TEACHING
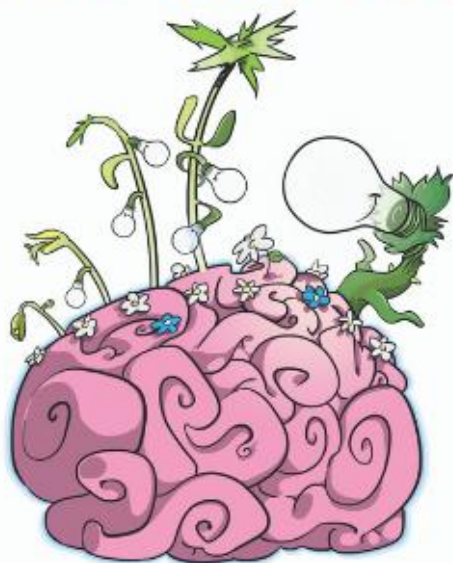# CREATIVITY

APPLYING BRAINSPROUTING
IN THE CLASSROOM

By Joel Hilchey & Brandon Love

Teaching Creativity:

Applying Brainsprouting in the Classroom

Digital Edition

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Foreword

Every so often I come across a book that really captures what I believe is important about education. Joel & Brandon wrote one of those books.

Brainsprouting is a book about developing creativity, both within ourselves and within others. We at 1MillionTeachers are on a mission to change the way teachers around the world get their training, and I was thrilled to include Brainsprouting as a core part of our professional development program.

Student engagement is crucial for effective teaching, and introducing creativity into your classes is an excellent way to accomplish this.

Teaching creativity will not only make your lessons more engaging, but your students will develop better problem-solving skills, become better team members, and enjoy coming to your class a lot more!

Joel Hilchey and Brandon Love are expert educators and entertainers. They practice what they preach, so what they teach is both important and highly engaging. If you haven't read the book, do that. But then read this too – a special bonus just for teachers. I know you'll find both incredibly valuable!

Thanks for being a teacher who is interested in creativity. And thanks for being willing to play along. After all, playing is the best way to start learning!

Hakeem Subair,
Co-Founder & CEO, 1MillionTeachers

Introduction

Swimming Upstream

The Brainsprouting book is a guide to becoming fearlessly creative. It's about how to have better ideas more often! We wrote it because way too many people believe they're just not creative.

Worse still, way too many people believe that creativity doesn't even really matter.

Now as an educator, you probably already know that creativity is important, but you also probably know that creativity does NOT thrive in most schools or organizations.

Perhaps the word "creativity" conjures up images of the whimsical, the impractical, or both. Creativity naysayers may accuse creativity enthusiasts of being artsy-fartsy, airy-fairy, pie-in-the-sky thinking types, and sadly, they don't think of those labels as complimentary terms. It's sad not just because name-calling is kind of mean, but also because the arts give life meaning, lofty-ideas change the world, and eating a slice of your favourite pie whilst somehow suspended in the sky sounds like a great adventure.

But sky-pie or no sky-pie, creativity experts understand that creativity is about problem-solving. While the process may involve temporary departure from practicality (and even from reality), the goal of creativity is *immensely* practical: To come up with ideas that have value.

But you're reading this, so you already know that.

You, oh educator that chooses to peruse a guide to teaching creativity, are already aware that creativity is about problem-solving.

So perhaps you fall into a second category of people: You're a teacher who knows creativity is important, and are doing some stuff to try to promote it to your students, but it feels hard.

Does this sound like you? This guide is for you!

These people are trying! They're doing their best, in fact, but often, they lack two important things: strategies and tools.

It's not their fault. They are frequently working in a school system with many pressures – most of them around traditional measures of student achievement like literacy and numeracy. Add in other important factors and metrics like physical and mental wellness, attendance, learning objectives, school climate, student safety, and continuous improvement plans, and it's no surprise that a nebulous idea like creativity just seems to get continually pushed to the bottom of the to-do list.

So when a courageous teacher *does* try to do something to promote creativity, and even if individual teacher colleagues or principals are supportive of their creative efforts, there is usually little in the way of formal support. Funding for grassroots project ideas? No. Resources? Not usually. Professional development for creativity? Only rarely. So on a systemic level, that teacher's efforts are often unsupported. That poor teacher is swimming upstream – like the lone fish who doesn't fit within the school. Literally.

Education Is Killing Creativity

Why do some people still think they're not creative?

Perhaps some people believe they somehow drew the short straw – like they missed out on some magical fairy dust that was sprinkled on a select few. But science has shown that this is wrong. Creativity is a skill, and some develop it while others don't.

In fact, there was a study done[1], and 98% of 3-year-olds measured as creative geniuses! That means everybody reading this was, at one point, a creative genius! (Well, okay... *almost* everybody.)

By the time those people reach 25 years old, guess what percentage measure as creative geniuses! Go ahead and guess! Nobody will know or care if you guess wrong! Okay we'll tell you.

Just 2%. Something happens between age 3 and 25.

Well, obviously a lot of things happen between age 3 and 25. But one thing that definitely happens is education.

Since almost every education system involves grades, and since grades are usually connected to getting "the right answer", most people spend somewhere between twelve and twenty years trying their hardest *not* to make mistakes. That's a lot of practice!

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[1] George Land and Beth Jarman did this for NASA, and then wrote about it in their 1992 book, Breakpoint and Beyond.

But creativity isn't really about knowing "the right answer". Creativity is about finding an *interesting* answer. The creative process involves generating novel possibilities, making connections, and testing ideas. And while some of those possibilities and ideas will prove useful, most of them certainly won't. Most of them will be dead-ends, or failed attempts, or notions too ridiculous to even bother fully exploring.

In other words: Most of the work involved in the creative process is about exploring WRONG answers. And the exploration eventually leads us to an *interesting* answer!

But traditional education doesn't really have space for that. So we think it's fair to say that traditional education is killing our creativity.[2]

What You Get from This Guide

We wrote the Brainsprouting book to help people tap into their own spark of creativity. But educators are in a unique position to pass that spark onto their students and spread the fire to society in general.

We created this guide especially for teachers. Think of it like an addition to the book. If you haven't read it, you should! This isn't a summary of the book, but a special bonus for those people who want to teach creativity in a classroom setting.

In this short guide, we're going to try to show you a different way of thinking. The ideas we're going to

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[2] We're not the first people to say this. Check out Sir Ken Robinson's must-watch TED Talks.

share are the product of years of practice and experimentation. We're both teachers, and we've used these techniques in the classroom. These are tested strategies to help you unleash the creativity and ideas of your students.

We're so excited to have the chance to share this material with you. If you can spare the time to read it, ideally in combination with the Brainsprouting book, here are just some of the benefits you'll get:

1) You'll believe you're creative.
2) You'll understand the barriers to creativity.
3) You'll have a collection of guidelines and stories to help others understand and overcome those silly barriers.
4) You'll have a collection of tools to help you tap into your own creativity and help others tap into theirs
5) You'll improve your creative output.
6) You'll understand how to transform your classroom into an idea-generating machine.
7) You'll have specific ideas for integrating creativity in your assignments and projects.
8) You'll have tools and techniques to evaluate and assess creative work.
9) You'll even have a simple to-do list to help you start putting these creative ideas into action!
10) Overall, you'll become a more likeable teacher, and a leader among your colleagues!

Sounds pretty great, doesn't it?
We thought so too! So let's get to it!

Creativity in the Classroom

Psychological Safety

It's helpful to think of a creativity teacher as a gardener of ideas. As such, the most important single thing you can do to help your students experience their creative selves (and come to believe they're creative), is to make sure the space is psychologically safe. That makes fertile ground for creativity.

If students don't feel safe to take risks, be wrong, or say something out-of-the-ordinary, they won't even try. Creativity will never flourish.[3]

While we'd love to think that our classrooms are already safe spaces, the truth is that they often don't feel that way. Many students are afraid to raise their hand and answer a question for fear that they'll be wrong, or ridiculed, or worse!

Introducing Brainsprouting

When we introduce brainsprouting to students who have never heard of it before, we always do a couple of specific things to make the space as safe as we can.

Firstly, we have everyone immediately engage in a creative exercise. Like we did with you in the book,

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[3] Neither will healthy relationships or true happiness, but that's a topic for another book.

we ask participants to come up with as many ideas for using a book as they can. What we want to show people is that they're already creative, so they better start believing it!

Then, we'll take a good 10-20 minutes outlining the guidelines to an effective ideation session. We take time to answer questions, and we make sure we share stories to make our points clear. Feel free to use the stories we share in Chapter 2 of the book, when we introduced the guidelines.

When it seems like people understand the rules of the game, we'll try a warm-up activity. For us, that usually looks like playing a game of "Banana Chair" (see Chapter 3 – Tools for Better Ideas), with the focus on being exceptionally silly, and we encourage people to have fun and jump in. We'll also ask if they noticed any of their judgements or bad habits creeping in, so they can start to build their own self-awareness.

Finally, we give the group a relevant topic, and ask them to come up with as many ideas as they can. We've asked students to come up with ideas for projects, for ways to make their school and class better, and for any other problem that needs a solution. Whatever the topic, we try to have lots of fun.

Remember, the goal is to make it fun enough that students would want to do it again!

We recommend following this structure, but feel free to experiment. So long as you model the way and intervene if people get off track or judge-y, your students will be sure to pick up the techniques and follow your example. This means that you not only get

to enjoy watching your class transform, but you become an active part of the transformation. Huzzah!

Daily Creative Activity

The brainsprouting process will help you have better ideas more often, and the key to learning to do it well is practice! Repetition and consistency will help students (and you) develop the skills!

But with all the other stuff you need to do each day, how can we find the time to practice?

We have an idea for you. In fact, this is the one thing you should do to infuse creativity into your classroom, and it will totally change the culture.

A number of years ago in our home province of Ontario, the government started a thing called Daily Physical Activity – DPA – an initiative to combat the rise of sedentary lifestyles in schools. It's interesting to us that the government mandates math, and languages, and now even twenty minutes of physical exercise in the middle of class time, but it hasn't yet gotten around to mandating *creative* exercise on a daily basis.

We took it upon ourselves to start our own initiative: We call it Daily Creative Activity – DCA – and we'd like to formally invite you to join the movement!

How do I join the movement you ask? Simple! Every day, spend at least five minutes engaging in some sort of creative activity. Go for longer if you like, but five minutes is all it takes.

So – what types of activities should you do? And when should you do them? Here are a few of our favourite approaches:

Minds-on Activities: To help beat the morning grogginess and clear the cobwebs, try starting your class with a quick and lighthearted thinking game. You can prime students for the subject of day, or you can make it totally irrelevant and just for fun. Many teachers already do warmups with their classes, but only a few see the opportunity to promote creative thinking. Instead of offering a riddle, for instance, which has a single right answer, why not give students an answer, and have them come up with several possible riddles? Anything that gets people thinking about options is worth considering!

Energizers: Just as students are disinterested first thing in the morning, it's easy for them to tune out from even the most entertaining of lessons after 30 minutes. Great teachers get people standing up and moving around every half-hour or so, or when they realize the group needs an injection of energy. The same types of activities that work for minds-on activities can work as energizers! We like to encourage activities that do indeed get the group to stand and play, rather than pure thinking exercises.[4]

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[4] In fact, if you're interested, we created an app to help teachers find great activities – it's got over a hundred simple, creative activities that can be done in a moment's notice with no preparation required. The app is called Creative Start, and you can find it on www.creativestartapp.com

Curriculum-Integrated Content: With virtually any topic, it's possible to find ways to practice coming up with possibilities. In language classes, consider coming up with alternative endings for stories. In math class, consider finding multiple approaches to solve the same problem. In geography, you might even have students brainstorm ideas for their final projects.[5] Don't let them get away with thinking their first idea is the best. Regardless of subject, an astute teacher can find ways to integrate creativity in the lessons she already delivers.

It's important to review and practice the guidelines of Brainsprouting regularly with your classes. When the guidelines are constantly in action, our spaces will feel safer for taking risks. And taking risks is everything creativity is about.

We want YOU to take a risk too – try implementing regular creative activities – perhaps even daily! It doesn't so much matter what you do as long as you do something! Anywhere you can possibly make choices, make a practice of creating as many options as you can.

Daily Creative Activity will further transform your classroom, and we'd bet it will become a highlight of the day for students.

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[5] Watch out! Some rogue students will write down "volcanoes" and then write a bunch of other dumb ideas just to fulfill the requirement… (This will only be funny to you if you've read the Brainsprouting book.)

Developing Relevant Projects

It's been our experience, and there's lots of research to back this up, that students are more willing to engage in work that they care about. Surprise!

Okay, perhaps that's obvious, but let's be honest: We don't always take the time to show students WHY they should care. It's amazing how many teachers still lecture the most boring of lessons without first helping students see the value in the subject. It's not that the subject itself is boring, but without the connection, it seems irrelevant. We didn't care to learn about fractions until we were talking about splitting up a pizza. Students won't learn ABOUT a subject until they learn to CARE about a subject.

One of the advantages of teaching students creativity is that the students become the *creators* of the content! They develop ideas that are relevant to them! And when students are working with their own ideas, the ones they care about, they'll happily dig in and develop all the attitudes and skills we tell them they need. Well… usually. Some days students literally will not do anything, even if they care a lot. But our chances of engagement go way up if they care.

We're big fans of project-based learning – using real problems to guide students through their education. It helps students engage with the content and one another, and we've found that project-based learning is a great way to help students discover their natural motivations.

Another benefit of project-based learning is that while students are learning content, they're also learning how the skills apply in real life.

For example, in a project-based science classroom, a few students might decide to research water. Suppose they'd like to conduct interviews with scientists at a local university. Before they even get to the interview, these students will need to learn how to best approach the scientist, how to politely request an interview, and what sorts of questions to ask. Relationship-building skills in real contexts!

So what does all this have to do with Brainsprouting?

Well, we're making the case that students learn best when they care. And they'll care a lot when they're working on projects that started with their own ideas. And brainsprouting is a really great way to generate those project ideas.

Brainsprouting ideation is *also* a handy tool to generate solutions to the challenges they'll face while doing their projects.

And it's also a great way to come up with ideas about how to assess the non-traditional output of project-based learning and creative education. Or not assess it.

Ahh… To grade or not to grade?

That's the question for the nextion … I mean – the question for the next section. No judging!

Evaluating & Assessing Creativity

To Grade, or Not to Grade?

When we talk with teachers about brainsprouting and creativity, they ask us one question time and time again:

How do we grade this stuff?

It's a great question. A huge part of our jobs as teachers is to evaluate students' work. So when it comes to creativity, what should we be trying to evaluate? Is it really all about the quantity of ideas? What if someone finds a gem early? Are there points for extra silliness and variety? Are we shooting for practical ideas, or oddball creative possibilities? What *matters* when it comes to creativity?

It doesn't take long to realize the central dilemma: Creativity is about removing judgement, and grading is fundamentally about judging. In fact, grading might be the most feared form of judgment our students know.

We sometimes think of teaching creativity as trying to UNDO the years of damage caused by a system that focused too much on grades. It's the *antidote* to the disease caused by years of believing that there was only one right answer, and one right way to do things.

While we'd love to think removing grades was possible, it's probably not feasible or practical for most teachers in most education systems, and teachers need

guidance right now. In *this* system. Fear not, we still have advice to share.

Our recommendations around grading are relatively simple, and they apply whether we are discussing grading creativity in particular, or just academic grading in general:

1. **Stop Labelling**: Stop labelling students with letters and numbers. It's discouraging, especially for those who are struggling the most.
2. **More Feedback, Less Judgement**: Put more emphasis on giving great feedback. Feedback is specific and constructive and is essential for great education.
3. **Process, Not Product**: If you must provide a letter or number, make the student part of the process in determining that number. Grade the process, not the product.

In the next few sections, we're going to break down these recommendations and give you more specifics. We're going to make the case for why grading in its current form should die a quick death, and we'll give you our best advice on what should be growing to take its place.

Current Thinking: Motivate & Compare

It's worth taking a step back and thinking about the goals of grading. In our opinion, the goals of grading boil down to two things: *Comparing* students and *motivating* students.

Back in the 19th century, Cambridge (one of the two dominant academic institutions at the time) ranked everyone using numerical grades, and students were listed in order of achievement. This may well be the origin of the phrase "graduating at the top of one's class."

But in 1851, the practice was modified: Students who did not obtain honours were listed in alphabetical order (rather than by academic rank), presumably to avoid embarrassing those near the bottom. This makes sense – grading can be deeply discouraging for those who seem to be less-capable. Alas, however much embarrassment this alphabetization helped avoid, the practice was abandoned in 1859, a mere 8 years later, on the basis that it discouraged effort.

The fact that it was discontinued illustrates that the ideas of comparison and motivation are actually inextricably linked, at least in the minds of academic institutions. People seemed to think that without the pressure of being ranked, students wouldn't care enough to try.

Take a moment and ask yourself: What do YOU think about that? Without grades, will students give up? Are students mere monkeys – waiting for a treat in order to do their tricks?

We think differently. If grades really *are* such a good motivator, then why are so many students disengaged from school? Grades certainly motivate SOME people, but they seem to be counterproductive for a much bigger group. Ask a student how they feel when they receive a C-. They likely don't merely feel that they *performed* poorly – they feel that they ARE

poor. Receiving low grades, for most people, is equivalent to being labelled as dimwitted, incapable underachievers. Not motivating in the slightest.

Of course, there's still the issue of practicality: Don't we need grades to compare students? University entrance, employment positions, scholarships – everyone is in the habit of using grades as a simple representation of a students' abilities and intelligence. But is this wise? We've all met those students who are amazing people but who can't seem to post good grades.

Go ahead and ask your students if they think grades are a good representation of their intelligence, skills, and worth as a human. 80 percent will say a resounding, "No!" And the people who say "yes" are probably the ones who happened to be succeeding in the system as it is – the system that is leaving so many students behind.

While it's certainly tempting to use grades to compare students, it's important to remember that it's an imperfect science. In fact, it's so far off that we'd be better off relying on something else entirely. Resumes, for instance. Or portfolios. Or interviews. These are things the business world already uses. In fact, we heard Google doesn't use grades at all when they're hiring, and they're not alone!

We get that standardized tests help diagnose systemic issues on a large scale. We get that it's helpful for high-level administrators to have methods to compare schools and teachers. We even get that it's helpful for teachers to have data from comparative tests that can illuminate areas of concern. But if the tests aren't measuring the right stuff, the data doesn't

help anybody. Can we be sure we're measuring the right stuff? And can different people in different contexts even agree on what the right stuff is?

Perhaps the more important point is that measuring and comparing does damage to creative risk-taking in education.

It's pretty clear that in their current form, grades aren't great for comparing, and they're not great for motivating. So what exactly are we doing, then?

Well-intentioned though they may be, grades are definitely failing us.

The New Way: Grading for Learning

So if we're not going to use grades to compare people, and if we know that grades are only motivational to a select few, we need to have a new *reason* to grade. Fortunately, there happens to be a great reason staring us right in the face: Grading for the purpose of learning!

While evaluation is about labelling student-work as good, bad, or in-between, feedback is about providing constructive, usable comments and wisdom that can help a student improve and learn.

Feedback, in fact, is not only useful, but essential! Whether the feedback comes from the teacher, peers, or even the student's own thinking, it is this space for reflection that incites learning and creates the opportunity for improvement!

Once we're clear that the main purpose of feedback is to help the student learn, it will change the way we look at grading. We're going to share some of

our best tips for facilitating useful feedback in a moment, but let's first address the practical objection head on:

What if we MUST provide a grade? "Fine." You say – eliminating grades is a lovely philosophical stance, but until someone changes the school system, grades will still be a part of it.

If we MUST provide a grade, here are a few tips:

Give the students as much input as possible on the methods of grading. Students must feel ownership over the journey and the outcomes they're being guided to achieve.

Ensure the grade feels secondary to learning. The grade must feel less important than the process of doing the work. Perhaps you can highlight that grades are just a necessarily evil for the sake of educational data collection.

Ensure you work hard to disconnect grades from self-worth. We've found that having explicit conversations about this philosophy is a great relationship-builder.

Students must get the sense that the teacher is not acting as a judge, but rather as a guide. Start thinking of yourself in these terms, and viewing your grading as guiding; seeing yourself as being on the same team as students will drastically change your approach!

In the following sections, we'll discuss some tips for giving great feedback as part of the educational evaluation process. We'll break it down by looking at three different sources of feedback: Self, peer, and teacher.

Self-Reflection

Learning to review one's own work with a critical eye is one of the most important skills we can learn. While others' may share their opinions (and they frequently will), our sense of pride and satisfaction must ultimately come from within.

Sadly, many students focus only on what others say. So, to help students grow their own sense of self-worth, it's important that the burden of judgement be shifted from the educator back onto the students themselves.

Instead of putting yourself in the evaluator role, encourage students to evaluate their own work. Here are some specific tips:

Help students identify their own success criteria. When students decide what makes something good or bad, they are getting clearer on what matters, and they will naturally want to do a better job. Improvement and learning are intrinsic goals, so we need only help people set clear targets, and they will be motivated to figure out better ways to get there!

Make a regular practice of self-reflection. As the teacher, reinforce that the most important opinion is the student's! The more you encourage self-reflection, the more students see that they are learning to do quality work not just to please the teacher, but because it feels intrinsically worthwhile to do so.

Make sure students are fair and kind to themselves. In a culture of judgement and comparison, it is far too easy to judge ourselves too harshly. A student-produced video may not measure up to the

latest youtube sensation, but students won't easily remember that it's not fair to compare their first attempt with a polished product influenced by years of professional experience. Our own inner critic is often the most critical of all voices, and the teacher must help the student find an inner voice that is both fair and kind.

Peer Evaluation and Feedback

While it is our own opinion that matters most, it's certainly helpful to look to others for ideas and input! However, there's a big difference between constructive, useful comments, and unsolicited commentary and critique.

One great form of feedback comes in the form of masterminding, which we discuss is Chapter 5 – Moving Ideas Forward. Essentially, small group sessions where everyone participates both as a feedback giver and a feedback getter can really level the playing field. Whatever the setup looks like, try to create structured opportunities for students to share ideas with each other!

Many teachers teach students how to GIVE feedback. Tools like the sandwich method are common – putting your point of improvement sandwiched between two bits of praise. But we think there's room to improve when it comes to two things: Asking for feedback, and receiving it!

To help with these things, we must foster a genuine belief that feedback is useful, desirable, and non-threatening. Coach your students in specific ways

to ask questions, or specific ways to respond to suggestions. Saying "Thanks for the suggestion!" is a great place to start! It sounds simple, but most people respond with something that sounds more like, "Yeah, but that won't work because…" Remember though: Saying the right words won't make a difference if your head and heart don't buy into the idea. And if a student doesn't believe it's helpful to ask for feedback, they'll do it to appease you, but quickly drop the practice when you turn your back.

Maybe the biggest factor here is how you model the way: Do *you* ask students for feedback? How do you respond when a student makes a suggestion? Have you created a safe space for students and staff to give *you* comments and suggestions?

As with all things in teaching, what we do speaks much louder than what we say.

Feedback from the Teacher

When it comes to teachers giving feedback to students, the main point we want to emphasize is that we should comment on the process, and not the products.

The classroom was designed to help us learn a bunch of processes – how to formulate an argument, how to do research, how to learn in general, and so many more.

It's important to remember that creativity is a process. Like all things we learn, our results depend on our ability and willingness to go through the steps. Mastering the process does indeed help us produce

higher quality products, but it's the process itself that offers the space for improvement, so this is where we need to focus our attention as evaluators.

Imagine two coaches commenting on the performance of a sprinter. The inexperienced coach yells: "Get to the finish line faster!" After all, that's the result we want!

But of course, this is silly. Even a well-intentioned, process-focused, "Run faster!" – the analogue to the educator's "Must try harder" comment – seems woefully inadequate, and possibly even counterproductive!

A *great* coach would break down the race, offer specific points of improvement for every step of the way, and provide a training regime to develop reaction time, fast-twitch muscles, and explosive power.

The great classroom teacher must think like a high-performance coach. Being able to determine a "good finish" from "bad finish" is helpful, but not sufficient. We must be able to diagnose errors in thinking, missteps, and opportunities for efficiency. We must be able to comment not just on students' work, but on their work habits. We must help students reflect not just on their results, but their effort and attitudes.

Unfortunately, it seems a lot of teachers (and therefore students) have gotten caught up in the products. This is why students will cheat on tests and plagiarize assignments (sometimes with their parents' in cahoots!). They'll do anything to make that final grade of A+. If the final A+ is all that matters, students become disconnected with the really important part – the process!

When we focus on the processes we want students to learn, some very cool things happen.

Firstly, it becomes easier to give objective feedback because there is so much more data to work with. Rather than a single paper, we have multiple drafts, and hours of observation. We can more easily identify specific things students are doing well, and we can find concrete areas for improvement in the future. Even if the final result turned out amazing, a great teacher will always be able to find ways the student could have done it more effectively or efficiently.

Secondly, the feedback becomes more useful! Focusing on the process is more helpful because students get more usable feedback and tips that actually affect their performance. Judging the final products feels like an afterthought – as it should be. As teachers, focusing on the process helps us gain a more accurate sense of a student's ability to solve similar problems in the future.

Thirdly, focusing on the process makes the teacher-student interaction more human. By sharing ideas rather than passing judgement, we remove the "student vs teacher" mentality. We put ourselves beside our students, rather than above them, and this will both improve the relationship and make the feedback more palatable to the student.

Overall, remember to focus your evaluation on the process, and you'll transform the way your students see grades!

The Creativity Teacher's To-Do List

"Teaching Creativity" can seem a bit nebulous; here are 10 to-do's so you can confidently say you do it!

- ☑ Plan three opportunities this *week* to include brainsprouting ideation into your classroom.

- ☑ Share your perspective on why creativity is important, and have a class discussion about it.

- ☑ Use stories to introduce the four guidelines of brainsprouting, and then do a silly activity (like Banana Chair? See Ch. 3), to practice!

- ☑ For one week, implement 5 minutes of Daily Creative Activity. (Bonus: Get 5 student volunteers to create an activity to share the load for week two!)

- ☑ Alter (or create) one assignment that features project-based learning. Make sure the project is relevant and engaging to the student.

- ☑ Choose one project where students could help determine the criteria for success.

- ☑ Change one assignment's evaluation method to focus more on the process than the product.

- ☑ Teach a lesson on how to receive feedback, and then have the class suggest ways to include peer feedback on projects. (Ideation opportunity!)

- ☑ Come up with three ways to incorporate student self-evaluation into your assignments.

- ☑ Bonus: Review page 92 of Brainsprouting - $100 to Enhance Any Creative Space. Go Shopping, and spruce up your classroom with some research-backed creative hacks!

Summary

What Matters Most

Congratulations! You're well on your way to helping your students unleash their creative potentials! Huzzah!

Here's a quick summary of what matters most, from both the Brainsprouting book and this supplemental guide.

Firstly, we wanted to emphasize the importance of creativity in education. When you teach your students to use their creative abilities, and you create space for them to practice regularly, you give your students the opportunity to develop skills and attitudes they'll use for the rest of their lives.

There are plenty of reasons that creativity doesn't always thrive, but the key to creativity is facilitating a space where lots of ideas flow freely. Psychological safety matters. You are the model – so make mistakes, celebrate originality, and shoot down judgment. And of course, look for every opportunity to brainsprout.

In the Brainsprouting book, we talked about four specific ways to boost creative output. Firstly, and most important, you must believe you are creative. Secondly, understand the guidelines for effective ideation sessions. Thirdly, use a variety of creative tools, and fourthly, change up your physical environment.

In chapter five of the book, we shifted our mindset from idea generation towards tools for idea refinement and implementation. We can bring ideas to life!

In *this* guide, we talked specifically about being more intentional about including creativity in the classroom. This included introducing creativity with flare, integrating consistent creative exercises, creating relevant projects where students can practice their creative skills, and shifting your evaluation and feedback techniques to be more in alignment with helpful outcomes. We even gave you a starter to-do list so you can get beyond "thinking about it" and become a bona fide, "making-stuff-happen", creativity teacher!

Teaching to Make A Difference

Putting all this into practice isn't easy, but we're convinced you'll see the benefits, not just in the classroom culture and student engagement, but also in your students' academic performance!

Why? Engaged students will naturally *want* to perform better. Your feedback will be more useful. And those creative problem-solver students you're fostering will find ways to learn what they need to learn.

But even better than that, is that your students will know the joy of working! Creative problem solvers don't just solve problems that are *assigned* to them; they *find* problems that are worth solving.

By teaching creativity, you are teaching your students how to make a difference. And without question, perhaps now more than ever, the world is in need of difference-makers. So go do it!