

GRANT IDEAS: WHERE TO START

Have trouble thinking of yourself as creative? Take heart! Creative or innovative ideas can start by modifying someone else's idea. But where can you find good ideas that spark your creativity? READ ON!

1. Attend conference sessions (such as CFE's Creative Classrooms Workshop) where other teachers present their projects. Build on the ideas presented or think of a spin-off. You can also gather ideas by looking through previous Study Group Grant Catalogs or Creative Classroom's Catalog (available online). For Fund for Teachers grant ideas, refer to www.fundforteachers.org for previously funded proposals. Check out museums, educational organizations, and travel websites for proposal ideas.
2. Page through old teacher's editions/manuals. Go to the sections at the end of chapters titled: "Enrichment Activities" or "Extension Activities."
3. Build on or expand an idea someone told you about or that you saw in a museum exhibit, museum gift shop or demonstration. Then think of ways to involve parents, grandparents, volunteers, students in other classes, the arts.
4. Contact the education department of a museum. They have sample activities that you can expand for classroom use. They will even help you plan a field-trip as a starting or culminating activity.
5. Page through magazines (*Instructor, Teacher etc...*) and note features that tell about unique classroom projects or teaching tips.
6. Call a favorite methods professor and say, "I'm looking for a creative idea that will help my students better understand _____. Got any ideas? Where is the best place to look?"
7. Conduct a brain-storming or problem-solving session with your students, your principal, other teachers. EX: "What can we do to make sure all students get 85% or better on the weekly spelling test?"
8. Visit a library that has a large education department and browse through professional journals or books in which teachers share their classroom ideas. While at the library, conduct a computer search.
9. Try posting a message on the internet. Visit a website.
10. Look through your own files. No doubt you have good ideas that you have not used in a long time or even forgot you had. You'll be surprised by what a little updating can do!

NOTE: Study Group Team Member Grants do not require teachers to come up with their own ideas for a grant project or strategy. Instead, Study Group Team Members adapt the strategies outlined by Study Group Coaches.