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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:13,240

Hello and welcome to A Practical Approach to Teaching Creativity.

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00:00:13,240 --> 00:00:20,300

This is a five-part podcast in association with the University of Stavanger, the research

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00:00:20,300 --> 00:00:26,800

project Literary Games in the Classroom, and research funding for Literary Games as Innovative

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00:00:26,800 --> 00:00:27,800

Pedagogy.

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00:00:28,360 --> 00:00:33,880

I'm your host, Alan Jones, associate professor at the University of Stavanger, and I'll be

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00:00:33,880 --> 00:00:40,360

talking today, well I'll be talking in the next five podcasts, about creativity.

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00:00:40,360 --> 00:00:44,040

And the first podcast is called Understanding Creativity.

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00:00:44,040 --> 00:00:47,720

This is going to be a lot of background to help understand what I'm talking about, what

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00:00:47,720 --> 00:00:50,080

I mean by that word creativity.

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00:00:50,080 --> 00:00:54,720

So while I won't get to the games in this podcast, this is fundamental to understand

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00:00:54,720 --> 00:00:57,420

what these games do, how to use them.

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00:00:57,420 --> 00:01:00,980

So I really recommend you take a listen to all this.

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00:01:00,980 --> 00:01:05,580

So the audience, this is framed in some ways as a podcast for teachers at the secondary,

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00:01:05,580 --> 00:01:08,940

at the high school level, and university level.

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00:01:08,940 --> 00:01:13,620

However, the ideas and approaches have been used with younger and older students all the

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00:01:13,620 --> 00:01:15,620

way up through graduate school.

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00:01:15,620 --> 00:01:20,380

I also want to argue that these ideas and these games can be useful for everyone interested

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00:01:20,380 --> 00:01:21,380

in creativity.

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00:01:21,380 --> 00:01:23,900

That's the title of the podcast.

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00:01:23,900 --> 00:01:27,300

You can even use these ideas to teach yourself creativity.

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00:01:28,180 --> 00:01:32,420

So there'll be five podcasts dealing with teaching creativity through writing and reading

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00:01:32,420 --> 00:01:33,420

games.

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00:01:33,420 --> 00:01:35,460

That's the general gist here.

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00:01:35,460 --> 00:01:39,660

Other ways to think about this as you try to frame this for yourself, what you're learning

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00:01:39,660 --> 00:01:41,380  
here, what you're thinking about.

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00:01:41,380 --> 00:01:44,620  
There's five of these I have for you to give you a lot of ins.

27  
00:01:44,620 --> 00:01:51,020  
One would be using creative writing to encourage student engagement in reading and writing.

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00:01:51,020 --> 00:01:55,620  
And I give you these different options because each one emphasizes something different, and

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00:01:55,620 --> 00:01:56,620  
so they don't give the full picture.

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00:01:56,940 --> 00:01:58,140  
But that's one way to think of it.

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00:01:58,140 --> 00:02:06,020  
Another way would be that the goal of this really is to use a nonjudgmental space to

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00:02:06,020 --> 00:02:07,420  
produce creative thinking.

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00:02:07,420 --> 00:02:11,780  
And you'll see that that's one of the fundamental keys to producing creativity is a lack of

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00:02:11,780 --> 00:02:16,900  
judgment, which isn't always a lack of assessment, but it does mean assessment needs to be geared

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00:02:16,900 --> 00:02:20,180  
to be nonjudgmental, which is possible.

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00:02:20,180 --> 00:02:24,860  
Number three, this can be seen as building collaboration and community, particularly

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00:02:24,980 --> 00:02:29,540  
in the sharing of writing through a safe creative space.

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00:02:29,540 --> 00:02:31,660  
And safe typically means nonjudgmental here.

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00:02:31,660 --> 00:02:39,100  
Number four, this can be seen as a playful method for cutting up and reorganizing texts,

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00:02:39,100 --> 00:02:44,980  
stories, poems, articles, advertisements, whatever you're studying.

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00:02:44,980 --> 00:02:50,820  
But a playful way for cutting these up, reorganizing them as a way to think deeply and critically

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00:02:50,820 --> 00:02:53,220  
about them in an interactive way.

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00:02:53,260 --> 00:02:55,420  
That's the pragmatic way to think about this.

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00:02:55,420 --> 00:03:02,580  
And then number five, the goal here in some ways is to move beyond comprehension, a necessary

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00:03:02,580 --> 00:03:07,580  
step, but move beyond comprehension to an in-depth reading, an in-depth thinking about

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00:03:07,580 --> 00:03:15,140  
ideas in something we have read.

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00:03:15,140 --> 00:03:19,140  
So while specific games will be presented here, games that I've used that I think are

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00:03:19,140 --> 00:03:24,900  
very useful, the real goal is to set up a framework for successful thinking about how

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00:03:24,900 --> 00:03:30,620

to use games and how to set up creative mind training for students that is both engaging

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00:03:30,620 --> 00:03:35,500

and pragmatically effective in their intellectual development.

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00:03:35,500 --> 00:03:38,420

If you're interested in more of this, you can see my other research.

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00:03:38,420 --> 00:03:41,500

You can look at my website, [alansijones.com](http://alansijones.com).

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00:03:41,500 --> 00:03:46,060

You can email me for access to articles or for ideas about articles that have been published

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00:03:46,060 --> 00:03:48,180

about this, in-depth resources.

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00:03:48,220 --> 00:03:53,460

We're also planning workshops soon, so keep your eye out for those.

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00:03:53,460 --> 00:03:59,380

So the first podcast is really going to be about understanding and teaching creativity

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00:03:59,380 --> 00:04:00,380

to give you a backdrop.

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00:04:00,380 --> 00:04:02,940

And the first most important thing is what is this word?

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00:04:02,940 --> 00:04:07,020

Because one of the big challenges is that people have all kinds of ideas about creativity,

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00:04:07,020 --> 00:04:11,180

most of which it turns out research shows are totally wrong.

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00:04:11,180 --> 00:04:14,220

So let's define creativity as we're going to use it here.

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00:04:14,220 --> 00:04:16,460

The first thing is the term divergent thinking.

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00:04:16,740 --> 00:04:20,980

And this is really what I'm talking about when I'm talking about creativity, is divergent

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00:04:20,980 --> 00:04:21,980

thinking.

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00:04:21,980 --> 00:04:22,980

So let me define that.

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00:04:22,980 --> 00:04:26,140

And this is not a term I use with students, and I'll tell you what term I use with them,

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00:04:26,140 --> 00:04:28,900

but it is the term that's used in research quite often.

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00:04:28,900 --> 00:04:31,820

So it's a useful one to know if you pursue this further.

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00:04:31,820 --> 00:04:39,060

But the first thing I'm going to talk about is divergent versus convergent thinking.

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00:04:39,060 --> 00:04:42,380

So at a basic level, diverge means to move apart.

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00:04:42,380 --> 00:04:45,700

Like if you have a central point, things diverge from it when they all move out in separate

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00:04:45,700 --> 00:04:46,700

directions.

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00:04:46,700 --> 00:04:47,820

Converge is the opposite.

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00:04:47,820 --> 00:04:50,340

Things come together towards a central point.

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00:04:50,340 --> 00:04:55,700

So convergent thinking, I also call this logical thinking and directed thinking in these podcasts.

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00:04:55,700 --> 00:05:00,320

But convergent thinking tries to find the one right answer.

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00:05:00,320 --> 00:05:02,400

This is typically what we're taught, this kind of thinking.

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00:05:02,400 --> 00:05:04,060

We get very good at it the older we get.

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00:05:04,060 --> 00:05:05,060

It's taught in school.

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00:05:05,060 --> 00:05:06,220

It's very useful.

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00:05:06,220 --> 00:05:08,060

We're not trying to replace that.

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00:05:08,060 --> 00:05:10,500

We're trying to do it with the balance, with another kind of thinking, another kind of

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00:05:10,500 --> 00:05:14,500

skill that disappears as students get older.

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00:05:14,500 --> 00:05:20,580

Divergent thinking tries to find the most number of possible answers.

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00:05:20,580 --> 00:05:23,060

So I'll say it one more time.

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00:05:23,060 --> 00:05:27,140

Divergent thinking tries to find the most number of possible answers.

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00:05:27,140 --> 00:05:28,140  
It moves outward.

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00:05:28,140 --> 00:05:29,140  
It expands.

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00:05:29,140 --> 00:05:37,220  
So Edward de Bono, who studied creativity for half a century, he frames it like this.

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00:05:37,220 --> 00:05:41,600  
Logical, directed, convergent thinking is selective.

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00:05:41,600 --> 00:05:43,280  
It selects one answer.

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00:05:43,280 --> 00:05:45,400  
It tries to select the best answer.

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00:05:45,400 --> 00:05:46,920  
Very useful.

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00:05:46,920 --> 00:05:50,560  
Creative thinking, divergent thinking, is generative.

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00:05:50,560 --> 00:05:51,680  
It generates.

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00:05:51,680 --> 00:05:54,160  
It tries to generate the most possible answers.

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00:05:54,160 --> 00:05:55,240  
It expands.

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00:05:55,240 --> 00:06:01,560  
It moves outward to produce lots and lots of ideas that then logical, directed, convergent

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00:06:01,560 --> 00:06:03,360  
thinking can select from.

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00:06:03,360 --> 00:06:05,360

It gives us lots of choices.

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00:06:05,360 --> 00:06:08,820

So an example of this is from the Torrance Test of Creativity.

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00:06:08,820 --> 00:06:14,260

This is the most used test of creativity since the 60s.

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00:06:14,260 --> 00:06:17,480

And one of the questions, they have questions like this.

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00:06:17,480 --> 00:06:20,500

How many uses does this toothpick have?

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00:06:20,500 --> 00:06:22,060

So you have a picture of a toothpick.

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00:06:22,060 --> 00:06:24,120

How many uses does this toothpick have?

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00:06:24,120 --> 00:06:25,500

And here the term fluency is important.

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00:06:25,500 --> 00:06:27,420

I'm going to use this term.

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00:06:27,420 --> 00:06:32,360

Fluency means, in this context, it means how many ideas can I come up with for a toothpick?

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00:06:32,360 --> 00:06:33,820

Of course, picking your teeth.

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00:06:33,820 --> 00:06:36,420

Convergent thinking would say toothpicks are for picking your teeth.

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00:06:36,420 --> 00:06:39,020

But you can use toothpicks for lots and lots of things.

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00:06:39,020 --> 00:06:41,840

In fact, if you want, you can stop right now and try to think.

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00:06:41,840 --> 00:06:43,940

Can you get three uses for a toothpick?

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00:06:43,940 --> 00:06:44,940

Can you get five?

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00:06:44,940 --> 00:06:46,140

Can you get 10?

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00:06:46,140 --> 00:06:52,920

In some ways, that is the way that fluency in divergent thinking is measured.

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00:06:52,920 --> 00:06:53,920

See what score you get.

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00:06:53,920 --> 00:06:58,700

I did read a book where they tell you to stop and try it and give yourself a score.

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00:06:58,700 --> 00:07:00,020

You can do that if you like.

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00:07:00,020 --> 00:07:01,020

Okay.

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00:07:01,020 --> 00:07:04,020

What are some fundamental challenges to divergent thinking?

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00:07:04,020 --> 00:07:09,700

Things to watch out for and to try to design against as you design these classroom activities,

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00:07:09,700 --> 00:07:12,620

games, as you use them, as you design your own.

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00:07:12,620 --> 00:07:15,740

The biggest one is really judgment.

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00:07:15,740 --> 00:07:20,820

Thinking openly and creating many answers will produce answers that are nearer or further

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00:07:20,820 --> 00:07:21,820  
from useful.

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00:07:21,820 --> 00:07:22,820  
Some of them will seem silly.

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00:07:22,820 --> 00:07:23,820  
They'll seem ridiculous.

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00:07:23,820 --> 00:07:25,740  
They'll seem crazy.

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00:07:25,740 --> 00:07:29,820  
And when you start to judge them, later you can, after you've produced them, after you've

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00:07:29,820 --> 00:07:34,500  
produced 100 answers for a toothpick, you might choose the three best ones.

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00:07:34,500 --> 00:07:38,980  
But if you're judging during that brainstorming, during that generative process, it'll shut

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00:07:38,980 --> 00:07:41,580  
down the spectrum.

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00:07:41,580 --> 00:07:45,620  
So one thing to think about is that you have to be open to valuing silliness.

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00:07:45,620 --> 00:07:51,260  
Some of these answers will be silly, and if you devalue silliness, you're going to lose

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00:07:51,260 --> 00:07:52,260  
those.

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00:07:52,260 --> 00:07:55,740  
And you're going to lose some of them that seem silly at first, like, for example, I

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00:07:55,740 --> 00:07:59,100

don't know, having a television in your pocket.

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00:07:59,380 --> 00:08:00,540

Or having the iPhone.

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00:08:00,540 --> 00:08:03,740

At some point, perhaps it didn't seem silly, but some of the greatest ideas seem silly

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00:08:03,740 --> 00:08:04,740

at first.

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00:08:04,740 --> 00:08:10,940

So you want to really avoid judgment as you practice divergent thinking.

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00:08:10,940 --> 00:08:13,900

The same thing with usefulness or realistic answers.

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00:08:13,900 --> 00:08:16,700

Now they do need to be not just random.

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00:08:16,700 --> 00:08:20,020

They do need to be some kind of, you know, it has to make sense that you can use a toothpick

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00:08:20,020 --> 00:08:24,580

for it, but it could be something very, very out there.

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00:08:24,580 --> 00:08:25,860

As long as a toothpick could do it.

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00:08:26,020 --> 00:08:28,540

You could pick a lock with a toothpick, maybe.

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00:08:28,540 --> 00:08:29,540

Possibly.

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00:08:29,540 --> 00:08:33,260

I'm not sure.

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00:08:33,260 --> 00:08:37,980

So as opposed to convergent thinking, looking for that one right answer, you're looking

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00:08:37,980 --> 00:08:39,840

for many.

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00:08:39,840 --> 00:08:43,060

So a question that's raised here early, you know, it's often raised, and I'll raise it

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00:08:43,060 --> 00:08:46,260

here early, is how can this kind of creativity be used realistically?

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00:08:46,260 --> 00:08:51,660

And in the fifth podcast, I'll actually talk, and the entire podcast is about how to design

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00:08:51,660 --> 00:08:56,460

these exercises into useful, more traditional assignments.

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00:08:56,460 --> 00:09:01,900

But in the beginning here, basically scaffolding a project, giving that project layers that

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00:09:01,900 --> 00:09:07,340

are graded, and one of those graded steps being a divergent brainstorming process where

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00:09:07,340 --> 00:09:12,500

fluency is the only measure, even turning that into a competitive game, how many answers

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00:09:12,500 --> 00:09:13,880

can you produce?

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00:09:13,880 --> 00:09:18,460

That's a way of realistically, you know, involving assessment, which does help students do the

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00:09:18,460 --> 00:09:20,460

work, but having it be nonjudgmental.

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00:09:20,620 --> 00:09:24,980

And it's based simply on fluency.

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00:09:24,980 --> 00:09:27,460

Why teach creativity?

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00:09:27,460 --> 00:09:32,580

First reason is that the creative mindset is useful in many areas.

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00:09:32,580 --> 00:09:38,620

This podcast, or these podcasts, focus on writing and reading as a way to teach divergent

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00:09:38,620 --> 00:09:45,140

thinking, but in fact, quite often in the early stages of projects, this kind of creative

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00:09:45,140 --> 00:09:47,660

thinking is quite useful.

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00:09:47,660 --> 00:09:52,620

The second reason is that as students progress, research shows that they are trained increasingly

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00:09:52,620 --> 00:09:56,020

in convergent thinking, finding the right answer, which is very useful.

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00:09:56,020 --> 00:10:00,300

However, it does mean that innovative skills suffer.

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00:10:00,300 --> 00:10:06,620

A third reason is that it's a way to build student engagement, as quite often it feels

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00:10:06,620 --> 00:10:10,620

original to the students since they haven't had this kind of training or this kind of

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00:10:10,620 --> 00:10:15,140

interaction with texts, with ideas.

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00:10:15,220 --> 00:10:18,980

A fourth reason is it's a way to build community and sharing in the classroom.

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00:10:18,980 --> 00:10:25,060

It opens up a different avenue for students to share a different kind of access to confidence

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00:10:25,060 --> 00:10:28,220

and collaboration.

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00:10:28,220 --> 00:10:32,620

And then the last one is it's a way to build a supportive, open teaching environment.

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00:10:32,620 --> 00:10:38,700

Because this kind of innovation necessitates an open space, it then in some ways forces

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00:10:38,700 --> 00:10:45,020

us if we want to be successful to create that space in our classrooms if we haven't already.

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00:10:45,020 --> 00:10:46,620

Some common myths about creativity.

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00:10:46,620 --> 00:10:49,940

This is important because we often fake, not all of these.

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00:10:49,940 --> 00:10:54,940

I've been recently doing some research on this in Norway, but these are myths that have

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00:10:54,940 --> 00:10:58,380

been around for a long time and are pretty prevalent.

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00:10:58,380 --> 00:11:03,260

It's good to know them so that you can deal with them when they come up.

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00:11:03,260 --> 00:11:05,980

The first one is that only geniuses are creative.

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00:11:05,980 --> 00:11:07,540

Shakespeare is creative.

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00:11:07,540 --> 00:11:10,300

Newton was creative.

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00:11:10,300 --> 00:11:13,780

Virginia Woolf is creative.

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00:11:13,820 --> 00:11:17,700

People who are geniuses are creative and the rest of us, you know, we just plug along,

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00:11:17,700 --> 00:11:19,980

do our work, do our best.

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00:11:19,980 --> 00:11:24,300

This is a problem because it makes people think that they cannot learn to be creative

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00:11:24,300 --> 00:11:27,740

when in fact it's a skill like any other.

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00:11:27,740 --> 00:11:35,060

A second myth is that creativity and play, and really this has to do with play and games,

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00:11:35,060 --> 00:11:38,940

more perhaps in creativity I would say, but since I deal a lot with play and games as

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00:11:38,940 --> 00:11:42,180

an avenue to teach divergent thinking, I face this a lot.

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00:11:42,580 --> 00:11:44,700

But the idea that they're not serious.

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00:11:44,700 --> 00:11:49,020

We do that when we're kids, we do that when we're young, and then we move on to serious

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00:11:49,020 --> 00:11:55,780  
things and even basically students at 10, 12 years old start to get this message, if

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00:11:55,780 --> 00:11:56,780  
not younger.

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00:11:56,780 --> 00:12:01,780  
A third myth is that you can't teach creativity or inspiration.

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00:12:01,780 --> 00:12:08,140  
This is particularly true if you call it inspiration, the word inspiration, this idea that geniuses,

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00:12:08,740 --> 00:12:15,780  
writers, artists are inspired and the rest of us plug along, as I said before.

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00:12:15,780 --> 00:12:20,580  
There are methods for teaching this, another myth that we're going to overturn here.

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00:12:20,580 --> 00:12:23,900  
A fourth one is that creativity is not useful.

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00:12:23,900 --> 00:12:28,980  
It's fun, it's extra, it's an activity to tack on top of other things.

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00:12:28,980 --> 00:12:34,660  
It can be a reward for the students, something to fill time, but it's not a fundamental part

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00:12:34,660 --> 00:12:36,180  
of the curriculum.

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00:12:36,220 --> 00:12:39,900  
This has changed in Norway where they actually have made creativity and innovation part of

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00:12:39,900 --> 00:12:45,020  
the curriculum, but still there's a general sense of this that you often face.

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00:12:45,020 --> 00:12:51,940

So it's important to frame these ideas in how are they actually useful.

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00:12:51,940 --> 00:12:56,860

Number five, this is a big one, is that creativity disrupts.

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00:12:56,860 --> 00:12:59,380

It has no boundaries or rules.

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00:12:59,380 --> 00:13:05,220

In some ways this is not totally untrue as a myth because in fact part of the nature

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00:13:05,260 --> 00:13:06,900

of creativity is to disrupt.

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00:13:06,900 --> 00:13:12,020

That's what makes it work, but there's a level of disruption that we don't want, to actually

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00:13:12,020 --> 00:13:18,300

disrupt learning, disrupt our own learning, students' learning.

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00:13:18,300 --> 00:13:22,820

So this mistakes in a lot of ways the environment that helps to produce creative mind, this

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00:13:22,820 --> 00:13:28,140

open area with the use of this mindset in creative activities, which are very much based

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00:13:28,140 --> 00:13:30,020

on strict rules to make them work.

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00:13:30,020 --> 00:13:36,900

These activities and these approaches have very strict ways of working.

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00:13:36,900 --> 00:13:42,060

And I'll be discussing those rules and how these games work, how these exercises work

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00:13:42,060 --> 00:13:43,500

in a later podcast.

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00:13:43,500 --> 00:13:47,540

The next thing I talk about is teaching environment.

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00:13:47,540 --> 00:13:53,500

There's a researcher, Amabile, who's done a whole series of experiments on this and

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00:13:53,500 --> 00:14:01,060

proved really, as far as I can tell, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that creating, or really

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00:14:01,060 --> 00:14:05,500

what she's proven is that extrinsic motivation, so intrinsic motivation means when I do something

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00:14:05,500 --> 00:14:09,940

for myself, it's inside me, intrinsic, I'm doing it because I understand that somehow

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00:14:09,940 --> 00:14:12,460

it's something I want to do.

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00:14:12,460 --> 00:14:16,580

Extrinsic is when I'm doing it for someone else, for a grade, for money, for a reason

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00:14:16,580 --> 00:14:23,180

outside myself, which focuses me on the reward and not on the process or the learning itself.

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00:14:23,180 --> 00:14:29,940

This researcher, Amabile, has shown that even the tiniest, tiniest hint of extrinsic

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00:14:29,940 --> 00:14:35,940

motivation reduces creativity significantly.

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00:14:35,940 --> 00:14:37,740

If you want to look into it, look her up.

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00:14:37,740 --> 00:14:43,480

They're fascinating experiments and they're quoted in all kinds of papers.

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00:14:43,480 --> 00:14:50,500

My research, I was an elementary school teacher for many years and I did research into the

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00:14:50,500 --> 00:14:55,900

rhetoric teachers use and this starts at a very young age where it's simply, at least

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00:14:55,900 --> 00:15:01,580

in English, and I've noticed it in Norwegian also, it's something we use certain verbs.

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00:15:01,580 --> 00:15:04,340

We tell a student, you must do this, or we say, do it for me.

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00:15:04,340 --> 00:15:09,540

Some of these examples are if we say to a student, a young eight-year-old student, do

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00:15:09,540 --> 00:15:12,580

it for me rather than do it for yourself.

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00:15:12,580 --> 00:15:18,100

Even just that small change can change a student's perspective, or you have to do it versus you

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00:15:18,100 --> 00:15:19,100

can do it.

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00:15:19,700 --> 00:15:25,460

There's also something teachers often get into saying it's easy to do, which is an attempt

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00:15:25,460 --> 00:15:30,340

to help students, but in fact, the things students are doing are hard for them.

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00:15:30,340 --> 00:15:34,540

Saying it's easy really backfires rather than saying, no, this is really hard and challenging

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00:15:34,540 --> 00:15:36,980  
and you can do it.

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00:15:36,980 --> 00:15:45,220  
Some challenges we face in teaching are, for example, when we talk about games, I often

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00:15:45,260 --> 00:15:50,020  
use the word games to talk about this, probably because games appeal, that term appeals to

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00:15:50,020 --> 00:15:54,020  
this generation, appeals to many generations actually, appeals to us because games are

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00:15:54,020 --> 00:15:57,420  
supposed to be fun.

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00:15:57,420 --> 00:16:01,420  
When we approach it this way, that's useful in terms of some students, but in terms of

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00:16:01,420 --> 00:16:05,300  
teachers and challenges as a teacher coming to this, there are teachers who say, I'm simply

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00:16:05,300 --> 00:16:06,980  
not a game teacher.

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00:16:06,980 --> 00:16:10,660  
Some people go, oh, I love doing games and some say, I'm not a game teacher.

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00:16:10,660 --> 00:16:15,180  
I think it's important to operate where you're comfortable as a teacher, work on your strengths,

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00:16:15,180 --> 00:16:18,180  
and so sometimes the terms can be changed here.

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00:16:18,180 --> 00:16:22,300  
For example, I'm going to present an array of free writing exercises.

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00:16:22,300 --> 00:16:24,420  
They're not really games.

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00:16:24,420 --> 00:16:27,460  
You can present them as games and I've tried that and it actually doesn't work that well

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00:16:27,460 --> 00:16:34,180  
with free writing, but you can also present them as something that's very playful, that's

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00:16:34,180 --> 00:16:36,940  
creative, that appeals to certain students and certain teaching types.

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00:16:36,940 --> 00:16:42,140  
At the same time, you can present them as exercises that are very serious, that are

265  
00:16:42,140 --> 00:16:47,940  
developing creative, innovative, diversion, thinking skills that are very pragmatic when

266  
00:16:47,940 --> 00:16:52,540  
it comes to doing drafting, when it comes to doing brainstorming, and when it comes

267  
00:16:52,540 --> 00:16:54,540  
to doing group work.

268  
00:16:54,540 --> 00:17:00,940  
You can present these as much more serious in terms of how you frame them for the students,

269  
00:17:00,940 --> 00:17:04,340  
if that is your approach, if that's what works for you as a teacher.

270  
00:17:04,340 --> 00:17:09,300  
A second challenge is how to integrate these things into the curriculum when you have perhaps

271  
00:17:10,300 --> 00:17:14,820  
you don't have an endless amount of class time, you need to work these things efficiently.

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00:17:14,820 --> 00:17:19,260

How do you make this not something extra to tack on top?

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00:17:19,260 --> 00:17:21,620

It can function as an extra.

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00:17:21,620 --> 00:17:25,700

If students enjoy it, if you have time, and if you need an extra that's fun to inspire

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00:17:25,700 --> 00:17:30,220

students, that is one way this can function, but I've found that that's a sort of a fallback.

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00:17:30,220 --> 00:17:34,060

That's what people do because they don't have the tools yet to teach this seriously, which

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00:17:34,060 --> 00:17:37,620

is what I'm doing in these podcasts, is trying to provide those tools.

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00:17:37,620 --> 00:17:42,580

The goal here is to see if this can become useful, and that will mean that it then becomes

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00:17:42,580 --> 00:17:49,340

part of the actual important, quote, serious schedule, curricular schedule.

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00:17:49,340 --> 00:17:52,420

One key to this is to set up clear boundaries.

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00:17:52,420 --> 00:18:01,140

So one, establishing a free creative space outside of assessment-based space.

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00:18:01,140 --> 00:18:02,140

This is key.

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00:18:02,460 --> 00:18:08,500

And then number two, establishing a free creative space within the assessment-based process.

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00:18:08,500 --> 00:18:14,260

So to develop these skills, you really want to have them be in a space outside assessment.

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00:18:14,260 --> 00:18:20,260

And then you want to figure out a way to work it into some traditional assignment so it

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00:18:20,260 --> 00:18:24,300

can be useful because students are going to face those traditional assignments a majority

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00:18:24,300 --> 00:18:29,060

of the time, and we want to figure out ways to have this be useful.

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00:18:29,100 --> 00:18:33,700

There is a risk, another challenge as a teacher, is there is a risk of opening up disruptive

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00:18:33,700 --> 00:18:35,540

or taboo topics.

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00:18:35,540 --> 00:18:40,020

Because you're opening up this divergent space, you can find things that are further from

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00:18:40,020 --> 00:18:42,900

the norm than you wish to go.

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00:18:42,900 --> 00:18:47,420

This can be seen as a strength, I think, as it forces us to face these topics that are

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00:18:47,420 --> 00:18:54,100

in students' minds, and it forces us to establish a classroom with a safe space for those things.

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00:18:54,100 --> 00:18:56,680

It also helps students to navigate those boundaries.

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00:18:56,720 --> 00:19:00,200

So when those things arise, there are some things we want to deal with and talk



about,

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00:19:00,200 --> 00:19:04,000

say, oh, this is something we don't talk about very much, but it's interesting and we want

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00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:05,000

to talk about it.

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00:19:05,000 --> 00:19:14,880

Let's say something difficult comes up about society, about race, gender, these things.

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00:19:14,880 --> 00:19:19,560

But it also means that the teacher in the classroom, the environment, needs to say,

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00:19:19,560 --> 00:19:21,000

oh, some things are too far.

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00:19:21,000 --> 00:19:25,320

If something hurts somebody, if something makes somebody uncomfortable, that's too far,

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00:19:25,320 --> 00:19:35,840

and we need to not go into that area, even if we think it's a divergent answer to a problem,

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00:19:35,840 --> 00:19:41,720

these things are inappropriate and not kind, and therefore, they're not allowed in a class.

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00:19:41,720 --> 00:19:48,720

One thing creativity does do, and these trainings do do, is it opens up a student-centered approach.

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00:19:48,720 --> 00:19:55,140

To make these tasks useful, the teacher has to function as a non-expert.

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00:19:55,140 --> 00:19:58,860

Because we're going places where we don't know the answers and we're finding divergent

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00:19:58,860 --> 00:20:02,460

answers, there is no expertise in the single correct answer.

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00:20:02,460 --> 00:20:08,920

Therefore, it puts us in a very natural position of non-expert, and this is sort of how advanced

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00:20:08,920 --> 00:20:15,940

teaching has developed, at least in the university, since the 80s, because it gives students really

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00:20:15,940 --> 00:20:22,060

the lead, while of course being framed and organized and driven and assessed by the teacher,

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00:20:22,060 --> 00:20:27,980

it allows students to really be central and for them really to develop intrinsic motivation,

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00:20:27,980 --> 00:20:28,980

most importantly.

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00:20:28,980 --> 00:20:35,300

Another thing creativity opens up is an exploratory or experimental approach, or at least this

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00:20:35,300 --> 00:20:37,300

is the way I approach it with students.

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00:20:37,300 --> 00:20:43,460

And this is a way of saying that there are many answers, this is a divergent space, and

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00:20:43,460 --> 00:20:47,380

what we're doing is we're exploring this, we're experimenting.

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00:20:47,380 --> 00:20:51,220

The third thing is it highlights the process over the product.

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00:20:51,220 --> 00:20:55,060

What they're learning is this skill, it's a way of thinking, it's a part of their brain

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00:20:55,060 --> 00:20:59,580

that they're using, as opposed to producing some perfect product.

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00:20:59,580 --> 00:21:06,160

And then the final thing that creativity opens up is really openness, and this is key in

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00:21:06,160 --> 00:21:08,900

all kinds of skill areas.

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00:21:08,900 --> 00:21:13,900

One solution for many of the challenges of teaching creativity is to have a clear understanding

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00:21:13,900 --> 00:21:17,140

of what you're teaching, which I'm going to talk about in these podcasts, and then have

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00:21:17,140 --> 00:21:23,620

a clear understanding of how the processes work that teach this, the rules, the techniques.

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00:21:23,620 --> 00:21:25,780

So there's a very specific task for the students.

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00:21:25,780 --> 00:21:29,500

It's not just a free space where you say, do whatever, right, where some people think

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00:21:29,500 --> 00:21:35,060

of creativity as that, but in fact creative professionals know that it's a very formal

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00:21:35,060 --> 00:21:43,940

task where you have techniques, rules, things that you use to create innovation.

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00:21:43,940 --> 00:21:48,580

In framing this for yourself and for students, some terms will help.

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00:21:48,580 --> 00:21:54,740

For example, rather than talking about play, quite often we'll use the term serious play.

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00:21:54,740 --> 00:22:00,260

And serious play means that it's a creative approach, a playful approach, a divergent

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00:22:00,260 --> 00:22:02,200

thinking approach, but it's actually quite serious.

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00:22:02,200 --> 00:22:08,300

We're going after real ideas, real thinking, but the process to get there needs to be open.

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00:22:08,300 --> 00:22:13,900

The second thing is to replace the term divergent thinking, since that term seems academic,

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00:22:13,900 --> 00:22:15,660

with the term creative mind.

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00:22:15,660 --> 00:22:16,660

You can choose your own term.

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00:22:16,660 --> 00:22:19,060

This is a term I've been using with students.

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00:22:19,060 --> 00:22:22,500

The creative mind seems to make sense to them.

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00:22:22,500 --> 00:22:27,780

And what you're saying is this is a part of our mind, even though technically, right,

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00:22:27,780 --> 00:22:29,340

people would argue about is it a part of our mind.

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00:22:29,340 --> 00:22:36,340

But talking about to students, this is a part of our mind that we use to develop ideas,

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00:22:36,340 --> 00:22:44,100

to search for ideas creatively and innovatively, and then we move to more convergent thinking.

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00:22:44,100 --> 00:22:48,020

I don't use the term convergent thinking either with them, but really finding the right answer.

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00:22:48,020 --> 00:22:52,220

First, we enter a creative space, come up with many answers, push ourselves to find

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00:22:52,220 --> 00:22:56,660

all kinds of answers, and then we move more towards the answer we want to use for whatever

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00:22:56,660 --> 00:23:00,060

reason we've decided.

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00:23:00,060 --> 00:23:05,340

Another way to, and I want to talk about this in the final game I discuss, is game design.

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00:23:05,340 --> 00:23:11,100

If we associate games with game design, it suddenly becomes creative, but a very specific

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00:23:11,100 --> 00:23:16,340

problem solution field for students.

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00:23:16,340 --> 00:23:19,500

Another way is to talk about creative forms.

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00:23:19,500 --> 00:23:27,140

If we associate divergent thinking and creative, innovative learning with forms like poetry

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00:23:27,140 --> 00:23:32,140

or film, it then becomes very specifically and technically challenging with a set of

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00:23:32,140 --> 00:23:34,220

rules in those forms.

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00:23:34,540 --> 00:23:38,220

Finally, if we talk about this as an experimental approach, we're experimenting, we're testing

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00:23:38,220 --> 00:23:42,740

things out, we're seeing what works, that sort of scientific approach is more creative

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00:23:42,740 --> 00:23:48,300

and flexible quite often, and also has value, seems serious.

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00:23:48,300 --> 00:23:52,700

The scientific approach, which never has the right answer, is always theorizing, is always

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00:23:52,700 --> 00:23:55,180

looking for the next answer, is always experimenting.

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00:23:55,180 --> 00:24:01,580

That's another way to talk about this playful approach and create a serious sense around

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00:24:01,580 --> 00:24:03,620

it for yourself and for students.

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00:24:04,020 --> 00:24:07,140

A final note on hierarchy.

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00:24:07,140 --> 00:24:12,500

There's a cultural awe that surrounds writing and creativity in most cultures that I've

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00:24:12,500 --> 00:24:15,140

lived in.

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00:24:15,140 --> 00:24:20,340

We think of writers as geniuses quite often.

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00:24:20,340 --> 00:24:27,420

Much of this creative work that I've been doing is inspired by the Surrealists and their

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00:24:27,420 --> 00:24:30,260

experimental writing games in the early 20th century.

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00:24:30,340 --> 00:24:33,620

Surrealists were a group of writers who tried to bring writing to the people.

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00:24:33,620 --> 00:24:39,220

They used games, they used collaboration to show that anyone could be a writer, not just

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00:24:39,220 --> 00:24:40,220

Shakespeare.

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00:24:40,220 --> 00:24:45,380

While you may have heard of them for being strange, the term Surrealist means strange

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00:24:45,380 --> 00:24:49,940

in popular use, at the heart of their project was an egalitarian goal.

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00:24:49,940 --> 00:24:55,300

This is really what drives my work.

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00:24:55,380 --> 00:25:00,980

For us as creatives and for our students as creatives, it's important to access this tradition

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00:25:00,980 --> 00:25:05,700

of egalitarianism and undoing the hierarchy of, oh, literature is something that famous

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00:25:05,700 --> 00:25:10,100

people write, I read, I must figure out the right answer, I must put it on an exam, and

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00:25:10,100 --> 00:25:12,740

then I must get a grade.

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00:25:12,740 --> 00:25:17,860

Rather than doing this, some pragmatic ways to challenge this, one is to call your students

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00:25:17,860 --> 00:25:22,340

writers, rather than students during these sessions.

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00:25:22,420 --> 00:25:24,420

During these sessions, they are writers.

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00:25:24,420 --> 00:25:29,540

They are writing creatively, they're doing exactly what Shakespeare and other supposed

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00:25:29,540 --> 00:25:33,300

geniuses do, and this gives them a sense of power.

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00:25:33,300 --> 00:25:40,420

A second thing, I'm going to talk about this a lot, but is to have no judgment, so to use

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00:25:40,420 --> 00:25:47,460

creative mind and the playful approach to open a relaxed non-judgmental space for whatever

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00:25:47,460 --> 00:25:49,460

students produce.

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00:25:49,540 --> 00:25:55,700

This is not just comforting or, quote, nice for students, cozy, although it may be those

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00:25:55,700 --> 00:26:00,820

things, it's actually a key technique for producing creative innovation.

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00:26:00,820 --> 00:26:08,500

A third way of working with this and making it successful is to have participatory assessment.

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00:26:08,500 --> 00:26:09,540

You can't always do this.

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00:26:09,540 --> 00:26:13,060

Not everything can be assessed by participation.

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00:26:13,060 --> 00:26:19,380

Typically in schools, we have a grade that's based on content, but if you can build a sequence

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00:26:19,380 --> 00:26:24,740

into an assignment, if you can scaffold it, so there's different steps, and some of those

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00:26:24,740 --> 00:26:30,740

steps are based on participation and task completion.

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00:26:30,740 --> 00:26:36,180

They can then be open for creativity because it's not the product you're grading, but the

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00:26:36,180 --> 00:26:40,500

process, and this is key for opening up a space without judgment.

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00:26:43,540 --> 00:26:48,020

At the same time, it does allow you to have assessment as to drive students, which I know

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00:26:48,020 --> 00:26:50,420

is very useful with many students.

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00:26:50,420 --> 00:26:56,500

So yes, this is assessed as in you will do it and you put effort into it, but the content

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00:26:56,500 --> 00:27:01,380

itself, as long as it actually is done, counts.

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00:27:03,380 --> 00:27:09,620

So this is the end of podcast one, and this is a lot of introductory ideas, defining diversion

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00:27:09,620 --> 00:27:10,740

thinking, et cetera.

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00:27:12,420 --> 00:27:17,300

In the next podcast, I'll dig into the actual games that we're talking about here.

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00:27:17,300 --> 00:27:19,620

So let me just go over what we've talked about here.

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00:27:19,620 --> 00:27:23,220

Summary of podcast one, first thing I talked about was diversion thinking.

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00:27:23,220 --> 00:27:28,260

This is really what I'm talking about when I'm talking about creativity, and I don't

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00:27:28,260 --> 00:27:28,740

use that term.

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00:27:28,740 --> 00:27:31,300

I use the term creative mind with students.

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00:27:31,300 --> 00:27:35,460

After three different research sessions with them, I found that much more useful.

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00:27:36,900 --> 00:27:41,700

I define this as conversion thinking, being thinking that tries to find the single right

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00:27:41,700 --> 00:27:44,500

answer, which is very useful.

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00:27:44,500 --> 00:27:48,980

Diversion thinking is the ability to come up with many possible answers.

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00:27:48,980 --> 00:27:50,660

This is akin to brainstorming.

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00:27:52,500 --> 00:27:57,380

It's also the ability to develop and detail those answers, and I'll use the word fluency

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00:27:57,380 --> 00:28:02,660

for this ability to produce the most number of possible answers.

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00:28:04,180 --> 00:28:08,820

That's sort of a mindset here when we're looking at divergent tasks.

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00:28:08,820 --> 00:28:11,060

I didn't talk about why teach creativity.

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00:28:11,060 --> 00:28:15,620

I talked about how it's useful, particularly in the early stages of projects, and it can

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00:28:15,620 --> 00:28:17,140

also develop engagement.

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00:28:17,140 --> 00:28:21,460

I then talked about common myths about creativity, and these are very important because they

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00:28:21,460 --> 00:28:26,420

can help us to counter them and to teach students how creativity actually works, how innovation

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00:28:26,420 --> 00:28:27,140

actually works.

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00:28:28,740 --> 00:28:34,340

I talked about teaching environment, and the main point here was developing a non-judgmental

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00:28:34,340 --> 00:28:40,500

space, which is necessary for the development of innovation and necessary for intrinsic

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00:28:40,500 --> 00:28:42,980

motivation, which is the key to creativity.

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00:28:43,700 --> 00:28:46,180

I talked about how this starts from day one in education.

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00:28:46,180 --> 00:28:48,020

The smallest things we say are rhetoric.

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00:28:49,220 --> 00:28:55,940

With students, it starts to develop extrinsic motivation, so that intrinsic

motivation disappears,

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00:28:55,940 --> 00:28:57,220

which kills creativity.

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00:28:58,660 --> 00:29:00,340

I then talked about challenges and solutions.

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00:29:01,140 --> 00:29:06,660

Teaching approach, if we think of ourselves as game teachers or creative teachers or not,

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00:29:06,660 --> 00:29:11,220

and I talked about how, in fact, you can frame this, and I often do, as a very serious technical

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00:29:11,220 --> 00:29:14,100

activity where we're learning something very pragmatically useful.

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00:29:14,660 --> 00:29:22,740

I talked about using the term serious play to open up this idea of playfulness, but playfulness

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00:29:22,740 --> 00:29:29,460

as a technique, as divergent thinking, as opposed to just playing around, quote, like

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00:29:29,460 --> 00:29:30,100

a kid.

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00:29:30,820 --> 00:29:34,260

Using that term with students, I don't use divergent thinking, but serious play is something

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00:29:34,260 --> 00:29:39,300

you can use and say, okay, we're going to use serious play in this activity to develop

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00:29:39,300 --> 00:29:40,180

these ideas.

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00:29:40,180 --> 00:29:44,420

Finally, I talked about some of the background of the surrealists in history, but really

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00:29:44,420 --> 00:29:51,940

just to say that this is a method that is democratic in its goals and egalitarian and

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00:29:51,940 --> 00:29:55,940

tries to undo the hierarchy of literature and reading.

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00:29:56,500 --> 00:29:59,860

Mainly, it's fine to undo hierarchies.

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00:29:59,860 --> 00:30:01,220

I'm not trying to start a revolution.

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00:30:01,220 --> 00:30:06,820

The main goal here is that it's more effective in creating innovation and helping open a

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00:30:06,820 --> 00:30:11,620

space where students and ourselves have the confidence to bring our voices to the table.

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00:30:12,340 --> 00:30:13,780

That's podcast one.

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00:30:13,780 --> 00:30:18,420

I hope that this was interesting, and I know it was very introductory, but in the next

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00:30:18,420 --> 00:30:23,140

podcast, we'll dig into how to train these things in ourselves and students.

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00:30:23,140 --> 00:30:33,860

I look forward to that conversation.