



Today we will:



- take a closer look at creativity (what it is and what it's not)



- explore ideas and techniques to engage students in creative thought

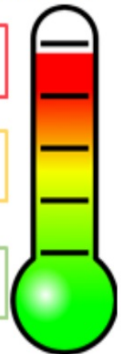


**Confidence thermometer**

I could teach this to someone else

I have completed this.

I need a bit of help with this.





**Are you  
creative?**



hesitation, humility



common preconceptions about what creativity is



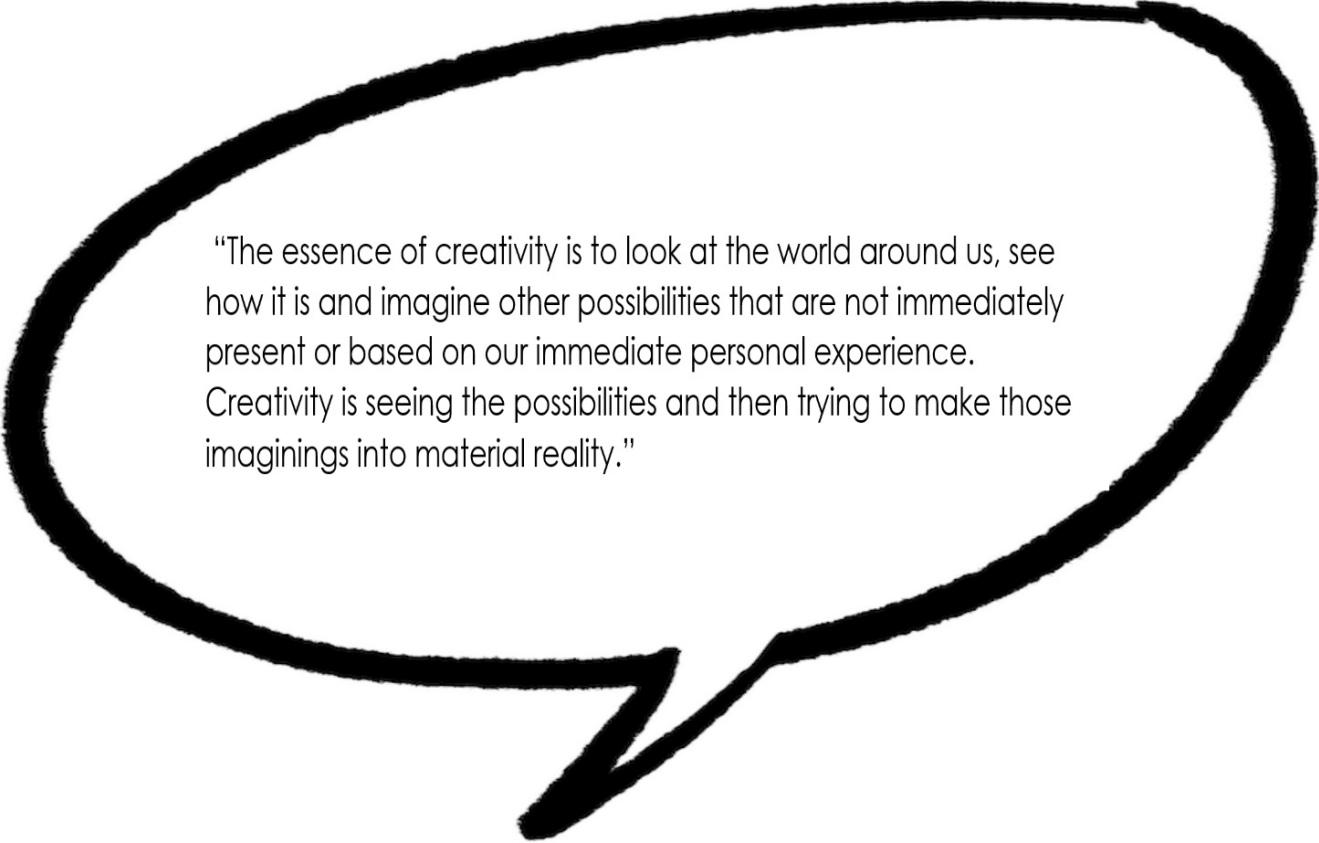
the term carries a mystical aura but is also the most fundamentally human of qualities



What words come to mind when  
you think of creativity?

Write your ideas in the chat!





"The essence of creativity is to look at the world around us, see how it is and imagine other possibilities that are not immediately present or based on our immediate personal experience. Creativity is seeing the possibilities and then trying to make those imaginings into material reality."

Agustín Fuentes - Anthropologist





“People pigeonhole creativity as belonging to a single individual or a group of geniuses. They don’t realize that each and every human has this incredible capacity to imagine and to change things. Auto mechanics can be amazingly creative—so can people trying to stretch a paycheck to the end of a month.”

- A. Fuentes



## Claire's Challenge



Write a haiku about something you can see in your room



How did you feel during the challenge?



Why didn't it work? Is Sarah just excruciatingly uncreative?



Many people connect creativity to freedom. George Steiner defines creativity as 'that which is enacted freedom' (Grammars of Creation, 2002) and some writers and artists see creativity as breaking boundaries.

It is more useful to think of creativity differently and a feature that characterises all creative processes **'is the challenge of balancing various constraints in a constructive manner'** (Biskjaer and Halskov, 2001).

Stokes (2006) goes further, finding that constraints actually promote creativity and says **'the more constrained the solution paths, the more variable, the more creative the problem solvers.'**

In an interview, the artist Damian Correll echoes this saying **'constraints usually make me think in a different way than I would maybe naturally think and they make the process a little more enjoyable and the final output is usually something I'm more proud of.'**



Claire Steele, 2019

## Claire's Challenge - Round Two



Choose an object that's on your desk or in your room - something that you use often, big or small.

Write a haiku about the object to honour it.

5 syllables - describe it

7 syllables - what do you use it for

5 syllables - thank it



How did you feel this time?



## What did we do?



- 1)  
- take a **closer look at** creativity (what it is and what it's not)



- 2)  
- explore **ideas** and techniques to engage students in **creative thought**

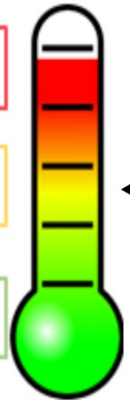


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## Engaging students in creative thought and processes How do we develop creative thinkers?



encourage students to observe



apply certain constraints



foster a sense of wonder &  
encourage curiosity





'Colour is the place where our brain and the universe meet.'  
Paul Klee

Choose a colour. It might be your favourite colour or a colour that you haven't worn or given much thought to in a while. Then take a walk around your room. Take your time to see and feel all the things that are this colour. Imagine your body as this colour, inside and out.

Come back in 30 seconds.







Now answer these questions.

How does your colour move?

In what season was it born?

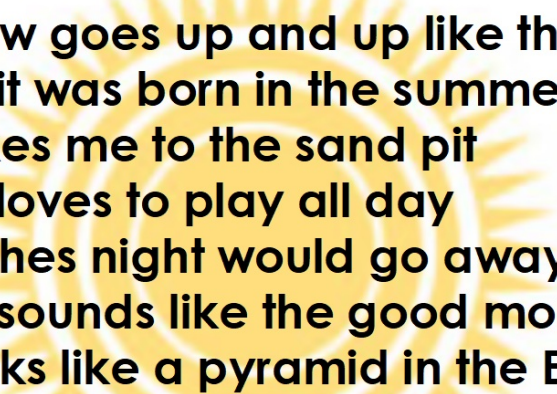
What place(s) does it take you to?

What time of day or night does it like?

What does your colour wish for?

What does your colour sound like?

What is the shape of your colour?



**Yellow goes up and up like the sun  
And it was born in the summer  
It takes me to the sand pit  
And loves to play all day  
It wishes night would go away  
And sounds like the good morning song  
It looks like a pyramid in the Egyptian desert**

**Alex, aged 10.**



**Dances  
Autumn  
Fire  
Burns  
Eat everything  
Shouts  
Rose**

**Markos, aged 8**

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Provide prompts for students to work from

Provide questions for students to answer

Content constraints

Provide inspiration for students to write about or respond to

Include a problem-solving element



**Write an email to a company to complain about a faulty product. Write in a formal style. Think of a product, problem, consequence and action requested.**

**1st paragraph - product and problem  
2nd paragraph - consequence  
3rd paragraph - action requested**

Good for exam students or business students  
Not very creative  
Let's impose some constraints!!

PRODUCT:



Justin Beiber  
CD

PRODUCT:



Balloon

PRODUCT:



Birthday  
Cake



PRODUCT:



Tube of  
Lipstick

PRODUCT:



Alarm Clock

PRODUCT:



Back Pack

Product

PRODUCT:



Microwave

PRODUCT:



Star Wars  
Action Figure

PRODUCT:



Watch



Problem:

Is too big

Problem:

Has a hole in it

Problem:

Wrong Size

Problem:

It's smaller than I expected

Problem:

Really Itchy

Problem:

Tastes really bad

Problem

Problem:

Is missing a part

Problem:

It's stuck

Problem:

Makes too much noise



**CONSEQUENCE:**



My boyfriend/  
girlfriend broke  
up with me

**CONSEQUENCE:**



I lost a lot of  
money

**CONSEQUENCE:**



My special day  
was ruined  
ANY special day!

**CONSEQUENCE:**



I had to pay  
a fine

**CONSEQUENCE:**



I failed a class

**CONSEQUENCE:**



My whole  
house smells

**CONSEQUENCE:**



I have to go  
to therapy

**CONSEQUENCE:**



I got fired from  
my job

**CONSEQUENCE:**



I went to jail



Consequence



<p><b>Action Requested:</b></p> <p>Give me a discount on future purchases</p>	<p><b>Action Requested:</b></p> <p>Send me \$1,000 compensation</p>	<p><b>Action Requested:</b></p> <p>Want a written apology</p>
<p><b>Action Requested:</b></p> <p>I'm filing a lawsuit</p>	<p><b>Action Requested:</b></p> <p>Want a refund</p>	<p><b>Action Requested:</b></p> <p>Exchange for a new one</p>



Action requested



## Show, don't tell!

My teacher is happy.

My teacher whistles a cheerful song as she walks into the class and beams a huge smile at us all.

My teacher is sad.

My teacher is relaxed.

My teacher is angry.

My teacher is hungry.

My teacher is excited.



## Structural constraints

Words in a sentence

Syllable counting



I met the President. Really. At this party. Standing by the coat closet. He shook my hand. "Sarah, nice to meet you." He shook *my* hand. Can you believe it? I smiled. Then.... my voice. It caught. It cracked. I lost it. Down around my ankles. Couldn't speak. Not a word. Not a sound. Not a syllable. He waited. Smiled. Kind of concerned. Then moved on. To the person beside me. They had a voice. "Mr. President.... they said.

Bungee jumping for the first time  
Visiting a foreign country for the first time  
Meeting your favourite celebrity  
Learning to drive

Now rap it!

Now sing it!

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## Reversal Thinking



This is a creative thinking technique to help think about things from a different perspective. It's all about changing the order of words in a question that is exploring a problem.

**How can we make homework **more** enjoyable?**

**How can we make homework **less** enjoyable?**

Have loads and loads of it.

Write so much that my hand falls off

Endless grammar gap-fills about people I don't know

My grades (and my future) depend on it

Too easy/too hard.

## Reversal Thinking



### How can we make homework more enjoyable?

The trick here is to encourage deeper thinking rather than just making a negative into a positive or vice versa...and really think of a solution.

**Loads of it!** **NOT** None of it!

**BUT** We work on a homework schedule as a whole class.

**Lots of writing/grammar** **NOT** Never any writing/grammar

**BUT** We get a choice - this can be given by the teacher or decided by the learner(s).



## Reversal Thinking



Do ghosts believe in us?



How can we escalate an argument?



How we can make the negative impact on climate change worse?



How can we be slower at learning new words?



How can we meditate unsuccessfully?



What are the worst conditions for plants to grow?



How can we design the worst poster to raise awareness of an issue?



## Under the Hood of Creativity.

How the brain bends, breaks & blends.

Anthony Brandt & David Eagleman. Time Magazine



### Bending:

The original is modified or twisted out of shape (e.g. size or shape)



Slinkachu

### Breaking:

Something whole is taken apart, and something new assembled out of the fragments (e.g. Cubism)



Picasso

### Blending:

Combining two or more sources in novel ways



Dali

## **Blend, Bend & Break Brainstorming**

Tell your students that they are going to design a poster for an awareness campaign against plastic pollution in oceans.



### **Individual work:**

**Step 1:** Write down all the things you use that are plastic.

**Step 2:** Write down all the things that are affected by plastic pollution.

### **Group work:**

**Step 3:** Show their words & reasons why you wrote them.

**Step 4: Blend:** Decide on two images to put together - one plastic and one thing that's affected by plastic pollution e.g. a bottle and a person.

**Step 5: Bend:** Play with the size & shape - enlarge/make smaller, etc. How does this change the image?

**Step 6: Break:** Think how to combine these images together - remember there are no rules! What is its message?

Think, thought.....think?



A 'Thunk' is a beguiling question about everyday things that stops you in your tracks and helps you start to look at the world in a whole new light. (Gilbert, 2007: 3)

Can you know something without knowing that you know it?

Is the future closer today than it was yesterday?

Can you have a friend you don't like?

What colour is Thursday?

What colour would a zebra be if it lost all its stripes?



Because Thunks have no definite answers, you can contribute anything you like without worrying that you may be wrong.

It's great to discuss random things which you might not have thought of before and they stimulate your thinking; it's good to listen to other people's perspective on things.



### **Thunk of the day/week**

Start or end the class with a thunk every time you meet



### **Bell-ringer thunk**

While waiting for students to arrive, leave some thunks on each table or on your screen for students to ponder



### **Wall of thunks**

Students can provide them, or the teacher can!

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# How do we develop creative thinkers?



Process



Product



What do we need to think about when planning creative lessons?



Everyone can be creative and creativity boosts happiness and well-being



Avoid giving students a blank canvas and provide interesting constraints



Get students to observe and explore



Move away from solely book-bound, exam-focused lessons



Provide ample time for wondering and thinking - not every question has an answer. Education should leave room for uncertainty





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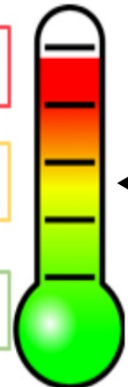


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Incredibly creative resources that we referred to throughout the webinar



TIME magazine - The Science of Creativity (Single Issue)

Karen Benke - Adventures in Creative Writing

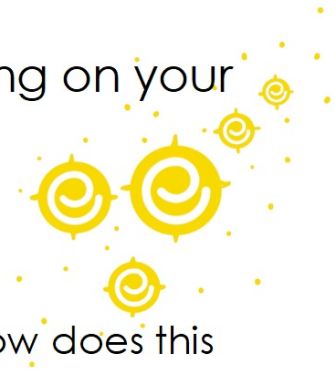
Agustín Fuentes - The Creative Spark

Ian Gilbert - Little Book of Thunks

Brandon Rodriguez - The Power of Creative Constraints

[The power of creative constraints - Brandon Rodriguez - YouTube](#)

## Questions to walk away with: reflecting on your current practice



What is your own perspective of creativity and how does this affect what you do in the classroom?

In what circumstances are your students more creative?

Do you actively seek ways to adapt coursebooks in a creative way?  
What could you do differently?

Do you give your students 'blank canvas' activities or do you provide constraints to encourage problem-solving?

**For further information, questions or just to say 'hey!' contact us on Facebook (eltonix connects) or [team@eltonix.com](mailto:team@eltonix.com)**