

Six Word Memoirs

Sample:
"For sale: baby shoes, never worn." - Ernest Hemingway

Other Samples:

Need more friends or more hobbies.
Old age approaches. Better start now.
My entourage asleep in his crib.
Some shoes will take you anywhere.
Life packed neatly away in boxes.
My greatest ideas involve duct tape.
Two eyes open, but still nearsighted.
Hobby became job. Seeking new hobby.

**Take a moment or three,
and write your own 6-
word memoir that best
describes your personal
attitude or history with
creative endeavors.**

Cool Ideas now in production:

"Blend a grid of LEDs with wireless communication platform and have the pillows emit a soft glow when one is touched. Two lovers can be separated by thousands of miles, and when each hugs one pillow, the other pillow – thousands of miles away – will respond with a soft glow."
-- p. 39, *Creative Thinkering*

Musical umbrella: " -- five different types of waxed fabric with varying degrees of elasticity to create a range of tones and frequencies, depending on the size and speed of the falling raindrops."
-- p. 68, *Creative Thinkering*

"We went to school. We were not taught how to think; we were taught to reproduce what past thinkers thought....Instead of being possibilities, we were taught as if we entered school as a graduated as a period."

-- Michael Michalko,
Creative Thinking, 2011, p. 3

Consider:

It's not an answer chase.

It's a question journey.

“Do they know how to ask good questions?”

-- Tony Wagner, *The Global Achievement Gap*, 2008

Do I dare disturb the universe?

Our future depends on this one here.



Tenets:

- A. It takes creative and critical thinking to achieve standards.
- B. Thoughtful classrooms create thoughtful students. We do not get creative students from non-creative classrooms.
- C. Students who think creatively and critically perform better on tests, standardized or not.

Grade 8: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (From the Common Core Standards)

- ❑ What is the proper way to cite textual evidence in a written analysis?
- ❑ How much textual evidence is needed to support the student's claims?
- ❑ What if the student cites enough evidence but it's for an incorrect claim?
- ❑ What if the student is novel or stylistic in some way – will that be acceptable as long as he fulfills the general criteria?
- ❑ How specific does a student need to be in order to demonstrate being explicit?

- ❑ Is the analysis complete if he just makes the claim and cites evidence without a line or two to tie it all back to the theme?
- ❑ And what does, "...as well as inferences drawn from the text," mean? Does it mean students make inferences about the text and back them up with text references or outside-the-text references? Are students supposed to comment on quality of inferences within the text? Are they supposed to make inferences when analyzing the text?
- ❑ What if they can do it with one piece of text, but not another, or they can do it this week, but not another?
- ❑ What text formats will we require students to analyze in this manner?
- ❑ What will constitute, "Exceeds the Standard?"

“Countries with higher PISA scores have fewer people who are confident in their entrepreneurial capabilities. Out of the innovation-driven economies, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan are among the best PISA performers but their scores on the measure of perceived capabilities or confidence in their ability to start a new business are the lowest.”

(Downloaded June 25, 2012, Test Scores vs. Entrepreneurship: PISA, TIMSS, and Confidence,” research from, *World Class Learners: Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students*, Y. Zhao)

Consider:

Creative teachers explore intellectually. They question policies, offer new research to consider, diverge from pacing guides as educationally warranted, share compelling professional reading with others, seek and offer alternative perspectives, post regularly on professional listservs, think critically about practices, and sometimes zone out of one topic while thinking about another.

Is anti-intellectualism a problem in your school?

Writer, Mark Bauerlein, speaking about today's students surfing the Internet:

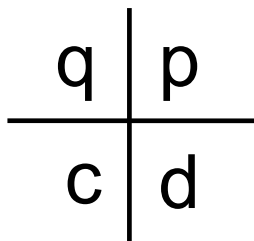
“Companionship is only a click away...Why undergo the labor of revising values, why face an incongruent outlook, why cope with disconfirming evidence, why expand the sensibility...when you can find ample sustenance for present interests? Dense content, articulate diction and artistic images are too much....They remind them of their deficiencies, and who wants that? Confirmation soothes, rejections hurts. Great art is tough, mass art is easy. Dense arguments require concentration, adolescent visuals hit home instantly.”

Big Questions We Can Solve through Creativity

- ✓How do we respond to failure: In teachers? In students? In leadership? In the system?
- ✓How do we increase time and social connections among faculty so they bump into each other and share ideas?
- ✓How are we taking advantage of diverse student population?
- ✓How do we participate in larger conversations of our profession?

Big Questions We Can Solve through Creativity

- ✓How do we build teacher self-efficacy so they can act upon innovative ideas?
- ✓How do we protect ourselves from negative politics in our instructional practice?
- ✓How do we build teacher creativity?
- ✓Other questions for which we seek solutions?



Which letter does not belong, and why?

Creativity Reminder from a Myth-buster

- http://www.ted.com/talks/how_simple_ideas_lead_to_scientific_discoveries.html

Creativity Inhibitors

- Lack of time
- Different priorities
- It's not evaluated or emphasized.
- The idea that problems have one solution.
 - Lack of practice
 - Lack of skill development in creativity
 - Lack of resources
- Entrenchment: "We've always done it this way."
(Invention of hot dog example)

- "The need to be right all the time is the biggest bar there is to new ideas." (P. 108, de Bono)
- Teachers lack autonomy:
 - ✗ Mandated scripted programs with no option to adjust it according to students' needs...
 - ✗ "We must maintain fidelity to the program..."
- ✗ Teachers are warned to plan accordingly because the paper supply will run out in January...
- ✗ The master schedule cannot be changed to accommodate a compelling guest speaker...
- ✗ Teachers can't incorporate a new "app" in their lessons because it promotes the use of personal technology that school hasn't sanctioned...
- ✗ New students are three grade levels below grade-level proficiencies but they must do well on the final exam anyway...
- ✗ No, you can't take that field trip with the class because you only get one per year, and it would be too much time away from preparing for the annual exam.

Remember,

Inducting, deducting, revealing logical fallacy/ consistency, making connections, revising thinking in light of new evidence, analyzing situations, and responding flexibly: We want those trusted to create the future via today's students to perform these tasks well.

School reformers do better to train teachers to think and act creatively than they do spending time and money teacher-proofing instruction.

- Negative attitudes towards children and colleagues who are creative.

"Teachers asked if they want creative kids in their rooms, and all said yes. When these same teachers rated their students on a variety of personality measures, the traits most closely aligned with creative thinking were also closely associated with their "least favorite" students. Those daydreamers and improvisers might have been imaginative, but they were harder to teach and they underperformed on standardized tests. As they result, they were routinely dismissed and discouraged. 'Judgements for the favorite student were negatively correlated with creativity.'" (p. 230, Lehrer)

- Giving up. "It can't be done."
 - Lack of confidence
- Perceived lack of creativity
 - Fear of looking foolish
- Peer pressure, Pressure to conform, Politics
 - Fear of failure
- Bias, preconceived notions
- Singular, myopic perspective
 - Learned helplessness

- (Sampling from Innocentive.com, page 1, downloaded June 24, 2012)
- Seeking Orthogonally Functionalized Cyclobutanes
 - Navigating the Inside of an Egg Without Damaging It
 - Cleveland Clinic: Method to Reconnect Two Tissues Without Using Sutures
 - Seeking 1H-pyrazolo[3,4-b]pyridin-3-amides
 - Synthetic Route to a Benzazepinone
 - My Air, My Health: An HHS/EPA Challenge
 - Mechanistic Proposals for a Vanadium-Catalyzed Addition of NMO to Imidazopyridazines
 - Seeking Highest and Best Commercial Application for Breakthrough Innovation in Building Technology/Structural Optimization
 - Desafio da Educaao: Como atrair pessoas talentosas para se tornar professor na rede pblica brasileira

“The problem solvers...were most effective when working at the margins of their fields...While these people were close enough to understand the challenges, they weren’t so close that their knowledge held them back and cause them to run into the same stumbling blocks as the corporate scientists.” (p. 121, Lehrer)

Check out InnoCentive at
www.innocentive.com/ar/challenge/browse

What would this look like in education?

How about some strategies to unleash my teacher's creativity?

“Creativity is making mistakes.
Art is knowing which ones to keep.”

- Scott Adams, *The Book of Positive Quotations*

Get over the fear of failure or of
looking ridiculous.

From Margaret Wheatley: “We can’t be
creative unless we’re willing to be confused.”

Do we have strong fear of failure or strong
fear of missing an opportunity? (P. 173, Seelig)

**From
[www.gagdonkey.com/
cartoons/creativity/](http://www.gagdonkey.com/cartoons/creativity/)**

Practice looking at objects, situations, ideas from different perspectives

- Argue from opponent's point of view
- Re-tell the story from a different character's point of view
- Imagine a day in the life of...(animate, inanimate)
- If decision is made, imagine the response of different groups of stake-holders
- Pursue methods to achieve empathy

Steal, borrow, and steal some more.

Incorporate others' work and ideas in your own. From T.S. Eliot: "Immature poets imitate. Mature poets steal."

Suspend judgment.

Humans naturally categorize and judge. Fight the urge to label or automatically dismiss something – which are both hard to do when in survival mode, agreed. Discern between exploring and judging, and lean toward exploration only. "Tell me more about..." "What would happen if we...?" "Have you considered...?" Choose "Yes, and..." over, "Yes, but...." comments.

Persevere.

"10,000 hours," says Malcolm Gladwell

Re-Do's & Re-Takes:
Are They Okay?

More than "okay!"
After 10,000 tries,
here's a working
light bulb. 'Any
questions?

Thomas Edison

Analyze...	Construct...
Revise...	Rank...
Decide between...	Argue against...
Why did...	Argue for...
Defend...	Contrast...
Devise...	Develop...
Identify...	Plan...
Classify...	Critique...
Define...	Rank...
Compose...	Organize...
Interpret...	Interview...
Expand...	Predict...
Develop...	Categorize...
Suppose...	Invent...
Imagine...	Recommend...

Change your verbs.

Share freely.

We are often better served by connecting ideas than we are by protecting them. (P. 22, Johnson)

P.61 – “Instead, most important ideas emerged during regular lab meetings, where a dozen or so researchers would gather and informally present and discuss their latest work. If you looked at the map of idea formation....., **the ground zero of innovation was not the microscope. It was the conference table.**”

The Fox television show, “House,” used this model frequently.

Consider: “A city that was ten times larger than its neighbor wasn’t ten times more innovative; it was seventeen times more innovative. A metropolis fifty times bigger than a town was 130 times more innovative.”

(p.10,

Johnson)

Re-Combine, Blend Across Disciplines

“Our thoughts are shackled by the familiar.” (p. 128, Lehrer) “Seasoned travelers live in ambiguity, more willing to realize that here are different and equally valid ways of interpreting the world. (p. 129)

3M rotates engineers, moving them from division to division. Why?

Writers need to see their work as an outsider. Let a week pass, then look at it afresh. Connections, weak spots, eureka moments happen!

Creativity is making connections between dissimilar things in such a way as to create something new. It's often about recombining old ideas and things for new purposes or perspectives.

From Professor Alane Starko in her book, *Creativity in the Classroom*:

Gutenberg developed the idea of movable type by looking at the way coins were stamped.

Eli Whitney said he developed the idea for the cotton gin while watching a cat trying to catch a chicken through a fence.

Pasteur began to understand the mechanisms of infection by seeing similarities between infected wounds and fermenting grapes.

Einstein used moving trains to gain insight into relationships in time and space.

“Consider Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. He did not invent the concepts of energy, mass, or speed of light. Rather he combined these ideas in a new and useful way.”

**-- Michael, Michalko, *Creative Thinkering*,
Machalko, 2011, p. xvii,**

Combination and Re-Combination

- Hall duty and Teacher Advisory
- Service Learning and Students in danger of dropping out
- Miniature Golf and lesson sequence
- Students’ cafeteria behavior and architecture
- Unmotivated faculty and farming, astronomy, or marble tabletops.
- Parental involvement and medicine

**Grades are
communication.**

Build instructional versatility.

We can't be creative with what we don't have.

Re-consider what we have around us.

Sitting in an empty parking lot, could we teach students all they needed to know about Algebra? 'Dirt floor, wooden bench, thatched hut: If this was our history classroom, could we teach students the differences between Middle Ages and Renaissance artwork?

Can we get the idea of homeostasis across to students using only elements found in cafeteria or library? How about communicating the definition of "gestalt" when comparing different linoleum patterns on the floor and ceiling tiles of our building?

Classroom Scenarios in which Creativity Can Help:

1. My whole lesson today is based on accessing those three Websites, but the school's Internet is down, so what can we do instead?

2. Small groups are not working in my class, yet I know they're important for many students' learning. How do I get these students to stay focused on their group tasks?

3. I've backed myself into a corner explaining an advanced science concept, and it's not making sense to me, let alone to my students. What should I do?

- 4. Angelica doesn't understand the concept after my explanation, but I don't know any other way to teach it. What will I do?
- 5. I'm supposed to differentiate for some of my students, but I don't see any time to do it.
- 6. My school's electronic gradebook system doesn't allow me to post anything but norm-referenced scores, and I want to be more criterion-referenced in my grades. What can I do?
- 7. Because I'm a veteran teacher, I've been asked to be the rotating teacher using a cart and moving from classroom to classroom each period so the new teacher can have his own room and not have so much to deal with his first year. How will I handle this?

<p>1 11 21 1211 111221 312211 13112221 1113213211</p>	<p>Discern the Pattern and Fill in the Last Row of Numbers</p>
<p>- From, <i>Creative Thinking</i>, 2011, Michael Michalko, p. 44</p>	

Practice generating ideas -- a lot.

Do it individually, then present generated ideas to a collegial group for critique. Samples of Generating lots of Ideas: The clock on the wall -- What is it doing? It's marking time. It's mocking my goal to prepare the school budget by this afternoon. It's decorating the office, but it's also tormenting students down the hall as they count down to the final bell, and it's representing man's evolution beyond other life-forms on earth. What is it not doing? It's not setting any speed records, nor is it declaring justice for the oppressed. It's not lobbying for tax reform, nor is it introducing new technology to the world, or compiling a list of the year's best movie one-liners.

Ways to motivate a reluctant student to read a particular book:

- Give background on the story before reading so he understands what's happening.
- Teach him the difficult vocabulary he'll encounter.
- Share the major themes first and see if any of them resonate with his own life.
- Show him the movie version.
- Bribe him.
- Have someone give testimony about the book's impact on them.
- Compare the book to one he's already read and liked.
- Let him blog or draw responses to his reading instead of writing to a prompt in hardcopy journal.
- Show how reading the book will transform his life in some way.
- Point out current events that parallel the story's conflicts.
- Let the student interview the author about how and why he wrote the novel.

Regularly do automatic tasks and let the mind roam.

Walk, run, drive a long distance without listening to music, take an extended shower or bath, wash a lot of dishes, mow the lawn, weed the garden, paint a room, crochet, clean gutters, shovel snow, stare at the ocean, watch birds for 45 minutes, swim freestyle, water walk, or tread water for an extended time. All of these put us in a more associative state.

Participate in the larger profession.

Professional inquiry via personal action research projects, Professional Learning Communities, subscriptions to professional journals, participation in on-line communities: listervs, Twitter, Blogosphere, Webinars, Nings, and Wiki's; professional conferences, instructional roundtables in the building

We get more ideas/tools, and creative people are inspired by people around them.

Read professionally and personally

Write in the margins, make personal reactions to text. Share text/comments with colleagues. Occasionally do intense, focused time immersed in one topic via Literature, blogs, videos, lectures, and other resources.

Time for a little Candor:

Many routes to true creativity are traveled outside of normal school operations. In order to live up to a school's mission, we sometimes have to part ways with its protocols. Once in a while, in a diplomatic, professional manner, be a little insubordinate. It may be the only way to live up to the promise of educating *all* children.

What goes unlearned in students because we played it politically safe?

Make it fun.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IXh2n0aPyw>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Bt1xm4w_CM

Did someone say,

**"Doe, a Deer, a
female deer?"**
