

# B

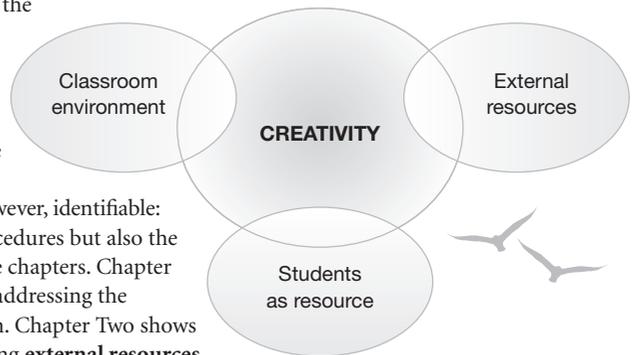
**Being Creative** began by saying a book is like a house. The historical overview, the background and the creativity research we dealt with in Part A can be compared to a study area, a quiet reading corner.

We are now moving into the kitchen. This is the place where we are going to get our hands dirty and actually *do* things. Here is where all the tools are checked, the ingredients assembled, washed, chopped, seasoned and cooked. Here is where all the experimenting and tasting takes place.

## From strategy to synergy

The aim of Part B is to illustrate how the strategies we outlined can be implemented in the classroom. You will remember what they are: simplicity, combining, playfulness and taking risks. It will be clear from the activities which follow

that none of these strategies work in isolation but, rather, they operate in synergy – there is actually considerable overlapping. They are, however, identifiable: infusing not only the procedures but also the outcomes. There are three chapters. Chapter One comprises activities addressing the **environment** you work in. Chapter Two shows ways of being creative using **external resources** such as music, pictures and texts. Chapter Three focuses on activities that **centre on the students** as your primary resource. But, again, the three chapters work in a non-exclusive way.



## From instruction to improvisation

While we provide initial indications as to what an activity is attempting to achieve – its rationale – and its approximate level of difficulty (graded from 1 to 3, 1 being the lowest level or *any* level), there are no instructions as to an activity's duration. Our belief is that teaching is a social act based on the interaction of the principal actors – timing this interaction would be absurd.

Teaching creatively implies, then, flexibility, a certain skill for improvisation – and that the teacher doesn't merely 'cover the material' but leads the group on a path of discovery.

## Encouraging remarks

The students give each other positive feedback.

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### Be prepared

Think about a student or two who hasn't been looking their best lately – someone who looks worried, or simply isn't showing enthusiasm and is falling behind.

### Be creative

- ★ Ask a student who doesn't seem to be having a good time in class, or is negative or seems nervous, to walk to your desk and stand with their back to the class.
- ★ Invite the other students to stand behind this person, not too close, but not too far either.
- ★ They should say *positive, encouraging* things about this student's work in class. Comments can range from:
  - fairly general – *You're doing well, Marie!*
  - more specific – *I really liked your presentation last week.*
- ★ Comments on the student's personality are accepted, if *positive*. For example:
  - *I think you're funny.*
  - *You're a friendly, warm-hearted person.*
- ★ Tell the students to speak one at a time and, when more or less everyone has had a chance to say something, ask the person in the spotlight to go back to their seat.
- ★ Do the same with a different student.
- ★ Finally, ask how the students felt *giving* positive feedback, and invite the 'recipients' to talk about their reactions to *being given* such feedback.

### Comment

Students have different kinds of needs: cognitive needs, but also emotional needs. I have learned this:

- If you fail to address the needs of the *student* in front of you, you can get away with it.
- If you fail to address the needs of the *person* in front of you, you will be history!

## Gossip

The students say nice things about each other.

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### Be prepared

There's no preparation as such, but it is a good activity to have ready, particularly for when there's a conflict in the class.

### Be creative

- ★ Ask the students if they know the meaning of the word 'gossip'. Explain if they don't.
- ★ Tell them that you want them to gossip about each other – but that they are only allowed to say *good* and *positive* things.
- ★ Ask them to work in groups of three (A, B and C) and to assign roles: they decide who's who.
- ★ Explain that you want the As and the Bs to gossip about the Cs.
  - The As and the Bs talk.
  - The Cs turn round, not making eye contact but 'eavesdropping' – without interrupting – on the conversations. They can, however, make notes of something they may then want to comment on or rectify.
- ★ Let this go on for three minutes, then bring the groups together and ask the Cs to report back on the conversation:
  - Is there anything they want to feed back on?
  - Is there anything they might wish to rectify?
- ★ Now ask the students to rotate and exchange roles.
- ★ When everyone has had a chance to gossip and be gossiped about, bring the class together and lead a general discussion around these questions:
  - Did you prefer being gossiped about or gossiping?
  - How did you feel in both roles?
  - Any other reactions?

### Comment

Thanks to Bonnie Tsai, who showed me this idea a few years ago.

## This picture ...

Using works of art for creative writing.

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### Be prepared

For this activity you will need a series of pictures of works of art with some action – 60 pictures for a class of 20 students is a good ratio.

### Be creative

- ★ Display the pictures on a table.
- ★ Ask the students to take a look at the pictures and choose one they would like to do some work on.
- ★ When they have all picked one, give out the following instructions:
  - Write one word that tells what the picture is *about*.
  - Write two words that describe the *subject* in the picture.
  - Write three words that describe what the subject in the picture *does*.
  - Write four or more words to *further* describe what the subject in the picture does.
  - Write five or more words that tell how you *feel* about this picture.
- ★ The students show their pictures to each other and compare what they have written.
- ★ Collect their writings for feedback.

### Comment

Students struggling with writing are often visual learners. Using pictures can often motivate them, helping them to work on non-visual skills.

This activity can also be done using texts or music.

## Biodata

Using portraits to unlock the students' writing and speaking skills.

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### Be prepared

Ask the students to look for a portrait online and put it up on the screen ([www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com) is a great source). If you don't have internet access, choose one yourself to put up on a transparency.

### Be creative

- ★ Invite the students to write a short biography for the person featured, as well as three wishes for this person.
- ★ Walk around, providing help with language as necessary.
- ★ When the students are ready, ask them to show what they've written to a partner.
- ★ Now put them into groups of four and ask them to merge their biographies and create a new one.
- ★ When they have finished, ask them to tidy up their writing and leave the biography on their desk.
- ★ Ask the students to circulate and read what the other groups have written.
- ★ Hold a plenary discussion:
  - Were there elements that were mentioned by different groups?
  - How were the biographies similar?
  - How were they different?

### Comment

Students are often surprised to see how perceptions can differ from one person to another. Surprise is a key element in that it helps the students to remain focused, it generates interest and gets them involved.

A variation consists of giving the students four or five biographies for as many pictures, and they have to match them up.