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TEACHING ESL LEARNERS DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE PRECISION THROUGH AI-POWERED CULTURAL MASHUPS

COURSE

Creative classrooms with AI: Innovate responsibly course by European School Education Platform on the EU Academy

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DESCRIPTION OF MICRO-EXPERIMENT

• *Select one teaching strategy, tool, or example introduced in this module, and write it down.*

"The Idea Mashup Lab" (originally designed to combine two different industries to create a hybrid innovation).

• *Adapt it to fit your own learners, subject, or setting. Be specific about how you modified it.*

I modified this strategy to suit my English as a Second Language (ESL) context for learners aged 7-11 and 11-13. Instead of purely industrial mashups, I adapted it into a "Cultural Symbol Mashup."The Modification: I asked learners to pick one traditional Georgian symbol (e.g., a Chokha or a Kvevri) and one modern technological function (e.g., Space Travel or Digital Gaming).The AI integration: Learners used AI as a Visual Prototyper. They had to write precise English descriptions to "mash up" these concepts in an AI image generator, forcing them to use specific adjectives and nouns to see their "Cultural Innovation" come to life.

• *Try it out in your teaching (if possible) or reflect on what you anticipate would happen when using it as part of your teaching.*

I anticipate a significant boost in learner engagement. For younger learners (ages 7-11), abstract vocabulary often feels "dry." However, when they see that saying

"A golden Kvevri shaped like a rocket ship" actually produces a picture, the language becomes functional and alive.

- *What strategy did you choose, and how did you adapt it to suit your learners?*

I chose **"The Idea Mashup Lab"** and adapted it into a **"Cultural Symbol Mashup"** for ESL learners. Instead of combining industries, learners combined traditional Georgian symbols with modern technological functions, using AI as a visual prototyper to bring their creative language descriptions to life.

- *What worked or surprised you in practice, or what do you imagine would happen if you tried it?*

The surprise factor: What surprised me (or what I expect to see) is the "prompt precision challenge." Learners often start with very simple prompts like "Fast Kvevri." When the AI gives a generic result, they are forced to tinker with their English—adding details about texture, lighting, and specific functions.

Outcome: The AI doesn't just "give the answer"; it acts as a mirror for their linguistic accuracy. It turns a grammar lesson into a high-stakes design lab where the final product is a visual representation of their own creativity.

HOW YOU CAN USE THIS IN YOUR PRACTICE

Choose any topic from your curriculum and use AI image generation as an "Idea Mashup Lab" where learners combine two contrasting concepts to create innovative hybrids. The process is straightforward:

Step 1: Learners select two elements to combine—one traditional/familiar and one modern/unexpected (e.g., cultural symbol + technology, historical object + future function, natural element + human innovation).

Step 2: Learners write precise English descriptions to generate their "mashup" using AI, requiring specific vocabulary about appearance, function, texture, and context.

Step 3: Learners refine vague initial prompts (e.g., "fast object") into detailed descriptions (e.g., "A golden traditional vessel shaped like a rocket ship with intricate patterns and glowing engines").

Step 4: Learners present their visual innovation and explain the language choices that made it successful, turning vocabulary into a functional design tool.

Subject-specific examples:

- **English / ESL:** Combine cultural symbols with modern technology (e.g., traditional clothing with space-age materials, folk instruments with digital features)

- **History:** Merge historical inventions with contemporary purposes (e.g., Roman aqueduct design meeting modern water filtration, medieval castle architecture with smart home technology)
- **Science:** Blend natural organisms with mechanical functions (e.g., butterfly wings with solar panel capabilities, plant roots with data storage systems)
- **Geography:** Fuse traditional architecture from different cultures (e.g., igloos with Mediterranean courtyards, pagodas with Gothic arches)
- **Design & Technology:** Combine everyday objects with unexpected materials or purposes (e.g., furniture made from recycled ocean plastic, traditional crafts using 3D printing)
- **PSHE/Citizenship:** Mashup community spaces with inclusive design features (e.g., playgrounds that serve multiple age groups, markets that incorporate green technology)

Implementation tip: Start with concrete, visual vocabulary lists for each "mashup category" (textures: smooth, rough, metallic; functions: stores, travels, communicates; styles: traditional, futuristic, ornate). Make it a "high-stakes design challenge" where the quality of the English description directly determines the success of the visual output.

The key principle: Transform abstract vocabulary learning into functional communication where language precision has immediate, visible consequences. The AI acts as a mirror for linguistic accuracy rather than an answer provider, turning grammar and descriptive writing into a creative design process. This approach makes language "alive and functional," particularly effective for ESL learners who can see their English proficiency directly shape their creative output.

This learning journal was created as part of the 'Creative classrooms with AI: Innovate responsibly' online course organised by European School Education Platform on the EU Academy.