Foster Creativity
in K-12 Classrooms

The shift from traditional classroom formats toward more learner-centered experiences calls for inspiring greater creativity in your classroom processes and in your students. Here's what THE Journal learned when it asked educators how they embed a culture of creativity in their classrooms.
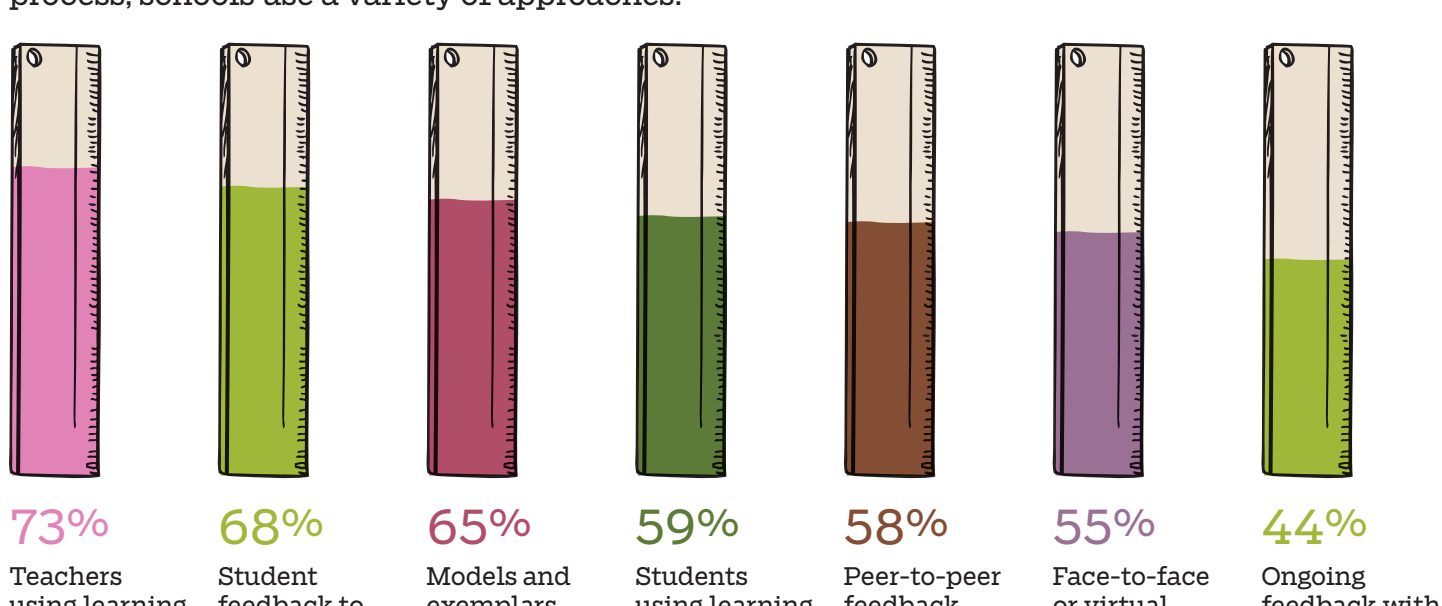
How to spark student creativity:

1. Use brainstorming
2. Let students make mistakes and learn through iteration/Let them tinker and explore (Tie score)
3. Give students authentic, open ended problems and projects
4. Let students think out loud
5. Let students choose how to show learning/Promote integration of subjects (Tie score)

Monitor learning

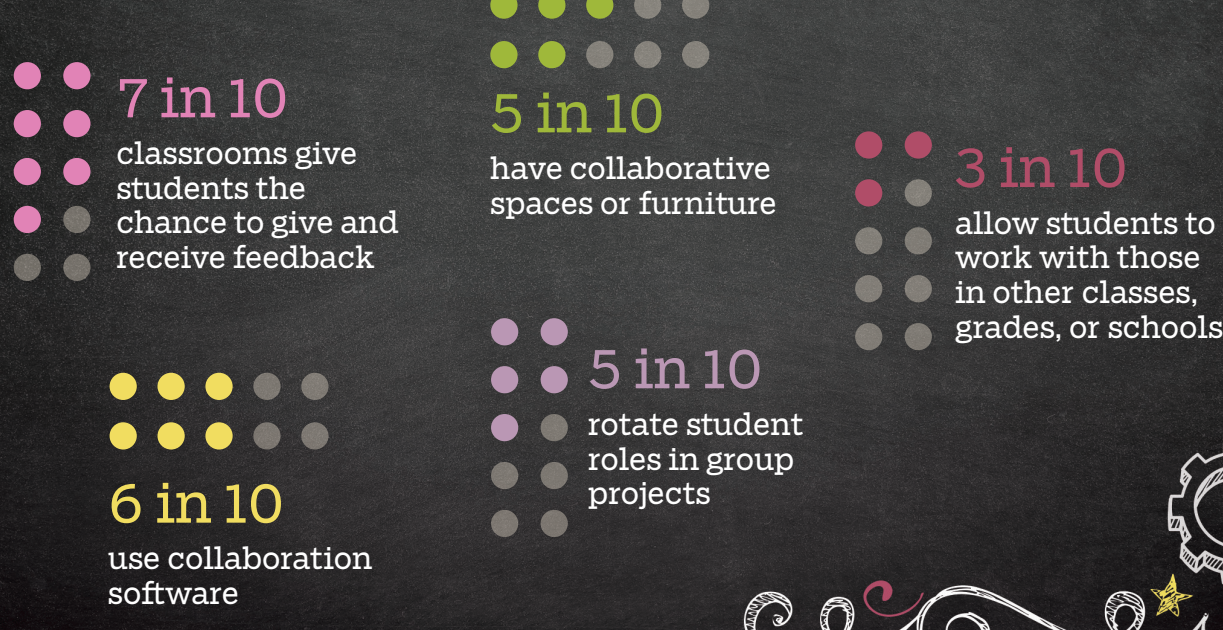To monitor learning throughout the creative process, schools use a variety of approaches:

- **73%** Teachers using learning rubrics
- **68%** Student feedback to teachers
- **65%** Models and exemplars
- **59%** Students using learning rubrics
- **58%** Peer-to-peer feedback
- **55%** Face-to-face or virtual conferencing
- **44%** Ongoing feedback with digital tools

Where's the teacher?

Stand-and-deliver teaching has given way to:

- **38%** Moving around the classroom
- **25%** Small group instruction
- **14%** Working one-on-one with students

Collaboration nurtures creativity

- **7 in 10** classrooms give students the chance to give and receive feedback
- **5 in 10** have collaborative spaces or furniture
- **3 in 10** allow students to work with those in other classes, grades, or schools
- **6 in 10** use collaboration software
- **5 in 10** rotate student roles in group projects

Involve the students

Ask them their preferred learning method

86% of teachers have asked their students how they learn best

Among those who said yes, **97%** have responded by changing instructional approach or assignments

Tap student ideas for improving your classroom processes

3/4 of classrooms have tried student ideas

for improving how the classroom works, which almost always results in improved engagement and motivation

7 improvements suggested by students

- Exchange engineering notebooks across periods, not just in class
- Ask students what devices they want for the classroom
- Rearrange furniture
- Have students present their "plans for success" and take peer questions
- Use a better timing method for a stop-motion project
- Let students be in charge of ordering lunch
- Use a timer for peer-sharing rotations

Technology is critical to creativity

How computing devices are used by students

- **90%** To research projects
- **81%** For digital creation
- **72%** To collaborate with other students
- **70%** For creative expression
- **64%** To collaborate with teachers
- **23%** To collaborate with outside experts

How computing devices are accessed by students

- **1/2** of classrooms have 1-to-1 programs
- **1/3** use classroom carts
- **1/10** have scheduled times for device access

6 popular technologies that help spur creativity in the classroom

- Google Apps for Education
- Video-making equipment
- Displays to share ideas and collaborate
- Design apps and applications
- Building, coding, circuit, and robotic kits
- Printers, including 3D printers

5 classic items that also help

- Colored markers, paints, pencils, and crayons
- Lots of whiteboard or drawing space
- Cardboard
- Fun floor seating
- Board games

Barriers to classroom creativity

2/3 report standards and testing get in the way of creativity in the classroom

1. Too much emphasis on standards and testing
2. Lack of time
3. An education system not geared to creativity
4. Lack of professional learning among teachers
5. Lack of resources

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