

# Integrating Neurodivergent Students into EFL Classes Through Creativity-Based Activities



NEURODIVERSITY



CREATIVITY



COMMUNICATION



EXPRESSION



MULTIPLE PATHWAYS



INCLUSION

MASTER'S THESIS DEFENCE

M U N I  
P E D

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***"What if some students are not struggling to learn, but struggling to show what they know?"***

## Why This Topic?

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Throughout my teaching career, I repeatedly met students who were described as **passive**, **unmotivated**, or **disruptive**.

Yet many of them became **highly engaged** when given alternative ways to use language.



Prague



| izmir



| 2023 – 2026

# FROM DEFICIT TO DIFFERENCE

*A Paradigm Shift in Understanding Neurodivergent Learners*

M U N I  
P E D

## TRADITIONAL VIEW



**What's wrong with the student?**

The problem is seen as **inside** the learner.



## NEURODIVERSITY PARADIGM



**What barriers exist in the environment?**

The challenge is seen as a **mismatch** between learner and environment.

### DEFICIT MODEL



*Student is expected to adapt to the system.*



### NEURODIVERSITY MODEL



*Environment is adapted to support diverse learners.*

THE EARTH WAS ONCE BELIEVED TO BE FLAT.



NEW EVIDENCE CHANGED OUR PERSPECTIVE.



NEURODIVERSITY INVITES US TO CHANGE OUR LENS.



For many years, educational systems asked:

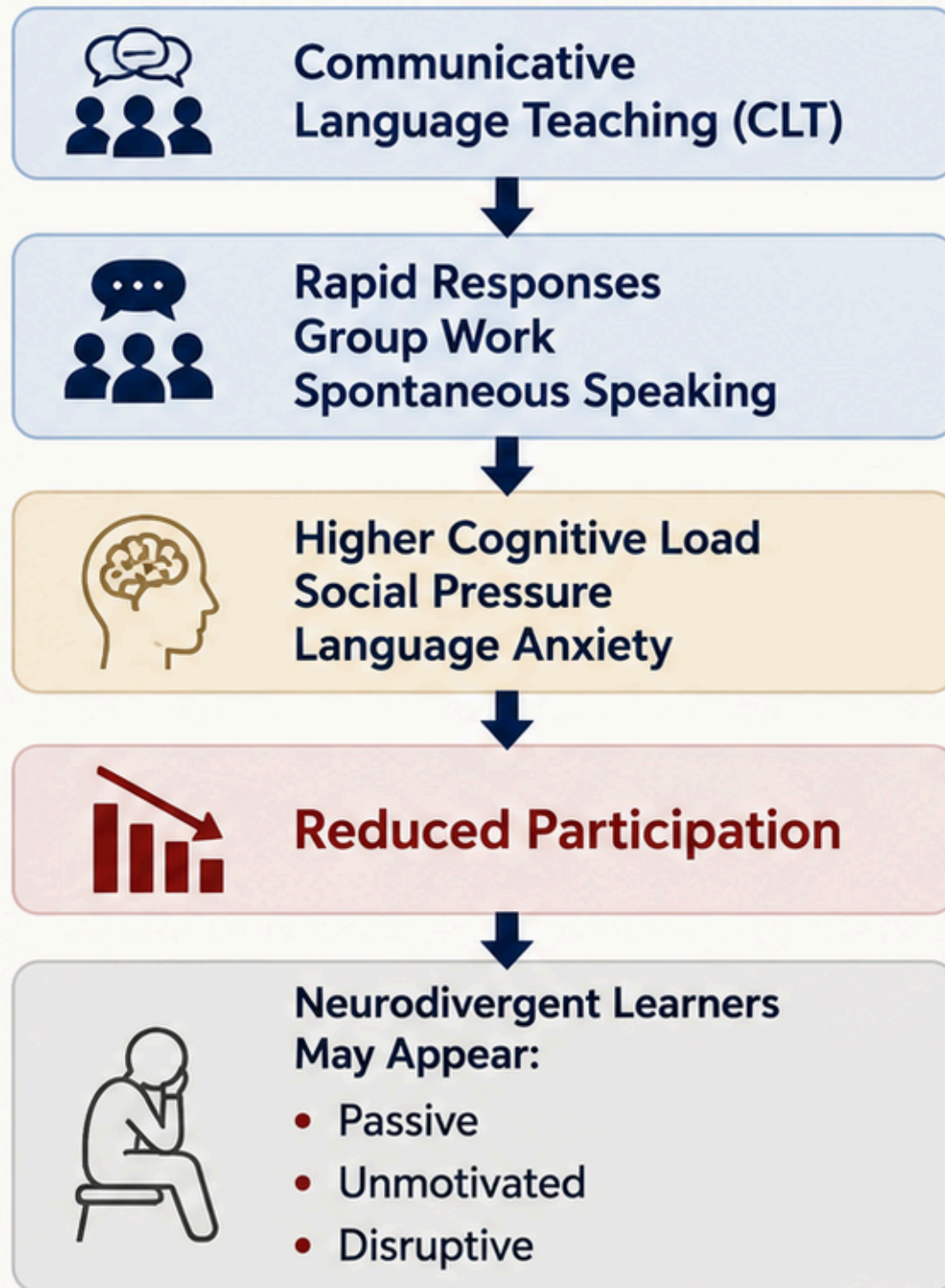
**“How can we fix the learner?”**

Neurodiversity asks a different question:

**“How can we redesign the environment?”**

When we change the question, we open the door to **inclusion** and **potential**.

# RESEARCH PROBLEM



**Does low participation always mean low ability?**

Traditional EFL classrooms often rely on:



RAPID  
ORAL INTERACTION



SPONTANEOUS  
RESPONSES



GROUP  
WORK

However, these practices may create **barriers** for some neurodivergent learners.

**→ RESULT:** Participation may decrease despite **adequate language ability**.

“ The issue is not necessarily language ability itself, but the interaction between the learner and the learning environment. ”

# Research Questions & Aims

## Research Questions



### RQ1

How do neurodivergent students respond to **creativity-based activities** in EFL classrooms?



### RQ2

Which types of creativity-based activities appear **most effective**?



### RQ3

What **challenges** do teachers encounter when implementing these activities?



## Aim of the Study

To explore how **creativity-based activities** can support the **inclusion** of neurodivergent learners in lower secondary EFL classrooms.

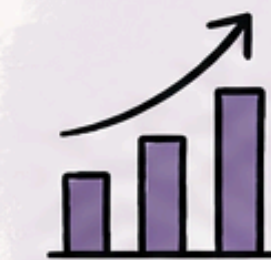
Research Aim



Creativity-Based  
Activities



Neurodivergent  
Learners



- ✓ Participation
- ✓ Confidence
- ✓ Language Use

## RESEARCH DESIGN



Qualitative  
Exploratory Study



Action Research  
Orientation

## CONTEXT



Schools in  
Prague & Izmir



Lower Secondary  
Students (Grades 7-8)



2023 - 2026

## DATA COLLECTION



Classroom  
Observation



Reflective  
Field Notes



Student-Created  
Artifacts

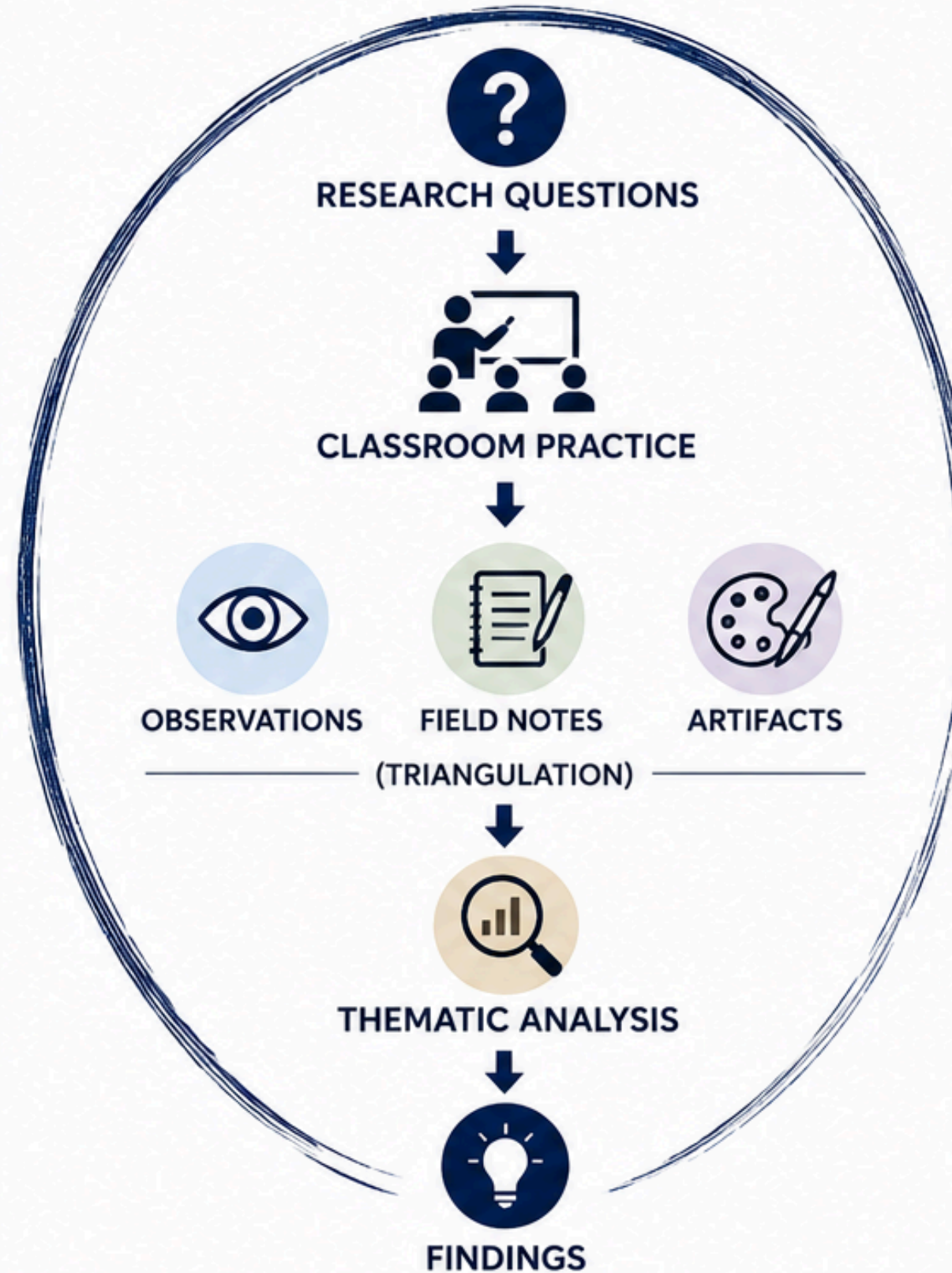


Participant  
Observation

## DATA ANALYSIS



Thematic  
Analysis



## PARTICIPANTS

 9 focal case students

 Grades 7–8

 Prague  and İzmir 

 Diverse neurodivergent profiles

 Different strengths, needs, and participation styles

## RESEARCH SETTINGS

### SETTING

### CONTEXT



Prague

Main Course,  
Skills Lessons,  
Clubs



İzmir

Main Course,  
Creative Activities

## PARTICIPANTS



Vanessa



Honza



Lena



Emir



Karoline



Dominik



Michal



Ege



Aneta

“

Neurodivergent learners  
are not one group.  
Different learners benefit from  
different pathways.

”

## WHY CASE PROFILES?

Because neurodivergent learners are **not a homogeneous group**.

Each student responded differently to:



Creative  
Writing



Music



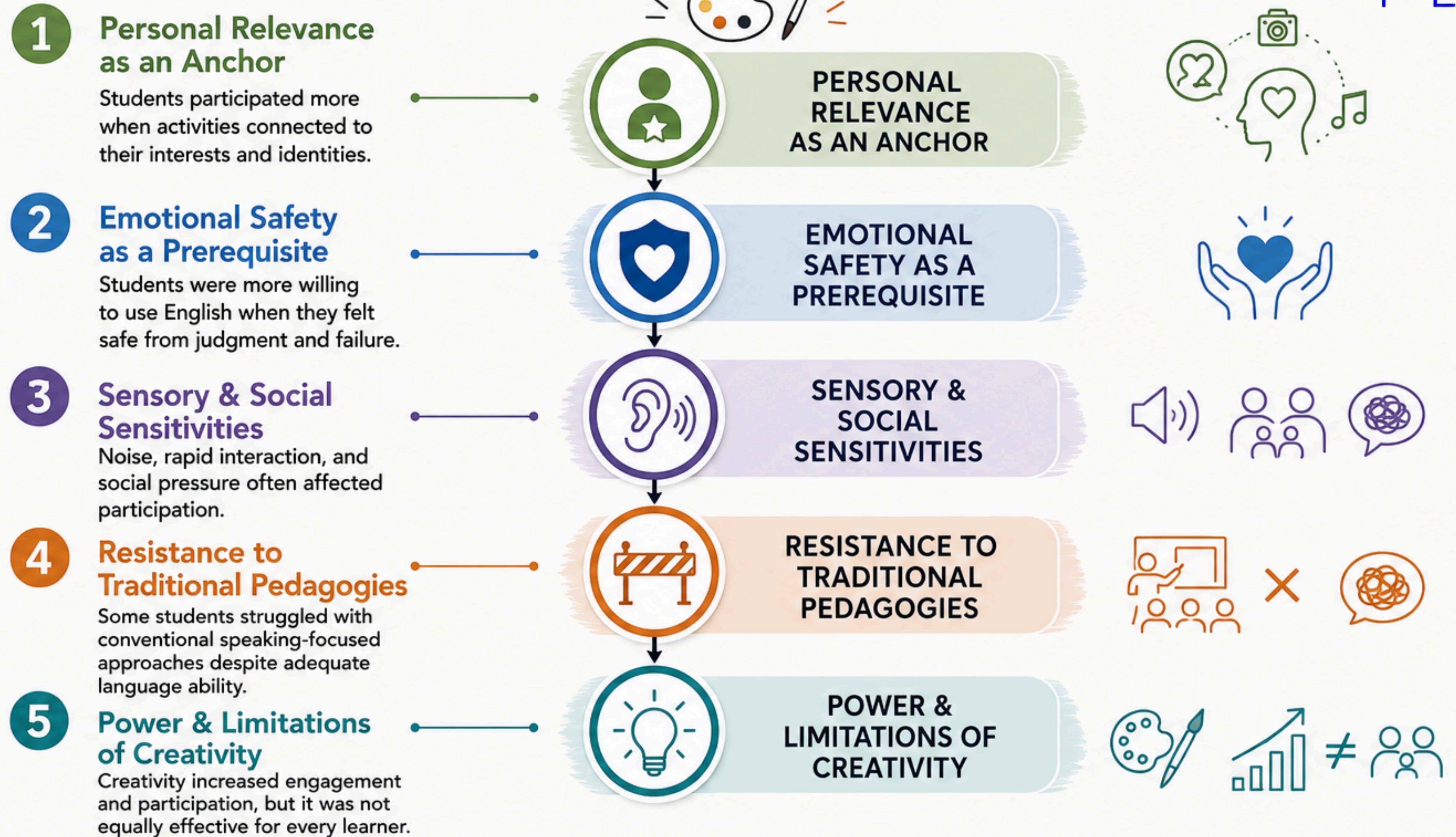
Drama



Visual  
Storytelling



# KEY FINDINGS



**EGE**Independent,  
Self-Directed TasksIncreased  
Engagement**BADE**Music-Supported  
ActivitiesSustained  
Focus**EMIR**Drama &  
Translation ActivitiesHigher  
Confidence &  
Participation

The same learning goal  
was reached through **different pathways.**



# IMPLICATIONS FOR EFL TEACHERS

*Practical takeaways for more inclusive language classrooms*

## MULTIPLE WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Offer creative options for students to engage with content and express understanding.



## FLEXIBLE PROCESSING TIME

Give students the time they need to understand, process, and respond in their own way.



## INCLUSION THROUGH FLEXIBILITY



## MULTIPLE WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

Allow different forms of communication to demonstrate language learning.



## EMOTIONALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Build classrooms where students feel respected, accepted, and safe to take risks.



CREATIVITY

+



SAFETY

+



CHOICE

+



LANGUAGE LEARNING

=



INCLUSIVE  
EFL CLASSROOMS

# THANK YOU

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What if some students are  
not struggling to **learn**...

...but struggling to **show**  
what they **know**?



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QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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