Module II: Teaching creativity

In the module, we present and discuss creativity as well as the approaches leading to the inclusion of creativity in teaching within regular classes given in the context of programme study areas and common professional topics. Several approaches are described and quite some interesting practical examples are shown either as videos or readings.

The module presents detailed information in the areas of:

- **What is creativity?**

To be able to teach creativity, we have to ask ourselves first, what creativity actually is and where it is hidden. A mathematical proof on one side and a unique beautiful painting on the other seem to be totally different things, yet maybe both creative.

Creativity is not just a simple skill limited to a few individuals or a few disciplines. It is a way of thinking and an approach to the problem solving that in many times cuts across several disciplines. It is as important in the fields of science and mathematics as it is in the fields of social sciences, management, engineering or arts.

To recognise creativity, three characteristics should be identified, namely (i) novelty bringing newness, freshness and originality, effectiveness bringing the value, quality and usefulness, and (iii) wholeness connecting the creativity to the specific context such as education.

- **How to approach creativity teaching?**

There is a strong sense in education that creativity should be nurtured in the classroom settings, yet there is little understanding of how creative teachers actually are. Existing research recognizes that creative people from any discipline are prone to use creative avocations to enhance their professional thinking, it even demonstrates a strong connection between professional and personal life creativity. Excellent teachers seem to actively cultivate their creative mindset. They are highly creative in their personal as well as professional lives, and they actively transfer creative tendencies from their external interests into their teaching practices.

The importance of fostering student creativity in higher education has been widely recognized. Young people should be prepared for the uncertain and complex world of work, which requires individuals to be able to use their creative abilities. Despite this recognition, the encouragement of creativity in higher education has become a challenge for faculty. Although there is an agreement that college students should be creative, college faculty are generally not familiar with learning and teaching environments that promote creativity. Furthermore, many factors impact creativity expression in higher education institutions, such as students' resistance, the organizational structure of universities, faculty attributes and pedagogical practices.

- **Techniques that may be used for creativity teaching**

Graduates' jobs and careers will certainly not be standardized, however, we might argue that educational systems are still too much oriented towards paperwork and the teachers do not have an easy job to foster creativity in their classrooms. Another problem hindering creativity teaching may be the students' motivation. They sometimes believe they are not creative if they do not play an instrument or perform some kind of arts. Too often, they require strict guidelines on what to do, how to do it, and what they need to know, for example for the exam.

Teachers have to help them to be able to reflect on the process of thinking and not to expect that they will come up with some ground-breaking new innovative ideas. Creativity may be hidden also in small things, small inventions. We want to help them to understand that they need to be able to think in a way that could generate the right kind of answer, however, they do not need to actually produce it.