

Suggestions For Promoting Creative Thinking In The Classroom - *Bill Collar, www.billcollar.com*

1. **Establish a climate of mutual respect between teacher and students.** Students must sense that you care about them as individuals and you enjoy working with them daily.
2. **Encourage all students to participate in class activities through providing a wide range of involvement activities.** Realize that creativity cannot be limited in scope. Creative potential exists in everyone. It is your mission to help turn it loose. Many “gifted” students lack creativity - help stretch their minds.
3. **Withhold Judgment of student contributions and ideas.** Allow for a proper fermentation period. Often the best ideas are those that seemed the craziest when they were presented. Hitchhike and piggyback to maximize student output. Some students will transcend your level of thinking. It is your responsibility to *encourage divergent thinking*.
4. **Beware of convergent thinking.** Too often teachers develop a “teach to the test” mentality where students are rewarded when they come up with the answer the teacher has in mind. Divergent thinking allows for new ways to solve problems. Often there may be more than one right answer. *Solving future problems will require the application of innovative techniques and technology.*
5. **Help channel students into creative activities where they will experience a certain degree of success.** This success will help build confidence and stimulate the creative powers for future accomplishments.
6. **Allow students to experience failure.** A great deal of input from the teacher may enhance the possibility of a project’s success, but the student may lose ownership in the process. This will stifle the creative process and failure will be blamed on others. *View failure as a positive learning experience and a stepping-stone to future success.*
7. **Find the time to plan your lessons in a manner that allows for student input and original thinking.** Remember, *“How much you teach is not nearly as important as how much students learn.”* Students support what they help create.
8. **Be prepared to experience criticism from colleagues and supervisors.** In promoting creative thinking you make break certain long established rules. Breaking rules, which exist, “because it has always been done that way,” can be painful to those who demand a high degree of order.
9. **Be a creative teacher!** Everyone possesses certain creative talents. However, we get programmed into doing things in a certain way. We must experiment with new methods of teaching and *learn from our successes and failures*. Change can be painful, but enjoyable and it will often renew a person’s enthusiasm. Employ a variety of strategies in your teaching and students will follow your example.
10. **Creativity takes time.** The best ideas must be given time to grow. Don’t expect immediate success when using a new method or when utilizing a student-centered project. *Monitor and adjust* to refine the learning experience to make it as valuable as possible.
11. **Maintain Your Uniqueness.** As you utilize the teaching style that works best for you, develop your gifts to the maximum. *Transcend “canned” approaches to the art of teaching.* Some structure gives a person direction, but too much structure destroys original thought.
12. **Challenge yourself.** Break out of your “comfort zone” and dare to be different. Make it a point to attend conferences and workshops, and do enough professional reading to stimulate your mind and encourage “out of the box” thinking.
13. **Have fun teaching!** Look for the positive in your profession. Laugh together, learn together and explore together. *A laughing classroom is a learning classroom.*

