

## **Promoting Creativity and Play with Students**

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For 25 years I taught at Wheelock College, which came out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Kindergarten Movement and had the mission, "To improve the lives of Children and Families." Wheelock had a 130-year history of teaching with active learning and play, and no history of a traditional math curriculum. Last year, when Wheelock merged with Boston University, I became part of the full-time faculty in a much more traditional math department. This semester, I am teaching the first new course I've developed at B.U.: *Mathematical Explorations*, which is a general education course addressing outcomes in Creativity/Innovation and Oral/Signed Communication as well as in Quantitative Reasoning. In order to foster intrinsic motivation and encourage risk taking, I'm using a labor-based grading system where students are graded solely on how much time they put into the course. In the talk I'll share some pictures from our last class meeting, some student comments, and discuss both the joyful and scary aspects of teaching this course. Then we can talk together about ways to make mathematics education more joyful, playful, creative, and connecting instead of the rote, boring, anxious experience that too many students still associate with studying math.