



## Methods of Teaching Creative Thinking to Students Based on the Design of Creative Tasks in English

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**Abstract.** The article concerns the question of developing system-creative thinking in the classes of English. It contains the description of some of the creative technologies (cluster, mind map, cubing) featuring their positive aspects. The author considers her own experience of using the technologies and their impact on students» system-creative thinking.

**Keywords:** system thinking, creative thinking, cluster, mind map, cubing, developing thinking.

### Introduction

Today, a future lawyer, like a professional in any field, needs a broader view of things than before. The developing information world leaves far behind educational methods aimed at assimilation and reproduction of knowledge, and an average approach to the educational process. Many researchers note that today the main thing is not to strive to know everything, but to know how to obtain the necessary knowledge. A professional must have a general system of orientation in life, which will allow him to replenish his knowledge system, find existing information and generate new knowledge. Thus, learning a foreign language today should be meaningful and systematic; on the other hand, it is important to teach students creative thinking, including collective thinking. The so-called technology of formation and development of systemic creative thinking fully corresponds to such educational needs. Having mastered this technology, the future professional will easily operate with subject material, spending time much more economically and understanding the essence of the problem much more deeply.

Systems thinking is a concept that is widely used today in management, psychology and various personal growth trainings. The key word of this concept





is system; as you know, this is a kind of structuring of individual fragments, where there are no separately functioning elements that are not related to this general structure. This is a kind of formation that exists and functions due to the multivariate interaction of a large number of its parts. The peculiarity of the system is that it is not the composition of the parts, but the methods and methods of interaction that influence the system as a whole. The nature of such interaction of parts is nonlinear, mostly hidden, non-obvious and sometimes paradoxical. In relation to pedagogy, systemic thinking can be defined as thinking, the level of development of which, when a person understands the world of objects and phenomena of objective reality, allows one to establish relationships between them, identify patterns of their interaction and development, predict this development and effectively solve problems arising in this case

### **Methodology**

Creativity, in turn, is understood as creative design in the mode of self-organization of the thinking process. In this sense, creativity differs from creativity as the generation of new knowledge through the use of already existing properties, connections, relationships, albeit hidden ones. Creativity (from the English word to create) involves the creation (design) of such properties from already existing elements (properties, relationships). When assessing creative thinking, we usually talk about varying degrees of development of four characteristics: productivity, flexibility, originality and the ability to solve complex problems. In a sense, creativity is opposed to critical thinking, which is aimed at identifying shortcomings in the judgment of other people.

Speaking about systemic creative thinking, following A.V. Sheverev and M.N. Romanchuk<sup>4</sup>, we will understand it as thinking that activates creativity in the process of solving existing problems and searching for new opportunities. Among the stages in the development of systemic creative thinking, we will highlight the most important ones when teaching English to law students: the transition from a predominantly inductive (school) style of thinking to a predominantly deductive and abductive (university) style of thinking; reorientation of methods of teaching disciplines from the predominant appropriation of knowledge by students to the predominant creative development and use of it. It is obvious that systemic creative thinking in English classes needs to be developed using active teaching methods that contribute to





the practical orientation of activities, the development of one's own knowledge (based on existing ones), create conditions for self-construction and self-development, and increase motivation. From this point of view, we will consider the use of such educational technologies as intellectual (mental) maps, cluster ("bunch") and cubeing.

Cluster and smart card technologies are familiar to many and have a number of similar features. These are graphic methods that allow you to present in writing information contained in written or orally perceived text. Their essence boils down to the fact that in the center of a blank sheet of paper (board) the main word is written - the basis of the future mental map or cluster - and circled. When creating a cluster, all the words and ideas that come to mind, connected or associated with a given central word are recorded. In this case, each new word is also circled and a line is connected either to the central word or to another with which, in the opinion of the cluster compiler, there is a connection. And so on until the ideas run out, or the time allotted for such a task runs out. After this, you need to look through your cluster, exclude words that are not related to the main word and start grouping "clusters" of words according to some characteristic, putting down the number of each "cluster". As a result, the resulting graphic image resembles a bunch of grapes, which explains the name "bunch" in Russian. This technology helps students think freely and openly about a topic and motivates them to make connections between ideas. Clustering is used in the challenge and reflection stages. This is a strategy that gives access to one's own knowledge or one's own understanding of a topic.

Compared to a cluster, a mind map can be defined as "intense brainstorming." This is a more analytical form of work. The main word, according to the classical method of mapping<sup>6</sup>, must be accompanied by an illustration (picture, image). Next, "branches" extend from the main word, and on each "branch" line a word is written that expresses the connection (an essential feature, a classification feature) with the central word. This "branch" of the first level receives further branching, leading to words-ideas of the second and other levels. Words, as mentioned above, are accompanied by drawings; it is recommended to use different colors when drawing up a mental map.

Both the cluster and the mental map are a reflection of a non-linear form of thinking. They are ways of creative thinking, and not a schematization of any object, and reflect how our thinking works, since when working on material with the help of such technologies, students learn to establish cause-and-effect





relationships, highlight the main thing, build their own conclusions, move from particular to in general, compare and draw analogies. They learn to see a problem (or topic) as a whole, they develop a holistic perception, and accordingly, systems thinking improves.

### **Analysis**

An analysis of the literature and our own experience of using clusters and mental maps in English classes for law students shows that they are well suited for group work as a “warm-up” exercise when students express their ideas on the proposed topic. The use of this technique helps to increase interest and motivation in learning, students are happy to express their thoughts. Depending on the level of preparation and further goals of the lesson, it is also possible to create individual clusters or in groups of 2-3 people with subsequent comparison of the resulting “final products”.

It is effective to use a cluster when working on a written text, when, after studying the text, it is proposed to take another look at the initial (intuitive) version and refine it taking into account the information obtained from the text, or even create a new cluster. At the stage of consolidating the material, it is recommended to use the cluster for a detailed retelling of the text. However, we emphasize that the cluster is not a reference summary that is created so that the student remembers the material better. A cluster is a tool designed to help you think more efficiently, so individual creativity needs to be encouraged.

The above applies equally to the mental map; it was also noted that the cluster is simpler compared to a thoughtful, colorful, purposefully created mental map. Experience working with law students shows that the cluster is a universal technology, suitable for any level of language training; the mental map is more likely designed for students with good language and general training or senior students. In further work on the material, the information presented using a cluster or mental map needs to be repeated, and, as we see, such repetition is not mechanical, reproductive, but active in nature.

Another interesting technology is cubing, which is successfully used in blogging, but can also be used in a broader context as a method for introducing a new topic, deepening understanding of a problem, etc. In the classical sense, cubing is a warm-up technique, often used at the preparatory stage in various kinds of literary work and helps to explore different aspects of the topic, thereby forcing the author to think about it more deeply and find the right focus.





The name of this creative technique comes from the word “cube”; to describe a cube, you need to look at each side of it, i.e. change your point of view six times. By applying this technique not to a specific subject, but to an idea (question, problem), you can explore at least six different points of view on the subject or idea. For example, students are given a question and asked to write for the same amount of time (for example, two minutes) about each of six aspects of that topic. To switch between different sides of a topic, you can use the following questions:

Description: what is this topic, what properties does it have?

Comparison: What can this topic compare to, what other topics is it similar to, and how is it different?

Associations: what comes to mind in connection with it? It is necessary to list any connections with this topic - associative, cause-and-effect, symbolic, irrational, etc.

Analysis: what components does it consist of? From what and in what context does it arise, to what other topics does it lead?

Usage: who and what is this topic useful for? Can it be transferred to other areas?

Evaluation: What could be the arguments for and against this topic? Why is it interesting to you personally? What might be of interest to other people?

A mandatory requirement is to write about all six sides of the topic (issue), even if initially no more than two or three aspects of the problem come to mind.

### **Results**

The cubing technique is certainly more complex compared to the cluster and mental map. Therefore, it is better to use it with students of the 3rd or 4th year of study, when they have already developed basic legal knowledge, have a certain amount of knowledge about the relevant aspects of law in English, and have more developed analytical and systemic thinking. Mastering this technology allows students to deepen their understanding of the topic, make their position on it more definite, discover a new point of view, determine the most interesting side of the topic and choose the main focus and, accordingly, can be used to work on an essay, prepare a speech at a student conference or in the preparation of course work.

To summarize the above, we note that many of the listed technologies are themselves creative and are used in marketing, management, etc. In addition, they allow you to systematize knowledge and help in finding a solution if





students are faced with a problematic situation. Students learn to see a problem or topic as a whole, identify relationships and mutual influence of its component parts, which undoubtedly contributes to the formation of systems thinking. General intellectual development does not stand aside either, since with the use of such technologies all mental operations (analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, generalization) are improved.

At the same time, students' activities are intensified not only in the field of learning English, but also in the field of mastering the professional competencies of a modern lawyer and business person, since these technologies are widely used in the modern business world.

The stage of primary foreign language education is one of the most important. During this period, there is an active accumulation of linguistic resources and a motivational basis is laid for further mastery of a foreign language. It should be noted that younger schoolchildren do not have a natural motivation to master foreign language speech. The speech acts performed are formal operations. The teacher's task is to create internal motivations for students to learn a foreign language. To do this, the teacher includes creative tasks in educational activities that promote interest in mastering a foreign language.

Creative activity is a driving force for internal motivation. The student has the opportunity to show imagination, freedom of thought, and unconventional thinking. Creative activity helps to increase the effectiveness of learning, provides a high level of educational motivation, helps to express one's individuality and is the key to becoming a successful person.

Creativity researchers offer more than a hundred definitions of it. Creativity is the creation of cultural or material values that are new by design. Creativity is a process of human activity, the result of which is the creation of material and spiritual values. Creativity is the highest manifestation of human activity.

According to the American psychologist and psychotherapist N. Rogers, creativity is the ability to discover new solutions to problems or discover new ways of expression, bringing something new into the life of an individual. Creative activity is a form of activity of a person or a team, the creation of a qualitatively new thing that has never existed

Most definitions characterize creativity as an activity, and any activity is the performance of certain actions and tasks. With the help of creative tasks, students not only get involved in creative activities, but also develop their cognitive interest





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All of the above defines the concept of “creative activity of junior schoolchildren” as an effective form of schoolchildren’s activity, focused on acquiring creative experience of cognition, creation, transformation and use of their own thoughts when solving tasks in the process of educational activities.

To engage students in creative activities, teachers use a variety of creative tasks. For example, familiarity with English children's poems known as “Mother Goose Rhymes” helps to understand the phonetic structure of the English language, its intonation, rhythm, and contributes to the mastery of new lexical units and grammatical constructions. In addition, they help to get acquainted with the unusual metaphors and humor inherent in the English language. Working with poems shows students the brightness and figurativeness of language, enriches the spiritual world, and awakens students’ creativity. One of the creative tasks can be a literary translation of a poem or its creation. For example, My mum is like a bee. / Because she’s as busy as she can be. Students’ own poems: My mum is as melancholy as a cat. / When she has much work, her mood is bad.

To develop attention, imagination, and linguistic rhythm, you can offer a task on rhyming words. For example, cat-rat, lake-snake, mouse-house, dog-frog. In the future, you can complicate the task: rhyme past tense verbs: talked-walked, swept-wept, drew-grew, bought-caught. An example of a poem created by students in pair work, based on the rhyming words school – rule: In our school / There is a strict rule- / Not to miss the school<sup>1</sup>. Tasks of this type make the lesson more varied, more interesting, and contribute to the manifestation of cognitive and speech activity of schoolchildren.

One of the effective ways to influence the emotional state of schoolchildren in the classroom is music, as well as songs. Music conveys various images of sadness, joy, anger, confusion, causing emotional experiences in students. The songs are a reflection of the culture of the country. They carry information about holidays, customs, the life of the people, and can reflect historical events. Songs can be used to compare the worldview of the country of the language being studied and your native language. For example, while listening to English lullabies, students can perform the following creative tasks: 1) identify common features in lullabies; 2) determine who are the main characters in English and Russian lullabies (in English lullabies the main characters are: fish, horses, sheep, who take care of their young, and in Russian - seals, gulenki, bunnies, which are designed to help the child’s mother), as a research activity, you can invite the student to find out and tell what causes this difference; 3) compare the euphony





of Russian and English lullabies (is the feeling of English verse different from Russian).

For example, the lullaby “Teddy Bear” is about a baby bear going to bed. Teddy Bear is a popular hero of English fairy tales and cartoons. As a creative task, you can ask students to draw analogies with fairy-tale characters from their native culture.

You can play out your child’s imagination using the technique of transformation. A student can create an image of a character from a favorite cartoon, an animal, or even an inanimate object. For example, when going through the topic “School Supplies,” a student can depict a ruler, an eraser, a pencil case, a book and talk about their lives in two or three sentences. For example, “Hello! I am a school bag. Mike has many lessons today and I am very heavy. I am not happy today.” As a moment of relaxation, you can use the following tasks: come up with funny names for these statements, for example, the adventure of the Briefcase, the measurements of the Ruler, the indelible day, and so on.

To develop students' creative abilities, you can offer a creative task such as writing a syncwine.

The first line is expressed as a noun and represents the theme of the syncwine. The second line consists of two adjectives that describe the given noun. The third line contains three verbs that describe the actions of the noun. The fourth contains the student’s thought, represented by a phrase and expressing his attitude to the topic. An aphorism or proverb can also be used. The fifth line is presented in one word, in the form of a noun, which can be a synonym for the theme of syncwine and is a kind of summing up. For example, a syncwine from a fourth grade student on the topic “Animals”:

The syncwine expresses the student’s knowledge, thoughts, and emotions. Sinkwine can be used on any topic; it helps to better understand new educational material. Working on syncwine develops critical thinking and imagination, develops the ability to analyze, and develops the creative abilities of students.

The final stage is summing up, discussing the results, identifying errors and searching for possible solutions

### **Conclusion**

We believe that it is important to use creative tasks in English lessons in primary school, since they contribute to the formation of interest in further learning a





foreign language, mastering foreign language skills, and help to enhance the cognitive and creative activity of students

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