

Some ways to promote creativity in our classrooms

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Introduction: Creativity has been defined by Sir Ken Robinson as original ideas that have value (Robinson, 2011). Kleiman (2008) similarly suggests creativity involves originality and novelty combined with utility or value., while Jackson offers creativity as the ability to 'move an idea from one state to another' (Jackson, 2006:8). Creativity has been linked with: attitudes of curiosity; willingness to engage and explore; being proactive; being willing to take risks, having determination and even obsession. Jackson (2006) offers a set of characteristics for creativity, including in being: imaginative; original or inventive; able to adapt and improvise; curious and resourceful; and able to see things differently. Robinson (2006) argues creativity is an essential aspect for learning, since learning takes us into a future that we cannot yet grasp. He argues there is a need to promote divergent thinking in diverse and dynamic learning spaces. We need educational spaces that acknowledge human diversity and that privilege and exploit such diversity to develop our creative capital. Possibility thinking influences our ability to find and solve problems and come up with original ideas. A possibility thinker is constantly looking to find new ways of thinking about the world.

It is argued creativity can be team-based, observable and learnable. It is evidenced in a collective capacity to select, reshuffle, combine, or synthesise already existing facts, ideas and skills in original ways. Thus we could promote creative thinking, being and doing in HE learning spaces by focusing on creative, collaborative learning activities among both learners and teachers (and see also Livingston, 2010).

Here are the some ways of creating creativity in Teaching- learning situation

1. **Embrace creativity as part of learning.** We have to create a classroom that recognizes creativity. We may design awards or bulletin boards to showcase different ways of solving a problem, or creative solutions to a real world scenario.
2. **Use the most effective strategies.** Torrance performed an extensive [meta-analysis](#) that considered the most effective ways to teach creativity. It is found that the most successful approaches used creative arts, media-oriented programs, or relied on the Osborn-Parnes training program. Programs that incorporated cognitive and emotional functioning were the most successful.
3. **Think of creativity as a skill.** Much like resourcefulness and inventiveness it is less a trait and more a proficiency that can be taught. If we see it this way, our job as educators becomes to find ways to encourage its use and break it down into smaller skill sets. Psychologists tend to think of creativity as Big-C and Little C. Big C drives big societal ideas, like the Civil Rights movement or a new literary style. Little C is more of a working model of creativity that solves everyday problems. Both concepts can be included in our classrooms to promote creativity in general.

4. **Participate in or create a program to develop creative skills.** Programs of [b](#) and [Thinkquest](#) aim at bringing together students from around the country and the world to promote creativity, design creative solutions, and bring them to competition.
5. **Use emotional connections.** Research suggests that the best creativity instruction ties in the emotions of the learner. A [blog post](#) by fellow blogger Julie DeNeen gives some valuable information about this type of teaching. Research suggests that the best creativity instruction ties in the emotions of the learner
6. **Use a creativity model.** The Osborne-Parnes model is oldest, widely accepted model. It is often used in education and business improvement to promote creativity. Each step involves a divergent thinking pattern to challenge ideas, and then convergent thinking to narrow down exploration. It has six steps:
 - *Mess-finding.* Identify a goal or objective.
 - *Fact-finding.* Gathering data.
 - *Problem-finding.* Clarifying the problem
 - *Idea-finding.* Generating ideas
 - *Solution-finding.* Strengthening & evaluating ideas
 - *Acceptance-finding.* Plan of action for Implementing ideas
7. **Consider how classroom assignments use divergent and convergent thinking.** Standardized tests do a great job of measuring convergent thinking that includes analytical thinking or logical answers with one correct response. [Divergent thinking](#) considers how a learner can use different ways to approach a problem. It requires using association and multiplicity of thought. We should design assignments that consider both types of thinking models.
8. **Creativity flourishes in a “congenial environment”.** Creative thinking needs to be shared and validated by others in a socially supportive atmosphere. Researcher Csikszentmihalyi (1996) coined this term, to explain the importance of reception from others. Others consider how to create [social communities](#) that promote creativity to solve problems.
9. **Be aware during discussions.** We know that student who often asks the question that goes a bit outside the lecture? Well, engage him. Once a week, intentionally address those questions. Write them down on an assigned space in the board to go back to later. Promote creativity by validating students’ creative thinking.
10. **See creativity in a positive light.** In his [blog](#) in Psychology Today, Eric Jaffe talks about research that suggests see creativity in a negative light. If we are going to promote creativity, we need to embrace it too. Reward students for thinking of problems in varied ways by recognizing their efforts.
11. **Try the Incubation Model.** E. Paul Torrance designed this model. It involves 3 stages:
 1. Heightening Anticipation: Make connections between the classroom and student’s real lives. “Create the desire to know”.
 2. Deepen Expectations: Engage the curriculum in new ways. Brainstorm and create opportunities to solve a novel problem.
 3. Keep it going: Continue the thinking beyond the lesson or classroom. Find ways to extend learning opportunities at home or even the community.

Some more Suggestions to bring the atmosphere of Creativity:

Use a cultural artifact. [Research](#) from experimental social psychology finds that artifacts can enhance insight problem solving. Consider using an ordinary object, such as a light bulb used in the study or a historical artifact to have students think about living in a particular time period.

Establish expressive freedom. The classroom environment must be a place where students feel safe to share novel ideas. Allow for flexibility and create norms that promote creativity.

Be familiar with standards. Knowing the standards inside and out helps find creative solutions in approaching a lesson. Teachers can adapt them and work within the current framework. Some topics allow for flexibility and use of creative approaches.

Gather outside resources. There are some great resources to read related to creativity. **Sir Ken Robinson said it best when he said, “If you’re not prepared to be wrong, you’ll never come up with anything original.”**

Allow space for creativity. Design some classroom space for exploration, such as a thinking table, a drama stage, a drawing table, or a space for groups to discuss ideas.

Give students time to ask questions. Organizations such as [CCE](#) (Creativity, Culture, Education) suggest teachers incorporate opportunities for students to ask questions. Intentionally design lessons that allow for wondering and exploration.

Creativity builds confidence. Students take ownership of their own learning. Think of ways where students might design a project. For instance, for the history requirement, I suggested students of both fifth grade classes create an exhibition of their final projects. The students were so proud of their final work and learned from others presentations. Parents and community members were happy to see students take ownership of their learning.

Encourage curiosity. Consider what is important to students. Student interest is a great place to start on what drives their own thinking tank. Find inspiration from their world. Creativity is intrinsic in nature. Try to promote creativity by stepping into their viewpoint to find what motivates them.

Structure is essential. Studies, such as a meta-analysis by Torrance suggest that creativity instruction is best with [clear structure](#). For instance, consider the guidelines of the standard curriculum objectives and add these to the design. For example, reading considers communication, comprehension, listening, writing and reading.

Observe a working model of creativity. To get a better idea of how others promote creativity, visit a creative classroom or watch a video about how a creative classroom works. The [“Case for Creativity in School”](#) is an excellent video that educators can watch to see how creativity might play out in a classroom. This school adopted a school-wide approach to recognize students.

Consider the work of current experts in the field. Sir Ken Robinson is an internationally renowned creativity and innovation expert. His work is used to meet global challenges, renovating education, business, and government organizations to implement his strategies. His [books](#) and [TED talks](#) are great places to promote creativity in your own teaching.

Explore different cultures. Culture is an excellent vehicle for inspiring creative thinking. In *Thinking Hats & Coloured Turbans* [Dr. Kirpal Singh](#) discusses how cultural contexts are central to creative endeavors.

You can discuss how collaboration between cultures, such as in the space program, produces unique, novel ideas.

Find ways to incorporate and integrate art, music and culture. A recent report prepared for the European commission considered that creativity is a central force that shapes our culture. With the changing times we live in, the report suggested that society is enriched by cultural-based creativity.

Use a collaborative creative thinking model to solve classroom problems. For instance, read a paragraph and then have groups discuss a list of questions. Collaborative problem solving is catching on quickly. In fact, many business schools have implemented creative thinking models into their curriculum.

Design multidisciplinary lessons when possible. When teaching geometry, I designed a lesson called, "Geometry through Art". It included works of Art to show fifth graders their application to everyday geometric concepts. The result was astounding. I never thought that the subject matter would be so successful. I designed an entire unit that focused on how different concepts rely on geometry. I even asked the Art teacher to help reinforce those concepts in class.

Tapping into multiple intelligences is key. Creativity requires us to use different parts of our brain. We often bridge connections between seemingly unrelated areas to make new concepts emerge. Allow students to use their strengths to find new ways of approaching a topic or solving a problem. You might be surprised with what they come up with.

Understand that creativity is important to students' future in the job market. Paul Collard for Creative Partnerships, discusses how 60% of English students will work in jobs that are not yet created. In today's market, students must largely be innovative and create their own jobs. Collard suggests teachers focus on teaching particular skills or set of behaviors, rather than preparing students for specific careers.

Teach creative skills explicitly. According to Collard, "Creative skills aren't just about good ideas, they are about having the skills to make good ideas happen." He suggests creative skills should include 5 major areas:

- Imagination
- Being disciplined or self-motivated.
- Resiliency
- Collaboration
- Giving responsibility to students. Have them develop their own projects.

- **Give students extended, unhurried time to explore and do their best work. Don't interfere when students are productively engaged and motivated to complete tasks in which they are fully engaged.**

- • **Create an inviting and exciting classroom environment. Provide students with space to leave unfinished work for later completion and quiet space for contemplation.**

- • **Provide an abundant supply of interesting and useful materials and resources.**

- • **Create a classroom climate where students feel mistakes are acceptable and risk taking is encouraged. Appropriate noise, mess and autonomy are accepted.**

Conclusion: we should continue the legacy of sharing information and practice “the art of creative thinking”. However, teachers are the real driving force behind the creative thinking in our schools. If our schools are lagging behind, we must be the creative minds that urge our students to be curious and seek new answers.