Criteria for Creativity

The following criteria and sample rubrics can be used to help determine if students are engaging in creative thinking.

Uses imagination

The student thinks of new ideas, speculates on what might be possible, and applies imagination to improve outcomes.

	4	3	2	1
Imagination	I often think of new uses for everyday items. I can imagine people, places, and events in such detail that they seem real to me.	I sometimes think of new ways to use everyday items. I can imagine people, places, and events that do not exist in real life.	If I have help, I can sometimes think of new ways to use everyday items. If someone helps me, I can imagine people, places, and events that do not exist in real life.	I cannot think of new uses for everyday items. I have difficulty imagining people, places, and events that do not exist in real life.
Invention	I can make existing objects, ideas, processes, and systems more efficient, beautiful, or ethical.	I can think of unusual ways to enhance objects, ideas, and processes.	With help, I can think of ways to improve objects, ideas, and processes.	I cannot think of ways to improve objects, ideas, and processes.

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Generates original ideas

The student produces many responses, thinks of alternative ideas, and asks questions that generate more ideas.

	4	3	2	1
Ideas	I can think of numerous new ideas with or without specific guidelines.	Given guidelines, I can think of several ideas.	If someone helps me, I can think of some ideas.	I have difficulty thinking of new ideas, even when I am told to.
Elaboration	When I create, write, or take action, I think of unusual and surprising ways to make what I do more useful, interesting, and beautiful.	When I create, write, or take action, I think of surprising or unusual ways to improve what I do.	When I create, write, or take action, I try to think of surprising or unusual ways to improve what I do.	When I create, write, or take action, I do not think of surprising or unusual ways to improve what I do.

Experiments with alternatives

The student is willing to change his/her initial ideas, see things another way, and experiment with alternative approaches.

	4	3	2	1
Goals	Given a specific goal, I can come up with a variety of ways to achieve it.	I can come up with several ways to reach a goal.	With help, I can come up with more than one way to reach a goal.	I can usually only think of one way to reach a goal.
Risk-taking	I seek out new experiences without worrying about what others think of me or whether I will make mistakes.	I try new experiences without worrying too much about making mistakes or what others will think of me.	Sometimes I avoid experiences that I know I will not succeed at.	I avoid experiences that I think I will not be good at.

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Expands on what is known

The student elaborates on what is known, builds upon a given situation, or makes things more unique and interesting.

	4	3	2	1
Incorporating subject-area knowledge	I use my understanding of the knowledge and skills of a subject area to think of a variety of ideas.	I use my understanding of a subject area to think of ideas.	With some prompting, I can use my past understanding of a subject area to think of ideas.	I rarely use my past understanding to think of ideas.
Flexibility	I notice what is surprising, unusual, and interesting in everyday objects and situations.	I notice unusual things around me.	When someone reminds me, I notice unusual things in the world around me.	I hardly ever notice unusual things in the world around me.

Exercises reflective judgment

The student reflects on his/her ideas, evaluates the creative process, and judges the outcome.

	4	3	2	1
Determining quality	I create or act with an idea in mind of how my final project should look. When I work, I think about what I am doing to make sure my work matches my idea.	I create or act with an idea in mind of how my final project should look.	If I am reminded, I think about how my idea will look in the end.	I do not think about how my idea will look in the end.
Evaluation	I have the confidence in my intuition and abilities to know if my ideas are worth pursuing and when the finished product or performance has value.	I usually know when my ideas are worth pursuing and when my finished product or performance has value.	I need a lot of help to determine if my ideas are worth working on and if my work is high quality.	I always think my work is good, regardless of what anyone says. OR No matter how hard I work, I never think my work is good enough.

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