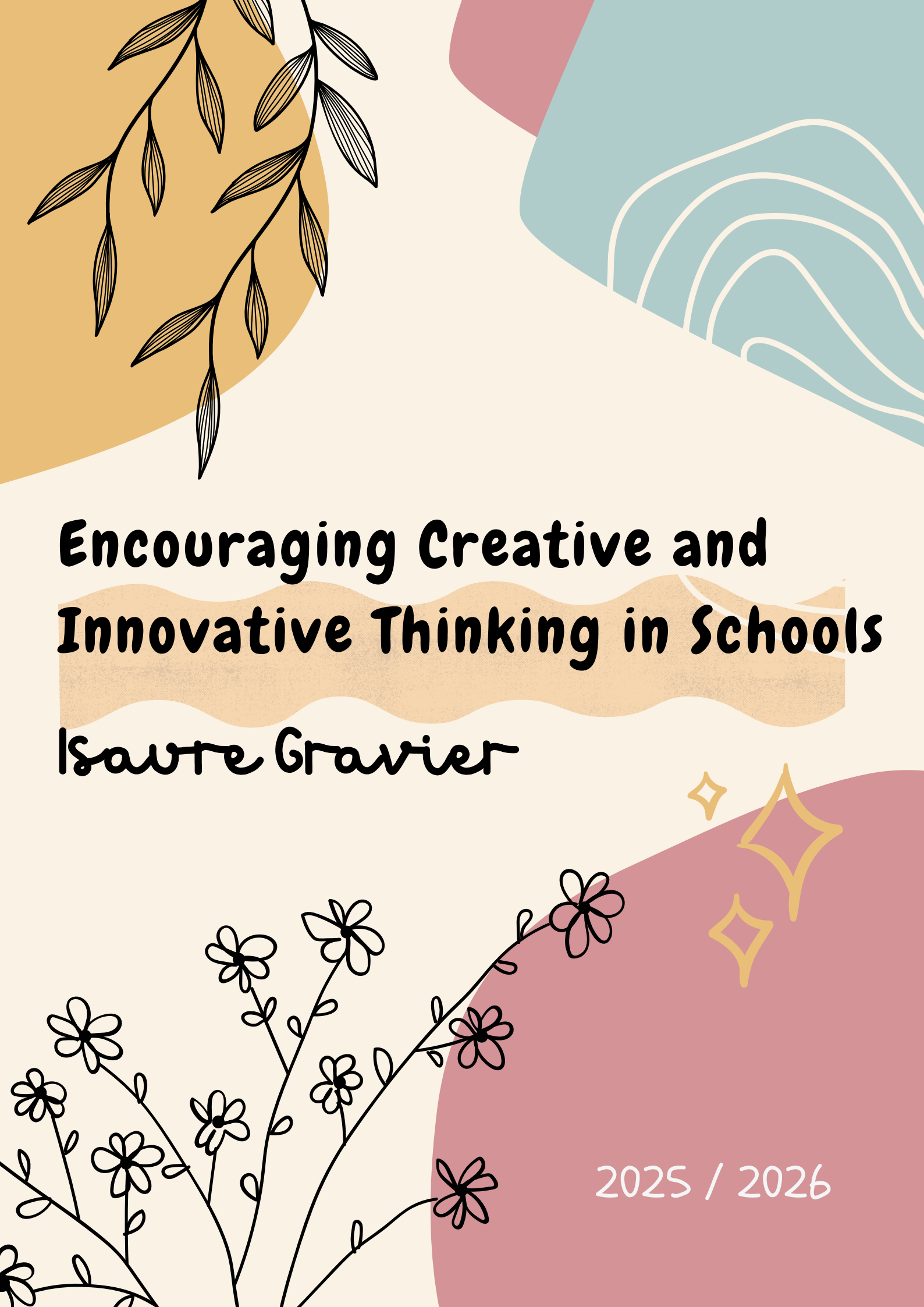
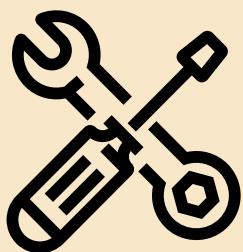




Encouraging Creative and Innovative Thinking in Schools

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2025 / 2026



Skills Builder

HOW SKILLS BUILDER WEBSITE CAN BE USEFUL

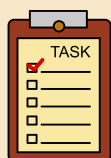


CREATIVITY AS A LEARNABLE AND PROGRESSIVE SKILL



The Skills Builder Creativity framework presents creativity as a learnable and progressively developed skill. By breaking creative thinking into 16 structured steps, it guides students from imagining possibilities to refining and implementing innovative solutions. This progression ensures that creativity is not perceived as an innate talent reserved for a few, but as a set of skills that can be nurtured and observed.

The initial steps focus on generating ideas, asking questions, and exploring alternatives. These activities develop curiosity and confidence in young learners, fostering a mindset that encourages experimentation. As students move to intermediate steps, they are guided to combine ideas, seek feedback, and iterate on their concepts. The advanced steps emphasize evaluating ideas, taking creative risks, and applying solutions in real contexts. This structure allows teachers to map student development and provide targeted guidance, making creativity tangible and measurable in the classroom.



CLEAR CRITERIA AND SHARED LANGUAGE

A key advantage of the framework is its clear criteria and shared vocabulary for creativity. Each of the 16 steps is associated with observable behaviours, such as generating multiple ideas, adapting solutions, responding to feedback, and refining concepts. This enables teachers to provide specific, actionable feedback and helps students recognize and articulate their own creative processes.

Using a shared language also fosters reflective practice. Students can self-assess their progression through the steps or evaluate peers in a structured way. For example, a teacher might note: "You are practising Step 6 by combining ideas from different sources," making feedback concrete. This clarity encourages a classroom culture where creativity is discussed, celebrated, and continuously developed.

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS ACROSS SUBJECTS



The Skills Builder creativity steps are versatile and can be applied across disciplines. Creativity is not limited to art or music; it can be embedded in mathematics, science, languages, and humanities. Teachers can design activities that encourage brainstorming, problem-solving, experimentation, and collaborative thinking, aligned with specific creativity steps.

As a teacher, I could use these steps to plan differentiated lessons that meet students at their current skill level. For instance, younger learners might focus on idea generation, while older students could work on refining and testing solutions. By integrating these steps into project-based or inquiry-based learning, creativity becomes a normal and measurable part of the curriculum, not just an occasional activity.



SUPPORTING INNOVATION, RISK-TAKING, AND RESILIENCE

Later steps of the framework emphasize innovation, risk-taking, and resilience. Students are encouraged to test ideas, adapt after failure, and refine their solutions. This approach normalizes experimentation and positions mistakes as opportunities for growth, cultivating a growth mindset.

In practice, this helps students develop critical 21st-century skills: adaptability, problem-solving, and reflective thinking. Teachers can model these behaviours, creating a classroom environment where students feel confident exploring unconventional solutions. Over time, students learn that taking risks and iterating ideas are central to creative success, preparing them for challenges beyond school.

LONG-TERM IMPACT AND TEACHER ROLE



The Skills Builder framework equips teachers with a structured methodology to cultivate creativity in all students. By tracking progress through the 16 steps, teachers can support learners' development over time, encourage self-reflection, and celebrate creative achievements. This systematic approach also allows schools to embed creativity into wider educational goals, ensuring that innovation and problem-solving become part of students' everyday experiences.

As a teacher, I could use this framework to foster not only academic learning but also lifelong creative habits. By modelling creativity, providing scaffolding, and designing lessons aligned with the framework, I can nurture students who are confident, adaptable, and capable of innovative thinking.

HOW CAN I USE IT

1. IMAGINING

The first step, imagining, is essential for developing creative thinking in schools because it encourages students to explore possibilities beyond what already exists. This step supports open-mindedness and curiosity. As a teacher, I could encourage imagining by asking open-ended questions and allowing students to visualise alternative outcomes without fear of being wrong.

2. SHARING IMAGINATION

Sharing imagination helps students externalise their ideas and move from individual creativity to collaborative thinking. This step is useful because innovation often emerges through dialogue. In the classroom, I could create safe spaces where students feel confident sharing imaginative ideas, such as group discussions or brainstorming sessions.

3. EXPRESSING IMAGINATION

Expressing imagination clearly is crucial for making creative ideas understandable to others. This step develops communication skills alongside creativity. As a teacher, I could encourage students to express ideas through different formats such as drawings, storytelling, or presentations.

4. GENERATING IDEAS

Generating multiple ideas supports divergent thinking, a key aspect of creativity. This step helps students avoid fixating on a single solution. I could use structured brainstorming activities to help students practise producing a wide range of ideas before selecting one. I could support this by encouraging alternative approaches when initial ideas do not work.

6. COMBINING CONCEPTS

Combining concepts from different areas supports innovation by encouraging connections between ideas. This step is particularly valuable in cross-curricular learning. As a teacher, I could design tasks that require students to merge knowledge from different subjects.

7. IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

Identifying opportunities helps students recognise situations where creativity can be applied. This step supports problem-solving and initiative. In the classroom, I could encourage students to view challenges as opportunities for creative solutions.

8. DEFINING SUCCESS

Defining success creatively helps students understand that success is not always linked to a single correct answer. This step promotes flexible goals and reflection. As a teacher, I could involve students in setting success criteria for creative tasks.

9. FLEXIBLE THINKING

Flexible thinking allows students to adapt when ideas change or fail. This step is essential for resilience and innovation. I could support this by encouraging alternative approaches when initial ideas do not work.

10. REFLECTING CRITICALLY

Reflecting critically helps students evaluate their creative process and outcomes. This step supports metacognition and continuous improvement. In practice, I could integrate reflection activities such as learning journals or self-assessment.

HOW CAN I USE IT

11. SEEKING PERSPECTIVES

Seeking perspectives broadens students' understanding and encourages inclusive thinking. This step shows that creativity benefits from diverse viewpoints. I could use peer feedback or group work to expose students to different perspectives.

12. PROTOTYPING

Prototyping encourages students to test ideas in practice rather than keeping them abstract. This step is crucial for innovation. As a teacher, I could design activities where students create models, drafts, or experiments.

13. INCUBATING IDEAS

Incubating ideas recognises that creativity often needs time. This step helps students understand the value of reflection and patience. I could allow time between idea generation and final production to support deeper thinking.

14. USING CURIOSITY

Using curiosity motivates students to explore and learn independently. This step supports engagement and intrinsic motivation. I could nurture curiosity by allowing students to ask questions and pursue topics of interest.

15. FACILITATING CREATIVITY

Facilitating creativity focuses on creating environments where creativity can flourish. This step highlights the teacher's role as a guide rather than a controller. I could support creativity by encouraging experimentation and reducing fear of mistakes.

16. CHAMPIONING CREATIVITY

Championing creativity emphasises the importance of valuing and promoting creative thinking within the school culture. This final step supports long-term innovation. As a teacher, I could model creative behaviour and recognise creative efforts across subjects.

SELF REFLECTION

1. IMAGINING

I consider myself as a creative person, but my creativity does not appear automatically in every situation. Imagining possibilities comes more easily when I feel safe and inspired. When I allow myself time and freedom, I can imagine alternative outcomes and new ideas, but under pressure, this skill becomes less spontaneous.

2. SHARING IMAGINATION

Sharing my imagination with others is something I still find challenging. I often keep ideas to myself until they feel “good enough”. I am aware that this limits my creative growth, and I am gradually learning that sharing early ideas is part of the creative process.

3. EXPRESSING IMAGINATION

Expressing imagination clearly is a skill I am developing. I sometimes struggle to put abstract ideas into words or visuals, but practice during this course has helped me communicate my thoughts more confidently.

4. GENERATING IDEAS

Generating ideas is one of my stronger creative skills. I enjoy brainstorming and thinking of multiple possibilities. However, I sometimes stop too early, doubting the value of my ideas before fully exploring them.

5. SUGGESTING IMPROVEMENTS

Suggesting improvements feels more comfortable than creating something entirely new. I am often able to analyse existing ideas and think of ways to make them better, which has helped me see creativity as improvement, not only invention.

6. COMBINING CONCEPTS

Combining concepts is a skill I enjoy, especially when ideas come from different fields. This process feels natural to me and helps me feel more confident in my creative abilities.

7. IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

Identifying opportunities for creativity does not always come easily. In highly structured tasks, I sometimes struggle to see where creativity fits. However, I am learning to actively look for spaces where creative thinking is possible.

8. DEFINING SUCCESS

Defining success creatively has been challenging for me. I often associate success with correctness rather than exploration. This course has helped me rethink success as progress, learning, and reflection.

9. FLEXIBLE THINKING

Flexible thinking is something I am developing gradually. When plans change, I initially feel uncomfortable, but I am learning that adaptability is essential for creativity and innovation.

10. REFLECTING CRITICALLY

Reflecting critically on my creative work is one of my strengths. I am able to identify what works and what needs improvement, which helps me grow even when creativity feels difficult.

11. SEEKING PERSPECTIVES

Seeking perspectives from others is helpful for my creative development, even though it can feel challenging. Hearing different viewpoints helps me see my ideas more clearly and improve them.

SELF REFLECTION

12. PROTOTYPING

Prototyping remains one of my weaker areas. Testing unfinished ideas makes me feel vulnerable. However, I understand that this step is necessary to move from ideas to innovation.

13. INCUBATING IDEAS

Incubating ideas suits my creative style. I often need time to reflect before ideas fully develop. Allowing this space helps me feel more confident in my creative decisions.

14. USING CURIOSITY

Curiosity supports my creativity, but it fluctuates depending on context. When I am interested and motivated, my creativity increases significantly, which shows me how important engagement is for my creative process.

15. FACILITATING CREATIVITY

Facilitating creativity in others is something I want to learn. I may not always feel highly creative myself, but I believe I can support creativity by encouraging, listening, and creating safe environments.

16. CHAMPIONING CREATIVITY

Championing creativity is a goal rather than a current reality for me. I want to become someone who values creativity openly and helps others develop it, even while continuing to work on my own creative confidence.