



ENCOURAGING CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE THINKING IN SCHOOLS

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A. Evaluate how Skills Builder website can be useful for teachers concerning encouraging and innovative thinking in schools.

The Skills Builder website can be an invaluable resource for teachers aiming to foster innovative and creative thinking in schools. It provides structured guidance and practical tools that go beyond traditional teaching methods, helping students develop essential skills for problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptability. Importantly, it shows that creativity is a trainable skill, not an innate talent, and can be nurtured through deliberate practice, structured activities, and reflection.

By emphasizing imagination, the platform encourages teachers to guide students in exploring multiple solutions, considering alternative approaches, and visualizing “what if” scenarios. Imagination is not limited to artistic expression; rather, it plays a central role in everyday learning and creative thinking. For example, students could use storytelling to propose solutions to social challenges or visualize scientific experiments in new ways, which helps build confidence and adaptability.

Sharing imaginative ideas is equally important, and the Skills Builder framework supports teachers in fostering collaboration. By describing their thoughts clearly and providing examples, students can help others understand their ideas, receive feedback, and collectively enhance concepts. This collaborative approach encourages teamwork and cultivates a culture of innovation within the classroom. Expressing ideas in multiple ways, such as through role-play, visual arts, or digital media, ensures that different learning styles are accommodated and that students communicate their concepts effectively.

Generating ideas is another key component of creative thinking, and the platform offers strategies to encourage both individual and group brainstorming. Students are guided to explore a variety of possibilities, refine initial concepts, and suggest improvements, developing the ability to make small adjustments that can lead to significant outcomes. Combining concepts from different areas can stimulate innovation and lead to practical and imaginative solutions. Teachers can apply these techniques to everyday classroom routines, projects, or larger school initiatives, promoting a mindset of continuous improvement and exploration.

In practical terms, the Skills Builder framework can be embedded within everyday classroom practice through approaches such as project-based learning. For instance, students could be asked to design a solution to an environmental problem in their local community. By using imagination and idea generation steps, they would brainstorm multiple solutions, combine ideas from science and social studies, and prototype their proposals through models or digital presentations. Throughout the process, teachers could observe and assess creative behaviours such as collaboration, flexible thinking,

and responsiveness to feedback, making creativity visible, intentional, and meaningful rather than incidental.

Setting clear success criteria helps students focus on meaningful outcomes while leaving room for creativity. Flexible thinking, encouraged by the Skills Builder approach, allows students to question assumptions, challenge the status quo, and discover new solutions. Critical reflection further enhances this process by encouraging students to evaluate ideas constructively, identify strengths and weaknesses, and act on insights. Seeking diverse perspectives ensures that solutions are inclusive, considering multiple viewpoints and experiences, which contributes to more well-rounded and innovative results.

The Skills Builder website also highlights prototyping and experimentation as essential parts of the creative process. Students can test multiple approaches through models, simulations, or role-play, refining their ideas based on feedback. Incubating ideas by stepping away from them for a period fosters unexpected connections and fresh insights. Curiosity underpins all of these processes, motivating students to explore unfamiliar concepts, ask meaningful questions, and approach challenges with an open mind.

Collective creativity is another focus of the platform, showing how structured group work can harness diverse skills and experiences. Teachers can guide students to refine ideas collaboratively, using discussion, testing, and feedback to improve solutions. Finally, championing creativity ensures that students feel supported, inspired, and confident to explore new ideas without fear of failure. By creating a culture where creative thinking is valued and nurtured, teachers can help students develop skills that will benefit them far beyond the classroom.

In addition to offering strategies to develop creativity and innovation, the Skills Builder framework also provides clear guidance on how these skills can be assessed, reinforcing the idea that creativity is not only teachable but also observable and measurable through formative approaches. Assessment is understood as an ongoing process that values reflection, evidence, and real classroom practice rather than a single final product.

One of the key assessment tools promoted by the framework is individual self-reflection. Through guided reflective questions, students are encouraged to think critically about their own creative development. For example, they may reflect on what it means to champion creativity and innovation, why fostering a creative culture is beneficial for a group, or how they have contributed to building such a culture in practice. This reflective process helps learners develop metacognitive awareness and take ownership of their learning.

Alongside self-reflection, the Skills Builder approach emphasizes teacher observation as a source of meaningful evidence. Teachers are encouraged to look for observable behaviours that demonstrate creativity in action, such as a student's ability to support others in generating ideas, collaborate effectively within a group, combine concepts from different disciplines, or respond constructively to feedback. These observation cues allow creativity to be assessed authentically within everyday classroom activities.

The framework also highlights the importance of collecting varied forms of evidence. This can include students' reflective responses, examples of ideas created by combining elements from different concepts, iterative improvements to projects, or feedback from peers and teachers. Such evidence captures creativity as a dynamic process, showing how ideas evolve over time through experimentation, collaboration, and refinement.

Therefore, the Skills Builder website is an effective and practical tool for encouraging creative and innovative thinking in schools. Its clear structure, progressive skill steps, and emphasis on both creativity and assessment allow teachers to embed innovation meaningfully across the curriculum. By treating creativity as a trainable, observable, and assessable skill, Skills Builder empowers teachers to create learning environments where students feel confident to explore ideas, take risks, and develop innovative solutions. In the context of the 21st century, creativity is crucial not only for professional success but also for personal growth, adaptability, and the capacity to navigate an increasingly complex world.

B. describe where you are as a creative person now and where you would like to be.

Reflecting on my own creativity, I realise that I have always been a naturally creative person. From a young age, I enjoyed imagining stories, making connections between ideas, and expressing myself in original ways. I spent hours drawing, painting, inventing narratives, and I loved dancing and creating my own choreographies. Playing symbolic games and inventing imaginary worlds with friends allowed me to explore different perspectives while developing imagination, originality, and expressive skills. However, as I grew older, I gradually set creativity aside, focusing more on structure and academic performance. At school, I often felt frustrated when my drawings or creative projects did not match my vision, leading me to prioritize accuracy over exploration.

This course has helped me reconnect with my creative side and has encouraged me to reflect on how essential creativity is in education. As a future teacher, I now believe creativity should not be treated as an optional skill but as a core element of learning that supports problem-solving, communication, and emotional expression. I have come to embrace the idea that creativity is a developable competency rather than a fixed, innate talent. As Julie Burstein (2010) notes in *4 Lessons of Creativity*, “*Creativity grows out of everyday experiences, including the hard ones*”, showing that it can be cultivated through deliberate practice.

One activity that exemplified this was the Dixit-inspired exercise, where my partner described an image and I had to draw it based solely on her explanation. At first, I felt anxious about the outcome due to my perfectionism, but as I focused on interpreting ideas rather than achieving a perfect result, I learned to enjoy the process and felt proud of my creation. This highlighted how creativity grows when one is willing to let go of control and embrace experimentation, echoing Burstein’s point that “*every creative act is born from tension: between control and letting go.*”

Throughout the course, one of the skills I have improved most is idea generation. I learned to move beyond my first idea and value the process of producing many possibilities, even if some seem unrealistic at first. This approach reflects the Skills Builder framework’s emphasis on imagination, generating ideas, and combining concepts to innovate and solve problems. Activities such as questioning assumptions, visualising alternative scenarios, and relating abstract objects to personal experiences showed me that creativity can be trained by creating the right environment and intentionally practising these skills. Connecting this to Bloom’s taxonomy, I now see creativity as linked to higher-order thinking skills such as analysing, evaluating, and creating, rather than just remembering or understanding information.

I have also developed flexible thinking, critical reflection, and the ability to seek multiple perspectives. Challenging assumptions about objects, images, or situations has helped

me understand that solutions and interpretations are rarely fixed. Actively listening to others' ideas has enriched my own and reinforced the importance of collaboration, empathy, and inclusion; skills essential for working effectively in diverse classrooms. By practicing these skills, I am learning to champion creativity, as described in the Skills Builder Step 16: providing space, inspiration, and confidence for individuals to explore new ideas and contribute creatively.

Looking ahead, I want to continue developing my ability to incubate ideas, prototype multiple solutions, and nurture curiosity daily. Stepping away from an idea sometimes allows it to develop more fully in the background of the mind, leading to unexpected connections and insights. I also aim to strengthen my role as a facilitator of creativity, creating a classroom environment where students feel safe to experiment, express themselves, and take creative risks without fear of judgement. Therefore, at this stage, I see myself as a creative person who is consciously developing creativity through reflection and practice, and I aspire to become a teacher who actively champions creativity in the classroom.

Another aspect I particularly appreciated in this course is that it was highly practical rather than purely theoretical. Concepts such as divergent thinking and Bloom's taxonomy were always linked to hands-on activities. This approach allowed me to experience creativity directly and gave me many strategies I can apply in my future teaching practice. Activities based on imagination, questioning assumptions, and generating multiple ideas showed me how creativity can be embedded naturally into everyday lessons.

As Ken Robinson (2011) asserts, *"Creativity is as important in education as literacy"*. By consciously designing lessons that foster divergent thinking, imagination, and reflection through frameworks such as the Skills Builder steps, teachers can support both academic learning and the development of essential life skills. Ultimately, creativity emerges as a shared, dynamic process that can be trained, nurtured, and celebrated, forming a cornerstone of meaningful learning. As a future educator, I understand that fostering creativity is not a pedagogical luxury, but rather the most powerful tool for empowerment I can provide my students to navigate and transform an ever-evolving world.

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