

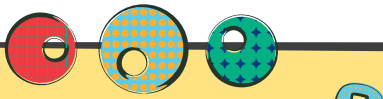


Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

17. CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

Creative activities is one of four constructive-use-of-time assets.

21% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Create assignments that require students to use their creative talents.
- Assign creative activities as homework.
- Give students time to join after-school activities: think of that as homework too, and plan your own assignments accordingly.
- Encourage talents by going to concerts, attending plays, and going to student art shows.

Becoming Well-Rounded

Art, music, theater, and other creative activities are just as critical to a student's overall development as math, science, and English. It's important to allow

space for students to find, be involved in, and be successful in music, theater, or other arts.

That doesn't diminish the importance of what you do every day, however. Your classroom counts, your work counts, and your lessons count. Students should be expected to perform well and consistently in your classes. But if you want to be teaching engaged, well-rounded students, you have to provide opportunities for them to *become* well-rounded.

In doing so, you don't have to compromise on class work or studying, but think about incorporating their creative activities into their homework and schoolwork. Be creative yourself!



- Give unstructured assignments where students can demonstrate an understanding of the material in a creative format.
- Balance time for homework with time for after-school activities.
- Allow them to do a major in-class assignment in a creative way.

Your goal is to build a vibrant and engaging classroom environment where kids love to learn;

allowing them to bring in their personal interests can serve your classroom well.

Creative Thinking

Just like your students, it's absolutely critical that you have interests outside of school. We can see the enthusiasm in our students' eyes when they're involved in the things that make them happy: sports, acting, drama, visual arts. You deserve to have that same excitement. Your outside interests make you happy and keep you motivated, and that's why you should remember to make time for them, even if you don't feel you can.

A good way to make time for hobbies while also making time for work relationships is to put the two together. Doing so will help sustain you *and* foster your relationships with coworkers. Here are just a few examples of how to do that:

- If you have other colleagues who are interested in visual arts, organize a staff art time using the school arts resources.
- Form a musical ensemble with other musical staff.

- Form a writing club where you share your own works of poetry or fiction.
- Form a book club that meets monthly (or as often as you have time).
- Paint a staff mural on a wall of the school.
- Hold a teacher talent show and invite students and parents.



In doing activities such as these, you are not only focusing on what's important to you, you're also creating a staff climate and culture that is based on creativity and interests—something that goes a long way toward making your school a great place to teach.