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BE CREATIVE NOW: SEEKING CREATIVITY

By

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana, 2006

Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Abstract

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Be Creative Now: Seeking Creativity

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A self-guided framework for professional and personal creative development including a series of five lesson activities geared towards developing a personal concept of creativity, with links to creativity videos, inclusive design features, and an annotated bibliography. In addition to guiding self-study, this document could be expanded into a syllabus for an online course.

Be Creative Now: **Seeking Creativity**

A self-guided framework for professional and personal creative development including a series of five lesson activities geared towards developing a personal concept of creativity, with links to creativity videos, inclusive design features, and an annotated bibliography. In addition to guiding self-study, this document could be expanded into a syllabus for an online creativity course.

Sam Kulla


Master's Capstone Project

The University of Montana

Autumn, 2020

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Talking About Creativity

According to creativity researchers, there are countless definitions of the widely touted term. Everybody seems to know and agree that creativity is good, and that we could all benefit from being more creative, but there is little consensus on what creativity actually is. Popular definitions tend to include elements such as novelty, divergent thinking, the use of metaphor, and the creation of original meaning. Other definitions include multi-sensory engagement, the concept of the flow state, and of course, art. The list goes on.

As an abstract, human-created concept like intelligence, creativity may turn out to be whatever we make of it. Not only does this make it exceptionally hard to define, but it also makes the concept difficult to accurately measure or assess. What would the meaning be of a test that spit out a creativity score? Somehow this has never been a major problem, because as John Cleese writes in his recent book, *Creativity*, “...You *can* teach creativity. Or perhaps I should say, more accurately, you can teach people how to create circumstances where they will *become* creative.”

While it's a common tendency to draw a connection between creativity and artistic skill or performance, it should be made clear from the get-go that this isn't meant to be strictly an arts program. And for the most part, it isn't desk work either. While increase in creativity skills and confidence will hopefully have an impact on participants' performance on a variety of tasks, including their work (which may be at a desk), one of the core activities common throughout these lessons involves putting oneself up against new and often unfamiliar tasks with their whole body. It shouldn't be possible to simply sit down with a cup of coffee and click through these brief lessons. Each one is intended to require some time away from the computer actually doing something, hopefully something new and perhaps “creative”.



To keep creating, you have to be about change.

- *Miles Davis*

Outcomes

This self-guided course is intended to give participants a personal understanding of the term “creativity” and also to promote certain additional outcomes. These outcomes are based on current research, as well as on creative writing and videos on the topic, and are intentionally described in broad terms in the hopes of resonating with a diverse spectrum of abilities and interests. Some of the principal outcomes should be:

- Increased confidence to address new or unfamiliar tasks and challenges. Students should arrive at a place where the intimidation of trying something new is replaced by a willingness or eagerness to dive in and embrace the unknown.
- A normalization of the experience of encountering challenges, surprises, and unanticipated changes in work as well as life in general. Most of life is unscripted, but so often we are caught off guard by new information or situations, so a desensitization to change should be sought to make us more ready to work with dynamic situations.
- A sharpening of executive function as it pertains to creative tasks and the ability to manage time and personal energy in a way that leads to better and more fun results.
- A development of an improved sense of ability to achieve creative goals, and a clearer mission to grow and develop into an aspirational future self. This includes affirming our abilities as they exist, as well as affirming our predilections to sharpen and hone specific unique skills.
- An improved sense of the relationship between social engagement (community) and isolation (focus) in the creative flow. By learning the dynamics of what social time and focused work time contribute to the creative process, students should seek to strike a balance between the two in an intentional manner that provides inspiration, engagement, and opportunities for contemplation, reflection, introspection, and community feedback.
- Arriving one step closer to an arts-integrated way of living, even in ordinary tasks. By fostering a vision of life that allows life tasks to be undertaken with creative flourish, students may arrive at a place where the creative spirit guides them daily.
- Creation and fostering of a greater meaning in life. Through the use of metaphor and reflection, students should arrive at a point where previously mundane action can be interpreted in new ways that enrich the mysterious experience of living and provide foundations for more satisfying and dynamic visions of self, and community.

Guiding Questions

Inquiry is critical, so as you go through the lessons, try to hold a question or two in mind. Here's some examples intended to initiate creativity, but the student is encouraged to write their own guiding question.

1. What's the best definition of creativity for different contexts?
2. How can you invite the creative spirit into your life and work?
3. What changes could I enact through a creative outlook?
4. What does a metaphor posed by a creative act tell us about ourselves?
5. What am I actively creating?


The lessons are interpretive. First, we dance with ourselves. Then, we locate ourselves and learn about the surroundings. We adorn ourselves and shelter our bodies. Do art. Address our community.

The activities aren't going to be tested or assessed in any standardized manner, but are instead meant to produce reflection, introspection and motivation. According to Bruce Dixon and Will Richardson, authors of the e-book [7 Assessment Strategies for Schools of Modern Learning](#):

“Standardized testing dampens creativity and entrepreneurship and creates a culture that values a homogenized student body, and as such, it is counter-productive to creating a diverse workforce in which economies can thrive. They Simply Do not test skills that matter for innovation and success, such as working with people of other cultures or thinking with complexity about global challenges. They bear little, or no, relationship to what is happening in our world today.”

When Dixon and Richardson write about creating a diverse workforce where economies can thrive, they aren't just refuting creativity tests. They are driving home the point that creativity is critical to all aspects of human society and survival. With that in mind, an overarching guiding question might be simply, “What can I do to help that hasn't been done before?” Through the reflective wrap-ups at the end of each activity, students should take the opportunity to self-assess and contemplate their own performance and participation in a personal way.

Feedback also comes through the interaction with the community. These lessons are set up to be asynchronous independent study. Rather than instructor feedback or coaching, these activities are designed to inspire self and community feedback, through reflective log and journal



entries, and sharing of work with those around us. That being said, anybody who gets their hands on this course plan and documents proof of completing all (or any) of the lesson activities can send it to curiousoutpost@gmail.com with their postal address, and *may hopefully* receive a completion certificate in the mail within a few weeks.

Lesson 1 - It's a Dance

Goals

- Break the ice with movement and sound - for some, especially introverts, this is possibly the most challenging lesson when it comes to getting out of comfort zones and being loud. For everybody, it's an opportunity to be bold and confident. That kind of confidence and willingness to "go for it" will come in handy with the rest of the series.
- Recognize your power to comfortably say yes and no to life's choices. By practicing these words, gestures, signs and even body language, with no anchor to real decisions but instead in an arbitrary and playful way, we open the door to be more sure of honestly asserting our choices and creative decisions when real questions are asked of us.
- Find a way to put it out there like you haven't done before. Novelty is one of the key ingredients of the slippery concept called creativity, across multiple definitions.
- Play a part, project an idea. For the purposes of the lessons in this short series, this initial activity could be used as an opportunity to think of the core intent you'd like to thread throughout the rest of the lessons. The idea doesn't have to be super explicit or shared, but should be the type of thing you can hold in your mind's eye with the same level of precision as you might recall a dream. It could be a color, a key signature, or a feeling, just as easily as bullet-pointed ideas explained in text.
- Be prepared and empowered not only to set firm boundaries with confidence, but also to fully embrace creative choices according to your own heartfelt intentions.

Materials & Conditions

- Floor space - You'll need an open area to spread out and move your body. It doesn't have to be a huge space, but it should be enough room for one person to extend their arms and not hit anything.
- Audio privacy - for the sake of providing a comfortable environment to experiment with your own voice and not feel awkward about it, try to schedule this lesson for a time when you'll be alone. This way you can be free to use words, sounds, and volume levels that won't disturb anybody or cause you to feel self-conscious about being heard.
- Some kind of way to record your thoughts. This could be a journal with a pen or keyboard, a digital audio / video recording device, a sketchbook, or even a blog. Whatever it is, it should be the type of medium that can hold and return information to some degree of accuracy.

Activity: Dancing Alone

Time required: 15 minutes

To do this activity, you might like some music on. If you have your own music already to go, either from a radio, home stereo, or streaming service, put something on. If you don't, search for something along the lines of "public domain music tracks" and find a site like <https://www.freemusicpublicdomain.com/>. Scroll through and explore for a minute and feel free to take the time to pick a track you are OK with.

Note: If the following brief activity feels difficult, take the time to change your soundscape by adding or subtracting white noise from a fan or synthesizer, or even foot-tapping, humming or singing your own tune as a bird would do in the forest. If you prefer or require silence that's cool too: Try a visual metronome or blinking light, or the second hand of an analog clock. Making choices about your environment like this are as important as what comes next.

Once you have the audio for your environment how you want it, move away from your desk and start to move your body, dancing or just swaying. Maybe you only tap a foot or tap a finger, or simply dart your gaze to the beat. Get comfortable with the rhythm you make with your body.

Consider an action, such as head-shaking or finger-wagging, that can mean "no", and practice the action while you continue to dance. Now do the same thing for "yes", and decide upon an action such as nodding or thumbs-up, that goes along with it. Practice that simple yes sign a few times while you think "yes".

Take a moment and re-approach your device to search for "closed question" or "yes/no question" online, or just go to <https://www.lawlessenglish.com/learn-english/grammar/questions-yes-no/> and ask yourself a dozen of the questions out loud. Each time, as you dance, answer "no" to the first group of questions, and make the gesture you decided upon. Hopefully, the questions are obscure or neutral enough you won't find personal significance in the answer. If you identify or notice meaning in a question in relation to your life, skip that one for now.

Now change to saying "yes" to the next random series of questions, and make the gesture. Even if the questions are absurd, answer in the affirmative and try to do so with a degree of believability or convincingness, as an actor in a script. Again, if any of the questions resonate or feel too personal, just skip them and try to aim for questions that mean nothing to you.

Note: This is set up as a solo activity, but could be easily adapted for pairs or small groups over video conferencing. If you are alone, and you can't do video chat, experiment with the use of a mirror. Maybe even do a little "me dance" where you dance and point at yourself to the beat. If

you are in a group, take turns with everybody pointing and paying positive attention to one person at a time. Give everybody a chance to be the focus in an affirming gesture.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Features¹

- **Engagement** - Self-assessment and reflection at the beginning of a project offer the opportunity to internalize and integrate the meaning of their activity, and remember it later on. The dance is intended to impart a sense of autonomy and control as well. Participants can engage on any meaningful level, through a variety of methods.
- **Representation** - Meaning is imparted through movement, signals and voice. Language and symbols work in tandem to appeal to auditory and visual attention. Generalization and comprehension of intent is suggested.
- **Expression** - Through physical action, we ask ourselves our own personal version of the guiding questions. Something as simple as signalling with the eyes can carry a lot of weight. The dance is meant to induce a self-conscious and self-aware state but not feel uncomfortable, so participants can and should adapt their interpretation to a personalized degree.

Creative Connections

I'm not the most comfortable actor or dancer, but I knew I had to do some kind of performance for one of my videos. Something about Shakespeare struck me as safe, as if by interpreting a scene of his I could anchor myself in history through participation in tradition. An important aspect of creativity is the ability for autonomy, so I went out into the forest far from town, where nobody would witness the monologue. In the time Shakespeare lived, you would call where we went "the green world," but this time it was brown. Or you could call it "the liberties." I didn't have the monologue memorized, so I decided to do it in cuts that I could edit together later. I enlisted the help of my friend Erik to film the ordeal, and selected some public domain music to accompany the video when I edited it.

Be Creative Now Video: [Shakespeare in the Forest](#) - The rock stack I make in this video while I recite the lines could be called a cairn, especially if it were used to blaze a trail. It took a few tries to get the stones to balance and not fall down, the same way many creative projects require iteration to get right. Shakespeare plays are even an expression of this, in the sense that the lines have been interpreted and re-interpreted so many times.

¹ <http://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>



Wrap Up: Defining Creativity for Yourself

Time Required: 15-20 Minutes

Pick a number between 1 and 22, or use [this random number generator](#). Go to the source with the same number in the Annotated Bibliography and read the blurb about creativity. Consider how the ideas it contains resonate or contradict with your own preexisting definition of creativity, and ask yourself: “Do I agree with this?” Record your answer, and a brief explanation, privately. In doing this, try to draw a connection to the dream from the beginning. Set an intention!

Key takeaway: Yes & No are the ABCs of creativity. (There are more answers to choose from for some questions too!) Set parameters (boundaries) and make intentional choices. While there’s no wrong way to be creative, try to do *whatever* you do for a conscious reason.

Lesson 2 - Earth Drawing

Goals

- Understand maps as a simplification of reality - Maps always contain less information about the world they represent than the world itself contains, but different kinds of information can be made to stand out. Most people are used to seeing traffic maps these days, and roads are foundational in our mental picture of the world. People say what street they live on, or off what highway. What other elements do we use to describe places? In areas with fewer roads, you might say you live on the side or a certain mountain, or along a stream.
- Consider our movement over time - for a moment, visualize the path you took to wherever you are, from wherever you were last. How does it look? How did you define your start and end points? Were you last in the kitchen, or last in another town? I had a car once with an analog clock mounted flat on the instrument panel, and I used to imagine the trail the second hand made through space as I drove. Consider the path the planets make around the sun, which is itself said to be orbiting something even larger. Helices within helices are drawn across the cosmos at all scales. What shape do the paths you travel make, and where do they tend to intersect most often? What do you know about the places your track never crosses?
- Make a design on a map - gain the skills to record a digital track on one of a variety of mapping apps, or through the use of manual cartography tools. Know how to read and share the map.
- Have the track design mean something - Assign figurative, literal, or any other form of meaning to the route you create. It's one thing to analyze our natural path but when we focus on the idea of our track as a line, we can express things through movement.

Materials & Conditions

Shoes, fins, wheels, or wings - A mode of transportation. Bicycles are popular but not the only option - some earth artists even make maps by swimming. You should choose a mode that fits you, and your terrain!

A device to record your track. Cell phones with tracker apps are the go-to, but this can be done with tablets, hand-held gps, marine navigation systems, and even paper maps with highlighters or markers. I once highlighted an old road atlas I found with all the routes I'd driven in the past, and learned a lot about my own travel paths by looking at the lines.

Activity: Earth Drawing

Time needed: at least an hour

Take some time to think about what you want to make for your earth drawing. You might pick an image or a word that relates to the intention you set in the previous lesson, or you might go a totally different direction here. A good way to think about options is to tear out the maps from your local phone book and trace a bunch of options into the roads and streets around you. If you're planning to swim or fly your design, or do something cross-country however, this might not be helpful. Note: If you don't have a phone book you can take screenshots of maps from any navigation app on your phone and trace over them with a drawing app or photo editor.

Note: I prefer paper maps over digital for planning, since they're a little easier to reference and grab when you are actually traveling the route. You could even print maps from a computer to draw on as you consider your options. Once you have an idea, try to fit it to the map best you can. If it doesn't fit, either draw something else or go somewhere else.

As you make your track, pay attention to your movement as you would if you were holding a paintbrush, a marker, or a pen. Not like a pencil however, because it's hard to erase your steps once they have been recorded. If you want sharp edges, make sharp turns. If you want rounded corners, make wide turns. Hold a mental image of the shape you are making, and notice if that changes your sense of orientation. Are there places that don't match the plan on your map? You'll have to figure those out on the fly, so try not to cause trouble with any ad hoc deviations to the course. And of course, if you are on a road or trail, watch out for traffic.

Be sure to stop tracking when your map is complete, and save an image of your route. This is one of the only ways it can be seen.

Note: Different apps make your track in different colors, and have options for different background maps, so look into a few different trackers until you find one that has the colors and map features you like best. Here's a few options:

- [Strava](#) is the mainstream option, which produces a red track and has a lot of social networking features.
- [Geo Tracker](#) draws a blue line and appears to have been translated from Russian.
- [FitoTrack](#) produces a green path and is focused on privacy. The nature of your design might have an impact on the color you choose!

UDL Features

- **Physical Expression** is at the forefront of this activity due to the nature of navigation. People can move via a variety of modes of transport to create an unspecified genre of design, or inscription.
- **Symbolic Representation** is encouraged through the project, and the ability to plan and execute the map in a variety of colors and materials provides opportunities for students to make the version that is best for them. Our perception of our surroundings can also be altered through earth drawing activities.
- **Engagement** crosses from conceptual understanding to symbolic representation through physical activity, and self-regulation is emphasized through the planning and executive stages of the activity to a degree that may make a positive, memorable impression.

Creative Connections

Fitness trackers on GPS-smartphones may be a relatively new invention, but aerial visualization of a representational path or track in the mind's eye has been around for a long time. When ancient cultures, such as the Nazca people of Peru made [their famous designs](#) on the land that can only be seen from above, who, if anybody was up there to see them? While it's intriguing to imagine theories about ancient aliens as the intended viewers the designs, it's equally believable the Nazca made them only to be visualized in their mind's eye. Whatever their motivations may have been, something about human nature draws people to do similar things to this very day.

Strava is an app that was designed for athletes to share their routes in a social feed. A surprising number of users however quickly took to making "[Strava Art](#)", which is actually a real thing and it's awesome.

Be Creative Now Video: [Strava Art and The Nazca Lines](#) - This video came much more naturally than some of the others. My friend Theo and I set out to ride a larger-than-scale version of the Nazca Hummingbird, since it happened to fit into the streets near where I live. My house is just a couple blocks from what became the hummingbird's head, which is now how I have come to think of that spot every time I pass by. Something about doing an interpretation of a historic design felt like it connected our ambulation to the lives and visions of people of the past.



Wrap Up: Beyond Point A & Point B

Time needed: 30 minutes

Document the trip, and the meaning of the design - Prepare a log entry of sorts. Think in the tone of the captain of a ship or the leader of an expedition, and either write, film, or record the story of your earth drawing expedition. Go beyond telling the narrative details of how you chose your design and what you did to make it happen, but also write about things you may have contemplated or wondered while you did the project. Did making your design take you anywhere you'd never been before? How did using a map in a creative way and immersing yourself in the route change your vision of your surroundings? Did you feel different about moving about in public with a purpose other than commerce or recreation?

Key Takeaway: Consider your surroundings, and your place within them over time. To arrive at an intentional destination, you must first have a clear concept of where you are starting from. The path to your destination can be a work of art in and of itself, so travel it thoughtfully.

Lesson 3 - Trying On Creativity

Goals

- Contemplate the historical context of textiles in human society, from furs to e-textiles. It's easy to take it for granted that people wear clothing, but it's also worth noting that with a few isolated exceptions (such as hermit crabs), it's a unique trait of human beings to adorn our bodies.
- Consider the various purposes of textiles, garments, and even jewelry from utility to fashion and more. Taken to an extreme, there's the argument that iPhones and their wrist-banded cousins, the smart watches, are more accurately described as "jewelry that connects to the internet" than they can be considered "tools".
- Develop a self awareness of the way we appear or present in public, as well as in time. Our attire weaves a thread that binds us with our culture, and our time. People from various historical epochs have clothed themselves in the fibers of their times. Synthetics are one of the more common classes of fiber these days, but it hasn't always been so.
- Develop the ability to change one's appearance or adaptation for various environmental conditions.
- Through conscientious decision making in our attire and adornments, we can affect not only the way we are prepared / protected in the elements, but how we are regarded and treated in society.
- This form of creativity relies upon the self as the canvas. It provides skills to navigate and create intentional action.

Materials & Conditions

There are no specific materials for this activity, but instead a range of options. You will need some kind of material that can be used to create a piece designed to be worn on your body. The breadth of acceptable materials is such that you can perform this activity in a variety of regions and environments.

Examples of material that might be useful in this activity include, but certainly aren't limited to:

- Leather / fur
- Natural fiber cloth such as cotton, bamboo, or wool
- Synthetic cloth
- Plastic or poly sheeting
- Wire, tinfoil, tape, or cellophane

- Nylon, hemp or manilla rope/cord
- Seeds, nuts, boughs, fronds, or other whole natural elements
- Anything at all that can be made into something to be worn
- Optional: Needle, thread, pins, tape, velcro, rope, etc

Activity: Functional Wearable in Public

Time needed: An hour or two, maybe more, then a little longer

The first step is to consider what effect you hope to produce with your functional wearable garment. Is the function an environmental one, such as the way a raincoat protects you from the weather? Or is it more of a social function, designed to impact or influence the behavior of those around you? To begin, before sketching anything, choose a starting point by committing either to a function, a core material to be utilized, or even an historical tradition. For example:

- I want a cape that will make me stand out in a crowd.
- I have a nice piece of material I'd like to use, but how?
- When people see me, I want them to think _____.
- Tricorn hats are just outstanding, I must have one.

Once you have a basic place to start, take some time to sketch (or describe) your article, and do some research into the best way to make it, and consider what tools you might need. If you are using leather, for example, you might want to look into getting an awl to stitch it. And if you are using wire for a piece of jewelry, you might want a tiny pair of pliers. If the demands are too much, start with something simpler so that you can actually get it done in a reasonable amount of time and move on to the next step.

Note: Avoid choosing any cultural regalia that carries special significance. An obvious example would be not making Native American head-dresses unless you have that in your own cultural background. (Unless you're comfortable skirting this advice by making commentary like Jack Boyd did with his piece [Manifest Destiny](#), a full-size head-dress made of repurposed dollar bills, credit cards, and coins.) Also don't make anything that carries connotations or historical implications that might be in poor taste or perceptible as contrary to your intent, such as Nazi paraphernalia. When in doubt, head towards the futuristic, or the ancient. Gloves, scarves, hats, helmets, ankle bands, lights, beads, or the timeless classic, capes.

Take your time creating your piece. There's no rush, no deadline. Once you have it - and it can be as simple as a ring, an ascot or a sash, or as complicated as the imagination allows - it's time to head for the runway. In this case, some place you will be around other people. The point is to see how the thing you made to wear measures up in the real world, if it has any effect at all, so choose a public place to go and wear it. Depending on the social conditions, this could mean

going to the mall, walking down the street, or running an errand. If you have the time, you could go to two places: One familiar, and one new. Compare the way you feel in both of these types of spaces. Be seen, linger and observe as you conspicuously wear whatever you've crafted. Note or record these observations as you go.

UDL Features

- **Perception** is key in this activity, which focuses around accessing a present awareness of the effects our garments, textiles, and even jewelry influence our movement and activity throughout the social environment.
- **Sustaining effort and persistence** are required to create and execute the design and fabrication of the wearable that students choose for their public use. The wide array of acceptable materials and configurations provides opportunities for diverse engagement regardless of environmental and other constraints.
- **Expression** is facilitated and encouraged through the selection of project parameters, which allow for a multitude of tools and techniques to be used in creating the wearable. There's no limit to how far you can take the project, such as including a microcontroller with sensors and outputs tailored to specific purposes.

Creative Connections

Back in the day, I was once stuck in Dodge City, Kansas for a few months with some spare time, so I made an interactive light cloak. To be specific, I modified a pretty nice zip-up hoodie to include fiber-optic textile breast panels, a bunch of accessory LEDs down the arms and around the hood, and home-made mechanical touch/pressure sensors. Inside the chest, I stitched an Arduino Lilypad microcontroller, and then I wired all the sensors, transistors, resistors, LEDs and power supply using stainless steel thread. The thread was stiff, which made the end-knots of my circuits come untied, so I used clear nailpolish to seal them. The tails of these hardened steel knots, however, were super sharp and since they were all on the inside liner of the jacket, they made the whole piece into a hairshirt of sorts. I wore it to a couple events, and it was super fun the way the fabric changed colors depending where people pressed on the garment, but I gave it away to an artist who had a mannequin that didn't mind the scratchy sharp knots. That project was my first and only major foray into the world of e-textiles.

One beautiful evening years later, I decided to look the other way on the textile timeline and visit a friend in his loom yurt. Sometimes you have to take a break from "being creative now" to see how other people are expressing their creativity, then return to your own projects with a fresh perspective.

Be Creative Now Video: [Woven Reflections with Andrew Rizzo](#) - Rizzo's historical view of weaving throughout human societies provides a big-picture view of the intricate connection people have with their garments, and the fibers that go into the textiles. The immediacy of cloth in daily life, which today includes a lot of plastic and other synthetic fibers, illustrates not only our connectedness to the world, by necessity, but our ability to creatively bend it to our purposes. The metaphorical perspective afforded by weaving is especially poignant as we think about all the "threads" that make not only our own creative projects, but also our daily lives and routines. The rhythmic dance of the foot pedals and packing bar punctuate the message in a way that provides an opportunity to take a longer, steadier view on whatever we are doing each day.

Wrap Up: Your Power Suit

Time needed: 45 minutes - 1 hour

In your log, design your own power suit, from head to toe - you don't have to actually make it, so go wild and either record or film an enthusiastic description of the suit, write about it, or draw the attire and accessories. Think about what you would want the power suit to enable you to do, as well as how it should make you appear. Consider

- What environment is it for?
- Is it purely ornamental, or does it serve a purpose?

When you are done, pick one element from the suit that is the most important.. What would be different if you had a suit like the one you designed? Consider your observations from wearing your piece in public as you design your power suit.

Key Takeaway: The identity you project into the world has an impact on how events in your life will transpire, and how people will regard you. You have the option to create an identity that empowers and enables you.

Lesson 4 - Doing “Art”

Goals

- Acknowledge the implicit connection between “art” and creativity, as well as the limitations of this association. Through this, identify and feel out creative elements of the artistic process that can be applied in a more general “life” context.
- On the surface, this lesson should also at very least lead to the acquisition of some handy tricks and techniques for a specific chosen media or classical discipline, such as painting, clay sculpture, wood-block / stone carving, or even mosaic, just to name a few.
- Access the creative spirit, a fancy phrase that means something close to “Inspiration with a hint of Motivation”. Identify the process, form or medium that feels like the right mode of action to portray a feeling or idea, *or just something that your gut says you like*.
- Tap into legacy and archetypes. Ride that wave to your next destination and see how traditional historical forces, characters, and styles can amplify your current projects. You may find that you are able to do more than you could do alone through scaffolding yourself and your work in a legacy that extends both backwards *and* forwards in time.
- During the process, somewhere in the middle, find the opportunity to “flow” with the act of production. Let go and let the action take place naturally and without resistance or internal commentary, free of self-judgement or analytical analysis. The results of what you create are, in some ways, nowhere near as important as the ability to lose yourself in the moment of creation while the constraints of the material guide your work.
- Consider perspectives, proportions, and compositions, both technical and metaphorical. Whether producing 2D or 3D work, or even something else, contemplate the meaning suggested by the emphasis and arrangement of elements. The ability for creative interpretation of these afford the opportunity to introduce contextual individual meaning.
- **“Make something you care about.”** According to creativity theorist Eric Booth, this is one of the broadest definitions of “art” available. More important than the quality of what you produce is the chance to create something you feel a certain way about, ideally in a positive sense, but this even works if you create something that evokes a negative response.
- Question what “is and isn’t” art, and how that changes based on circumstance or context.

Materials & Conditions

Your materials will vary based on the type of art you decide to create. You might first want to consider the idea of splitting artforms into those that are additive, and those that are subtractive.

Additive art, like painting or drawing, is all about accumulating material (paint, ink, graphite, clay) until the piece looks how it's supposed to look. You start with the classic "blank canvass" and put the painting on top of it. Subtractive art is a whole different situation, where you begin with a piece of material such as a piece of stone, wood, ice, or even stamp rubber, and remove everything that isn't part of your piece. A classic example of this is the idea of a stone carver who looks at a rock, imagines a shape within it, and removes all the pieces of stone that aren't part of the shape. Additive art requires applicators such as brushes, pens, markers, etc. Subtractive art calls for removal tools such as chisels, files, knives, or even chainsaws. Your exact materials will depend on the art form you choose to work with.

More important than a list of what shape for brushes or what brand of chisels to get, you will need space and time. While these may not seem like "materials" they are critical! A dedicated table, room, alcove, or workbench that will not be disturbed is indispensable. You'll need a healthy dose of time as well. The time to do the initial work, and in the case of something like oil painting where the paint can take days or even weeks to dry, the time for your artwork to sit undisturbed for a while.


Beyond that, an internet connected device with enough data to stream some videos and music is required for the main activity below.

Activity - Follow a "How-To" Video

Time needed: Several hours a day, for several days

First, fixate on artists whose work you like. For me, this might be somebody from the past like [Titian](#), [Corot](#), [Diego Velasquez](#) or perhaps one of the "[Dutch Masters](#)". If that doesn't appeal to you, it's fine to focus on a contemporary, living painter like [Cathrin Machin](#) or [Noah Ptolemy](#). (If you're more interested in sculpture, then select [a sculptor](#).) Visit their website (if they have one), look at as much of their work as you can, and read about their life. Go down the rabbit hole, so to speak, and really spend at least an evening just viewing and considering their work, and asking yourself what you do and don't enjoy (or perhaps understand) about it, and why.

Note: Try not to focus on the technicality of their work or concern yourself with the question of how you would make something like it, but instead try to simply grasp *what* they are doing, and *how* they are conveying meaning. Most likely, the artist you fixate upon is really good at what they do and probably spent a long time practicing their skill, so don't worry if it's immediately obvious that the person you are interested in makes art that seems hard to make. For example, the sculptor [Richard Serra](#) works in giant steel, which is a pretty challenging thing to dive into! But the meaning of his work, and how it fits in the world, might be helpful for your own art.



Through observing and contemplating the work of the artist that interests you, you might learn something about approaching your own art that can be applied through a different medium. Think of the artist you are studying as a source of inspiration, as if they were shrunken down and sitting on your shoulder, suggesting a feeling rather than demanding specific action. Spend a few days (or as long as you need) considering their work and letting it permeate your thoughts before you head on to the next step.

Go online, either to YouTube or any other site of your choosing, and search for “how to” videos for different types of art projects. While [Bob Ross](#) is a fine place to start, there’s so much more out there and available than would be practical to list here. The sky's the limit, within reason. Try searching for something like “how to paint a sunset” or “how to sculpt a skull”. The sunset and the skull could be anything that interests you, what’s important is that you want to do the thing.

Through following along with a how-to video, we acknowledge that we may not be masters yet. At the same time, we get to walk a mile in the shoes of somebody proficient in their art. Your interpretation of whatever you are guided through doing is guaranteed to be unique and distinct from all the other versions.

Note: The important thing is that you choose a how-to video that is actually reasonably doable, and doesn’t require you to go out and buy a potting wheel, air compressor, or glass-blowing torch. Drawing videos (“how to draw the human body accurately”) require a much lower resource contribution, for example. Don’t choose anything where the technical details and materials are so intense they get in the way!

After you complete your how-to video project, whatever it is, take a photograph of it and send it to the person who made the video with a little thank you note. Not only might this gesture mean a lot to the creator of the video, but it gives you something to shoot for that will represent completion. Don’t expect them to write back or even acknowledge you, though of course they might, but instead plan to send the photo to hold yourself accountable for doing the thing. The idea that the finished product has somewhere to go not only pulls you forward through the execution phase, but also connects your action to somebody else, somewhere else.

UDL Features

Engagement is encouraged through a focus on identifying personal interest in selecting artists, art forms, and tutorial videos. Students are encouraged to make choices that take the activity in a direction that authentically appeals to them in a relevant and valuable manner.

Representation is emphasized through a reliance on perception, symbolic meaning, and through comprehension of the story of their focus artist as well as the selection of their how-to video. A

certain level of resourcefulness is required by the search activities, which are intended to yield personally relevant knowledge as well as generalizations about art and creativity in the world.

Expression is spurred through the interpretation of the how-to video, and students should be able to add their own individual style elements to whatever project they choose to complete. Through the availability of multiple modes of input and output, an understanding of the creative artistic process that supersedes isolated disciplines is encouraged.

Creative Connections

IF IT HANGS FROM THE WALL, it's a painting. If it rests on the floor, it's a sculpture. If it's very big or very small, it's conceptual. If it forms part of the wall, if it forms part of the floor, it's architecture. If you have to buy a ticket, it's modern. If you are already inside it and you have to pay to get out, it's more modern. If you can be inside it without paying, it's a trap. If it moves, it's outmoded. If you have to look up, it's religious. If you have to look down, it's realistic. If it's been sold, it's site-specific. If, in order to see it, you have to pass through a metal detector, it's public.

- Ben Lerner, [Angle of Yaw](#)

Lerner's poem, snarky and pretentious as it may be, hinges on the fact that art itself is a thing that comes across in a nuanced multitude of forms, genres, and modes. What you create in your life doesn't exist in a vacuum but instead takes shape through multiple levels of direct and indirect feedback from your community. The context that contains the work influences the work itself in a feedback loop, unless the artist does their work in a hidden cave. Understandably, we don't hear of many artists like that. To a variable degree, many creative artists have to be marketers too.

This isn't something that has just recently become true, but has been the case for centuries. In the middle ages, successful artists might find themselves lucky enough to have a royal patron who paid them to produce and maybe even gave them a castle to work in, but a far greater number had to live austere lives, or balance their time between their art and something else. Today, one of the ways artists market themselves is through how-to videos and tutorials.

Seeking engagement at this level, I selected a how-to video series focused on a particular technique I'd seen in some of my favorite historical artists' work. [The Creators' Toolbox](#) by Luke Lamar is a short video series that breaks the oil glaze technique down into key stages, and allows the participant to flow within each stage. Not only was I able to feel lower creative stress thanks to the detailed instructions in his calm, reflective narrative, but I was also able to actually produce something I felt proud of, which came out unique from the video demo painting.

Be Creative Now Video: [Alla Prima "Wet-on-Wet" Oil Painting](#) - As a boat guy, a frequent traveler to Santa Barbara, and a lifelong sunset aficionado, the subject the painting Lamar uses as his example really motivated me: A fleet of boats in Santa Barbara Harbor at sunset. I'm not sure I would have been as excited about painting something more remote, such a creek I had never swam in, or a beach I've never walked along. I sent Lamar a thank you note with a link to the painting video I made from his painting video, and he seemed gratified. I did art. Am I creative now? The act of painting the picture felt like creativity and when I finished I felt proud. I haven't painted since.

Wrap Up: Consider Art & Creativity

Time needed: 20 minutes

The wrap up here is a brief exercise when measured in time. But it's the type of thing that will hopefully stick with the student and roll around in their subconscious, surfacing occasionally to stare at you, disappearing again when it stares back. A lot of the research on creativity points to the importance of letting ideas marinate, so don't worry if you don't immediately feel you have something definitive or substantial to say. Using your log - be it written, digitally recorded, taped on a reel-to-reel deck, or even painted on the wall of a cave - set a timer for 15 minutes as you prepare an extemporaneous response to any or all of the following question:

- What's an art, what's a craft, and does it even matter? Are those the only two options?
- Where (and even who) are you when you are engrossed in "flow" of creative production?
- Who is art *for*, and what should they do with it?

Try not to stop writing or speaking until the timer goes off, no matter what is coming out, and resist the urge to edit your thoughts or second guess things as they move from your mind to your output modality of choice. When the timer goes off, put your log away and do something else.

Key Takeaway: Creativity isn't just for people who call themselves artists, but engaging with art can help us become more creative.

Lesson 5 - Creative Opportunity & Community

Goals

- Sell or trade objects or items in public - either one is fine. Most likely, the objects are something you either make or modify, but this is not 100% necessary. Selecting an intentional combination or class of pre-existing objects can work as well. There may be local rules that require permits for itinerant vending, and it's possible they could be expensive in your area, in which case trade only might be the way to go.
- Understand what makes creative items or arrangements more or less appealing - This involves paying attention to the reactions of people as they react to the items, reading their interest indirectly, and through conversation with people that stop.
- Question how public appeal interacts with our creativity. If the object on your trading blanket generates a certain response, try switching or altering it and seeing how the next person responds. Do you still care about the thing you made when you bend to the will of the passers by?
- Develop a community awareness through observation and engagement - As you observe and interact with people about the items on your blanket, try to form a mental picture of the community you are in. Notice what people have in common who visit your blanket, and what is unique about each of them. Tell yourself a story that addresses why this place is the way it is, and what kind of place it is.
- Consider opportunities or needs for creative projects that would appeal to the character you perceive of the community.

Materials & Conditions

- A blanket, sarong or canvas tarpaulin. Anything you can lay on the ground to display some items upon. Lacking a piece of material like this, you could get by without it if there's a wall to lean the items against, or even a shelf to set them upon. The advantage of having a cloth of some kind however is that it sends a universal signal that the items are available for some kind of exchange, and you can also quickly pick it up with the items in it and move when it's time to go.
- Objects, items, or articles to be set upon the blanket. The items could be almost anything for the sake of the goals of this activity, but certain types of items may be more fun than others. And they should be interesting. For example, packs of gum from a multipack *could* do the trick, but some simple hand made items like jewelry, sketches, painted

rocks, or even found objects might get better results in terms of engagement from passers by.

- If you plan to sell, rather than trade, do a quick search in your local government pages for any rules or permits for itinerant vendors. As a sole proprietor doing the activity just once, you could probably get by without a permit, but if they don't cost an arm and a leg it might be a good idea to get one just to be safe. (An easy way around all this could be to trade, rather than sell.)
- Optionally, you could bring a chair and even a table, both of which might be a good idea for some environments, not to mention an umbrella or small shade structure in case it's rainy or sunny. A musical instrument is never a bad idea either, and can even lead to busking if the action at the blanket is slow.
- Don't forget to bring water and snacks, and your notebook with a pen or pencil. Consider leaving your phone at home, if at all practical, or at least turning it off, so that the majority of your attention can be focused on the people and the setting around you.

Activity: Spread Out a Blanket

Time needed: A whole afternoon

Note: This activity may seem intimidating at first, but should be manageable if you break it into small pieces. Don't worry if you are making the right decision about every step, but try to move swiftly and confidently through them as you bear in mind the words of advice a friend once gave me when I complained of my own tendency to procrastinate and overthink a project: If you don't do *something*, you risk doing *nothing*. It's better to do something people don't understand than nothing at all. Sometimes the public isn't ready for what an artist creates for 100s of years, but if they don't do it, nothing happens at all about their work for a much longer time.

Consider this activity in four stages, most of which hinge upon a simple decision or choice:

1. **Items / Objects** - Often this boils down to a question of what's available. Improving free ordinary objects into something worthy of trade is the gold standard. Strategic display of banal consumer products like buttons, batteries, old camera parts. Old photo prints can be drawn upon in marker, sorted into rows by dominant color, or dealt at random like playing cards on the blanket, etc. It's best to avoid food, drink, or anything to be consumed, for health & safety.
2. **Blanket** - The blanket, sarong, cloth or alternative item you use to display your items should be thick enough, the right size, and of a material that won't get too dirty. Consider the pattern, will it make the items stand out or look bigger or smaller?
3. **Location** - On a hike up a side creek during a three-week Grand Canyon rafting trip, a friend and I walked a few miles in the blazing sun and laid out a red trading sarong on a

desert trail. Upon it we put literally everything we had in our pockets and packs, and waited for hikers. Several stopped, and everybody traded something. My best trade was with a Canadian hiker who gave me a metal whistle for something off my blanket, a good trade, amplified by the surprise of finding the trading blanket miles and miles down a desert trail. Choose a conspicuous place with people, where it's safe and comfortable to be for a while.

4. **Observations** - Once when I was much younger in Puerto Escondido, I decided to sit on the curb and low-key draw portraits in my sketchbook of different people, street performers, artisans, etc. on [the Audoquin, a popular place for that](#). As I was drawing a particular couple across the street who were selling handmade jewelry and doing circus arts, I must have looked pretty obvious because they saw me and invited me to sit with them. They showed me how they wove the manila or hemp cords around tropical seeds, and we ended up becoming good friends. As you observe the people around you, remember that you are being seen as well!

Consider arriving early or staying late. Layout your blanket in plain view, with the objects and items on it, and stay nearby. Experiment with sitting, standing, moving or playing an instrument while you wait. If nobody comes, move to a new spot. You might move several times or be in the same spot the whole time. After you feel that you've been there long enough that your observations and interactions are meaningful, you are done. Write or record them however you see fit, as thoroughly as possible, before leaving the location if possible.

Note: Don't be discouraged if nobody is interested in anything on your blanket. The important thing is your observations of the people and place. When it's time, count your money or snap a photo of what you got in trade, pick up your blanket and go!

UDL Features

Engagement - this activity takes shape in a series of choices that provide multiple opportunities for recruiting interest, and focuses heavily on community observations and reflection. In the attention paid to the specific objects and trading blanket, avenues for personalization abound.

Expression & Communication - By carefully selecting their materials, participants create unique trading experiences. Through the act of trading or selling, communication is structured in a predictable framework that allows for convivial community building.

Executive Function - This activity requires a significant effort in planning and follow through. Strategic, goal directed thinking is required to really pull it off to a meaningful degree.

Creative Connections

When we talk about the scope of creativity, it's not only artistic and even professional activities where the concept comes into play, but also in "play" itself: Recreation. *Alpinist* ran [a curious piece by Drew Thayer](#) in 2016 about a group of rock climber mountaineers who trekked for a month across remote terrain using a variety of creative modes of self-propelled transport. They of course hiked, but they also climbed, cross-country skied on home made wooden skis, then burned the skis on the beach before boating away in pack rafts, and produced thoughtful art along the way.

One of the expedition members is an old guide friend of mine, [Craig Muderlak](#), who drew the climbing route maps the expedition explored onto his own photography to accompany Thayer's article. He makes his living by selling his work, and also produces multimedia pieces including albums, films, and more. I got in touch and asked for a mini three-question email interview, and he agreed. Here's what he had to say:

1. How does monetization change your relationship with the work?

Monetization definitely changes my relationship with work because I have made intentional decisions to include elements in my work that I know are more marketable... The busier I get with commissions/selling work and in-turn have less time to do work that I want to do simply for arts' sake.

2. How does the meaning of your work change through selling it?

I'm not sure if the meaning of my work really changes when I sell it.... What I do consider is how once somebody sees my work, or purchases it specifically, that they have created their own meaning for the work. Much of the work I'm creating is for commissions, so I'm taking into consideration what the client wants. But usually, they want me to use my own judgement and entrust in me to create something with my own meaning.

3. What do you think about [the juxtaposition of crisis & opportunity](#), from an "art / creativity" standpoint?

I think that "crisis" does tend to create opportunity for artists - at least speaking for myself. It's not necessarily that I enjoy the crisis, nor do I feel motivated in the moment; but something about the intensity and struggle of the situation helps me let go and give into the moment. It rarely feels like "opportunity" in the moment of crisis, but in hindsight it may appear that way due to a newly acquired way of looking at things, creative accidents that lead to new ideas, or a prolific output of new creative work.

Be Creative Now Video: [Boosted Bread Yerba Mate Sourdough](#) - Looking at a context other than art, you can take creative opportunities in an unlimited number of directions. A friend who owned a tea company called asking if I had any ideas for how to use a bunch of surplus yerba mate he had on hand. The same day, somebody else offered me some sourdough bread starter. Combining them into caffeinated “boosted bread” seemed like a gold mine at first, and the owner of the tea company even took some loaves to sample at local grocery stores, but for whatever reason it never took off. Since that experiment however, I have continued to regularly bake for my family, though not again yet with the tea in the dough. I might make a few more boosted loaves for the holidays, perhaps to give as gifts.

Wrap Up: Your Trading Blanket

Time needed: One Hour

Responsive community thru creative trade

There are versions of creative trade that may not sound creative at first at all, at every scale, such as the stock market or foreign exchange trading, or the entire credit economy. And alongside all that, new forms of value, such as cryptocurrency, blue-chip art, and [other novel instruments of worth spring up throughout history like exotic wildflowers in the spring](#), ready to be plucked and exchanged. Like personal creativity, all trades at every scale come with an element of risk. But if life gives you lemons, the saying goes, make lemonade.

1. Write or record a short account of a time you made lemonade, so to speak. What obstacle or crisis did you encounter: Car breakdown? Natural disaster? Missed alarm clock? And how did you creatively adapt to make something good come of it?
2. When that’s done, make a list of things or services you think people in your community might want or need. Try to come up with at least ten or twenty ideas, no matter how outrageous, expensive, or impossible they seem, of products (including artwork) or services you could sell or trade. Write or record a brief description of each item on the list, including the price or trade value. If you live in the country or don’t have a community, then use the internet!

Work for 20 minutes each on both of the prompts above, then take a break or go for a walk for 20 minutes. On the walk, make a mental note of which item on your list - if any - you would really like to do, and start immediately, even if you won’t finish today.

Key Takeaway: Take stock of the opportunities for creativity that already exist around you, and use them to tell the story of your trading blanket.

Capstone Reflection

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Narrative

The project of creating this series of lessons on creativity came about through the suggestion of an old friend over dinner in Santa Barbara. A glass blower turned Wall Street tech entrepreneur, he met me for some enchiladas when I was passing through town. He lamented the rigors of his business, and expressed nostalgia for the arts.

He commented that people (and businesses) are most eager to seek advice or training in three main areas: Financial stuff; health & wellness; and creativity. In our current era, he claimed, people are especially hungry for guidance in creativity, in a broad sense that could be applied to their real daily lives, and that employers are also looking for more creative employees.

The idea of creativity education shined like a beacon of possibility. It resonated with me. Plus, the enchiladas were really good so I was feeling open to new ideas. I thought about his observation, which he even formulated in the shape of a specific idea about a creativity class that could be offered to anybody online.

It seemed like a fun idea so I did what any student of education does at a time like that: I started a creativity blog. Over the course of the spring, I made a handful of video posts - the [Be Creative Now](#) videos in the lessons - and posted them. These were fun, since people commented on them and engaged, so at least somebody was watching!

At the same time, I took a graduate class on Educational Research and focused my investigations into the academic study of creativity, especially in an online context. Approximately half of the articles in the Annotated Bibliography represent research I did as a part of that class, which had great forums where I was able to softball certain ideas that later developed into parts of this.

Over the pandemic summer, I let the project marinate and focused on cycling, 10 or 20 miles a day or more, and didn't think about "creativity" at all. Finally at the end of summer, I went on a

ride from Missoula to Lubrecht Experimental Forest and back as part of a volunteer road-kill survey being collected by [Adventure Scientists](#) (a totally creative business in and of itself). 43 miles round trip, stopping all the time to photograph animal remains and record locations along a busy 2-lane highway. After the ride I was sore for days, and looked at the creativity project again as I drank tea, sat on the floor, stretched and considered.

I knew I had this big project coming, and had made the creativity videos in the spring not fully sure how they would fit but knowing they'd come in handy, intending to have them somehow enrich the lessons. What it turned into is that the topics of the videos included in this project formed the suggestion for the activities at the core of each lesson. The videos are intentionally imperfect and not heavily edited. Instead they are rough and intended to reflect a spontaneous creative release rather than a planned and highly edited product. As such, they carry the unscripted creative intent that I would want present in whatever might later replace them. They were shot on an old phone, and edited on a ten year old computer, so they are full of imperfections in some ways analogous to the human spirit. A number of people asked how I got the weird subliminal glitch effect, and I confess I have no idea, it was not on purpose. Additional future videos could be done with newer equipment, and more planning, depending on how refined a creativity you wanted to represent.

What really set me on track was the serendipity of getting access to [MakeSPACE](#). Through a friend of a friend, I was able to log in and participate in the online creativity development platform, which inspired a lot of choices in creating this document. Reading articles from their sources, such as the Ross Anderson articles, led me in new directions that felt full of potential. The design of MakeSPACE itself is a work of art, bracketed in the context of a river journey with guides, rather than instructors, and it really spoke to me.

As a distraction, I simultaneously started taking classes on information theory from [The Santa Fe Institute's free Complexity Explorer](#) catalog. The math and logic heavy classes not only had a refreshing effect thanks to their distance from creativity research, but they also represented a nice model of how a trimmed down, minimal yet rich online course could take shape.

The final self-study guide format of this project came about to make it into a stand-alone piece that could be easily shared and understood. It's my hope it may lend itself to adaptation and expansion into an online mode teaching multiple people at once with improved opportunity for peer engagement through forums, Socratic exercises, and collaboration activities.

Through a synthesis of current academic research into teaching creativity and a collection of non-academic resources, this project led me to a new understanding of the power of abstraction to motivate real creative action.

Annotated Bibliography

1. Anderson R.C. (2020) Creative Development. In: Glăveanu V. (eds) The Palgrave Encyclopedia of the Possible. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98390-5_97-1

Anderson writes about the concept of framing creativity into specific domains, and envisioning lifetime creative development. Breaking down creative behaviors, thoughts, attitudes and beliefs, this paper calls out agency and the pursuit of possibility as key factors in creative growth, and hones in on the importance of societal participation in the crafting of our identity. According to Anderson: “Distinguished by the element of surprise, novelty, and potency, artistic and creative activism can seed new ideas about the world in the audience and boost the sense of possibility and purpose for the creator(s), emboldening individuals or groups with the possibility of liberation from oppressive or dominating views or conditions. (...) This socially and culturally engaged perspective on creative development expands conceptions of creative development as a phenomenon experienced in isolation by individuals into realms of interdependency, participation, and possibility.”

2. Anderson, Ross. (2018). Creative Engagement: Embodied Metaphor, the Affective Brain, and Meaningful Learning. *Mind Brain and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12176>

This piece takes it way back to John Dewey and William James and through the present tech era in pursuit of a thoughtful and multidisciplinary picture of the reflective process of understanding life through metaphor. Anderson proposes a model of creative engagement consisting of an orbital shell of belonging, competency, creativity and autonomy. This orbital shell encompasses a meaningful synthesis of body, mind and environment. He makes a case for allowing students ample time and encouragement to personally interpret content and promotes the use of drama, dance, and the arts as learning tools. His recommendations are focused on equity, personalization, collaboration, and authenticity in the hopes of producing positive and engaging emotional responses in students that lead to creative representations of learning.

3. Anderson, Ross. (2019). “Mistakes Can be Beautiful”: Creative Engagement in Arts Integration for Early Adolescent Learners. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, Vol. 0, Iss. 0, pp. 1–14 © 2019 Creative Education Foundation <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.401>

Like *Meaningful Learning*, this article is also focused on arts-integration, specifically for middle school students. Engagement, metacognition and agency are central themes in this piece study. The principal finding is that creative engagement in school can be achieved when autonomy, belonging, and a sense of competency are achieved and sufficient creative resources can be

harnessed. Autonomy includes interest, curiosity, and the flow state, as well as the opportunity to create through a variety of modalities. Belonging comes through the welcoming of divergent, diverse, and culturally distinct perspectives into an accepting society. Competency comes from skill, revision, and reflection, as well as an emphasis on risk-taking.

4. Azzam, Amy M. (2009). Why Creativity Now? A Conversation with Sir Ken Robinson. Educational Leadership. ASCD. Volume 67, P. 22-26.
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept09/vol67/num01/Why-Creativity-Now%C2%A2-A-Conversation-with-Sir-Ken-Robinson.aspx>

Sir Ken Robinson addresses the connection between critical thinking and creativity, as well as misconceptions and priorities for creativity in education. Robinson affirms that creativity can indeed be taught, and underscores the importance of collaboration, diversity, and the exchange of ideas. He makes a case that creativity is vital for humanity and business to continue to address new and unforeseen challenges into the future, and makes a distinction between teaching creatively and teaching for creativity.

5. Beghetto, Ronald. (2013). Killing Ideas Softly? The promise and perils of creativity in the classroom. Information Age Publishing Inc. 164 Pages. Paperback.

Beghetto's textbook on creativity divides the approaches to incorporating creativity into a classroom into distinct magnitudes. He makes a case that creativity can be addressed through only a slight change in existing teaching practices, and that spontaneous "micro moments" can be opportunities for creative learning. The incremental approach avoids creative mortification through diverse feedback modalities and promotes a long view of creating a lifestyle of creativity in an open, vibrant world.

6. Beghetto, Ronald. (2019). Structured Uncertainty. C. A. Mullen (ed.), Creativity Under Duress in Education?, Creativity Theory and Action in Education 3,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90272-2_2

Applying his theory of magnitudes of creativity to current events, Beghetto argues that creativity thrives under constraints and that uncertainty and space should be left in lessons for spontaneous, unscripted engagement.

7. Booth, Eric. (2013.) Creative Engagement in Schooling. Article from the author's blog.
<https://ericbooth.net/creative-engagement-in-schooling/>

Booth compares and contrasts the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in arts-integrated educational systems. He defines art as "make[ing] stuff you care about" instead of strictly working in artistic media, and draws attention to the divergent, metaphoric, and flexible thinking

skills that contribute to overall creative motivation across the disciplines. He underscores the power of multi-sensory engagement in creative projects and stresses the importance of empathy and inquiry in a creativity-focused curriculum. Finally, he makes the claim that arts-integrated education with intentional creativity features can help students make meaning and value out of an unbounded range of life tasks.

8. Cleese, John. (2020). *Creativity: A short, cheerful guide*. Crown Publishing. 103 pages. Hard-cover.

Best known for his comedy work with Monty Python, John Cleese is an internationally known celebrity and actor. Originally trained as a lawyer, he made his career on creativity through an adherence to a handful of folk-wisdom style proverbs that seem to universally encompass and summarize a lot of the more wordy creativity research available today. He covers authenticity, inspiration, connection with the audience, and the importance of unstructured time. A strong advocate for play and deferred decision-making, Cleese is probably the one author on this list you should pick as your first choice to read, if you could only choose one, due to his uplifting brevity and concise manner of putting complex concepts into actionable terms.

9. Danah Henriksen, Punya Mishra, & Petra Fisser. (2016). *Infusing Creativity and Technology in 21st Century Education: A Systemic View for Change*. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 19(3), 27-37. www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.19.3.27

A research article from a policy standpoint with the goal of igniting discourse about creativity. What are the effects of teacher education, assessment, and ed policy on the foundations of creativity in the new technological paradigm? How can these influential factors be leveraged to satisfy the changing demands of a population that is rapidly experiencing technological transformations of an unprecedented nature in all fields? The article incorporates the work of 35 studies dating from the 1990s through the present by cornerstone creativity researchers such as Robinson, Zhao, and Csiksgentmihalyi, and others who are ubiquitous in the field. The foundations for the article were established in a professional workgroup in Bangkok during the EdSummitIT 2015 conference, and grew from there into a policy-oriented document aimed at providing recommendations for institutional decision-makers. Traditional educational systems and definitions are not sufficient for serving contemporary societal needs for creativity in light of recent “novel” definitions of the term that are dependent on the individual person, field and domain where creativity is to be assessed. The creation of value is identified as necessary when identifying creativity, which is said to exist as a dynamic process arising from systemic interactions. A systemic approach that incorporates fostering teacher attitudes about technology; assessment tools that focus on group behavior, psychometry, and process; and policies that affirm integrated technological interpretations of creative opportunities across disciplines & for

learners of all abilities and levels have become necessary. Finally, a shift from defining but instead to locating opportunities for creativity creates room for positive growth into the future.

10. Hokanson, B. (2016). Introduction to Special Issue on Creativity and Educational Technology. *Educational Technology*, 56(6), 3-4. www.jstor.org/stable/44430499

An introductory summary to the journal's special edition on creativity, this academic editorial summarizes current attitudes and progress in the area of technology's relationship with creativity education. How is society changing its views towards the meaning of education and knowledge, and how are institutions adapting through technological pathways to address these changes in a historical context? Using Bloom's Taxonomy as a starting point, the editor cites five additional references from the 21st century to connect the summaries of multiple authors' contributions to a special edition on creativity and ed tech. Like Miller's paper, this editorial identifies assessment as one of the primary challenges in the field of creativity education, due to the nature of a process-oriented teaching objective like "improving creativity". Educational design needs to move beyond information retention and into more complicated aspects of learning such as curiosity and perseverance, which can be interpreted to extend to inquiry and motivation.

11. Inman, Matthew. 2020. Ten Eight Marvelous and Melancholy Things I've Learned About Creativity. The Oatmeal. https://theoatmeal.com/comics/creativity_things

A professional comic artist, Inman is a keen observer of the self. His graphic piece tells the story of his relationship with his craft, and reveals details about the effects of social engagement and selling his own work. Similar to the pieces by Cleese and Urban also reviewed here, the writing is anecdotal and individual. Common themes that run between these pieces include the need for unstructured time and the classic "kill your babies" advice. What makes Inman's comic stand out is the attempt he makes to reconcile the financial realities of working as a creative artist, and how he has grown to regard the things he makes over time. His perspective on the creative lifestyle supports a vision of an arts-integrated approach to life in general.

12. Lubart, Todd & Zenasni, Franck & Barbot, Baptiste. (2013). Creative Potential and Its Measurement. *International Journal for Talent Development and Creativity*. 1. 41-50. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264618782_Creative_Potential_and_Its_Measurement

This article proposes a method to assess for creative potential through the measurement of discreet psychological traits, with the goal of developing and enhancing creativity education at the forefront. Cognitive and conative (individual style and behavior) resources of students are delineated and used to create a profile of the student that can be helpful in personalized lesson development. Cognitive resources to be assessed include divergent and convergent thinking, analytical thinking, mental flexibility, and associative thinking. Conative resources to be assessed

include the tolerance for ambiguity, openness, risk taking, intuition and motivation. Through the creative potential profile, talent can be developed intentionally through career-counseling and life-coaching.

13. Meyer, A., Rose, D.H., & Gordon, D. (2014) Universal design for learning: Theory and practice, Wakefield MA: CAST <http://udltheorypractice.cast.org/>

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based inclusion framework. UDL strives for engagement through a focus on regulation, motivation and interest. By being mindful of how information is presented to learners, UDL aims for a high level of understanding through the diverse use of symbols and expressions geared towards helping people perceive meaning independent of specific forms of input. Finally, UDL affords for a broad range of strategic expressive modalities, including visual and physical representations. UDL lessons tend to be engaging, multi-sensory, and flexible enough that students of all abilities have an opportunity to engage, comprehend, and express themselves with a high degree of effectiveness and authenticity. UDL provides checkpoints for educators to use while integrating features into their lessons, and is one of the most respected and useful design tools for situations demanding a high degree of engagement and achievement from groups of learners with diverse abilities, predilections, interests, and stories.

14. Miller, D. (2015). Cultivating Creativity. *The English Journal*, 104(6), 25-30.
www.jstor.org/stable/24484423

An action-oriented synthesis of current attitudes in the field, with a markedly academic / educational focus, in the tone of recent creativity celebrity educators such as Sir Ken Robinson, & popular culture at large. What are the cultural and contextual conditions affecting the advancement & appreciation of creativity in classrooms, and what can teachers do to promote creative growth in their students? The paper draws upon 25 sources of academic and popular nature, and connects observations about cultural trends to contemporary research as well as classical thought reaching as far back as John Dewey (1910). Miller identifies creativity education as process driven, with a focus on inquiry, identity, challenges & risk-taking, and imagination. Qualities such as flexibility, patience, and perseverance are also highlighted as mandatory in the field. Assessment in creativity education is especially challenging. Continual subversion & disruption of mainstream norms contribute to the development of creativity's changing definition.

15. Monroy, L. (2015). Teaching Creativity. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 2795-2797. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.969>

A literature review focused on the task of channeling memory & meaning into "neuronal storage", geared towards the creation of representational works of art in the real world, as well as in the imaginary future, through a focus on message distillation and technical mastery of various artistic

or otherwise expressive skills. “It has been said a lot that the creative process in the artistic field as a god’s inspiration, state of grace or totally unconscious self-absorbed state ; but rarely this process relates to the living experiences and the transformation from memory into imagination. This work intends to fill that void.” -Monroy. The paper elaborates and expands creatively, even poetically, upon the findings of six primary academic sources published during the first decade of the 21st century. The creation of a piece of art first requires awareness of a clear message or intent. This psychic clarity, to be communicated, requires sufficient technical skill & material resources in an artistic discipline to be able to be conveyed in a unique way, and thereby broadly be considered “creative”. In short, teaching creativity requires a dual-pronged focus on identifying the creator’s message, as well as the technical training & confidence to execute a craft. Simultaneous to this, awareness of what is already being said and understood in the larger world is needed in order to execute original messaging.

16. Muirhead, Brent. (2007). Integrating Creativity into Online University Classes. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 10(1), 1-13. www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.10.1.1

A synthesis of practical research in the field of teaching creativity online, the article is structured in a linear manner that builds a framework based on complex definitions, and finally provides practical & actionable recommendations for educators. In many respects, this is the most useful single article in this review for anybody interested in teaching creativity online tomorrow. How can you define creativity in a useful way and merge that definition into a practical framework with what is known about the contemporary developments in motivation and behavior that have arisen in conjunction with the advent of online learning systems & digital scholarship? Muirhead cites 39 sources dating from 1990 through 2007, including several of his own previously published works, subtly highlighting his prolificacy in the subject matter this article covers. While Csikszentmihalyi is cited in this study as well, his contribution is not as central as in the works of other authors reviewed in this document, but instead contributes handily to the author’s own bold synthesis. As with other studies reviewed here, creativity is defined in terms of process, problem-solving, and ability, but what sets this one apart is the alignment of that definition with psychological research and techniques designed to increase motivation and authentic engagement while maintaining adaptable personalized agility tailored to individual learners’ character and specific goals. Online creativity educators must take advantage of the motivation provided by challenge, freedom, group-work, controversy, & multiple interpretations of situational ambiguity. Relevance of instructional material must be visceral and adapted to changing times and views in order to facilitate buy-in (over “degree seeking”) and investment, reflection, and self-direction.

17. Plucker, Jonathan & Beghetto, Ronald & Dow, Gayle. (2004). Why Isn't Creativity More Important to Educational Psychologists? Potentials, Pitfalls, and Future Directions in

Creativity Research. *Educational Psychologist*. 39. 83-96.

https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep3902_1

The authors identify and dispel several key myths and misconceptions about creativity in pursuit of a more agile definition of the term that can be used to maximize potential psychological gains. The myths include the idea of creativity being innate, and the idea that creativity is a “fuzzy” or “soft” construct. After careful consideration, the authors arrive at the following definition of creativity: “Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context.” Finally, the piece includes recommendations for future reworkings of the definition in continued pursuit of novel, constructive approaches to creativity research.

18. Rath, Tom. (2007). *Clifton Strengthsfinder 2.0*. Gallup Press. 174 pages. Hard-cover.

Clifton Strengths are an assessment-based psychology assessment. Similar to Myers-Briggs or Enneagrams, Clifton Strengths provide a limited number of categories that can be used to help people make thoughtful choices. The suggested interplay between people with different strengths can also help employers or teachers place people on projects & roles best suited to their own aptitudes and interests. The assessment feedback includes top strengths and characteristics, and rather than also assessing for weakness or deficiency, stays focused on positive abilities. Based on interdisciplinary research, the assessment and guide are focused on helping people identify their innate abilities. My top three strengths, according to the assessment, are: Input, Includer, and Ideation. (I’m also Myers-Briggs ENFP, and Enneagram Type 7.) These strengths are suggestions, roles that might be available to play in certain dynamic interactions.

19. Silvia, P. (2015). Intelligence and Creativity Are Pretty Similar After All. *Educational Psychology Review*, 27(4), 599-606. www.jstor.org/stable/24761209

This historical survey tracks the parallel study of intelligence and creativity over the last 100 years, drawing conclusions suggestive that the underlying cognitive processes that help learners find the “right answer” also support flexible, critical, and even playful thinking. How does executive processing contribute to divergent and convergent thinking, from a neuroscience stance, & can assessments be developed that treat intelligence and creativity as interrelated? What is the relationship between the two historically separated concepts? Citing 56 sources dating as far back as the 1960s, Silvia analyzes historical statistical interpretations of thinking processes previously considered to be distinct & synthesizes his findings with contemporary neuroscience research to infer similarities between them. Historical mainstream concepts of creativity & intelligence appear to have been biased, holding the processes as distinct, when in light of modern cognitive and neural research, executive function appears to correlate closely to


aptitudes in both, suggesting common roots. Sorting learners as either creative or intelligent is a baseless approach that creates unnatural division. Assessments for creativity and intelligence could be developed in tandem to create more holistic pictures of learners in various contexts.

20. Surkova, I. (2012). Towards a Creativity Framework. *Society and Economy*, 34(1), 115-138.
www.jstor.org/stable/41472190

The study attempts to describe a systemic model for creativity geared towards exploration in any domain. Treating creativity as a naturally emergent phenomenon, the paper attempts to merge the vast bodies of Eastern and Western research on the topic into a logical model for exploration. While the task described may sound paradoxical, metacognitive awareness of the passion in her work on a study like this is in fact inspirational and exemplary. How can we conceive of a framework for creativity that can be overlaid upon multiple disciplines and applications based on complex historical, psychological and contemporary societal definitions of the abstract term? What opportunities for fulfillment in a creative endeavor may be described algorithmically and carried from task to task? What are the characteristics of creative people that defy categorical silos and can be cultivated in a broad sense? Spanning from the bible to Eastern European philosophers and linguists of the early 20th and 21st centuries, and including Freud, Dewey, Maslow and of course Csikszentmihalyi, Surkova analyzes and cites 73 sources in her attempt to formulate a general & adaptable model of creativity. Using verbose, unwieldy, yet highly creative modeling techniques, such as plotting Novelty, Validity, Increment, and Realization against Originality, Creativity, Invention and Innovation, Surkova attempts to determine calculable relationships between concepts like metamorphosis, psychic force, humor, and more. Her “tool” concept of creativity could be applied broadly across the fields, but more research is needed to solidify her model. While almost entirely impractical, this study illustrates the extreme of how a systematically divergent thinker can create uniquely original conceptual fodder and achieve social validation, via publication. This study represents a successful case study of achieving a creative answer to a possibly impossible question.

21. Urban, Tim. (2013). Why Procrastinators Procrastinate. *Wait but Why*. Blog post.
<https://waitbutwhy.com/2013/10/why-procrastinators-procrastinate.html>

In the first half, the popular author and speaker writes about the matrix of high and low urgency and importance in self-regulation, from a creative point of view. Urban anecdotally explores instant gratification, anxiety, and levels of achievement. In the second half of the piece, he explains techniques and tools to overcome procrastination through a focus on planning and execution. Presented with frequent colorful drawings and graphic visualization of key concepts, the article makes a strong case for a slow and steady growth mindset to achieve creative production goals.

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22. Yu-Chu Yeh, & Chun Fu Lin. (2015). Aptitude-Treatment Interactions during Creativity Training in E-Learning: How Meaning-Making, Self-Regulation, and Knowledge Management Influence Creativity. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 18(1), 119-131. www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.18.1.119

In light of the prevalence of E-Learning, this quantitative study correlates the effectiveness of certain interventions with creativity scores, centered around mind-mapping and digital storytelling during a 17-week online course. All measurements, data collection, and participant interaction took place entirely through online channels. What are the effects of individualized aptitude treatment interventions (ATIs) on meaning-making, self-regulation, and knowledge management (KM), and how do these factors influence creativity scores in an E-learning system? Because of the complexity of the variables, this study focused on a relatively small sample population of 31 undergraduate students (9 males and 22 females) with a mean age of 19.93 years (SD= 1.44 years). All of the participants were enrolled in a liberal education course “Creativity,” which emphasized KM and e-learning. Interventions proved successful at improving creativity scores, supporting a view of creativity as related to knowledge acquisition, sharing, application and creation. Subjects with higher self-regulation scores improved more than those with lower self-regulation scores, suggesting the findings are most relevant in this demographic. KM and appeals to metacognition in general promise to be powerful tools for amplifying the benefits of creativity education in an online environment, especially with students who already display high degrees of self-regulation.

