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UNIT 3

Re-thinking Arts and Creativity in Learning

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1. Introduction

This unit was designed to provide educators with an opportunity to explore different concepts of creativity, its role in education, as well as reflect on how their teaching practices directly influence students' creativity in their learning process. The general goal is to foster understanding on the importance of recognizing creativity as a significant part of any learning environment. Thus, in this unit, trainees will complete a series of tasks that will allow them to reflect, discuss, self-assess, as well as identify how to align their practices to foster creativity in their working environments. The unit can be implemented as a workshop or as an independent unit that educators can work on with co-workers in their school setting.

2. Learning Objectives

At the end of this unit trainees will be able to:
- Identify different forms of creativity and its different nuances
- Reflect on their practices and the role of creativity in education
- Recognize and discuss the importance of developing practices that support student creativity, as well as their own.
- Use the tools provided to improve their teaching practices in promoting creativity in the classroom

3. Time

Approximately 1h30 minutes to 2h30 minutes, depending on the number of participants. A maximum of 15 participants is recommended per session. If the number of participants exceeds per session exceeds the recommended number, it will take longer to complete the tasks.

4. Tasks

Each of the tasks below were designed to promote better understanding of what creativity means through practical activities that allow trainees to think critically and consider examples from their daily activities as teachers. The focus is on providing trainees with the opportunity to reflect on three important aspects: 1) their own understanding of their

creative skills and how to use these skills in the classroom, and 2) how to foster and support their students' creativity in the classroom,3) perceptions and attitudes towards creativity in the society. It is important that the order of each task is followed, as each activity is connected to the previous one.

A. Task 1 – Video discussion – 30 min to 45 min

This first task explores Creativity considering how it is affected by social conventions and expectations. The 7-minute animated short film metaphorically depicts the impact of social conventions on creativity, the positive or negative effect that we might have on others around us through our creativity.

Instructions:

Watch the short film 'ALIKE' by Daniel Martinez and Rafa Mendez. While you watch the video, consider the following questions:

1. How is creativity represented on the video?
2. How does the video portray the impact of creativity in our lives? (Explore the visuals, colours, educators' and parents' attitudes)
3. How do societal conventions affect Creativity? Consider your own educational system and compare it with examples from the video.

Think-Pair-Share: Individually, think on your answers. Next, pair up with a partner and discuss your ideas/perspectives. Finally, come back as a group and share your ideas all together.
Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDHIyrfMl_U&t=5s

B. Task 2 – Consider your classroom- 10min to 20min

This task provides trainees with the opportunity to reflect on their own practices. After completing task 1, they will begin to reflect, analyze, and compare what happens in their surroundings with what happens in the video. This is their opportunity to reflect on their own practices and to demonstrate their own understanding of what Creativity means. A certain level of vulnerability is necessary for this activity to be successful, so it is highly recommended that a safe space for sharing be created, so that participants feel comfortable with sharing their ideas.

Instructions:

Individually, consider your own practice and the activities, resources and assignments that you   usually implement/use. Think about the following questions, then discuss with the group:

1. Do you consider yourself to be a creative person? Why?
2. How creative are you in your practice as an educator?
3. Do you often use creative ways to address your teaching? Give an example.

C. Task 3 – Creativity vs creating – 15min-30min

This task focuses on demystifying the meaning of Creativity, as it introduces the concept as being much more than artistic expression. After watching the 2-minute video entitled "Everyone can be creative", participants will now reflect on their answers to the questions from task 2 as they discuss Creativity as both a skill and a process. Chances are that some participants will change the answers provided in task 2, as they get a better understanding of what Creativity is.

Instructions:

After you have completed task 2, watch the video "Everyone can be creative" by learnfree.org (link below). As a group, use the following guiding questions to analyze the information provided in the video:

1. How does the video portray creativity?
2. What is the difference between creativity and creating?
3. Revisit task 2 and reconsider your answers? Are there any changes on your perception about how creative you are?

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTtjETjGDFY

D. Task 4: Creativity- an innate or developed skill? 5min-10min

This task allows participants to discuss their ideas on Creativity as an innate skill as opposed to a skill that can be developed. With the information from the video in task 3, they can now begin to reflect on whether we are born with creative minds, or whether we learn to be creative. This task focuses on small group discussions only. At this stage, there is no need to share with the group, as this will be covered in task 5.

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Instructions:

1. Break into small groups (2-3 people).

2. Discuss the question: Is Creativity an innate or developed skill?

E. Task 5: Present task 4 results – 10min-20min

Up to this point, participants have been following a consistent pattern of discussion-reflecting, then sharing ideas. This task is designed to challenge participants in applying their own creativity to present the results of their small group debate in a different way.

Instructions:

In your small groups, follow the steps below:

1. Think on how you usually present results.

2. Think on an alternative way you could present the results.

3. Share your ideas with the rest of the group

F. Task 6: Definition of creativity – 10min-20min

All previous activities lead up to this final task. Instead of starting by defining Creativity, participants go through a series of tasks that culminate on this last one: defining creativity. This technique allows them to build on an understanding by analyzing and sharing information, and then using that understanding to decide what creativity means to them. For this activity, posters containing different definitions of creativity are provided. They should be printed and distributed throughout the room for participants to choose the one that best represents creativity to them (in a face-to-face setting). Alternatively, they can be projected.

Instructions:

1. Read the posters and stand by the one that offers the best definition of creativity in your opinion.

2. Tell the rest of the group why you chose a specific definition.

3. Reflect on how this unit will impact your practices as a creative person, educator, and member of your community.

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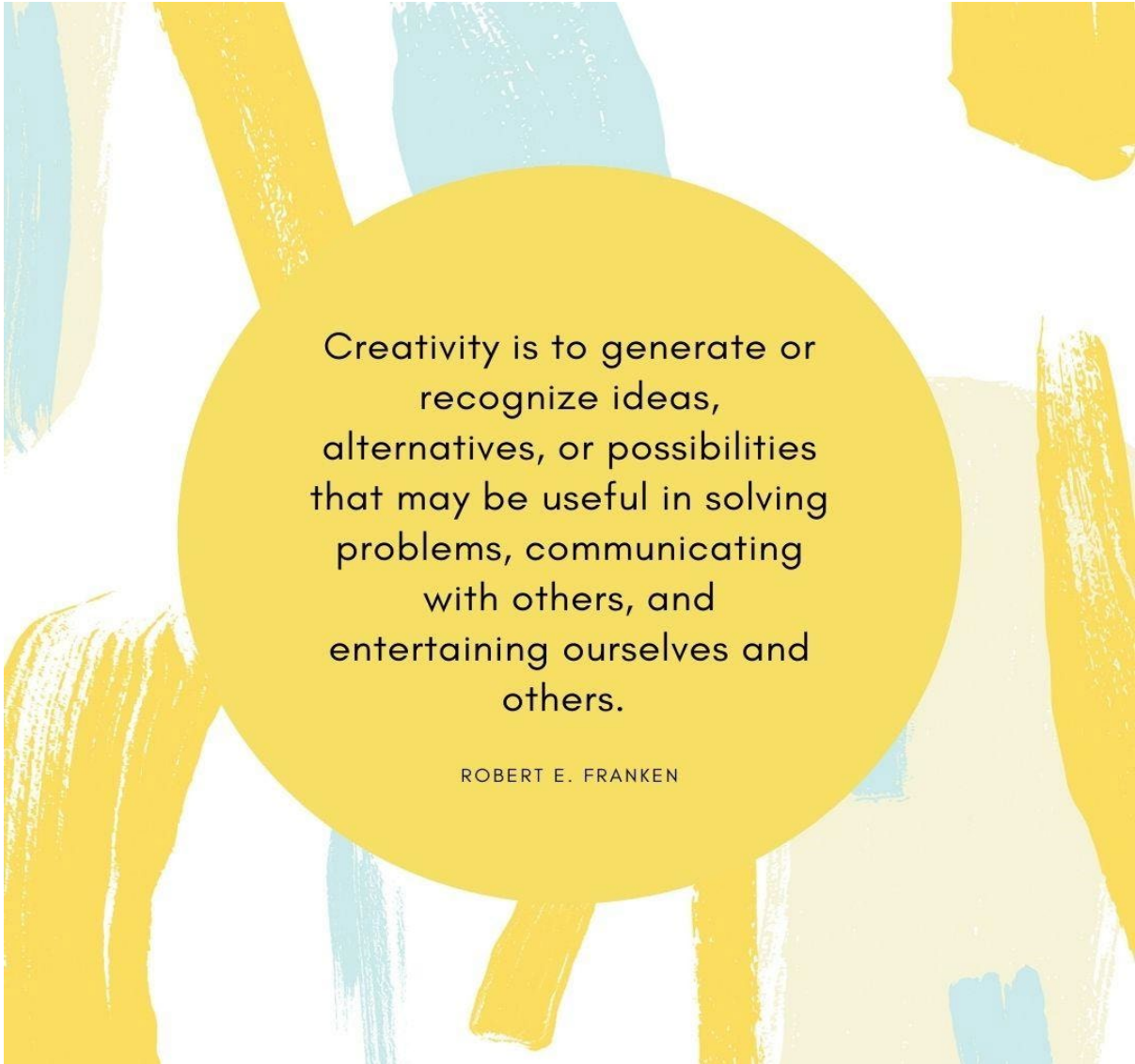
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5. Resources

A. Posters

Poster 1

Creativity is an act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain or that transforms an existing domain into a new one.

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Poster 2:

Creativity is to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others.
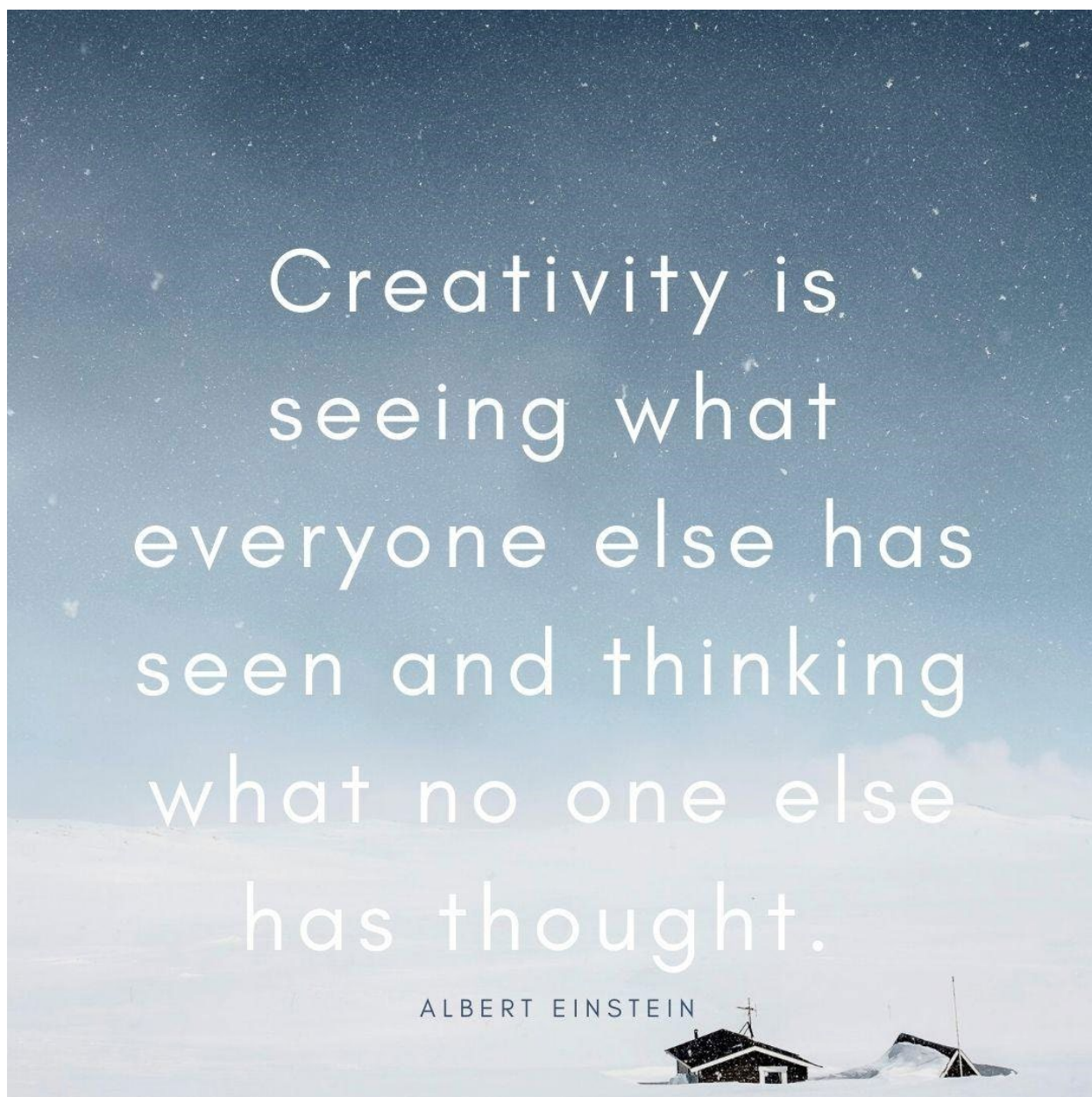
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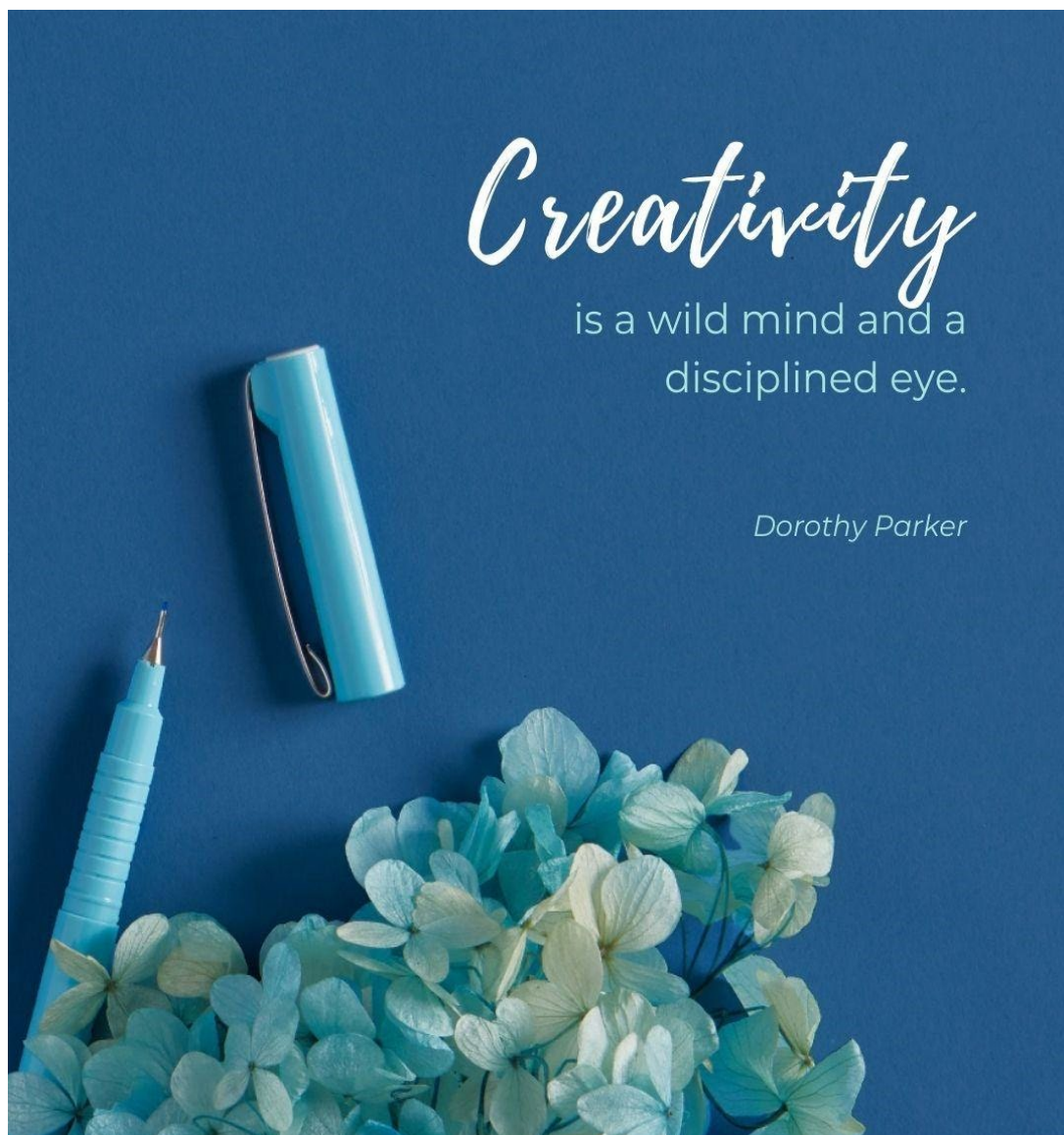Erasmus+ Programme
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Poster 3:

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Poster 4:

Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen and thinking what no one else has thought.
ALBERT EINSTEIN

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Poster 5:

6. Supplemental materials

Gura, M. (2016). How to turn your classroom into a hotbed of creativity and innovation. *Eschool News innovations in educational transformation*, April 4, 2016. https://www.eschoolnews.com/2016/04/04/how-to-turn-your-classroom-into-a-hotbed-of-creativity-and-innovation/2/

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Pllana, D. (2019). *Creativity in modern education. World Journal of Education. (Vol. 9). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1215357.pdf*