

## CHAZ PUGLIESE

### Plenary Helping our Learners Sing a Better Song

These are tough times for teachers, especially those working with teenagers and young adults. While the idea that there ever was a golden era in education is far-fetched, the fact that teachers have to face a few, important new issues cannot be denied. Our students are stressed out, they seem to have given in to the pressure of a hyper-materialistic world, so much so that they learn something (memorize is a better word) if they're going to be graded on it. But this isn't our students' fault, to be fair: over the last few decades we've managed to build a culture of schooling in which more emphasis is placed on control than surprise, more attention given to what's standard than to what is original, we have even in some cases replaced the question: "what's good for the students?" with "what do our corporations need?" We have shifted the conversation about education to what will be useful in workplaces rather than to what *might promote self-development as an intrinsic good* (Elliot Eisner). I believe a new vision of education is called for.

So, can we make our students grow? Yes, definitely, if we design tasks that train the students to look beneath the obvious and stretch beyond the language point; if we teach in ways that are meaningful to the students; if we pay more attention to what happens in our groups; if we stop flirting with best methods" and embrace more creative ways of teaching our classes; and if we manage to wean them away from the chains of test scores.

### Workshop Creativity for Teachers

We live in a culture that doesn't encourage us to be creative unless there's a chance we are going to strike it big with a commercial hit. Creativity, like so much else in our world, has been co-opted into consumerism and its worth calculated by how much money it generates. The teaching world is no exception: the big pull is towards standardization, exams, regimented syllabi, a senseless don't rock the boat attitude, intellectual short sight that will do nobody a favor. The Victorian art critic John Ruskin, when asked why he was teaching factory workers to draw, said "I'm not teaching them to draw, I'm teaching them to see". Isn't learning a language, too, a way of learning to see anew? I would venture to say that enhanced seeing and feeling are the real reasons to create, whether it is an exercise, a song, a haiku, or a brand new thought. A creative teacher knows how to get his/her students' attention and help them keep it. A creative teacher knows teaching in ways that are meaningful to the students. A creative teacher will always find ways to make

10<sup>th</sup> METU ELT  
Convention



22-23 May 2009  
Ankara

her lessons stick. Creative teachers can do all that. Creativity is not a luxurious extra for a teacher, but rather the foundations to base our practice upon. Think of the word creativity and images of imposing Renaissance men or 20<sup>th</sup> century iconoclast physicists will come to mind. Well, luckily for us common mortals, the story is a little more complex than that. If you're after a genius type of creativity and you're wondering whether this workshop will make you attain the heights of a Leonardo da Vinci or Bach, I'm sorry to say that, no, it won't. On the other hand, if we talk about an everyday type of creativity, absolutely everyone can be creative, and this is what I will attempt to show in this practical session.

In this workshop we will first tackle a few important questions such as *What* is creativity? Why should I bother? We will take a look at a few creativity strategies and see how they can be implemented in the classroom.

#### Bio

Chaz Pugliese is currently Director of Studies (Teacher Training) at Pilgrims, UK. A regular presenter at international conferences, Chaz has contributed over 60 articles to several ELT publications and has worked with teachers in over 25 countries.

Chaz's first book (Creative Strategies for Teachers) will be published by Delta in 2009. A second one (with Simon Mumford and Mario Rinvoluceri) on Teaching Spoken Grammar will be out in 2010.

When he's not training, Chaz likes to spend time with his family in Paris where he's based, and play the blues on his beloved Gibson guitar.

10<sup>th</sup> METU ELT  
Convention



22-23 May 2009  
Ankara