

MINDSIGHT

Best Practices

Whether researching the inner, inter, or external connections that our minds depend upon for creativity, compelling questions about best practice confront teachers daily. Many questions remain unanswered, but research suggests the following best practices:

1. If you want creative reflection from your students, continue to practice creativity.
2. Reflection about the process and products students create allows for future inspiration as well as hard wiring lessons into long-term memory.
3. Collaborative work creates even more moments of insight.
4. Vary the size and scale of creative projects. The brain thrives on variety.
5. Vary the content area that is employed in pursuit of greater ingenuity. Interdisciplinary connections are often the most creative ones.
6. Play develops creativity.
7. Creativity in the present is built in some way on past ideas. Knowing the history of invention helps build mental reference points for new ideas.
8. Sleep increases the benefits of a creative mind. Lack of sleep diminishes creative capacity.
9. Having permission to be creative increases creativity.
10. Creativity most often comes from deep knowledge of a field. While novices from other fields can cross-fertilize ideas, components, processes, and inventions, lasting creativity in a field emerges from experts. Academic environments need to build exceptional opportunities for creativity while also providing equally effective coverage of content.
11. Critiques by others and self-evaluation of work should be specific and tied to the initial design constraints.
12. Design challenges that are aimed at and slightly above the developmental level of students encourage higher levels of creative achievement and critical thinking.
13. Frame failures as a pathway to success.
14. Encourage verbal fluency about imaginary ideas.
15. Encourage student independence and autonomy during projects. Project choice and freedom to access materials and age-appropriate tools lead to higher engagement and motivation to create.
16. Students should have access to a variety of materials, media, and tools through which they can make their thinking visible.
17. Simultaneously applying perspectives from different disciplines unlocks new ways of thinking when solving a problem.
18. The creative personality takes time to develop. Provide the requisite time to grow a mindset of ingenuity.
19. Allow students to find their own problems to solve.
20. Expose students to varying people, places, and perspectives. Think of a coffee house-type environment of diverse people and ideas. That is often where insight is discovered.