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**Dimensions of Creativity: Fluency**



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**Fluency: the ability to generate LOTS of ideas, not necessarily different.**

Fluent thinkers can also "hitchhike" on one idea to come up with many more ideas. E.g. when brainstorming ways to mop up an oil spill, one idea might be to use hair clippings. "Hitchhiking" on that idea would include using dog hair, cat hair, sheep's wool, etc.

**Why does fluency matter?**

The first step to problem solving or generating anything creative is having as many ideas as possible to choose from. Fluency loosens up the creative wheels. School tends to make students seek one correct answer instead of considering multiple possibilities. Students learn not to go past one.

**Fluency Builders**

**Brainstorming**

- Assess prior knowledge or build concepts while building fluency and modeling openness
- ACCEPT any response (prohibit "Yeah, but" comments)
- Sort and eliminate responses AFTER the fact
- Teachers MUST model openness by thinking aloud
- Judging responses during a brainstorm will kill fluency very quickly
- Post-sorting the choices will reinforce curriculum concepts by eliminating the non-examples.

Offer brainstorms related to the concept being studied, done TOGETHER or as ongoing lists and graphic organizers referred to often during learning activities. An interactive whiteboard file created and saved by student "emcees" allows classes to add to the brainstorm or refer back to it later in the unit. **Examples:**

- Math: Ways to see 24 (practice and review order of operations, math facts), list things that are cylinders
- Language Arts/Reading: brainstorm alternate word choice options, such as ways to say *said*, words that have a certain consonant cluster, words with negative connotations, onomatopoeias, etc.
- Science: things that require energy, characteristics of living things, things that can affect motion
- Social studies: things that can affect an election, natural resources that can build an economy, things a colonist might say about the British, roles of a leader, community helpers, etc.

**Fluency tools on the web:**

- Stormboard ([review](#)) collaborative online brainstorming-looks like sticky notes
- Draw.Chat ([review](#)) online collaborative whiteboard
- Bubbl.us ([review](#)) graphic organizer maker
- Wordle ([review](#)) word cloud maker
- Worditout ([review](#)) word cloud maker
- Tagxedo ([review](#)) word cloud maker
- WordArt ([review](#)) word cloud maker
- and many more. See [idea sharing](#) for specific activities/projects or to add your own ideas.

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