



CREATIVE TEACHING Pocketbook

2nd edition

A pocketful of imagination,
inspiration and innovation to
help you become an even
more creative teacher

Roy Watson-Davis

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Pocketbook

2nd edition

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Foreword

Creative teaching is what motivates all of us who work in the classroom. Sometimes, though, the pressure of deadlines and the weight of content block the creativity that informs the very best teaching. This book is intended to give you back some time by providing creative starting points for your own teaching ideas, with you using and amending suggestions as necessary according to your own classroom experiences.

For myself, I learned most by watching colleagues teach, and by discussing ideas with them. In that spirit this book is intended to stimulate and support existing creative practice. It is also intended to support in-school mentors in discussions with their mentees, whether they are student teachers, newly qualified, or experienced teachers who want to re-energise their teaching.

Adopting some of the ideas put forward in this book will sometimes move you as a teacher away from your own comfort zone, but by using them to complement your own approaches you will see real results in the way that students engage with your lessons. This book should let you take a fresh look at how lessons are delivered and will also recharge your batteries and increase the enthusiasm of students working with you.



**Challenge Your
Comfort Zones**



**Starting
Out**



**Asking the
Right Questions**



**Active
Learning**



**Making
Technology
Work for You**



**Creative
Lesson Ideas**



**Revision
Aids**



**Building a
Sense of
Teamwork**



Challenge Your Comfort Zones

Slap yourself in the face with a fish



Well, did that catch your attention?

I hope this chapter will encourage you to look again at how you do the everyday, routine things linked to classroom teaching. We all want to feel energised and challenged when we deliver lessons, rather than a bit like a mouse on a treadmill. You can make a massive difference to your working life if you reappraise how you go about the basics.

Now: you can either buy a fish, or read on and think about moving your desk...



Classroom environment



Creative teaching starts way before your students ever set foot in your classroom. You need to ask yourself some uncomfortable questions and take brave chances with the way you interact with your teaching space.

As a first step try to look at your classroom from the perspective of a student:

- Is the environment warm and welcoming or is it cold and sterile?
- Does it have a personal feel to it, or is it just another classroom?

Try to make your classroom uniquely different, and then work to share ownership of the space with the students.

Classroom environment



Setting up the room

Look to set up a room that engages the students as an extension of their learning experience, rather than as a place where learning is enacted on them.

- Make your classroom as interactive as possible. This will challenge and stimulate the students and enhance the status of your subject. A resource table of reference books or subject magazines is ideal
- Curiosities are stimuli – plants, fish tanks, junk shop curios and other oddities can work for you. A colleague has a witch's broomstick mounted on his wall, something which fascinates and engages the students
- Aim to set your room up to create an atmosphere of working with the students – ask them how they'd like the room set up

Make your room distinctive. This helps make your learning environment interesting and engaging.



Classroom environment



Using the space

The way you interact with your own teaching space is crucial: right-handed people tend to favour that side of the room, and left-handed the other. Students recognise this and so if you are right-handed you'll find:

- Attention-seekers will be on that side of the room
- Quiet students will be at the front on your left-hand side (your real blind spot)
- The genuinely disgruntled will place themselves towards the back on the left. (Over a run of early lessons, you unwittingly ignored them when they offered to contribute)

Run this scenario in your head – the chances are you will either have trouble remembering who sits in your blind spot area or you will realise that they are the 'invisible' students you can't quite put a face to.

Classroom environment



Using the space

You need to counteract your preferred-hand bias, so instil a dynamic atmosphere by careful coverage of the room.

- Make yourself move and talk to each student at least once in every lesson
- Drill yourself to talk and teach from at least three different parts of the room each lesson

This approach helps develop a participatory atmosphere as students know that you will be accessing them all at some point of the lesson.