

# Faculty Professional Growth Summer Project Final Report Draft

Use this Word template to compose your responses to questions that are part of the new online summer project application form, and take advantage of spell checking. You can then cut and paste this to the online system.

Do not bother with fancy formatting as none is preserved in the online form.

## Summer Project Title

Developing Creative Thinking Using Software in Teaching and Faculty Work.

## Abstract

Write a concise summary with descriptive information about your project, location, time span, your relationship to it, etc. Include specific information-- since you have completed your project, your knowledge is valuable and can be shared with your colleagues (200 word limit).

Between May 17 and June 14, 2004 I worked on tutorials and applied exercises with the IdeaFisher Brainstorming and Creativity software in Phoenix. Specifically, I used IdeaFisher to define problems, brainstorm new and creative ideas, generate solutions, organize information, and evaluate choices. Three overarching benefits seemed to accrue: First, I gained a strong understanding of how to create and apply extended metaphor to speech writing and other forms of composition. Not only will this benefit me in my own applications, it will allow me to teach this important creative skill to students. Second, using the QBank component of the software was especially beneficial as it applied to problem solving and conflict management. Again, this activity helped me to develop new directions in my approaches to several professional activities, including program development, and it also will be a specific skill I can train students and staff to utilize. Third, I conducted extensive reading and developed a bibliography for future research and writing on creative problem solving and brainstorming. I hope to use these materials in a future project to develop a professional presentation on the application of these skills in teaching communication and conflict management.

## Outcomes

In a paragraph or two describe what worked well. Did you accomplish your objective(s)? Were you able to complete your summer project as written? If not, what did you modify and why? What did not go as well as expected, if anything? Were there any surprises? **Note: Use the questions as guides for your outcomes. Do not include detailed list of workshops attended, speakers who presented, or a list of items you have seen, heard, or read.**

Generally, the project worked well and I was able to complete it as written. The only surprise was that the application of the software to real problem issues took longer than I anticipated. In fact, on open ended problem solving issues, using the software seems to make the resolution of the issue take longer than it does working without the software. I think this is because the software helps the user generate many more possibilities and raise many more questions than working without the software. On the other hand, as previous research in the area suggests, working with such software helps the user work better away from the software tool. Therefore, it clearly was beneficial for me to use a powerful creativity tool such as IdeaFisher.

**Professional Growth**

Your own professional growth is a large part of your project. Your professional growth is important to you, your students, your college, and possibly other colleagues. How did project affect you professionally? What skills did you learn? What environments were you working in and how might your summer project influence your teaching or other responsibilities? Did you gain a different perspective? Was it professionally valuable for you?

I grew substantially as a professional as a result of this project. As I indicated above, I learned a software tool that will help me be more creative teaching communication, conducting conflict mediation and administering the program, problem-solving in my academic and administrative committee assignments, and managing behavioral problems. Though this software has many tangible applications in academia and business, its approach is very artistic and creative. I believe the use of this software has helped me to develop a more creative and artistic approach to my teaching discipline and other professional responsibilities.

**Dissemination**

How will you share this information with your colleagues, department, students, or campus?

I will share this information primarily by incorporating the lessons I learned into specific learning activities that I can integrate into the communication classes I teach. I might also conduct a "brown bag" seminar for interested colleagues. Finally, I can provide sources and materials to interested parties as appropriate.