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# **Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity**

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# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

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## Qualities most employers look for in students they hire are:

- the ability to clearly and effectively communicate information in oral and written forms
- competency in decision-making and problem solving is also crucial as this enables them to utilize creativity, resources, evaluation and judgement and systems thinking to arrive at a decision

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

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## Goal of Presentation:

- describe and share learning from different written and oral communication activities directed at improving competencies of communicating and creative problem solving

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Assignments

- Term-poster presentation preceded by weekly abstracts
- Extemporaneous presentations
- Journaling coupled with reflection papers
- Interviewing a leader and presenting a written and oral report on the interview
- Oral and written presentation of service learning project planning and execution

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Words To Remember

- Everyone has creative potential
- Criticism and closed-mindedness are creativity killers

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Creativity Is Not...

- Confining
- Exclusive
- Change for the sake of change

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Defining Creativity

- Create come from a Latin word meaning “to grow”
- Creativity is an implementation of new ideas or methods or the use of existing practices in a unique or innovative way
- Examples: use of term posters, journals, service learning



## Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

# Essential Characteristics Of Creativity in Assignments

- Novelty: creativity involves processes never before utilized or experienced...inspiring, motivating, captivating to recipients of presentation



# Essential Characteristics Of Creativity in Assignments

- Usefulness: has a practical, functional value...is effective, improves an existing paradigm
- Reproducibility: approach or experience can be repeated, duplicated

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## The Success Creativity Can Bring

If develop creativity, one can become skilled at:

- solving problems
- Advertising
- Lobbying to resolve issues
- “Forgotten Anniversaries” - good for the home life!

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## How Could Creativity Benefit the Instructor?

- Creativity can be effective in solving problems in the classroom
- In helping see solutions to problems in one's institution



# Ways to Enhance Personal Creativity

- Gain Experience
  - ◆ Reading more (surf the net to become proficient at the knowledge base)
  - ◆ Travel to other locations to elicit a new experience
  - ◆ Engage in Personal Reflection on the learning of the day



# Enhancing Personal Creativity (cont.)

- Explore and inter-link Hobbies
- Ask more questions
- Spend time with creative people; observe and engage them
- Borrowing from others and building (Hitchhiking) on their experiences



# Brainstorming: The Answer To Our Prayers

## Value of a Brainstorming session

- ◆ Generates robust list of ideas
- ◆ Changes Attitudes
- ◆ Develops sense of Confidence
- ◆ Builds Team commitment

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## Brainstorming (cont.)

- Principles
  - ◆ Stay focused on topic
  - ◆ Encourage wild ideas
  - ◆ Defer judgment (Criticism Kills)
  - ◆ Build on the ideas of others



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## Brainstorming (cont.)

- Rules & Norms
  - ◆ NO CRITICISM is allowed
  - ◆ The more ideas the better
  - ◆ The wilder the better
  - ◆ One conversation at a time
  - ◆ Honor and encourage each other in the process

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## OK, So These Are Effective Too!

- **Plugging**
  - ◆ Essential components of an existing paradigm are kept and improved upon
- **Story boarding**
  - ◆ A basic map of your new ideas and goals

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## Creativity In The Classroom

- ATTENTION DEFICIT
- Fault of student or fault of teacher?
- Everyone has some capability



# Helpful Suggestions for bringing more creativity

- Use latest technologies
- Ask extensive questions to experts
- Provide as much hands-on and class participation as possible
- Always seek to be student centered and enhance their self-regulation of learning



# The Five C's of Classroom Creativity

- Character coveted
  - ◆ Persona
  - ◆ Fictitious entity
- Colorful Stories get told
- Comedy relieves stress
- Constructive comments craved
- Competition adds energy



# Creativity In An Assignments

- Use creative planning and action to exact change in your assignments
- It will be necessary due to changing mosaic of students

# A Simple Method

- Again determine the most essential values and goals
  - ◆ Those that **HAVE** to exist in order for your course to continue to exist or to evolve
- Devise **VERY TO THE POINT** objectives and frameworks for learning
- Use constant and continued **PLANNING** - adapt regularly



## A Simple Method (cont.)

- Devise an **EFFECTIVE** form of **INSTITUTIONAL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY** contact and interaction for the class
- Perpetually recruit and inform students about your ideas
- **NEVER TAKE A HOSTILE APPROACH** to those that oppose you



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## Remember

- Creativity is an inclusive growth process
- Characteristics
  - ◆ Novelty
  - ◆ Usefulness
  - ◆ Reproducibility

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## Remember

- Enhance your personal creativity through constructive
  - ◆ Experiences
  - ◆ Hobbies
  - ◆ Questioning
  - ◆ Association

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Remember

- BRAINSTORMING
- Plugging
- Story boarding

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Remember

- The five C's of classroom creativity
  - ◆ Character
  - ◆ Colorful stories
  - ◆ Comedy
  - ◆ Constructive comments
  - ◆ Competition

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## Remember

- Steps for curricular Change
  - ◆ Essential goals
  - ◆ To the point objectives within a framework
  - ◆ Long term planning developed

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

## Remember

- Steps for Change
  - ◆ Effective communication and contacts
  - ◆ Perpetual recruiting and informing
  - ◆ Decline initial hostility towards adversity

# Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity



**Examples of  
Communication  
Assignments to stimulate  
creativity**

## Assignment

## Description

## Impact

Term-posters

Undergraduate students built an understanding of the problems and science through weekly abstracts. Students then assembled their presentation on poster boards using a scientific presentation format. Posters from the entire class were displayed on poster nights where students made a 3-4 minute presentation to a committee of evaluators reinforcing a simulated conference setting.

Students were able to demonstrate incredible creativity in the way they illustrated and presented the issue, problem or concept. Their ability to discuss the concepts and arrive at solutions was reinforced.

Oral presentations

Students are given an opportunity to select a topic representing a current agricultural issue and then given 30 minutes to prepare a 5 minute team presentation to the class. presentations are scored on creativity, innovation, content and delivery effectiveness.

The students had typically studied many of the issues over the course of the term and therefore, the presentations were an effective method of co-learning and integrating concepts.

Journaling coupled with reflection papers

Students were asked to journal several times each week during the term on topics of leadership, agricultural issues and challenging problems presented by people. Every couple weeks, students submitted a 2 page paper demonstrating a reflection on the topics being discussed in class.

Students developed a reflective process in their writing and ability to apply concepts to their personal lives

Interviewing a leader and presenting a written and oral report on the interview

Students developed interview questions, planned and organized the interview opportunity, practiced people skills in conducting the interview and then shared their learning experience to classmates

Allows students to practice leadership characteristics while learning about them. Creates a deeper sense of learning of the topic of leadership.



## Pedagogical Experiences with Written and Oral Communication Assignments Designed to Stimulate Creativity

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**Abstract:** Of the qualities most employers look for in students they hire, the ability to clearly and effectively communicate information in oral and written forms ranks toward the top of most lists. Embedded in this competency is the ability to influence others and enhance credibility with an audience. A competency in decision-making and problem solving is also crucial as this enables them to utilize creativity, resources, evaluation and judgement and systems thinking to arrive at a decision. Over the years, a number of avenues to help students develop these competencies have been explored and depending on the course, assignments have differed in their complexities and expectations. These pedagogical approaches will be briefly described. The courses from which experiences have been drawn are: 1) two Animal Science courses, Value-based Analysis of Livestock, and Growth and Development, 2) an Agricultural Issues course, and 3) an Agricultural Leadership course. The assignments that will be shared have been: a) Term-poster presentation preceded by weekly abstracts, b) Extemporaneous presentations, c) Journaling coupled with reflection papers, d) Interviewing a leader and presenting a written and oral report on the interview, and e) Oral and written presentation of service learning project planning and execution. The purpose of this presentation is to share some thoughts on creativity and provide examples of assignments used to stimulate creativity in the classroom while providing opportunity for students to practice communication skills.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Term-posters	Undergraduate students built an understanding of the problems and science through weekly abstracts. Students then assembled their presentation on poster boards using a scientific presentation format. Posters from the entire class were displayed on poster nights where students made a 3-4 minute presentation to a committee of evaluators reinforcing a simulated conference setting.	Students were able to demonstrate incredible creativity in the way they illustrated and presented the issue, problem or concept. Their ability to discuss the concepts and arrive at solutions was reinforced.

<p><b>Oral presentations</b></p>	<p>Students are given an opportunity to select a topic representing a current agricultural issue and then given 30 minutes to prepare a 5 minute team presentation to the class. presentations are scored on creativity, innovation, content and delivery effectiveness.</p>	<p>The students had typically studied many of the issues over the course of the term and therefore, the presentations were an effective method of co-learning and integrating concepts.</p>
<p><b>Journaling coupled with reflection papers</b></p>	<p>Students were asked to journal several times each week during the term on topics of leadership, agricultural issues and challenging problems presented by people. Every couple weeks, students submitted a 2 page paper demonstrating a reflection on the topics being discussed in class.</p>	<p>Students developed a reflective process in their writing and ability to apply concepts to their personal lives</p>
<p><b>Interviewing a leader and presenting a written and oral report on the interview</b></p>	<p>Students developed interview questions, planned and organized the interview opportunity, practiced people skills in conducting the interview and then shared their learning experience to classmates</p>	<p>Allows students to practice leadership characteristics while learning about them. Creates a deeper sense of learning of the topic of leadership.</p>
<p><b>Oral and written presentation of service learning project planning and execution</b></p>	<p>Students were given a task of thinking creatively and innovatively to plan and engage in an original service learning project. Students prepared a written and oral team presentation.</p>	<p>Allows students the opportunity to explore learning outside the boundaries of the classroom and bring their creativity to the solutions of problems or issues.</p>