NURTURING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom is a groundbreaking collection of essays by leading scholars who examine and respond to the tension that many educators face in valuing student creativity while believing they cannot support creativity given the curricular constraints of the classroom. Is it possible for teachers to nurture creative development and expression without drifting into curricular chaos? Do curricular constraints necessarily lead to choosing conformity over creativity? This book combines the perspectives of top educators and psychologists to generate practical advice for considering and addressing the challenges of supporting creativity within the classroom. It is unique in its balance of practical recommendations for nurturing creativity and thoughtful appreciation of curricular constraints. This approach helps ensure that the insights and advice found in this collection will take root in educators’ practice, rather than being construed as yet another demand placed on their overflowing plate of responsibilities.


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Nurturing Creativity in the Classroom

Edited by
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This book is dedicated, with much love, to Jeralynn – my wife, best friend, and most ardent supporter.

— RAB

To my wife’s parents, fellow university educators
Joseph and Jean Katz,
with love and gratitude for welcoming me into their family,
and to her sister, Cynthia,
as she begins her own journey as a classroom teacher.

— JCK
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PREFACE

In addition to being creativity researchers, both of us are fathers of young children. As we watched Olivia and Jacob develop, the importance of an educational system that values creativity has become increasingly salient. Our children have an advantage in that their fathers value creativity (perhaps too much!). Like so many other parents, we are committed to providing diverse learning opportunities for our children. However, this commitment is not enough.

As college professors, both of us have seen many types of students. We see the student who is utterly convinced she is not creative and yet surprises herself by sharing a profoundly creative idea in class or on an assignment. Another student believes he is not creative and initially has no interest in cultivating his creativity. Yet another sees herself as a creative musician but fails to see any creativity in science or mathematics. It takes time and effort for these students to shake off their (mis)conceptions about creativity.

Then, there are the students we never see, those who have had limited opportunities to develop their creative potential. Not only do these students fail to find success in school, often for capricious and unjust reasons, but they may also believe that they lost what little spark of creativity and curiosity they had before entering formal schooling.

Finally, there are those students who have been mentored, supported by inspirational teachers, and (when appropriate) left alone to develop their creative potential. We are not too worried about these students; however, they, too, should not be forgotten. It is our hope that this book inspires educators, parents, and researchers to ensure that all students have an opportunity to find, nurture, and sustain their creative potential.

Such a goal is ambitious and one that we cannot hope to accomplish alone. We therefore selected contributors who we not only respected and admired but who we thought could most directly address the challenge of supporting creativity in the classroom. We hope that you will enjoy and draw as much insight and inspiration from these essays as we have. We close the book with a coda that highlights twenty key points and repeated motifs across the chapters.
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James would like to thank his CSUSB family for consistent and meaningful support – colleagues Mark Agars, Allen Butt, Susan Daniels, and Mihaela Popescu; his chair Robert Cramer, his dean Jamal Nassar, and his president Al Karnig; Stacy Brooks, Stephanie Loera, Jane Rowland, and the rest of the unfathomably good administrative support staff; and his students, whose many pathways to excellence inspire him every day. He also would like to thank his family for their love and support, especially his parents Alan and Nadeen, his sister Jennie and her family, his wife Allison, and his son Jacob.