

101 Ways For Teachers To Be More Creative

Creativity isn't always something that just happens. It can take quite a bit of work to nurture, grow, and develop creativity, even for those who are immersed in creative and dynamic fields.

For educators, it can be even more of a challenge to inspire creativity in students or embrace your own creativity while trying to juggle academic requirements, testing, and other issues in the classroom. It may be difficult but it's certainly not impossible, and accomplishing it can help to create a classroom environment that's more motivational, interesting, and educational for both you and your students.

So how do you get there? Here are some tips that can help you get creative in the classroom in a variety of ways.

FINDING CREATIVE INSPIRATION

Not sure where to begin? These tips will help you master the fundamentals and take the critical first step towards a more creative classroom.

1. BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS.

Even the most open-minded of us sometimes get stuck in a rut and can't see that there are other, potentially better ways of doing things. Break out of that and try to be open to new ideas, even if they seem strange at first.

2. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.

Stop thinking about your classroom within strictly confined terms and be open to ideas that are outside of the norm. You might just find a creative idea that transforms some of your lessons.

3. FIND EXCITEMENT.

One way to get your brain thinking creatively is to start learning about **things that excite** you. That excitement tends to get the brain motivated, and a motivated brain is an active and creative one.

4. GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE.

It's hard to push yourself out of your comfort zone, but it may be just what you need to really get creative. Work with new groups of students, teach new topics, or try out something you're not comfortable with. It might work, it might not, but you'll never know if you don't try.

5. FIND INSPIRATIONAL PLACES.

Some lucky people may be able to find inspiration in a broom closet, but others of us need a place that pushes us **toward inspiration**. Whether it's a park, your living room, or even a place in your school, head there and get your creative juices flowing.

6. RELAX.

While some people work better under stress, most of us find it to be a creativity killer. To really get in touch with your creative side, relax and don't force ideas to come.

7. LOOK FOR IDEAS EVERYWHERE.

Amazing ideas can come from anywhere at any time so always keep your eyes, ears, and mind open!

8. TAKE UP A HOBBY.

Setting aside teaching in favor of some other interest for a few hours a day can help you return to your work with renewed passion and interest.

9. FOLLOW A PASSION.

Love something? Pursue it! Your passion will likely leave you feeling excited, inspired, and ready to get creative.

10. GET ACTIVE.

Your brain needs lots of oxygen to think, and exercise gets it there faster.

11. CONSIDER MEDITATION.

Sometimes you just need to clear your mind of all the old clutter to be able to open it up to new, innovative ideas.

12. PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS.

While challenging yourself is great, it can be tiring. Work with your strengths in your creative journey as well, and you're much less likely to feel burnt out.

CAPITALIZING ON THE CREATIVE SPARK

If you've got creativity in spades, you need to start taking the next steps to make use of it. Here, we offer some ideas that can help.

13. SET ASIDE TIME FOR CREATIVE THINKING.

It's hard to be creative when you don't have any time to even do so much as think about being creative. Make it a priority to set aside a few minutes of your day for free thinking and ensure that your students aren't so overwhelmed with homework that they don't have time to be creative.

14. DEVELOP CREATIVE IDEAS, DON'T LET THEM DIE.

It's not enough to just come up with a creative idea; you have to follow through. Be willing to spend the time nurturing your ideas and developing them into something worthwhile and useful. Encourage students to do the same.

15. CARRY A NOTEBOOK.

Inspiration can strike at any time, so make sure you've got a way to record it when it does by carrying a small notebook with you.

16. SILENCE YOUR INNER CRITIC.

When it comes to creativity, we're often our own worst enemies. Work hard to stop yourself from being overly critical and unkind to yourself and work through ideas without judgment.

17. KEEP YOUR MIND SHARP.

Much like your muscles, your brain can get weak if you're not pushing it. Read, learn, and challenge your own mind to keep it sharp. You'll not only be more creative, but you'll also likely be a better teacher for it.

18. LOVE WHAT YOU DO.

Nothing will make you feel more creative and inspired than truly loving what you do. If you're feeling stressed, remind yourself how great your job really is. It's bound to help you feel a little more creative and inspired.

19. IMAGINE YOUR CLASSROOM AS A BUSINESS.

If you were an art director or innovation manager how would you inspire your employees? Use those same tactics in your classroom!

20. CELEBRATE SUCCESSFUL FAILURES.

Lesson tanked? Great idea didn't pan out? Don't get yourself down. **Failure is part of the creative process**, and sometimes failures can actually be great successes if they teach you something in the process.

21. OWN YOUR IDEAS.

It's fine to use ideas that originate with others, but don't borrow: buy in completely. Even when you're inspired by someone else's style or ideas, make them your own by improving them, changing them, or personalizing them in some way.

22. SUSPEND JUDGMENT.

The best ideas always sound a little crazy at first. Suspend judgment until you have all the information.

23. EXPLORE ALL POSSIBILITIES.

When you write off certain things as being impossible, then you limit your creative potential. Explore possibilities fully, even if you think they're a long shot.

24. EMBRACE WEIRDNESS.

When it comes to creativity, weirdness is usually a good thing. Go with it. It may lead you just where you want to go.

INSPIRING STUDENTS

Once you're good and creatively inspired, you should help your students embrace their creative side as well.

25. MODEL CREATIVITY.

Want to help your students to be more creative? Then show them how it's done! Be a model of creativity and they are sure to follow.

26. ENCOURAGE MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS.

If there's always a definitive right and wrong in your classroom then there won't be much room for creative thought. Encourage multiple viewpoints and different ideas, even if they don't always match your own.

27. HIGHLIGHT DIVERSITY.

If your students come from a range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, then take advantage of this **diversity** and highlight ideas and values from each of their cultures. It's not only educational, but it helps to show them that there's more than one way to do things.

28. HELP STUDENTS SEE THEIR OWN ABILITIES.

Every student has **different gifts and abilities**. Use these to engage students and help them to be more creative in their activities.

29. QUESTION ASSUMPTIONS.

Don't just go with the status quo! Be willing to question common assumptions and encourage your students to have the same kind of inquisitiveness as well.

30. ENCOURAGE CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.

Usually, there's more than one way to solve a problem. Help students to be creative in how they solve problems, and give them opportunities to work on projects that build these skills.

31. READ AND ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO DO THE SAME.

Books are excellent places to find inspiration, information, and creative ideas. Demonstrate the importance of reading (books, magazines, newspapers, or even comics) to kids.

32. ASK OPEN QUESTIONS.

As simple as it is, asking students questions can be an amazing tool in getting them to think creatively. Just make sure the questions are open enough to allow them to come up with their own answers and not feel bound by your expectations.

33. FIND PERSONAL MEANING.

Helping students to connect their ideas to their own experiences and emotions can make projects take on a deeper meaning and may just encourage a whole other level of creativity.

34. LET STUDENTS SHOW OFF THEIR WORK.

Students at any age love having their work shown off, whether in the classroom or in the hallway. Give students the opportunity to show what they can do to their peers.

35. BE SPONTANEOUS.

Break out of your teaching rut and **be spontaneous**. Students will be forced to think and respond in new ways, expanding their minds in the process.

36. ASK STUDENTS FOR THE ANSWERS.

Don't give students the answers, ask them to come up with them on their own.

37. WORK TOGETHER AS A CLASS.

Sometimes, working together is the best way to come up with a creative solution to a problem.

38. HIGHLIGHT EXEMPLARY STUDENT WORK.

When students do a good job, make sure they know how impressed you are. This will give them motivation to keep up the great work.

39. MAKE THINGS FUN.

Fun activities get students laughing, feeling relaxed, and most importantly, having fun.

THE CREATIVE CLASSROOM

Here we share some tips for creating a classroom environment that embraces creativity.

40. ASSESS CREATIVELY.

Multiple choice tests are easy to grade, but there isn't much room for creative thinking on them. Answers are either wrong or right. To boost creative thinking in the classroom, show students you value it by creating assignments and tests that use it.

41. REWARD CREATIVE IDEAS AND PROJECTS.

Put your money where your mouth is when it comes to creativity in the classroom by rewarding and praising students who think creatively, even if you don't necessarily like or agree with their ideas.

42. ENCOURAGE SENSIBLE RISKS.

Many kids are so afraid of failure that they're unwilling to take risks in how they approach learning new things. Help assuage that fear by encouraging smart risk-taking, which can help students to make new breakthroughs, think outside the box, and grow as individuals.

43. ALLOW MISTAKES.

Not every creative idea will be a success, but that doesn't mean it wasn't useful or valuable. In fact, some early mistakes have served as the basis for some pretty great things later on. Analyze and work through mistakes instead of treating them as failures.

44. CREATE A STIMULATING ENVIRONMENT.

While you can be creative anywhere, it's much easier to do so when you're in a stimulating environment. Both you and your students can benefit from a classroom that's well-decorated, fun, and engaging.

45. DELAY GRATIFICATION.

The best creative projects don't come with instant rewards. Help your students to learn this and to teach them the value of discipline and hard work by delaying the rewards of their creative work and emphasizing long-term goals.

46. HELP STUDENTS IDENTIFY AND PLAN FOR OBSTACLES.

Nothing worth doing is ever easy, and students will undoubtedly encounter obstacles during their creative work. Help them to see these as opportunities not roadblocks by creating plans of action and workarounds together.

47. SURPRISE YOURSELF (AND YOUR STUDENTS).

There's nothing that creates a creative atmosphere like a little spontaneity. Occasionally, do something out of character. It will keep your students on their toes and keep you from falling into a rut.

48. INCORPORATE THE ARTS.

The most traditionally creative subjects are in the arts, but these can be incorporated into just about any lesson, whether math, science, or history. Find ways to bring music, drawing, creative writing, and other arts into a wider range of lessons in your classroom.

49. HELP STUDENTS MEET THEIR GOALS.

It's not enough to just be creative. Help students to set and work towards meeting their own educational goals in the projects and assignments you do in your class.

50. EMBRACE CREATIVITY IN ALL SUBJECTS.

Why should the arts get to have all the fun? Bring aspects of creativity into all of your subjects, including math and science.

51. MIX THINGS UP

Foster creativity in teaching by mixing things up now and then. Change how your lessons are presented, assess students in different ways, or give them new and unexpected challenges.

52. GIVE FEEDBACK.

Offering feedback on student work can help them to better refine and understand their ideas.

53. AVOID DEMONSTRATING A RIGHT WAY.

Creative thinking is the result of thinking outside of the usual way of doing things. Don't present a right way to do things up front, ask students to solve the problem on their own.

54. DON'T ENCOURAGE KIDS TO BLINDLY CONFORM (AND DON'T DO IT YOURSELF).

You can't have independent thinkers without a **little rebellion**. Encourage your students to question why things are a certain way and to speak up when they don't think things are right.

55. GIVE FREEDOM, BUT HAVE A FOCUS.

Creativity requires a certain amount of freedom, but not limitless freedom. Give students a focus so that they have a goal to work towards.

56. ENCOURAGE AUTONOMY.

If you simply give students the answers to all the tough questions, they won't be motivated to come up with solutions on their own. Encourage them to work by themselves and only ask for help if they get really stuck.

57. FOSTER COLLABORATION.

While working on their own can be great, students can also gain a lot creatively from working together. Help them learn to work in productive, supportive groups.

58. INVOLVE STUDENTS IN MAKING THE RULES.

The rules in your classroom will make a lot more sense and be more respected by students if they play a role in setting the guidelines for the class, within reason, of course.

59. DECORATE YOUR CLASSROOM.

Cool bulletin boards, displays, plants, posters, and other materials can turn a hum-drum space into one that gets your students thinking and being creative.

60. GET PARENTS INVOLVED.

Creativity shouldn't stop when students leave the class. **Get parents involved** in projects and encourage them to take an active role in the learning process.

61. MODERATE BOTH REWARDS AND CRITICISMS.

Too much praise can be just as bad as too much criticism. Moderate them both to help students max out their creativity.

62. USE YOUR SCHOOL'S RESOURCES.

Whatever resources your school has to offer, use them. Libraries, computer labs, and even school gardens can be inspiring and educational places for learners.

63. CREATE A SENSE OF WONDER.

One of the best things you can do to foster both learning and creativity is to instill a sense of wonder in students. It'll keep them learning long after they've left your class.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

These tips offer up some fun and interesting ways to explore lessons creatively in the classroom.

64. BRAINSTORM.

Whether you work on it alone or with others, brainstorming can be a great way to get your creative juices flowing. Let your mind roam and don't expect every idea to be a winner.

65. USE TECHNOLOGY.

Technology is an amazing tool for boosting creativity. It can be used to find ideas, brainstorm, and even create final products. The possibilities are endless, so don't count it out when working on creativity.

66. GET HYPOTHETICAL.

Creating **hypothetical situations** is one way to get creative. When you consider what could happen, potential solutions, and likely reactions, you can open up whole new avenues of thinking.

67. GET OUT OF THE CLASSROOM.

The best lessons sometimes take place outside of the classroom. Interesting field trips or even just a walk outside of the school

can help students to learn things in a new and exciting way.

68. USE PUZZLES AND GAMES.

When students are having fun, they often forget they're learning. Puzzles and games can challenge them to think creatively but also provide **entertainment** that will make them more motivated to keep learning and working.

69. USE MIND-MAPS.

Mind maps can help students to use a central idea and expand creatively on it.

70. ROLE PLAY.

Being able to think how another person would think or react is a great way to get the mind working and being creative.

71. BUILD A STORYBOARD.

Storyboarding asks students to use their imaginations to tell a story in pictures, a form of communication they may not use every day.

72. RETHINK FAILURES.

Sometimes, an idea that didn't pan out can be the best place to start over. Help students to return to failed ideas and figure out ways to retool and repurpose what they already have.

73. ENCOURAGE LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.

Students shouldn't stop learning once they leave your classroom. Encourage them to head to the library, pursue their interests, and keep learning.

74. FLIP IT AND REVERSE IT.

Turning a situation around can be an interesting way to keep students on their toes. It will show them multiple viewpoints and require some creative thinking.

75. CONNECT IDEAS.

Everything your students learn is connected in some way. Help them to make connections between subjects and to find creative links in their knowledge.

76. LET KIDS BUILD AND INNOVATE.

What's more creative than inventing? Let students get hands on with materials and ask them to come up with a **creative solution** to a problem you pose.

77. RETHINK LITERATURE.

The classics are great, but sometimes they're hard for students to relate to. Come up with new ways to approach them through images, modernizations, or other interesting ideas.

78. ASK STUDENTS TO SOLVE REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS.

A lot of the things students learn in school seem useless to them, which can sap their interest. Combat that problem by asking them to use what they know to solve real-world problems.

79. TELL STORIES.

Everything becomes more interesting when a story is attached to it. Even math can be related to a story if you get creative.

80. INVOLVE ALL THE SENSES.

Learning can be a multi-sensory experience when you embrace everything from touch, to taste, to smell in your lessons.

81. GO OUTSIDE.

Break up the monotony of the school day by going outside and enjoying nature.

82. MAKE LESSONS INTERACTIVE.

It's hard for students to get bored when they're taking an active part in a lecture. Hands-on activities that provide a lot of feedback can be a great way to inspire.

83. SHOW KIDS THE NEXT STEPS.

Help students to actually follow through on their creative ideas by showing them how to develop them into products they can be proud of.

SHARING AND COLLABORATING

Use these ideas to get the most out of working with others.

84. USE PINTEREST.

Pinterest is a great place to collect ideas for the classroom and to connect with other teachers. With millions of pins out there, you're sure to find something that inspires a creative spark.

85. TALK TO OTHER TEACHERS.

Sharing ideas and working together can go a long ways towards helping you to feel more creative and motivated in all you do at work.

86. WORK WITH OTHERS.

Two minds are better than one when it comes to solving problems or coming up with creative solutions. Enlist the help of other teachers, friends, and deep thinkers to boost your creative output.

87. SHARE YOUR CREATIVE SPIRIT.

Help others around you to find their own inner creative drive by sharing ideas and enthusiasm with your colleagues.

88. JOIN THE CONVERSATION.

Head to Twitter, chatrooms, forums, and other online resources to get involved in some great conversations about creativity in the classroom. You can learn and share your own experiences.

89. SHARE YOUR OWN WORK.

Show students that you value creativity by sharing your own creative works, whether poems, songs, paintings, or whatever strikes your fancy.

90. START CLUBS AND GROUPS.

If you don't have enough time in the classroom to focus on topics that you're passionate about, why not start an after school club or group? It will help you share what you know and learn from others.

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Don't know much about creativity? Then learn! These tips will help you to become a creativity expert.

91. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES FOR CREATIVE THINKING.

There are a wide range of techniques out there that can help you better tap into your creative mind. Do a little research to learn more about a few and experiment to see what works best for you.

92. USE THE WEB.

A great place to start brainstorming is the Internet. There are thousands of lessons plans, videos, and projects you can look through to find inspiration.

93. UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS.

Creativity isn't just about the product. In fact, creativity is **more about the process** than anything else. Work to understand the creative process and what you need to feel productive.

94. TRY NEW THINGS REGULARLY.

Give your creativity a boost and learn something new in the process by trying something new, just because. It'll keep you on your toes and keep your brain sharp.

95. READ BOOKS ON CREATIVITY.

There's a lot to learn about creativity and one great place to start is in books on the subject. There are a number of great reads out there, so pick one up and start learning.

96. EMBRACE THE INTERESTS OF STUDENTS.

When you take an interest in your students, they're more likely to stay interested in school. Help them learn about and explore their own interests and transform these into valuable learning and creativity experiences.

97. LEARN ABOUT CREATIVE METHODS. There is a wide range of methods educators can use to help students (or themselves) to feel more creative. Learn about them as much as possible. You might just find something that works.

98. WATCH GREAT VIDEOS.

There are numerous videos out there that can inspire you to be more artistic, creative, and daring with your lessons and your teaching. If you haven't, [check out TED](#) for some cutting-edge educational videos.

99. FIND A MENTOR

Even experienced teachers need some help now and then to avoid burnout and stay creative. Find a mentor who can help you to better meet your professional goals.

100. STUDY THE BRAIN.

If you want to really understand creativity and learning, learn more about the organ that's responsible for both: [the brain](#).

101. LISTEN.

Your students, colleagues, friends, and family can be great places to look for inspiration, guidance, and help in the classroom.