

Leading Matters Los Angeles  
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Session Notes

**Pictures and Words: Exploring the Creative Process**

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Eavan Boland

Stanford's Creative Writing Program was founded by Wallace Stegner more than 50 years ago. Stegner fellows and Jones lecturers are young working artists who share their talent with undergraduates. As part of the current trend of interdisciplinary collaborations, six designers and six writers were brought together to create graphic novels.

What does it mean to have creativity in education? All creative components of the university should be available to students. Students shouldn't have to lay aside any dreams of self-expression. Engineers and doctors will be better at what they do if they understand the place of self-expression. The challenge is to make students participate and feel involved.

Kristine Samuelson

You can't teach students to be creative, but you can provide factors that allow them to be creative. Students are paralyzed by a fear of having to be original. There are some ways to allow them to be more creative in film making:

- Put constraints on creative assignments so they feel more comfortable.
- Through a myriad of assignments that build on each other, create a scaffolding so students feel they can take on larger projects.
- To diminish a fear of coming up with film ideas, encourage students to start a digital or hard copy archive of ideas. Encourage them to be eavesdroppers and to put themselves into the heads of others.
- Limit and change the materials students are allowed to use in making films.
- Introduce students to new aesthetic approaches. Expose them to international and non-mainstream films.
- Ask them to think about incorporating other arts. Think of using narration from literature, melody and harmony from music, lighting and framing from painting and photography. MFA documentary film students are now required to take a studio art class.

Some examples of creativity in film include Theo Rigby's *Close to Home*, a five-minute black-and-white film shot on a traditional Bolex. The film was made with input

from professors and classmates at all stages, and is one step in the scaffolding process that MFA students undergo.

Another is Peter Jordan's *The Champ*, a seven-minute film shot on color negative. And there's my *An Abundance of Crows*, a trailer of a work in progress.