

1) If you've never done it before, submit a poster to a conference. It's a well established format, so it's not going to upset the academy; it's just going to help you practise taking risks.

2) Physically chop up something you're working on into sections and re-arrange it in different configurations; not just linearly. Keep rearranging and see what emerges when you change the connections in your research.

3) How much colour do you have in your work? Invest in a pack of felt tips or crayons and use them freely. Maybe get some stickers too.

6) Find the space where your mind wanders and go there.

7) Seek out 'interdisciplinary' events or projects: discipline boundaries have already come down and there's a sense of openness and exploration; an ideal space in which to take a risk.

8) Want to try delivering something in a new way? How about in a seminar in your institution? It's not too formal, and you're amongst familiar faces.

4) Take a draft of a piece of your writing and illustrate it with stick people and images in the margins. Reflect on what emerges.

5) 1) Raid the recycling bag for magazines, then 2) think about any aspect of your research, then 3) start cutting and sticking without worrying about the outcome.

TAKE LITTLE STEPS

SEEK OUT CREATIVE SPACES

20 IDEAS FOR KICK-STARTING YOUR ACADEMIC CREATIVITY

9) Want to try delivering something in a new way? How about in a seminar somewhere else? People have (maybe) got less of an idea of who you are. There are no preconceptions. What a way to make a splash!

10) Find public engagement opportunities. Engaging the public with our research requires us to bring them into the mix and that means we have to think differently.

11) Play helps with innovation (Gross & Do 2009). Get out the Lego, plan a treasure hunt, turn your research into a Monopoly-esque game, make a costume and act out an aspect of your research.

12) Question why you're not doing something differently. Is there a good reason why not? Would there be a good reason to do it differently?

THINK DIFFERENTLY

LEARN FROM OTHERS

16) Seek wisdom and inspiration from people writing and speaking about creativity. Rod Judkins' 'The art of creative thinking' is packed with ideas, and there's a wealth of inspiration to be found in TED talks.

17) Go out and seek inspiration: visit a gallery, listen to a piece of music, go to a museum, go for a walk.

13) Do you do any crafts (knitting, candlemaking...) or have any hobbies (baking, orienteering...)? Have you ever tried doing an aspect of your research with or through them? Try it.

14) Think about your research journey. Think about what's happening and what you're doing and feeling. How could this awareness shape what you're doing and where you're going?

15) Got a totally radical idea you love, but scared to go for it? Is what's stopping you really a valid reason not to?

18) Have a conversation with someone about part of your research you'd never imagine having that conversation with. What comes out of it?

19) Talk to the people in your office, your institution, your network. And people who've got nothing to do with your area. What different things are they doing?

20) Look at how your or your friends' children tackle a task. Try emulating their approach.