

B

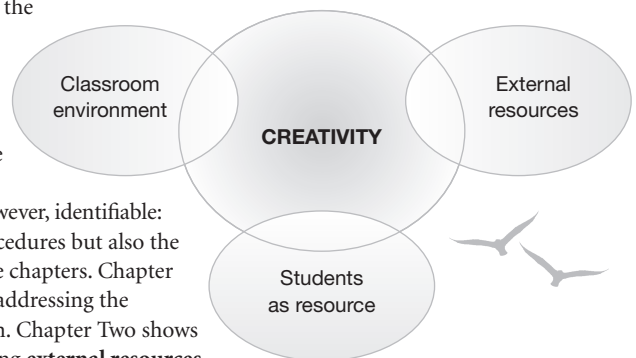
Being Creative began by saying a book is like a house. The historical overview, the background and the creativity research we dealt with in Part A can be compared to a study area, a quiet reading corner.

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.

2

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.

3

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.

3

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.

2

Be prepared

Ask the students to look for a portrait online and put it up on the screen (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.