

## Creative Thinking

**What it is:** Creative thinking encourages students to use a variety of approaches to solve problems, analyze multiple viewpoints, adapt ideas, and arrive at new solutions. Sometimes it is referred to as divergent thinking. Strategies can be introduced using direct instruction in creative problem solving models and creative thinking processes. The processes are generally considered to be fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. There are a variety of models available (see Examples section below).

### Benefits:

- Encourages risk-taking
- Develops the ability to deal with ambiguity and unstructured problems
- Helps students appreciate multiple perspectives
- Promotes innovation
- Encourages independent learning

### Examples:

- Creative Problem Solving or CPS (Parnes, 1992)
- SCAMPER (Eberle, 1996)
- Forced Associations (Feldhusen & Treffinger, 1985)
- Schoolwide Enrichment Model (Renzulli & Reiss, n.d.)
- RAFT (Role, Audience, Format, Topic)

### Situations where the strategy is useful:

- For enrichment
- To engage a student's natural curiosity
- To apply information that has been learned
- To infuse challenging learning opportunities into the core curriculum

### Pointers:

- Torrance (1986) demonstrated that creative thinking can be improved by directly teaching skills and creative problem-solving structures
- While some direct instruction in creative thinking is helpful, it's important to remember that students need opportunities to apply these skills and construct their own meaning, as well
- Use creative thinking activities as an opportunity to observe characteristics of giftedness (as a universal assessment)
- Creative thinkers often not identified because typical behaviors can be annoying and disruptive. Many of these students get poor grades, refuse or forget to hand in work on time, argue with adults, and "fool around" in class.
- Provide open-ended learning experiences to encourage critical thinking - those without a single right answer, solution, or explanation. Include plenty of "think time" for incubating ideas. Give students choice in selecting problems.
- Creative thinkers often need time to work alone

## References/Resources

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