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USING LATERAL THINKING IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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Lateral thinking is solving problems through an indirect and creative approach, using reasoning that is not immediately obvious and involving ideas that may not be obtainable by using only traditional step-by-step logic. The term "Lateral Thinking" was developed by Edward De Bono. According to him lateral thinking involves looking at a situation or a problem from a unique or unexpected point of view, it deliberately distances itself from standard perceptions of creativity as either "vertical logic" (the classic method for problem solving, working out the solution step-by-step from the given data) or "horizontal" imagination (having thousands ideas but being unconcerned with the detailed implementation of them). He proposed instead a more creative answer from taking a step "sideways" to re-examine a problem from entirely different and more creative viewpoint. De Bono suggests that lateral thinking is necessary for coming up with solutions that aren't so straightforward. Teachers and students can find that lateral thinking is an especially useful technique for the creative arts. When writing a short story, for example, lateral thinking would be an effective tool for coming up with unexpected turns in a plot.

Lateral thinking puzzles are puzzles that are supposed to demonstrate what lateral thinking is about. However any puzzle that has only one solution is not lateral. While lateral thinking may help you construct such puzzles, the lateral thinking tools will seldom help you solve puzzles.

The purpose of puzzle stories like other kinds of communicative activities is to stimulate real conversation as much as possible. Students are strongly motivated by their desire to receive, offer or exchange information. Puzzle stories solving requires learners to analyse situations, think of solutions, and explain the solutions. Each student's proposal adds to and influences the other students' ideas until a final solution is reached. In ESL Lateral Thinking Puzzles are a great resource for thinking, speaking and writing because they are often strange situations which require an explanation. They are solved through a dialogue between the teacher who sets the puzzle and the student or students who try to figure out the answer. The puzzles generally don't contain sufficient information for the students to find the solution. So the most important part of the process is asking questions either in a cooperative, collaborative way or individually. Students are expected to ask only general questions and a teacher can answer only "Yes", "No" or "Not important". By asking a large

number of questions they eliminate wrong and irrelevant explanations of the story and find out what it is really about. The first student to guess what has happened is the winner. Students can be allowed to work in pairs or threes or teams to discuss the situation and help each other. During this kind of communicative activity a teacher gets students thinking and gives them an opportunity for both practicing of question forms in different tenses and using a wide range of vocabulary. This activity does not have to be linked with any other.

Here are some puzzle stories.

1. A man walks into a bar and asks the barman for a glass of water. The barman pulls out a gun and points it at the man. The man says "Thank you" and walks out happily.
 2. A man is lying dead in a snowy field. There are no footprints to or from his body. The man has a pack on his back. How did he die?
 3. The telephone rang in the middle of the night and the woman woke up. When she answered the phone the caller hung up. The caller felt better.
- Solutions.

1. The man had hiccups. The barman recognized that from his speech and drew the gun in order to give him a shock. It worked and cured the hiccups. The man no longer wanted any water.
2. The man jumped from an airplane but his parachute didn't open.
3. The woman and the caller were both guests in a hotel, but didn't know each other. Their rooms were next to each other. The caller couldn't get to sleep because the woman was snoring.

The aim of this activities is to generate curiosity and prompt speculation and hypothesis about seemingly impossible or unlikely situations using the so-called "lateral thinking". Being presented with an unlikely or bizarre scenario, students have to do their best to ask lots of questions correctly to solve the mystery. They are usually highly motivated in asking questions and get really interested in the story. This fact makes them participate very actively and improve their skills in asking questions. Using puzzle stories provides students with opportunity to engage in extended discourse in real context (spontaneous speech), engage in unrehearsed communication where there is uncertainty about what will be said and the speakers have some choice in what they will say. There is a goal to the communication, both the speaker and the hearer must attend to grammar and topic.