



Creative Learning in Higher Education: International Perspectives and Approaches

Watts, Linda S.; and Blessinger, Patrick
Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017

Book Review

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teaching techniques

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Creativity in higher education is oftentimes pigeonholed to certain academic disciplines or perceived as the property of select individuals with an artistic flair. Watts and Blessinger, through their well-crafted anthology, demythologize these and other constructs, by providing readers with a more comprehensive understanding of creativity as an accessible and proactive agent in higher education – past, present, and future

According to Watts and Blessinger, “creative learning transcends individual capacities, disciplinary constraints, national boundaries, and institutional barriers” (217). Nonetheless, they also caution against assuming that it can be understood or practiced the same across cultures. Creativity in the classroom demands particularistic pedagogic approaches that reflect the institutional and cultural settings of those served (xvi).

With a primary focus on higher education, the assembled chapter authors reflect different international and interdisciplinary perspectives and bring teaching techniques based on extensive research and experience.

A central theme found throughout this book is that “If all students possess the potential for creativity, then teachers do well to consider how their instructional objectives, curricular designs, learning assessments, and institutional structures reflect that fact” (214).

Within this anthology, the reader is provided with case studies and essays that cover a full range of subject content and pedagogic approaches in varied cultural settings – including “Play and 3D Enquiry for Stimulating Learning,” “A Case Study in Best Practices in Public Higher

Learning,” “Creative Approaches to Stimulate Classroom Discussions,” and “Configuring Interdisciplinarity: The Common Core at the University of Hong Kong.”

As a book, it exhibits a dynamic interplay between convention and innovation and reminds the reader throughout how creativity is deeply rooted in the pedagogic theory of all disciplines. It also challenges educators to “foster a climate and culture in which creative learning and teaching are promoted, supported, and valued; a culture that allows experimentation, new ideas, even failure – for what is failure if not an opportunity to learn?” (199).

This book would be a useful resource for any educator regardless of their respective discipline. It helps us to remember that “learning creativity happens when inventive, imaginative, and physical methods are used to explore a subject and harness its practices to new partners” (120). And although the reader may not find each chapter as pertinent as the next, they are given access throughout to seminal texts and issues relating to creativity in higher education. The mantra of this book is – creativity is an activity in which anyone may engage in.

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