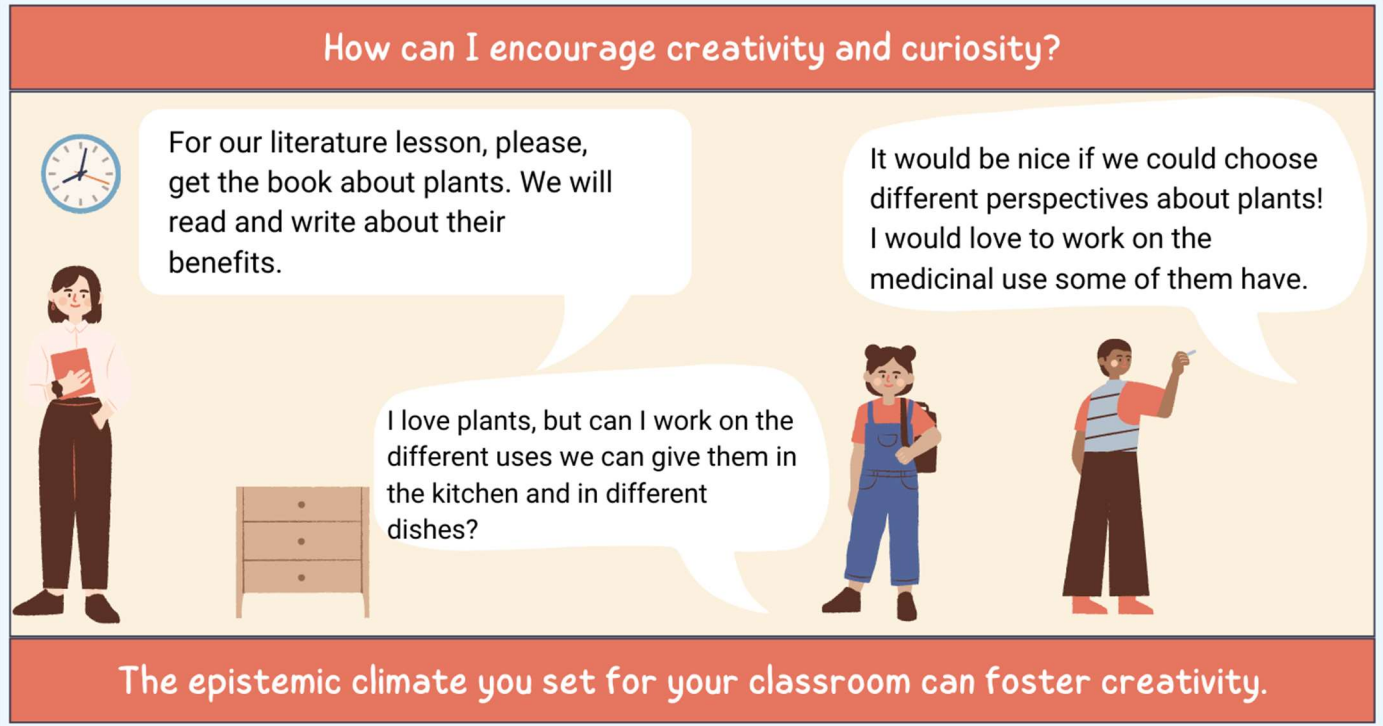


Encouraging Curiosity and Creativity Within the Classroom

OSU Motivation in Classrooms Lab – Motivation Minute. November 2022



- **What are epistemic beliefs?** Epistemic beliefs refer to how an individual views the nature of knowledge. Some believe that knowledge is fixed and unchanging, while others believe that knowledge is fluid and evolving.
- **What is an epistemic climate?** Epistemic climate refers to features of the classroom—often teaching practices—that can shape the beliefs students have about the nature of knowledge and learning.
- **Why are epistemic beliefs and epistemic climate important?** The climate a teacher creates can facilitate or stifle creativity.

Example Situation	Promoting Fixed Epistemic Beliefs (Not Preferred)	Promoting Fluid Epistemic Beliefs (Preferred)
Fluency - A middle-school teacher is teaching a unit on plant science. The teacher asks the students “what mediums are plants grown in?”	The majority of the students respond with the answers “soil, sand, and water.” The teacher says “correct” and moves on to the topic of germination.	The teacher answers with “correct, what other mediums might plants be grown in?” The students answer “clay, paper towels, moss, and tree bark.”
Flexibility - A middle-school literature teacher is teaching a unit about character roles in a play. The teacher asks their students to split into groups and act out their assigned parts. Some of the students say that they prefer to rehearse their character roles individually rather than as a group.	The teacher refuses to allow the students to practice their character roles individually and tells the students that they are required to practice as a group.	The teacher acknowledges that some students would do better rehearsing in a small group while others may do better rehearsing by themselves. The teacher allows the students to choose; they may rehearse individually or as a group.
Originality – A middle-school art teacher is teaching a unit on lines, shapes, and form. The students must complete an art project that demonstrates understanding of the terms.	A student turns in a drawing of their favorite cartoon character. The student is critiqued because the project was not completed using the specific lines, shapes, and form that were discussed in the unit.	The teacher asks the student to explain their artwork. The student then demonstrates understanding of the terms by explaining the lines, shapes, and form applied to their own artwork.

Recommendations:

- Promote intellectual risk taking by encouraging your students to generate as many original ideas as possible.
- Tolerate mistakes and teach students that there is no wrong answer when brainstorming.
- Design spaces in your classroom that support a multitude of student preferences in the same environment.
- Encourage students to explain or defend their choices and reasoning before assuming that a student’s work did not meet the assigned criteria.

References:

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