

## Center for Creative Learning

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# Custom Consulting Projects and Services

The Center for Creative Learning offers a variety of customized project and consulting services. This information packet includes examples of several possible kinds of projects or services that we have offered for current and past clients. These illustrate the broad array of possibilities that can be created for new clients. Please keep in mind, however, that we emphasize designing all projects and services specifically to deal with the unique needs and concerns of every client.

Contact us to discuss how we can tailor any of these options to respond to your circumstances and goals! We are always willing to provide you with a specific and detailed proposal that will describe the goals, methods, outcomes, deliverables, and costs for any services that will help your team, school, or organization deal more effectively with productive thinking, talent development, or learning styles.

## Strategic and Long Range Planning: A Contemporary Process Approach

We can help your organization with the challenges of long range or strategic planning and systematic approaches to managing change. By applying contemporary process tools, our trained facilitators will guide your group in moving beyond formula-driven, prescriptive models and attaining innovative and practical results. We can assist you in formulating original mission or vision statements, and with the challenges of moving from lofty goals to practical realities. We also guide you in learning the tools we use to help support and sustain your own follow-up and to enable your group to work more effectively and powerfully on its own.

*Examples:* (a.) The board of directors of a state organization needed to clarify and define the group's vision, mission, and broad goals. Through a one-day planning session, we helped them to construct a clear statement of their future vision, a concise mission statement, and a prioritized list of major goal areas to guide their subsequent planning and program development. (b.) We have also conducted strategic planning "advances" (we don't do "retreats" because they move backwards!) for two to five days, to guide leadership groups from the initial planning stages through detailed implementation planning and preparation. We have worked with school teams, school districts, professional associations, state educational agencies, arts organizations, church groups, museums, and science centers.

## Program or Project Audit and Evaluation

The Center team can also assist you in planning and carrying out reviews, audits, or in-depth evaluations of programs or projects. We will work closely with you to assess your needs, and then to design a detailed plan that will meet your needs within your time and budget constraints. These services include a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to help you answer the questions of greatest importance and value for your key stakeholders and goals.

*Examples:* (a.) A school district with several years of experience in gifted programming desired to take stock of its present activities and services, reexamine its needs and goals, and explore ways to direct its future efforts in more powerful and contemporary approaches. We conducted site visits, observations, conferences with staff teams, and personal interviews with a variety of stakeholders. We reviewed the program's historical planning documents and evaluation data. We prepared an extensive report, integrating information about current programming approaches with data from the district, and we presented a detailed set of recommendations concerning several options for the district to consider for its future programming directions, along with documentation and study recommendations. (b.) In another setting, we worked with a district to develop a detailed program evaluation plan, to gather and analyze data from students, parents, staff and administration, and other community members, and to prepare and present a detailed evaluation report and specific recommendations for future programming services.

## Customized Curriculum Revision or Development

We can help you to incorporate productive thinking, learning styles, or talent development opportunities into existing curriculum and instructional resources — in any content area or for any age group. The process begins as your group brings us existing curriculum plans and instructional resources. We will work closely with you, providing technical assistance, support, original suggestions, and resource recommendations to help you to incorporate productive thinking, talent development, or learning style into your plans. We can also support new curriculum and instructional resource development initiatives. We can assemble a specialized team to prepare original materials for addressing creative and critical thinking, CPS, talent development, and learning styles in a content area, topic, or theme that you require. We can also conduct curriculum development workshops or institutes in which our leaders work with key participants from your organization to plan new resources, create prototype materials, support implementation, and assist in evaluation of the materials created.

*Example:* A school district was concerned with differentiating instruction more effectively for all students, and specifically with incorporating creative and critical thinking and Creative Problem Solving more effectively into its curriculum and instructional programs. We helped them to develop prototypes of new curriculum materials in several content areas and at various grade levels. We provided initial training for a core group of team leaders, including classroom visitation and conferences with teachers. We guided the initial team in working with other staff members to incorporate appropriate methods and tools in other curriculum plans and teaching units.

## Problem Identification and Problem Solving Consultation

We welcome clients who wish to bring problems, opportunities, or challenges from their organization to us for direct assistance in understanding the challenge, generating ideas, or preparing for action. We can help you appraise and analyze the situation, clarify your problems and goals, generate new options, or plan for successful implementation. Our facilitators will guide your team, with the support of additional resource people, to deal with complex challenges in any area. These are working sessions in which we focus on helping you to solve problems, identify promising new options and directions, and build success.

*Examples:* (a.) A community theater group was struggling to attract patrons and to build its attendance to a level that would insure the theater's successful, continuing existence. We worked with their staff and a resource group assembled by our Center to conduct a three hour idea generation meeting, and then we conducted follow-up meetings with the theater's representatives to assist them in preparing to implement promising ideas from the meeting. As the group implemented their plan, attendance rose to acceptable levels and community support increased significantly. (b.) A school district sought to redefine and enhance its total approach to in-service or professional development for its staff. We worked with a team of teachers, administrators, and Center resource group members to design an innovative approach to staff development that, when implemented, received highly positive responses from more than 96% of the K-12 staff, continued to grow over a period of several years, and led to the development and implementation of several school-based and district-wide innovative programs.

## Custom Search and Review of Instructional Resources

The Center maintains an extensive reference library of curriculum resources on creative thinking, critical thinking, and Creative Problem Solving, and an active reference file of reviews and evaluations of published resources. We will conduct searches of our library and data base to help you to identify appropriate curriculum options for your needs — for general process instruction, or within any curriculum area. We can provide you with a written analysis and recommendations, or, after we have completed our search and review, you can send a team to Sarasota to meet with our staff and to examine and review the recommended resources in person. (Our library resources do not circulate.)

*Example:* Several teaching teams from a middle school wanted recommendations for published curriculum resources that would promote creative and critical thinking in the areas of science and mathematics. We reviewed more than 50 published resources and studied the teams' curriculum and instructional plans. We identified more than a dozen recommended resources, and demonstrated those materials and their possible uses in the school's curriculum to the team leaders in a one day meeting at the Center; we also provided a detailed written report.

## Custom Search and Review of Assessment Resources

The Center also maintains an extensive reference library of tests, rating scales, and check lists for assessing creative thinking, critical thinking, and learning styles. We will conduct searches of our library and data base to help you to identify appropriate assessment resources for your needs and to design an appropriate assessment plan for your purposes.

*Example:* We helped a school district choose and apply specific instruments for assessing the effectiveness and impact of instruction in thinking skills on the creative thinking of students at the elementary level.

## Team Building Through Personal Style Assessment

The Center has developed a new instrument, *VIEW: An Assessment of Problem Solving Style<sup>sm</sup>*, that can help teams, committees, or task forces to collaborate more effectively, build constructive interpersonal relations among members, and recognize and tap the strengths and preferences of each team member. Understanding the results of this powerful tool, which individuals can complete in less than 15 minutes, will help large and small groups in their efforts to work together, solve problems, and manage change.

*Example:* We worked with the administrative leadership council of a local school district to help them understand the style diversity of their members, to understand the strengths and unique contributions of various style members and how to use them to attain more effective and productive results when defining problems, generating ideas, preparing for action, and communicating with various stakeholders.



Contact the Center office to arrange for a free consultation about ways we can help your organization. We arrange for programs at your site, at a conference or training facility of your choice, or by working with your group in Sarasota. We can help you to arrange accommodations and meeting facilities for any size group, ranging from modern, economical hotels to luxurious resorts directly on our Gulf of Mexico beaches. Many groups also arrange to visit the near-by tourist attractions in Orlando or Tampa before or after their working sessions with us.

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