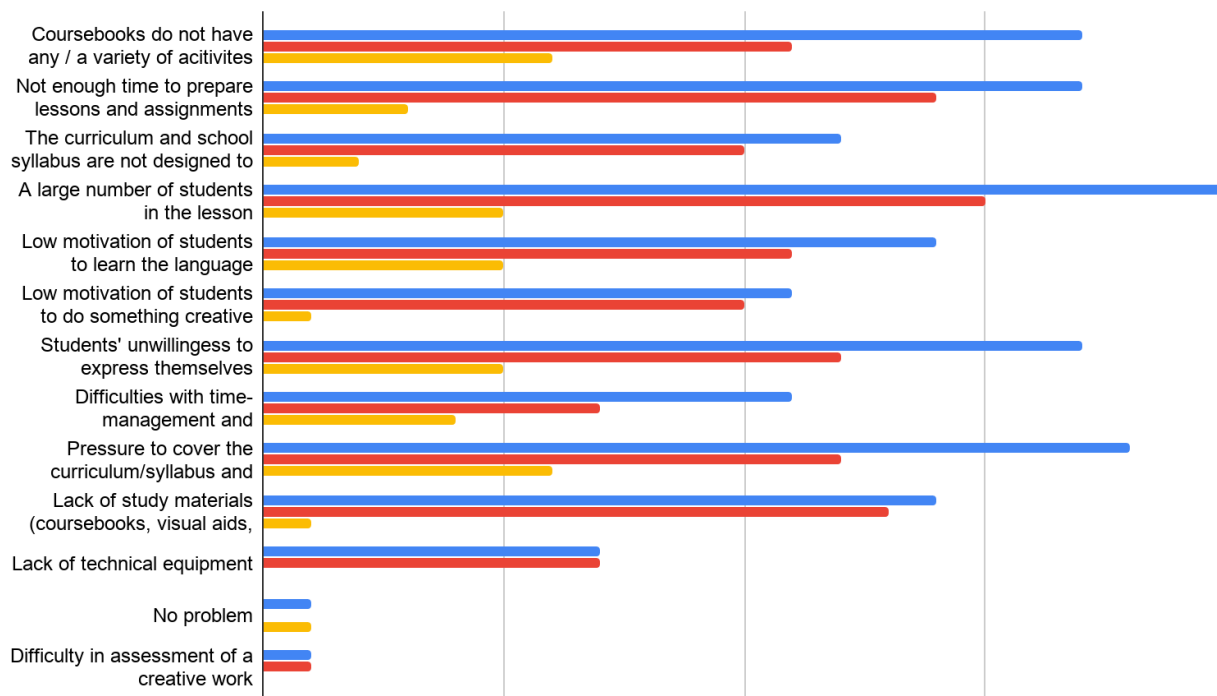
32% of the English as a foreign language teachers agree that the curriculum and school syllabus are not designed to develop creativity. Learning outcomes focus on developing core competencies, such as grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing and reading.

Approximately 30% of the respondents believe that due to the unwillingness of children to do something creative, they cannot fully develop the creative abilities of students. The same number of respondents find it difficult managing time and discipline when engaging students in creative activities.

The smallest number of the respondents (19%) considered the lack of technical equipment in the classroom as an obstacle to the development of students' creativity.

Only one respondent stated that he/she did not experience any difficulties and problems in terms of supporting and developing students' creativity. Another teacher shared that he/she had difficulties in assessing the creative work of students.

**Table 7.** *Problems associated with supporting and developing students' creativity in EFL lessons*



## 2.4. Discussion of results

As was previously mentioned in Chapter I, creativity and imagination develop especially intensively at the ages of 5 to 15. The initial stage of education is essential and helps to lay the foundation in the development of creative abilities. Therefore, it is important to find out whether EFL lessons in Narva primary schools at the first and second stage of study contribute to the development of students' creativity.

The analysis of the Estonian National Curriculum in the subject area of foreign languages has shown that the primary skills that foreign language teachers should develop in their students are, after all, communication skills – reading, writing, speaking, listening. The structure of the language is mastered through practice and production in the lessons and outside of the classroom. However, when planning and organizing lessons, all teachers, including language teachers, should take into account core values, general competencies, integration with other subjects and cross-curricular topics. It follows that teachers, when planning lessons, must take into account a lot of subtleties, which may complicate their work.

Approximately 48% of the respondents said they were under pressure to cover the curriculum / school syllabus and demonstrate certain results in terms of grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing. From which it follows that the teacher may simply not have enough time to develop students' creative abilities and prepare tasks aimed at developing creativity. As evidenced by the survey results, 49% of teachers complained about the lack of time for the preparation lessons and assignments that involve students' creative abilities. Most of the teachers with 1-5 years of work experience noted this problem. At the same time, the percentage of teachers with higher working experience facing this problem is much less. Most likely this is due to the fact that more experienced teachers already have their own materials, previously invented assignments. They do not have to create new lesson plans every year, as they can take advantage of assignments and lesson plans from previous years.

According to the National Curriculum (2011), students should be able to study both individually and together with others by the end of the second stage of study (individual work, group work and work in pairs); it is important that different tasks are used in language lessons, therefore, their content and level of complexity contribute to an individual approach and increase motivation for learning. However, unfortunately, as the survey results showed, more than half of the teachers (54%) experience difficulties because of the large number of students in one class, which in general affects the level of development of language competencies and creativity in principle. According to the Estonian Education Strategy 2021-2035, the learning approach should be learner-centred. But having a large number of students in the classroom, it is difficult for a teacher to use an individual approach to everyone, which in turn can negatively affect the students' motivation and their development as a person.

32% of the teachers state that the curriculum and school syllabus are not designed to develop creative abilities. Learning outcomes are aimed at developing core competencies, such as: grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing and reading. However, it can also be added that, regardless of the fact that the curriculum is designed to develop basic language skills, it also still supports the development of creativity of students.

In addition, a common problem which teachers face is students' unwillingness to express themselves. This problem was noted by 45% of the teachers. But it is most acute among primary school teachers. Approximately 44% of the teachers working in the first and second stage of study noted this as a significant problem. It is an interesting result and it may only

be speculated why it is so; the unwillingness of primary school students to express themselves may be due to their age (7-12) or perhaps their inability to express themselves because they are just learning how to do it.

In the National Curriculum (2011), several important factors are noted that contribute to the development of communicative competence, one of which is the correspondence of the content of educational materials to the interests of students. Textbooks undoubtedly support the development of communication skills. However, the lack of appropriate textbooks / study materials and the respondents' opinion that textbooks do not contain any / a variety of activities to develop students' creativity appear to be current issues. To some extent, these problems are interrelated. Since textbooks lack creativity-oriented activities, there are thus not enough study materials suitable for this purpose. Thus, teachers need to come up with and prepare their assignments and activities, which takes a certain amount of time. As a result, teachers may not have enough time to prepare activities and assignments that involve students' creativity, and this is one of the most common problems encountered among teachers, especially at primary school level, as evidenced by the results of the survey.

According to the National Curriculum (2011), teachers should use different teaching methods and techniques such as role plays, discussions, project-based learning, etc. Approximately 73% of the primary school teacher respondents have chosen these techniques in their work: "words in a story", "my opinion of the story", readiness activities and lesson-project. Such activities are aimed at developing not only skills such as reading, writing and listening but are directly aimed at developing skills related to creativity in the broadest sense of the word and also imply discussion in a class. Through these exercises, divergent thinking, problem solving skills, imagination, critical thinking, higher order thinking skills, and the ability to create something original and new are developed. Equally important, among other teaching methods, project-based learning is gaining popularity. Which is one of the points described in the Estonian Learning Strategy 2021-2035 to improve education in Estonia. It can also be said that teachers not only follow the curriculum, but also develop students' creative skills.

The following activities were noted by approximately the same number of primary school teachers (around 44%): "visualization", "Simon says", lesson-performance, re-writing or continuing a story in a different perspective, discovery activities, drawing, making visual aids. Some of these activities are more narrowly focused, and some, on the contrary, are

aimed at developing various skills, collectively related to the concept of creativity in a broad sense. One of these activities is a lesson-performance, when students not only learn to listen, speak and develop their vocabulary, but also think outside the box, can show their talent in performing and acting. Also, lessons of this kind can increase interest in not only learning a language, but also another culture. However, using this method too often might be problematic, as it can take a long time to prepare. While the rest of the above activities do not take so much time to prepare, they also develop imagination, divergent thinking, vocabulary and communication skills as well.

Also, 37% of the primary school teachers also noted that they use such tasks in their lessons as: interview with a character from the text, students devising challenging questions for others based on the text they read, personal mind maps, debates and discussions. Most of these activities involve critical thinking, thinking outside the box, higher-order thinking skills and also develop communication skills as well.

In such a way, it could be said that in the primary EFL classroom in Narva schools children learn to express their opinions and listen to others. Students feel support from others, which motivates them and gives an incentive to take initiative. Students should also learn to express their negative opinion correctly to understand that making mistakes is normal. According to the results of the survey, the respondents often use such tasks in their lessons where students have to express an opinion, which helps him / her to develop not only respect for others, but also the ability to think critically.

During the study, it could be concluded that teachers with more experience give approximately the same answers as teachers with less experience. This suggests that experienced teachers, along with less experienced ones, keep up with the developments in teaching methodology; moreover, teachers are obliged to participate in continuing professional development courses. Also, work with young people (students) may encourage them keep to up with the times and master new approaches.

As the results of the survey showed, most often to define the concept of creativity, the respondents chose such items as good imagination and the ability to create something new and original, as well as critical and divergent thinking. Although in most questions there was an opportunity not only to mark the existing answer options, but also to add their own,



teachers almost never added their own answers. From which it can be concluded that many teachers agree on what creativity is, as well as what skills are related to this concept.

The survey showed that in Narva schools in English as a foreign language lessons teachers pay attention not only to activities that are aimed at developing language skills, but also focus on such tasks that are aimed at developing creative abilities (e.g. drawing, singing, performance, etc.) and imagination. This approach is used not only in the lower grades, but also practiced at other stages of study. Despite the fact that the activities aimed at the development of the ability to take risks and to show initiative are used by a smaller number of teachers in Narva schools, similar skills can be developed using other types of activities, which may not be listed in the questionnaire.

As a result of the survey, it appears that most of the teachers use various creative tasks, such as singing, acting, creating something new, performing in front of an audience, etc. Activities of this kind not only develop creativity, but also develop the general competencies. When performing such tasks, students become more self-confident, learn to take initiative, try to invent something new and unusual (use divergent thinking).

According to the results of present study, it can be stated that primary school teachers working in Narva schools, along with secondary school teachers, use many different activities that contribute to the development of students' creativity.

## CONCLUSION

Primary school is an important stage in the development of creative abilities of younger students. Creativity and imagination develop especially intensively at the ages of 5 to 15 and require a special focus in education. In order to develop creativity among younger students, certain conditions are necessary. Teachers should be also creative to promote students' creativity development. Using different teaching strategies to engage and challenge students' creative potential, inviting them to hypothesize, create and share, and showing students that their contribution is as important as language accuracy is essential. Estonian National Curriculum supports the development of students' creativity in its general provisions regarding general competencies and cross-curricular topics. Estonian Education Strategy 2021-2035 also supports the development of students' creativity, as it provides problem-based and project-based learning, and the teaching approach is learner-centred.

EFL methodology resources suggest different ideas on how to support and develop students' creativity in the EFL classroom. For example, teachers could organize non-standard lessons, such as lesson-performance, lesson-interview, lesson-project, lesson-holiday and other forms. There are also many different activities which teachers may use in the EFL classroom every day to encourage students to share their opinions, develop their communicative and thinking skills, problem solving skills, and get a real-life experience.

The results of the empirical research demonstrate that the main challenges in developing students' creativity are the large number of students in the classroom, the pressure to cover the curriculum/syllabus and demonstrate specific results, as well as, the respondents' opinion that the curriculum and school syllabus are not designed to develop creative abilities, lack of time to prepare activities that include the creativity of students, lack of study materials and such course books that do not imply the development of creativity.

To conclude, the present Master's thesis has revealed that primary school EFL teachers working in Narva schools, along with teachers of the third and fourth stage of study, develop in their students not only core language skills, such as reading, listening, writing, speaking, grammar and vocabulary, but also such skills as critical thinking, problem-solving skill, divergent thinking, higher order thinking skills, imagination, creative skills, and the like, which can be considered as development of students' creativity.

## SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Meie maailm areneb kiiresti ja samuti ka haridus. Me elame meediarevolutsiooni ajastul, mis mõjutab tugevalt meie eluviise, suhtlemis- ja mõtteviisi. Sel põhjusel on vaja üle vaadata paljud tänapäeva hariduse aspektid, parandada õppeprotsessi, mille eesmärk on rahuldada kaasaegse inimese vajadusi, toetada õpilaste kui ka tulevaste spetsialistide ja ühiskonnaliikmete sotsiaalset ja professionaalset arengut. Haridus on inimühiskonna oluline osa ning peame leidma viise oma õpetamise täiustamiseks ja uute teadmiste omandamiseks. Meie tulevik, inimeste elukvaliteet, tööga rahulolu, sotsiaalne staatus ja palju muud sõltub sellest, kuidas inimesi õpetatakse. On palju erinevaid oskusi ja loovus on üks nendest, mida on vaja arendada, et muuta meie elukvaliteeti paremaks.

Käesoleva uuringu eesmärkideks on analüüsida ja süstematiseerida teavet õpilaste loovuse arendamise ja toetamise kohta algkoolis üldiselt, eriti inglise keele tundides; teada saada, kuidas toetatakse õpilaste loovuse arengut Eesti ametlikus haridusalases dokumentatsioonis; uurida, kas ja kuidas toetatakse algklasside õpilaste loovust Narva algkoolide inglise keele kui võõrkeele klassides.

Algkool on oluline etapp nooremate õpilaste loominguliste võimete arendamisel. Loovus ja kujutlusvõime arenevad eriti intensiivselt 5–15-aastaselt ja vajavad sellel perioodil erilist tähelepanu. Nooremate õpilaste loovuse arendamiseks on vaja teatud tingimusi. Samuti peaksid õpetajad töös ise olema loovad, et selle kaudu edendada õpilaste loovuse arengut. Õpetajad peavad kasutama erinevaid õpetamisstrateegiaid õpilaste loomepotentsiaali kaasmiseks ja proovilepanekuks, kutsuma lapsi hüpoteese esitama, looma ja jagama ning näitama õpilastele, et nende panus on sama oluline, kui keele korrektsus. Eesti riiklik õppekava toetab õpilaste loovuse arengut.

EFL-i metoodika ressursid pakuvad erinevaid ideid, kuidas toetada ja arendada õpilaste loovust EFL-i klassiruumis. Näiteks võiksid õpetajad korraldada mittestandardseid õppetunde, näiteks tund-esitlusi, intervjuu-tunde, projekti tunde, õppepühasid ja muid alternatiivseid õppevorme. Samuti on õpetajatel EFL-i klassiruumis iga päev palju võimalusi läbi erinevate tegevuste julgustada õpilasi oma arvamust jagama, suhtlemis- ja

mõtlemisoskust arendama, probleemide lahendamise oskust arendama ja reaalsest kogemusest osa saama.

Empiiriliste uuringute tulemused näitavad, et õpilaste loovuse arendamisel on peamisteks väljakutseteks õpilaste suur arv klassiruumis, vajadus järgida ja täita õppekava / ainekava ja näidata konkreetseid tulemusi. Samuti õpetajate arvamusel ei ole õppekavad ja koolide ainekavad piisavalt disainitud loovate võimete arendamiseks, ka ajapuudus on teguriks õpilaste loovust sisaldavate tegevuste ettevalmistamisel. Lisaks veel on takistusteks õppematerjalide ja õpikute puudumine, mis ei toeta loovuse arendamist.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et käesolev magistritöö on näidanud, et algklasside inglise keele õpetajad koos kolmanda ja neljanda astme õpetajatega arendavad oma õpilastes mitte ainult põhipädevusi, nagu lugemine, kuulamine, kirjutamine, rääkimine, grammatika ja sõnavara, vaid ka selliseid oskuseid nagu kriitiline mõtlemine, probleemide lahendamise oskus, mitmekülgne analüüsioskus, sügavamad mõtlemisoskused, kujutlusvõime, loovus, võime luua midagi uut ja originaalset, mida saab pidada loovuse arendamiseks laiemas tähenduses.

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## APPENDICIES

### APPENDIX 1. Questionnaire

# DEVELOPING STUDENTS' CREATIVITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM IN NARVA PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Dear respondent,

I am a student at Narva College of the University of Tartu, and I am conducting a research among English teachers to examine if and how primary school students' creative abilities are supported in English as foreign language classes in Narva primary schools.

I would be very grateful if you could find 5-10 minutes to provide your response to the following questions.

Thank you very much for your help with my research!

**\* Обязательно**

---

Grades you teach in: \*

- ☐ Primary school (1-6)
- ☐ Lower-secondary school (7-9)
- ☐ Upper-secondary school (10-12)

---

Your teaching experience: \*

- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years



In your opinion, what from the following list relates to / defines 'creativity'? You can choose more than one answer and provide your own definition if something is missing from the list. \*

- ☐ problem-solving skills
- ☐ readiness to take risk and make mistakes
- ☐ readiness to take initiative
- ☐ thinking outside the box / divergent thinking
- ☐ good imagination
- ☐ curiosity, inquisitiveness, ability to hypothesise
- ☐ ability to see and create something new from customary and ordinary things
- ☐ ability to produce something entirely new and original
- ☐ higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, creation)
- ☐ critical thinking
- ☐ Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you use any activities in your English lessons to develop & support the following skills in your students? Tick all skills that apply: \*

- ☐ lower-order thinking skills (memorisation, comprehension, application of new material)
  - ☐ higher-order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)
  - ☐ creative abilities (doing arts, music, performance, producing something original, etc.)
  - ☐ thinking outside-the-box / divergent thinking
  - ☐ problem-solving skills
  - ☐ critical thinking
  - ☐ imagination
  - ☐ self-confidence
  - ☐ taking risks and showing initiative
-

Do you use any of the activities below to foster students' creativity? Tick all that apply or write your own answer. \*

- ☐ Using cards with clue words for students to work individually / in groups and create a story.
- ☐ "Visualization" - teacher describes a scene; students imagine it and after share what they saw.
- ☐ Divergent thinking - teacher suggests a couple of things that could be done with an object, then students in groups think of 10 more options of how this object can be used.
- ☐ "Shaped poems" - writing a shaped poem, which is written and laid out in a shape of a picture of what it describes.
- ☐ "Words in a story" - teacher introduces and writes a selection of key vocabulary from the story on a board (could be used another material support). Students predict what happens in the story based on the vocabulary given.
- ☐ "My opinion of the story" - students think about their personal opinion of the story they have read, write or draw pictures showing their opinion. At the end, teacher organizes a brief class discussion.
- ☐ "Make a book" - the task is to make a book with their own stories or reconstruct stories or poems
- ☐ "Simon says"
- ☐ Students create a game / exercise using a familiar framework.
- ☐ Drawing, making visual aids (for example to learn new grammar and vocabulary).
- ☐ Project - a series of lessons devoted to one topic when students work in teams to achieve a common goal and produce something tangible)
- ☐ Performance - students stage a play/concert or another type of performance in the foreign language.

- ☐ Holiday celebration - students prepare and organize a celebration of some holiday
- ☐ Readiness activities - before reading a text, ask students some questions which are connected to the topic, ask them to look at pictures and think what the text is going to be about, discuss it with a partner.
- ☐ Discovery activities - students discover things for themselves about language features in the course book.
- ☐ Peer-to-peer activities - students create activities for their classmates in relation to a text.
- ☐ "Dramatization" - teacher could act out a text from the coursebook or asks students to do the same task but in their own way. After acting out teacher asks students questions from the course book as if they were the main heroes of the story.
- ☐ Drawing interpretations instead of answering questions verbally.
- ☐ Interview with a character from the text.
- ☐ Re-writing or continuing a story in a different perspective.
- ☐ Students develop challenging questions for others based on the text they read.
- ☐ "Magical content" - watching "magical" videos / movies or reading magical books.
- ☐ "Making use of the master" - each student chooses one of the pictures and then in small groups they express the feelings they experienced by imaging themselves in the pictures. Other students should guess which picture it was.
- ☐ "Bulding a machine" - students take a look at the pictures and share their ideas about the purpose of the machine. Then learners are divided into small groups and try to act out the process of how the machine works. Using words is not allowed, but sounds can be used. Other groups should guess the purpose of the machine.
- ☐ "Personal mind maps" - students draw a personal mind map (with some personal information about themselves). When the mind map is ready, students exchange them with partners and interview each other about the meanings of the words in the circles. After that they introduce each other to the rest of the class.
- ☐ Organizing debates and discussions
- ☐ Creating videos and other visual content
- ☐ Conducting research
- ☐ Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

What problems do you face in terms of supporting and developing students' creativity? Tick all that apply or write your own. \*

- ☐ Coursebooks do not have any / a variety of activities to foster students' creativity
- ☐ Not enough time to prepare lessons and assignments that involve students' creative abilities
- ☐ The curriculum and school syllabus are not designed to develop creative abilities.
- ☐ Learning outcomes are aimed at developing core competences, such as: grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, writing and reading.
- ☐ A large number of students in the lesson
- ☐ Low motivation of students to learn the language
- ☐ Low motivation of students to do something creative
- ☐ Students' unwillingness to express themselves (caused by lack of self-confidence or classroom environment)
- ☐ Difficulties with time-management and classroom management ("discipline") when students are involved in creative activities
- ☐ Pressure to cover the curriculum/syllabus and demonstrate specific results in terms of grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading and writing
- ☐ Lack of study materials (coursebooks, visual aids, etc).
- ☐ Lack of technical equipment
- ☐ Другое: \_\_\_\_\_

I, Darja Tsussovina (11.08.1994),

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DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' CREATIVITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOMS IN  
NARVA PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Supervised by O. Orekhova, MA

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