Teachers share: How to plan creative lessons

Webinar handout

Idea 1: Exploring metaphor with AI

by Halla Khan

Introduction

The following activity helps learners understand how metaphors create meaning and can be used in lessons where learners produce pieces of creative writing.

Age and level: This activity is for B1-B2 level teenage learners.

Time needed: 15-30 minutes

Objective: Instead of simply memorising metaphor definitions, learners explore how language expresses feelings, experiences, and ideas creatively. It focuses on helping learners understand metaphorical mapping, particularly how meaning is created between a target concept and a source concept through shared qualities.

Equipment needed: A printed metaphor mapping table for learners. Also, and access to an AI tool (such as Gemini or ChatGPT) is used to generate the activity sheet, while the interpretation and creative thinking are done entirely by the learners. This encourages thoughtful expression, collaboration, and confidence in using metaphorical expressions.

Step 1: Teacher modelling

1. Select one metaphor to model. Example: *My heart is an open book.*

2. Identify the *Target* and *Source* together. Target = heart (representing emotions, inner thoughts, and feelings). Source = The open book (representing something easy to read, accessible, and transparent, where the contents are plainly visible).

3. Ask a guiding question:

"*What qualities do heart and book share?"*

4. Learners brainstorm 3-4 shared qualities in pairs/groups. Pool answers on the board.

Step 2: Main activity

Learners receive a simple three-column table with the headings **Target, Source,** and **Shared Qualities**, and work in pairs to explore the connections between the concepts. Their task is to discuss what characteristics or emotional associations the two ideas share, focusing on interpretation rather than correctness. The teacher's role is to encourage slow, reflective conversation where learners explain their thinking to each other and listen for similarities and differences in perspective. This discussion-based approach promotes reasoning, collaboration, and deeper understanding of how metaphor expresses meaning.

- **AI prompt suggestion**

Create a simplified metaphor activity sheet with visual-friendly metaphors. Include a 3-column table (Target / Source / Shared Qualities) and include metaphors such as: Classroom → Garden, Teacher → Lighthouse, Friendship → Bridge. Leave the Shared Qualities column blank.

Tips for teachers

- Allow AI to assist only with structure (e.g., creating the metaphor table).
- Ensure learners generate their own interpretations and connections.
- Emphasise that metaphors have multiple valid meanings and encourage personal insights.
- Model your thinking process slowly to show how meaning unfolds and to reduce anxiety.
- Invite learners to choose metaphors that feel personally meaningful to them, in order to increase engagement.
- Avoid grading rubrics — treat this as a space for creativity, reflection, and free exploration.

Idea 2: Creative and critical thinking in teen classes

by Dina ElSebaie

Introduction

This session shows how we can promote teens' creative and critical thinking skills. It aims to help differentiate between creative and critical thinking and help you become more confident in planning different activities that promote teens' creative and critical thinking

To promote teens' creative and critical thinking skills, we should encourage our teenage learners curiosity and support their individuality by creating safe environments to make them feel more included and confident to express their views. They learn through trial and error and be encouraged to reflect on the outcomes. They trust the process that empowers their creative and critical thinking skills.

How can we differentiate between creative and critical thinking?

1. While *Creative Thinking* is about initiating and generating ideas, *Critical Thinking* focuses on analysing and assessing information.
2. *Creative Thinking* activities encourage learners to design, invent and create. Meanwhile, *Critical Thinking* activities support them in solving problems and making decisions.
3. *Creative Thinking* relies on intuition; it is subjective. *Critical Thinking*, however, relies on logic, so it is objective.

Class activities

Activity 1: Thinking box

Share a box with the learners and add interesting questions that get them to wonder.

Example questions:

- What would happen if food was free?
- Which superpower would you give your mum? Why?
- What would happen if boys and girls switched roles for a day?

Activity 2: Four dots

Learners contemplate and summarise four aspects of an issue: **personal opinion; opposing opinion; question; remarks.**

Example issue:

Australia is banning social media apps for users under 16. To what extent do you agree/disagree?

Activity 3: Show my colour

Write a sentence and ask the learners to choose a colour. Then, ask them to complete the sentence with an idea reflecting this sentiment.

Example sentences:

I was walking into the school and noticed that everyone was wearing blue, I looked around and realised that …

My friends and I were playing a game when we heard a squeak, it was …

A recording of Halla and Dina's webinar can be watched here: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/creative-lesson-planning-webinars