

Dispelling the Myths Can Creative Thinking Be Taught?

Myth #1: Creative thinking is a gift and cannot be taught.

The International Center for Studies in Creativity in Buffalo, New York, has done over 30 years of research on the topic of creative thinking. Can creative thinking be taught? They reply with a resounding “YES.”

Our experience has demonstrated that three important requirements are necessary for creative thinking to take place:

1. The teacher must create a responsive environment.
2. Students must be skilled in the use of creative thinking tools.
3. Students must be given opportunities to apply and practice using the tools of the creative process in their classroom curriculum.

This chapter presents three fundamental creative thinking tools for students and teachers to use when it is time for a “power surge” of ideas.

Idea Generation Tools

BRAINSTORMING
THE CATEGORY LIST
SCAMPER

Myth #2: Creative thinking cannot be evaluated.

Many teachers believe that there is no way to evaluate student growth in the area of creative thinking. E. Paul Torrance disagreed with a resounding “Yes, they can be evaluated.” He identified four components to use to assess creative thinking. This chapter includes an explanation of how to evaluate each component of creative thinking.

CREATIVE THINKING ASSESSMENT TOOLS

FLUENCY – The number of ideas generated
FLEXIBILITY – Developing ideas from different perspectives or categories
ORIGINALITY – One-of-a-kind, unique ideas
ELABORATION – Explaining ideas in detail

Myth #3: There is no time to teach creative thinking skills in today’s test-driven school environment.

We respond to this myth with a resounding “Yes, you can.” This chapter includes sample lessons that demonstrate how to integrate creative thinking skills into daily lessons.

Myth #4: One must be highly creative to teach creative students.

E. Paul Torrance expelled this myth with this quote: “*The teachers who made a difference were those who enabled their students to hold on to their creativity. These teachers were not always the most creative individuals themselves but those who recognized the spark in their students and encouraged it.*”