

Engaging Imagination: Helping Students Become Creative and Reflective Thinkers

By Al James, Stephen D. Brookfield

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How to nurture creativity in tomorrow's innovators—today's college students

When asked what they want colleges to emphasize most, employers didn't put science, computing, math, or business management first. According to AAC&U's 2013 employer survey, 95% of employers give hiring preference to college graduates with skills that will enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace. In *Engaging Imagination: Helping Students Become Creative and Reflective Thinkers*, two leading educators help college instructors across disciplines engage students in nurturing creativity and innovation for success beyond the classroom. Alison James, an expert in creative arts education, and Stephen D. Brookfield, bestselling author, outline how creative exploration can extend students' reflective capabilities in a purposeful way, help them understand their own potential and learning more clearly, and imbue students with the freedom to generate and explore new questions.

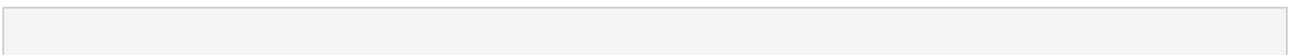
This book:

- shows why building creative skills pays dividends in the classroom and in students' professional lives long after graduation;
- offers research-based, classroom-tested approaches to cultivating creativity and innovation in the college setting;
- provides practical tools for incorporating “play” into the college curriculum;
- draws on recent advances in the corporate sector where creative approaches have been adopted to reinvigorate thinking and problem-solving processes; and
- includes examples from a variety of disciplines and settings.

Engaging Imagination is for college and university faculty who need to prepare students for the real challenges of tomorrow's workplace.

Engaging Imagination: Helping Students Become Creative and Reflective Thinkers By Al James, Stephen D. Brookfield Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

Stepping outside of the comfort zone of traditional classroom methodologies, *Engaging Imagination* enables instructors across disciplines to engage students in learning through creative and innovative approaches and thereby help their students succeed, both in the classroom and beyond. Leading educators Alison James and Stephen Brookfield show that through creative exploration, students can extend their reflective capabilities in a purposeful way, understand their own potential and learning more clearly, and claim the freedom to generate and explore new questions that have not already been asked. Creativity and innovation are now top priorities employers look for when making hiring decisions, and important skills for success in any area of life.

Engaging Imagination guides readers through the three primary elements of developing and implementing effective creative instruction techniques:

- Understanding the Role of Imagination in Learning
- Engaging Imagination: Tools and Techniques
- Negotiating the Emotional Realities of Engaging Imagination

The book draws on multisensory approaches to learning—visual and verbal, kinesthetic and cognitive, online and off-line, solo study and group work, large and small numbers of students—and travels across domains of time and space. And although the book is about practical application, it takes much more of a “what if” than a “how to” approach to evoking critical reflection. *What if* we, as teachers, take more imaginative approaches and integrate them into our established curricula? *What if* we, and our students, step outside our comfort zone and do something differently? *What if* we are playful in our approaches to learning?

Engaging Imagination offers a mixture of exercises, activities, theories, positions, approaches, and people. It is a text of different voices: stories, case studies, anecdotes, and project descriptions. It is a book about questions and assumptions, about dialogue and spaces. With this book, the authors intend to add to the library of resources on alternative modes of learning and assessment and to link the literature of creativity, imagination, and play explicitly to reflective practice. *Engaging Imagination* is not about shutting out traditional approaches but about extending and adding to them via open-minded experimentation and exploration. This is an invaluable resource for educators at all levels who seek to integrate imaginative learning exercises to help students develop the skills necessary for productive critical reflection.

Written for teachers at all levels who wish to engage students in nurturing creativity and innovation, this book challenges and empowers educators to seek new ways of reaching and inspiring their students and preparing them for the real challenges of the future.

From the Back Cover

Praise for *Engaging Imagination*

"This is an absolutely delightful book: perceptive, entertaining, and wise, yet also immensely practical. If you want your students to grow, in your hands, as creative thinkers, read this—and get them to read it, too."

—Guy Claxton, author of *Building Learning Power* and *What's the Point of School?*

"Alison James and Stephen Brookfield are wonderfully inventive guides to using creativity and play in helping students to reflect and become better learners."

—David Gauntlett, professor of media and communications, University of Westminster

"An immensely valuable, practical, and inspiring resource for anyone interested in helping students use and develop their creativity."

—Norman Jackson, founder of Lifewide Education; professor emeritus, University of Surrey

About the Author

ALISON JAMES is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the UK and has worked in creative arts education for more than two decades. During this time she has taught students at all levels, run a learning support service, carried out extensive staff development on all aspects of pedagogy, and conducted research into student learning through personal and professional development. She has taught, written, and presented nationally and internationally on personal and professional development in fashion and the creative industries, emphasizing play and interactivity in reflective practice. Her publications on these and other subjects include a monograph, solo and coauthored book chapters, and journal articles.

STEPHEN D. BROOKFIELD is the John Ireland Endowed Chair at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For more than 40 years, he has taught in England, Canada, Australia, and the United States. A six-time winner of the Cyril O. Houle Award for Outstanding Literature in Adult Education, he is the author of numerous books on teaching including *Teaching for Critical Thinking* (2011), *The Skillful Teacher* (Second Edition, 2006), and *Discussion as a Way of Teaching* (Second Edition, 2005), all from Jossey-Bass.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Rose:

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