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Dear faculty colleagues,

Welcome to the 10th issue of lessons! We at CTLE are celebrating this anniversary issue by concentrating on creativity; its rewards and its challenges. One of the challenges that our student writers met beautifully in this issue was broadening our perceptions of creativity out of Fine Arts, to encompass other disciplines on campus. How faculty members incorporate new discoveries into our classrooms, and teach in novel ways, made for some fun interviews and interesting reading. I hope some of you gain inspiration from what our students have written.

Please take a moment to visit our online version of lessons, and post your letter to the editor there. There is usually no lack of opinion amongst faculty on a variety of things and I, for one, would love to hear what you are thinking about creativity, about past issues of lessons, or about future directions we might take.
Classes for Creativity?

By Ruby Wang
Photos by Marie Hendrickson

Is one's intelligence merely measured by his or her verbal and mathematical abilities? Should intelligence also be determined by one's aptitude for creativity?

Why is school no longer fun? What has happened to education since kindergarten and grade school? Neil Postman, chair of the department of culture and communication and professor of media ecology at New York University, said, "Children enter school as question marks and leave as periods."

Children awake each morning looking forward to going to school, eager to find out what new things they will learn. They ask questions continually, impatient to know the answer. At the end of the day, they come home excited to share their experiences with their family and anxious for tomorrow's activities.

In stark contrast, young adults awake each morning dreading school, hoping to find classes cancelled due to weather conditions or a teacher's absence.

According to Cheryl Wright, associate professor in the family and consumer studies department and director of the child and family development center, "We are trying to reignite the desire for learning and excitement that used to take place during early childhood." Wright's dilemma is that there is a minimal level of learning at the college level due to a lack of interest on the student's part and the necessity of creativity from the teacher.

Wright's class, Creativity and Cognition in Young Children, was designed to examine the early learning environments of young children. Originally developed by Wright, this class breaks away from traditional classroom models and uses more hands-on activities. "This class is a new approach to teaching as it draws students into the field of learning," Wright stated. "I find that students always enjoy more interaction than lecture because we must try different things since it's never fun to just sit and listen to presentations." Students enrolled in the class are encouraged to enhance and explore creative teaching curriculum. Rather than constant lecturing, Wright stimulates creative thinking through numerous interactive experiences, such as observing young children in a classroom setting, group activities, creative projects, and kinesthetic learning.

Because creative cognition is a vital element to learning
in early childhood, part of this class included observing pre-school children’s creative and cognitive development. Interesting enough, students noticed that ideas in which young children believed were creative were in fact, not very creative but sometimes boring from a college student’s point-of-view. However, students were able to “re-learn” the meaning of creativity from a child-like perspective. As well, for extra credit students enrolled in an affiliated course called “Child Development Practicum” in order to gain experience working with children.

Class assignments included writing letters to teachers with whom students identified over the years. This activity forced students to reflect why and how certain teachers have been influential mentors as well as evaluate their own learning styles. According to Wright, today’s education system is geared toward auditory learners. However, there is only a small percent of students who find auditory learning effective. On the contrary, more students prefer learning through visual and sensual experiences. “Without a doubt, the more senses you can engage the more powerful learning is,” said Wright.

In Wright’s class, many group activities and creative projects were both educational and interesting for the students. For example, students participated in Lego building contests. They also formed academic teams where students would come up with creative questions for reviewing exams. They had fun drawing a mural of a family environment which facilitates creative and cognitive development. They even illustrated “an exciting learning opportunity” which intimidated many students because they were worried about their artistic abilities. They built things out of recycled materials like toilet paper rolls, film canisters, all types of paper, water bottles, coat hangers, and even tin cans. According to Wright, this was an open-ended assignment that encouraged students to come up with the creative designs. All of the exercises enabled students to let their imagination run wild and inspired creative thinking.

“College students have been so used to the idea of anonymity by sitting and listening in class that they have become uncomfortable with the basic physical aspect of learning,” commented Wright. For this reason, Wright incorporates kinesthetic learning into her teaching to help students not only be more comfortable with their physical movement but also facilitate multi-tasking. Students stood up and moved around the classroom while thinking and responding to her questions. If they try to answer a question, they throw a basketball in a basket placed at the center of the room when they answer correctly.

Why don’t college students go on field trips? Was it only something for grade schoolers? Perhaps as another effective teaching strategy, college instructors can incorporate field trips and more outdoor activities into the learning process in order to motivate students. “Multi-sensory and social experiences are the most effective learning strategies because they are not just objective but fun and educational,” said Wright. “Being creative will make you the best in the field because it’s so interdisciplinary.” Indeed, creative abilities will help everyone become better thinkers and problem solvers.

Meanwhile on the other side of campus, Elizabeth DeWitte, adjunct professor in the art department, teaches Creative Problem Solving. According to DeWitte, every semester the class is different because the dynamics of the students change. Sometimes students feed off of each other’s ideas while other classes need to be pushed. In class, students do a lot of puzzle solving. One group activity involves dividing the class into groups of four to five, and over a two-week period, they have to come up with a different application to something that is used and seen everyday. A good example is using car keys as jewelry. The teams compete against each other to come up with the most creative solution to a problem. Teams are assigned complex tasks such as suspending a cup using three cups and three knives. In the end the students that experiment with possibilities triumph. “Experimentation is a key to creativity.” Dewitte recommends students to solve a problem using as simple as the “diamond method.” The diamond method begins with the problem in mind. Then students think of many solutions. And finally narrow it back down to one solution. “When it comes to creatively solving a problem, it’s all about breaking out of the mold,” DeWitte concluded.

There are also some interesting classes that stimulate creative thinking in the English and writing departments at the University. Professor Heidi Blitch, an adjunct faculty member since 1998, teaches Introduction to Creative Writing which prepares students for 3000- and higher levels of writing. Parallel to incorporating creativity, the English department allows instructors to teach the class however they want just as long as both poetry and fiction writing are taught. “Students come to writing classes wanting tips on form and preset ideas but this class does the complete opposite by readjusting students’ thinking and de-emphasizing structure,” said Blitch. “It forces students to work outside of their comfort zone because the common writing standards that have been taught since high school may not always be useful but in fact tie you down when writing stories like Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings!”

In the class, Blitch works with students on writing free verse poetry and creating original stories with fictional characters. She tries to give students enough freedom so that students can play with their own ideas. For example, one writing assignment requires students to imagine a fictional character and describe a space associated with the character without using the character in the piece at all. Other creative assignments include asking the students to write about a “fender-bender” argument giving two contrasting viewpoints and re-imaging what they see as metaphors of certain poetry and coming up with their own ideas.
using free prose. “Students often find it more difficult to think and write when they are not limited with any set rules,” said Blitch. To help students better Blitch uses additional materials such as Stacy Ricktor’s “A Date With Satan,” a short story of insane, obscene characters dating Satan, as well as scholarly essays discussing the use of adjectives.

Closely related to Blitch’s class is Francois Camoin’s Creative Nonfiction Workshop for students seeking a master’s degree. Francois Camoin, professor of English and director of the Writing Program for 25 years, quotes Irving Lehman while teaching a class on clay-making, “Don’t make ashtrays - don’t make something useful and ordinary, be creative and come up with something new and different.” When teaching students on how to write nonfiction, Camoin suggests, “Don’t use imagination because the real world we live in offers interesting aspects that are far beyond the imagination, so writing a story about the details of even the littlest things such as a thumbnail is possible.” Camoin also discourages students to write about matter that can be summed up in normal terms. “The whole idea is ambiguity and uncertainty,” added Camoin. “In general, grad students accept being uncertain better than undergrads because they don’t try to look for a definite answer in everything which is the key to creative writing.”

Joseph Bentley, professor of management at the School of Business, also teaches masters students a creativity-related business management class called “Enhancing Creativity in Business.” In Bentley’s opinion, the turbulence and turmoil in today’s business world are primarily caused by the constant changing of rules, people, and technology. “There is a need for coming up with new, different and better ways to answering age-old problems rather than simply resolving to new rules and means of technology,” said Bentley. Given this premise, Bentley attempts to teach creative ideas and solutions to significant problems in not only the business field but life in general. The course focuses on (1) the development of creative talent: creative thinking, creative problem solving; (2) the importance of organizational climate in supporting and encouraging creativity; and (3) exploration of the relationship between creative thinking and product/process innovations and improvements in business organizations.

Bentley encourages creativity by disregarding the normal restrictions of a structured class setting. The first page of syllabus packet reads, NO SCHOOL TODAY!! - a catchy phrase that will surely draw students’ attention. According to Bentley, this almost misleading yet inventive way of inviting University students to his class is effective and keeps students in the class. Also, Bentley forces the students to think and create their own grading standards by which they will abide throughout the semester. Another interesting aspect of the class are the titles of the supplemental texts: “Orbiting the Giant Hairball” and “Weird Ideas that Work.”

Among many creative assignments, Bentley has the students keep a record of what they learn during the course as well as designing a creativity portfolio. For instance, one student had his daughter illustrate the portfolio while another student attached her works on the outside of a box. Another fun class exercise involves the development of a new innovative product or service and taking the idea into production by creating a prototype and ideas of how to distribute the product. Bentley’s goal was for students to use their creative abilities and develop better, useful, different, cheaper, faster, more fun and outrageous products and services in which the public never thought of or knew they needed but would benefit the world. Students worked on this project with two or three other students by brainstorming new ideas. The rules were: everything works, no criticism, no judgment, break rules!

In addition to the creative portfolio and product-inventing activities, students had to plan and carry out a personal creative experience that takes them into territory they were not familiar with or competent in. For example, one of the results of this imaginative task was that students feasted one night eating foods their peers cooked or dishes they have never tried nor cooked before. “I love when students have fun while exploring different new possibilities,” remarked Professor Bentley. “My objective and the purpose of this class is for students to learn to expand their own creativity as well as collaborating with others.” Clearly, Bentley’s class encourages the idea of “getting-out-of-the-box” with stimulating, creative assignments and activities.

Instead of traditional lectures, papers and exams, perhaps incorporating more creativity into university classes will reignite that feeling of excitement as we awake each morning and actually look forward to learning and attending school. Creativity can no doubt be applied across disciplines and into every facet of life. Experimenting and going “out on a limb” to do things that are not of the norm makes people not only more successful but flexible. Rules can be broken. Stimulating creative over conventional thinking pushes boundaries and provides creative solutions which will help students become skillful employees, managers and educators in the future.
OUR VERY OWN MASTERS OF CREATIVITY

BY BECKY JENSEN

Stepping into a college classroom for the first time can be difficult for students. Likewise, instructors face similar difficulties. Everyday, professors and graduate students face the challenge of presenting interesting lessons in front of dozens, even hundreds of students. Many professors take the traditional route to present material: lecturing straight out of the textbook. However, some professors on campus take the route less traveled, striving to use as much creativity in their presentations as possible. Professor Geoffrey Klinger, in the department of communication, and Shari Willis, a graduate student teaching in the health education department are two instructors who incorporate creativity into their lessons.

It was a seemingly routine day for the students in communication 1270 Analysis of Argument. However, on this fall morning, Professor Klinger, or “Geoff,” as he prefers to be called by his students, had other ideas. The class of 100 students meets in a large auditorium complete with a stage on which the professor lectures. Klinger, however, sits cross-legged on top of a table in the middle of the stage. He lectures without notes, and appears comfortable doing so. However, on this particular day, five minutes after class was supposed to begin, the restless class wondered where was their professor. Suddenly from the side door of the stage, walked in Klinger, wearing nothing but a classic Greek toga. The day’s lecture was on the history of argumentation and rhetoric in Roman times. Again, no notes were used, and despite the potentially dull material, Klinger made sure to keep the class’s attention as he strutted on stage, donning his white toga.

This would not be the last of Professor Klinger’s creativity in the classroom. His non-traditional lecture style was sometimes difficult for students to follow. Some students complained that the material was not being directly taken out of the textbook and nothing was written on the board. Students not used to the creative approach found it difficult to know what to include in their notes. It was also hard to know what material would be on the test. Professor Klinger believes that students learn best not by taking notes, but by listening and engaging in the lecture. “My favorite students are those who don’t take notes, but rather pay full attention through watching and listening.”

David Reichner, a senior in communication, had mixed feelings about Klinger’s creative teaching style. “His attempt to teach was good, but what he was going to be grading on was unclear. He tried to make the class atmosphere very calm and relaxed, but the tests were hard, and down to business.”

As the history of argumentation lectures continued, so did Klinger’s creativity. At the next class meeting, he turned off all of the lights in the room and dressed in a medieval-style hooded robe. He taught by candlelight about how religion and rhetoric were related and represented during early Christianity through the Middle Ages. On this particular day, there were rumblings from the class about not being able to take notes because it was so dark. Many students didn’t appreciate Klinger’s creative methods of teaching. They felt that they had to write down everything that was said in order to do well in the course. However, there were some students who felt that these dress-up lectures were humorous and more interesting than a professor who might just stand and read overheads or textbook notes.

Of all Professor Klinger’s creative lectures and class meetings, the one that stood out was being the best attempt at creative teaching for senior Matt Deakin was his final lecture on the history of argumentation. “He really blew us all away with that one. I’ve never seen any teacher do anything like that.” The lecture was based on the controversial theorist Marshall McLuhan, and his book, “The Medium is the Message.” Professor Klinger used several mediums that were available to him in the classroom, such as the VHS projection screen, compact disc players, and brought in an additional television and VCR. Again, the lights were dimmed, and Klinger read excerpts from McLuhan’s book by candlelight and flashlight. One by one, Klinger turned on the television, played a tape to be shown on the big projection screen, and played songs on the CD players. The point of the lecture was to demonstrate that the public is bombarded with many aspects of the media and through many mediums. All of the televisions and CD
On a typical day, Willis begins her classes with a five or
 ten minute critical thinking exercise. These exercises encourage
 students to think and focus by coupling real-life situations with
 "what would you do?" scenarios. An exercise science major,
 junior Kristy Bemis, said that no two days are exactly alike in
 Willis' class. Bemis remembers one of Willis' creative exercises,
 "she gave us a scenario in which one or more of the people
 involved did something that could be considered morally wrong
 or unethical. We had to decide which of the people in the story
 was most at fault, or was most wrong, and why. It was very
 interesting and made me think."

 Willis also incorporated her creativity in selecting guest
 speakers. She invited a member of the Salt Lake City sheriff's
 department to talk to the class about abuse. "I called the sheriff's
 department to get some figures about a particular subject, and
 the person on the phone said they could just come down and
 speak to the class. The class learned a lot from him. So many
 people in our community have no ideas what the actual facts
 and statistics are." Variation in presenting course material
 is always a creative way to spice up the curriculum.

 Willis always found interesting visual
 aids to accompany her lectures. Some
 of the tools she used were pictures of
 affected body parts of people with certain
 sexually transmitted diseases, commanding
 immediate class attention. She also gave
 her students the option to either take tests
 or write reaction papers about the material
 from class. "In sexuality, your opinion really
 matters. It is your morals that determine
 how you feel about sexual subjects. I want
 my students to think for themselves, and
 then explain why they think the way they
do." Willis often has the class engage in
 open discussions of topics such as whether
 or not oral sex is considered to be sex. It
 is discussions like these that keep the class
 creative and keep the students' attention.

 In addition, Willis has shown videos
 about female circumcisions in Africa,
 people addicted to pornography, and a
 CNN series, "Sex Stories." The fact that
 she takes time to record and bring in
 these excerpts makes a difference to her
 students. "It is so much better to actually
 see interesting videos and listen to her
 strange little facts than sitting in a class
 taking notes on something that we can read
 for ourselves out of the book," commented
 Jessica Sperry, another of Willis' students.

 Whether a professor performs for his
 class as a rapper, or a graduate instructor
 letting her students talk about sex, it's
 obvious that creativity exists on our
 campus. At the U many professors have
 a unique way of expressing themselves in
 their classrooms. Creativity can be difficult
to teach, but faculty can use their creativity
to make learning fun.

"Builders of Babylon" S.L. Margolies (1937). Courtesy Mary Francey at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts
Voices

"Creativity in the classroom is using whatever methods will spark the interest of the students and help them understand the materials to be learned that particular teaching session."

JOANNE WRIGHT
Dean, College of Health

The biggest challenge to creativity in the classroom is being "pre-tenure... conservatism pays, and innovation is risky."

PETER T. MARTIN
Professor, Civil Engineering

"Creative activity could be described as a type of learning process where teacher and pupil are located in the same individual."

ARTHUR KOESTLER

"Creativity in the classroom is a balancing act. You plan to share your information but you need to encourage creative responses in class discussions. This requires taking a risk to go on a tangent and encourage the creative impulse. You need to give assignments that build upon the creative experience in class."

TARLA RAI PETERTER
Professor, Communication

"Sometimes I don't like being graded on creativity... as a student you start to worry about what the teacher is looking for, as a result you are only being as creative as the teacher will let you be, not as much as you can be."

WILLIAM STONEHOUSE
Junior, Finance

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

"Being creative will make you the best in the field because it is so interdisciplinary."

CHERYL WRIGHT
Professor, Family & Consumer Studies

"Experimentation is the key to creativity."

ELIZABETH DEWITTE
Professor, Art

"Ah, good taste! What a dreadful thing! Taste is the enemy of creativeness."

PABLO PICASSO

"A large part of being creative is to let go, to surrender, and give into your ideas- to stop censoring."

MEGHAN COOLEY
Asst. Professor, Modern Dance

"You must get out of the catalogue of your mind. You have to play. You can't be driven by somebody else's agenda. You've got to give yourself permission to make mistakes..."

FRED MONTAGUE
Professor, Biology

"Some classes don't require creativity as much as other classes. For example: with sophomores and juniors, the task is to open them up to perspectives that might facilitate creative thought at a later point... but I don't test them on it."

PHIL EMMLI
Professor, Urban Planning & Architecture

"Creativity is innate, but we forget it, so it has to be relearned."

DONNA WHITE
Professor, Modern Dance

"My classroom simply oozes with creativity. My single most important job is to channel it and encourage it."

ROBERT BREAULT
Professor, Music

"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
RECLAIMING THE CREATIVITY WITHIN

BY SARAH LEYMASTER
PHOTOS BY ALY DANIELS

_"I dwell in Possibility-
A fairer House than Prose-
More numerous of Windows-
Superior – for Doors"
-Emily Dickinson

One artist who used creativity to break the constraints and conventions of her time is Emily Dickinson. She took her creative powers to the limit, and expressed herself in unique and free-flowing prose. How many of us, as faculty or students at the University of Utah, really let go of the constraints that keep us in check, and allow our creative mind to take over? It seems that expressing ourselves with the kind of abandon that Dickinson displayed, or just expressing ourselves period, is more the exception than the rule.

Is creativity a quality that exists innately within each of us, or is it something that is learned? Professors in engineering, biology, English and dance at the University of Utah believe that creativity is a process of self-expression that exists innately within each of us, but that we lose our ability to access our creative power over time. If creativity is innate, what causes our capacity for creativity to decrease?

There are several factors that may contribute to such a decrease, including the way our current educational system is designed. Also, fear of embarrassment and fewer opportunities for self-expression can decrease creativity in higher education.

Though creativity means different things to different departments on campus, professors from all departments feel that creativity is an important, if not essential factor in higher education.

Donna White, associate professor of modern dance at the University of Utah, feels that our innate ability to be creative diminishes over time. "Creativity," she said, "is innate, but we forget it. It has to be relearned." Throughout life, we are conditioned to follow the rules. Sometimes we lose sight of our ability to come up with new ideas, and think outside the box.

Assistant Professor Meghan Cooley, also of the modern dance department, said, "Our traditional education system is about imposing limits and finding categories. Growing up, children have the ability to generate new ideas, but they are not encouraged to do so as much as they get older." That's why dance fosters the creative process so much – because "there is so much play involved in dance." Part of the reason we lose our capacity to be creative is due to a fear of embarrassment. In order to be creative, students need to let go of the fear of embarrassment or failure, and need to allow themselves to exercise their creative faculty. A large part of being creative is to let go, "to surrender, and give into your ideas – to stop censoring," said Cooley.

Professor Cooley agreed that what most of us think of as mistakes are actually opportunities for growth and development. She said, "I feel most creative when something goes wrong (during a performance), like when the music stops. It gives me the opportunity to solve a problem in the moment – it forces me to be creative." Creative learning happens when we make mistakes. "Mistakes are continually informing me and leading me in a new direction," said Professor Cooley.

We put limits on ourselves and on our degree of expression, because we are so afraid of failure. Professor White said, "We are conditioned to feel that criticism is negative...but sometimes it is our biggest failures that give us the most information."

Creativity is an essential element in the modern dance department. Professor White said, "Without a creative sense of self, you won't have a lot to express as a human being or as a performer."

These views on creativity are not specific to the modern dance department. Jenn Gibbs in the writing department, Pat McMurtry in engineering, and Fred Montague in biology also feel that creativity is an inherent quality that we all have, but that our capacity for it decreases as we get older. Gibbs said, "Creativity is a faculty that we all possess – it's a capacity that all human beings have." She believes, "people can have ideas that get in the way of joyfully exercising that capacity, but that
doesn’t mean it’s not there.” To be creative, is to possess “the ability to be fluid and to move from one mode of expression to another.” The key to creativity, she explained, is “to be open to the process,” in part by “not being limited to that laundry list in your head.”

Like Professor White, Professor McMurry in engineering also feels that creativity is innate, but that it dwindles over time and so must be relearned. McMurry believes, “Creativity is a quality – or a faculty – that all of us possess to some degree, and we can all expand our creative potential.” From a young age, we are “taught to follow guidelines.” Much of the homework we are given consists largely of memorization and the ability to duplicate problems. For McMurry, “there’s no creativity involved in memorization, or in seeing a problem in a book and being able to duplicate it.” In order to be creative and to solve problems, “you’ve got to be willing to embarrass yourself,” said McMurry. You’ve got to start, he said, “by wiping out preconceptions and by starting wild – eliminating no options. You’ve got to be willing to put yourself in that space that is not quite comfortable. Once you’ve entered that realm of discomfort, then I think you’re on your way to something.”

Jenn Gibbs compares giving in to the creative process to disco dancing. “You’ve got to let it rip and get into the music, and a sort of grace will appear. There will be constraints – you can see them as painful limitations, or as part of the material which helps determine the product.” Gibbs says that those who are self-conscious when they dance – those who hold back, will most often “look as stupid as they feel.” Whereas, if people let go, “they may look stupid, but at least they’re having a good time – and chances are that a certain grace will emerge.”

Professor Fred Montague, director of undergraduate advising in biology, echoes what professors in other departments have said about creativity. To be creative, “You must get out of the catalogue of your mind. You have to play. You can’t be driven by somebody else’s agenda. You’ve got to give yourself permission to make mistakes.”

How can professors on campus create opportunities for students to enhance their creative potential and to help foster creativity? There are various ways that professors implement creativity in their classrooms. In his Global Issues class, Professor Montague encourages, but does not require students to bring harmonicas to class and to learn how to play them. The students play music at the beginning of class “to help them turn off the left side of their brains.” Professor Montague and his students also maintain a community garden at the Sill Center. The garden, Professor Montague says, not only teaches students ecology skills, but it provides food for the food bank, and “empowers students to know that a small group of [them] can make a difference.” “My job is two-fold,” he says. “My first job is to get students turned on to the popular literature that teaches biological ecology, [and] my second job is to get students to see the processes that make the world work.” Professor Montague wants “to get students to make connections.” Montague believes that he has to let his class know what the facts are, “but I also need to let students know that they can’t be paralyzed by those facts.”

Jenn Gibbs sees herself more as a “facilitator” for creativity than as a teacher. “I see myself more as not teaching creativity, but rather as encouraging students to exercise that faculty,” said Gibbs. She believes she is “a facilitator of [students’] personal
expression." According to Gibbs, many teachers "let students down if [they] don't push them to challenge themselves." Gibbs challenges her students by assigning a mixture of expressive and analytical work. She hopes that "the experience of having taken [her] class will help students to trust their own faculty for creativity, however they end up applying it."

Professor McMurry implements creativity by assisting students in developing their creative thinking skills. He says that he occasionally "purposefully provides incomplete instructions, or gives incomplete information when giving an assignment" to help foster the creative faculty. By doing this, he assists students in "using all of their brain, not just part of it." He feels it is important that students "have interests outside of the nuts and bolts," and that they learn to "think of things from multiple points of view." McMurry feels that creativity is "an essential factor" in education.

Professor White of modern dance also feels that creativity is an important part of education. "Creativity is the missing link in education," said White. "It is important to spark creative engagement...and to enlighten the imagination and honor creative endeavors." It is important for teachers "to create an atmosphere that allows for and that sets the tone for questioning, for discipline, and for pushing students." In providing this atmosphere, and this "fertile ground for learning and discovery," it is important for teachers to provide "the safety net and freedom [for students] to test the boundaries, to risk, to have the imagination to perceive and conceive of something different than has been presented." To create a safe environment, teachers can "focus on the process, not the product, [and] can stay away from judgement."

Assistant Professor Meghan Cooley implements and fosters creativity by "crea[ting] open-ended assignments, and giving creative problems to help stimulate new ideas." By doing this, she allows students "to push beyond their safety zone." It is important, she says, to "honor students' knowledge base." "Students already have something — use that as a starting point," she says. "This helps them to take risks that lead to creativity. You don't want to put another cog in the wheel — [fostering creativity] is a delicate dance."

By creating a safe environment, and by giving assignments that help foster creativity, professors can invite creativity into the classroom and can assist students in reclaiming their own creativity. As Professor Cooley said, "Creativity invites passion into education — the passion then feeds into greater learning and a greater commitment to education." Implementing creativity in the classroom provides benefits for the educational system and for the students.
INCORPORATING CREATIVITY INTO THE CLASSROOM: AN IMPORTANT LESSON

BY SARAH PLUMMER
PHOTO BY ALY DANIELS

Students on campuses around the world benefit from creativity as a fundamental part of the college classroom. It is extremely important for universities to offer a variety of classes that deal with creative subjects such as language and the arts, and to recognize that students have different interests. However, students not only have diversified interests, but they also have distinct learning styles. Some are visual learners, some learn better through hands-on experiences, while others are auditory-learners and prefer taking notes during a lecture. More instructors are beginning to realize that incorporating creativity into their everyday curriculum is beneficial for both themselves and their students. Creativity brings refreshing variety to the classroom and has become an effective teaching tool rather than just another boring lesson to be taught.

How can creativity be incorporated when teaching a subject that either is inherently creative or doesn’t allow for much creative thought at all? These instances occur in many departments, and some suggestions are simpler than one might think.

“I think one of the most creative professors I’ve had was my anatomy professor. He realized that students learn in different ways and he tried to use a lot of different techniques throughout the semester,” according to Joseph Kamerath, biology major. “He would give PowerPoint presentations with different graphics on each slide, and his textbook was a big coloring book where we filled in blanks and graphs from the slide presentations.” Kamerath appreciated his instructor’s weekly lectures and labs where students could apply what they had learned through hands-on activities.

Heidi Gordon, a senior studying English, said her most creative instructor was coincidentally a creative writing professor. Gordon said that while creativity was obviously a big part of the subject matter, the professor always found ways to creatively convey concepts or ideas. For example, the professor would bring in a selection of music to listen to, or sonnets for the students to read, interpret, and relate to their current course focus.

“I realize that every class of students is different,” said Mitch Jensen, professor of American Sign Language. “At the beginning of each semester I like to get a feel for who each student is, what their personalities are like, where their skill levels are, and what kind of background they’ve had in the subject.” Jensen believes that this helps him decide how to teach the class, since the interactions are always different from semester to semester.

While creativity may come naturally for some instructors, those who are less creative can easily start incorporating fun ideas into their usual routines. In his article Teaching Creativity, Marvin Bartel, Ed.D., provided some useful tips.

One of Bartel’s suggestions included letting students generate questions to be included on quizzes and tests. This helps students think from a different perspective, gain a well-rounded understanding of the course materials, and feel involved in the progression of the course. Bartel encourages the use of interactive multimedia aids during lectures to maintain the attention and interest of students. Bartel also recommends having students keep a class journal where they can express any thoughts or ideas about material being covered. Other suggestions include: role playing, brainstorming with the entire class about an issue, inviting panels of experts or guest speakers to speak to the class, and small group discussions.

While Bartel gives ideas on incorporating creativity, he also has some advice for instructors to facilitate a creative thinking mode for students. He suggests that instructors consider and
INCORPORATING CREATIVITY INTO THE CLASSROOM: AN IMPORTANT LESSON

BY SARAH PLUMMER
PHOTO BY ALY DANIELS

Students on campuses around the world benefit from creativity as a fundamental part of the college classroom. It is extremely important for universities to offer a variety of classes that deal with creative subjects such as language and the arts, and to recognize that students have different interests. However, students not only have diversified interests, but they also have distinct learning styles. Some are visual learners, some learn better through hands-on experiences, while others are auditory-learners and prefer taking notes during a lecture. More instructors are beginning to realize that incorporating creativity into their everyday curriculum is beneficial for both themselves and their students. Creativity brings refreshing variety to the classroom and has become an effective teaching tool rather than just another boring lesson to be taught.

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"David Bowie was going to introduce something new. Ziggy Stardust would not only be a cross dresser, but a cross dresser from outer space," said John Costa during a lecture in his class, the History of Rock and Roll. Costa's course material includes references to androgyny, psychedelic drugs and political protests to biting the heads off of bats.

Many students ask, "What does this have to do with our college education?"

"Education is more than just learning a specialty," said Costa. He believes "it is about opening the door to understanding."

The History of Rock and Roll is a course that encourages students to think and understand the world in terms of creative relationships. Unlike typical history courses, Costa provides students with more than a timeline of dates and events. He explains why certain artists and musical groups are "original" and the elements that influenced their creativity and performance.

"It's important to understand where things come from," said Costa. His course teaches students the origins of different types of music and their influences on contemporary musicians. For example, students learn about Bob Dylan's poetic influences, David Bowie's inspiration to dress like a woman and where Elvis Presley got his dance moves. "Nobody creates art out of a vacuum, there are always influences. There is always a starting point," said Costa.

The starting point of this course was humble at best. In 1998, when Costa first taught History of Rock and Roll only six students enrolled. This semester there are four sections offered and more than 600 students enrolled. "Students find out that the course is difficult but they still sign up. I hope that means I'm doing something right," said Costa.

Students appreciate Costa's method of teaching. Senior Jason Morrow said the course helped open him up to new ideas and gave him a greater appreciation for different genres of music. Morrow said, "I used to hear the Rolling Stones on the radio, and think, 'They're just a bunch of old guys,' and change the station. Now that I know where they're coming from and I don't dislike them as much."

Freshman Emily Hutchings said, "I like how he always points out ways to be creative. [The course] is about more than just music. Costa is all about doing something new. When I walk out of the class I feel like I need to go write a song or something."

Costa believes that certain principles of creativity can be learned from rock and roll regardless of a student's field of study. During lectures, Costa frequently waves his finger in the air and comments, "and that, ladies and gentlemen, is another way to be original." Here are a few examples that Costa shares with his students to encourage original thought and action:

**Risk taking:** Costa attributes the Beatles' most creative work to willingness to take a risk. With their album "Revolver" they made a drastic turn in their musical direction. Costa believes that risk-taking can "spearhead an original style that may take a mainstream audience decades to appreciate and understand." He also shares personal experiences of risks he has taken as a composer. Though failure is always a possibility, he teaches that the true test of character is how one deals with setbacks.

**Streamlining:** It's not always necessary to come up with an original idea. Oftentimes, an idea simply needs to be made more "user-friendly." Costa uses Alice Cooper as an example. "Alice Cooper took a harsh, noisy Detroit hard-edged sound and made it more palatable - smoothing it out a bit with pop melodic hooks in order to appeal to a wider audience." Costa has streamlined the course material to make it fit for a classroom setting. "By law," Costa says, "I can pretty much say what I want" about rock's raucous past, but he tries to only give details that will enhance students' understanding of the subject.

**Limitations:** "Limitations can often breed originality," says Costa. For example, Black Sabbath tried to keep up with amazing blues players like Eric Clapton. Lacking the technical skills, they simplified the blues and created something new - Heavy Metal. Students in Costa's class don't rely on a textbook and in-class lectures alone, they listen to the music they are studying and watch films about the artists. Costa says, "It's one thing to read about these artists, but it's quite another to see them doing their thing."

Costa has created a learning environment that promotes a meta-analysis of creative influences. By discussing the challenges of risk-taking, streamlining and embracing limitations Costa encourages students to think about how they can innovate. Costa's goal as a professor is to "plant a seed" of understanding. He feels that if students are willing to open their minds and learn something new right now it will enable them to understand and accept new ideas in the future.
“Education is more than just learning a specialty. It is about opening the door to understanding.” John Costa.
A "CREATIVE PROCESS" FOR RESEARCH

BY STEPHANIE RICHARDSON

Creativity is not usually associated with research. In fact, research is associated with such regulations and conformity that creativity, as we usually think of it, is often discouraged. For example, the steps and expectations for protection of human subjects are prescribed such that acting outside the norms can jeopardize our subjects' safety and privacy. No one wants that. However, I argue that there is room, lots of room, for creativity in research endeavors. Further, I believe that an understanding of the process of creativity as developed by Edwards (1995) can greatly enhance the process of research. It can also help us teach and coach students through their dissertations.

We have all gotten stuck in a project. Faculty and students get gummed up in choosing a topic, in limiting the scope of a project, in securing resources, in beginning and continuing and ending. It is painful and difficult to find a solvent that allows us to move freely. I believe that much of our problem with progression can be either prevented or solved by applying what Edwards asserts about creativity to our research process. The process of creativity involves five main stages, according to Edwards: insight, saturation, incubation, illumination and verification.

The first phase, insight, is the period where you experience the, "Gee! I wonder why...?" Insight is usually unconscious and kinetic, a nagging "problem" feeling, where something is just a little odd about something. For many, insight can also be a visual phase, where our ordinary surroundings or usual practices are seen in a different light and with different emphases. Insight is generally impaired by attempts to verbalize it.

In research, insight correlates with problem identification. Getting started on a problem can be a source of high anxiety, particularly for graduate students beginning research. You can help them by instructing them to pay attention to their intuitions. If something isn't quite right, or is intriguing, they may have identified their problem. You might also ask them to look at things in a different way, either literally or metaphorically. What would the student see if you shook it up, moved it to another place? Finally, silence during observation can enhance this phase, so instruct the student to quiet themselves and open their eyes. However, once the discrepancy makes itself apparent, most will need assistance in putting this insight into words. You can help the student distill the problem into
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RULE</th>
<th>QUESTIONS TO ASK</th>
<th>OTHER ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RULE #1 Define the Edges</td>
<td>Where does this problem start and where does it end?</td>
<td>Help the student trim down their proposal into something that fits within the thesis hours and is compatible with having a (albeit narrowly defined) life.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What is the scope of the project?</td>
<td>Provide your perspective on the rich environment of the project's context, often more interesting than the questions being addressed. Negative spaces may become confounding, intervening, or contributing variables.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Who is involved, who is not involved?</td>
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<tr>
<td>RULE #2 Look at the Negative Spaces</td>
<td>What is around or behind the problem?</td>
<td>Ask to see their models and help with re-shaping a series over time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is there research that involved a precursor concept, or a related concern that informs your project?</td>
<td>Help them find quiet, undisturbed blocks of time for this activity. Talking and reading can be real impediments here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RULE #3 Examine Relations and Proportions</td>
<td>What is a visual representation of the problem, either drawn or actually constructed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the theoretical foundation, or the conceptual framework?</td>
<td>Your judgment of the literature can help the student focus efforts on something that would make an original contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RULE #4 Discriminate Light from Shadow</td>
<td>What has already been found?</td>
<td>This is a deliberate attempt to move from verbal labels of small parts, to a more visual or visceral sense of the entirety of the situation, particularly the non-verbal overall impression. Go ahead and verbalize your impression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is left yet to do?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is still unknown?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RULE #5 Examine the Whole</td>
<td>What is the bigger picture?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you see when you step back?</td>
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**FIGURE 1: Edwards' Saturation Rules & Questions to Help**

A concise, clean statement or question.

The second phase of the creation process is saturation, where one immerses in information. Saturation is a conscious phase, in contrast to insight. Saturation is extremely verbal and words are very important. In research, saturation corresponds to familiarizing oneself with the literature, with what others have to say about the problem, and the context of the problem. For many disciplines, the evidence of saturation is a review of the literature.

The creative rules for saturation are well known, and provide a comfortable road map for those of us who are linear and prefer structure. I've constructed a chart of Edwards' saturation rules, the questions you can ask the student, and other assistance you can provide to help them get through this phase successfully.

Evans advises using model construction to accomplish Rule 3. A model in Rule 3 is a visual, wordless representation. By drawing or making a model of the problem, situation or concept in its context, the student can see how things relate to each other, and the relative importance or influence of components. You may find independent and dependent variables. You will find what can and cannot be changed.

**GUIDELINES FOR MODEL CONSTRUCTION**

Saturation requires concentrated activity at a fairly rapid pace. You can instruct the student that focus at this time is critical, and they might want to adjust their work or personal schedules to allow for intense immersion in the subject. This might be a good time for them to cut back on other courses or to take some personal days. Definitely, they should avoid major changes at this time, such as childbirth, marriage, divorce and moving. (But they never seem to take that kind of advice, do they? Nor do we.)

Following these five rules of saturation leads to excess data input. This input, its pace and breadth and depth, leads to some paradoxes. In order to make a fresh, new thing, the student must become overly-familiar with what everyone else is doing. They must over-fill their brain with information while simultaneously keeping an open mind. And, the student must be confident amidst increasing uncertainty. Reaching a point of maximum anxiety and information overload is an indicator that the student is ready to end the saturation phase. You can reassure your students and yourself that feelings of being overwhelmed, overloaded and overstuffed mean that they are doing exactly the right things.

The third phase of creativity is incubation. Incubation is an occasionally painful period of waiting for inspiration and cannot be hurried. I believe that this is the least understood, least recognized, but most important phase of the creative
process. Edwards explains that during incubation our verbal selves must be left alone and ignored, leaving our non-verbal selves free to work with all the data entered during saturation. We will shift information around unconsciously until the concepts fit together, if only we stop talking about it.

Incubation requires a great deal of time and there is initially very little to show for it, in terms of productivity. Incubation results in an inactive, non-productive and fairly uncommunicative student, generally unacceptable state of affairs to faculty, especially those who value outcome over process. I know of no graduate program that offers "Cogitation Units" towards a degree. Additionally, the person in incubation may never have been taught the value – the necessity – of the phase, and consequently suffers guilt and anxiety for "wasting time."

One of the best ways to incubate successfully is by using physical activity that is repetitive or automatic, not requiring much conscious thought. Incubation should be devoid of verbal interruptions, including conversations, reading and writing. Hiking, swimming, showering, washing dishes, vacuuming, driving a familiar route, all are examples of great incubating activities. We are all vulnerable to criticism during this phase. As faculty, it is best to leave the student alone at this point and let his or her brain work, save for occasional murmurs of encouragement and your continued faith in his or her abilities.

The fourth phase of the process of creativity is illumination. Edwards describes this as the “Ah-ha!” It usually lasts for a short, marvelous period of time and is described in visual terms. “I could see the answer so clearly!” “There it was, right before my eyes!” Your visual and kinetic self has come up with a solution that can be perfectly verbalized, resulting in a sense of rightness and certainty. This phase is so wonderful and satisfying that we are willing to continue with the less delightful aspects of the research mission in order to achieve illumination once in a while. There is no way to hurry this phase, which, I believe, must be preceded by stages one through three in order to occur. This phase, like incubation, requires isolation. You can instruct the student to carry a pencil and paper with them during incubation (e.g., while jogging), so they can write down the inspiration that will come during illumination. You can also assure them that it is critical that they put some distance between themselves and the project, to allow this phase to occur. Forcing it never works.

The fifth and final stage of the process is verification. This phase is characterized by a logical, conscious thought process. Unlike illumination, this phase is usually quite lengthy. It involves proving, for others’ benefit, the rightness of the “Ah-ha.”

In most disciplines, verification corresponds with writing. In fact, talking and writing about the project can speed this phase, as the isolation so important to incubation and illumination can now be damaging. You can schedule meetings with your student to check progress during this phase and to keep them on track. Steady and timely turn-arounds of drafts is crucial. Criticisms at this point should be constructive and move the project forward, as this is a time when the student is easily discouraged. Since it is also easy, during this practical and prosaic stage, to lose the magic and light experienced during illumination, your job here is to stay positive and encouraging. It can help to occasionally re-examine with the student the project’s original uniqueness and value.

We can use what we know about creativity to improve and enhance our own and the student’s research process. Understanding how Edwards’ five phases of creativity relate to our research efforts and how to promote each phase, can stimulate the production of scholarly work. Specifically, this type of understanding can lead to the construction of more realistic time frames for research, more focused support of students and peers, and proactive problem prevention. Applying the creative process can help us both perform and teach the mechanics of research. I wish you some luck and lots of illumination.

stephanie.richardson@nurs.utah.edu

Artwork: “Dam Builders” Herschel Levit (1937), Courtesy Mary Francy at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GUIDELINE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use no words or commonly identifiable</td>
<td>Use shapes that have meaning</td>
<td>Labeling shapes with words, on paper or symbolically, opposes the shift of</td>
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<tr>
<td>shapes.</td>
<td>to you, but are not easily</td>
<td>information from verbal to visual.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>connected to a word.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construct a series of models over time.</td>
<td>Create a folder or clear a</td>
<td>Serial construction fosters feelings of growth, progress, and hope, and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shelf for models, and date</td>
<td>can avert premature closure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>them.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occasionally review them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate or avoid verbal distractions</td>
<td>Unplug the telephone, work</td>
<td>Most of us prefer or are most used to verbal descriptions and will revert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during construction.</td>
<td>in solitude, remove sticky</td>
<td>to verbal whenever prompted by spoken or printed words. Besides, these</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>notes from the margin of your</td>
<td>actions will also remove distractions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>computer screen, close</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>curtains and drape signs.</td>
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</table>

FIGURE 2: Guidelines for Model Construction
EVALUATION OF CREATIVITY

BY KIRA JONES
PHOTOS BY TORY DAVIDSON AND
CHRISTOPHER GINO DEAN

Creativity spawns originality. Without creativity, the world would lack many of the inventions, theories and ideas that it has fostered today. However, the idea of having this attribute evaluated in an academic setting is a concern for many students at the University of Utah.

Presently, there are not set standards for grading creativity; therefore, objectivity is difficult when professors evaluate a student’s work. Because there are no set guidelines for instructors, their personal preferences may sway grading decisions. Perhaps if professors were able to grade creative projects more on content and effort or a combination of the two, personal biases could be alleviated.

The idea of being creative is different for both students and faculty. Hence, the way it is implemented into courses and assignments also differs. For example, a business course may require students to come up with an original business plan and work out the logistics of it for an assignment while a dance class may ask students to implement certain steps into an original routine.

From a student’s perspective, it appears that some faculty view creativity as a tool to help students make necessary connections for learning course material. On the other hand, students see creative assignments as a challenge because they feel they’re being graded on more than the correct answer. When faced with creative assignments many students feel they are forced to tailor their creative abilities to what professors want, which ultimately limits creative potential.

William Stonehouse III, a sophomore studying corporate finance and accounting said, “sometimes I don’t like being graded on creativity.” Stonehouse continued, “as a student you start to worry about what the teacher is looking for, as a result you are only being as creative as the teacher will let you be, not as much as you can be.”

When students are given assignments they are occasionally required to present the material in a creative way, as a result, they fear being graded more on their creative abilities than simply the information they are presenting. Stonehouse also commented, “professors shouldn’t grade you on how creative an assignment is, grades should be given based on the effort put into the work and completion when it comes to a creative assignment.”

Likewise, not everyone is creative. Assignments that require students to create poems or use other creative techniques to convey their knowledge of the subject may appear to students as a difficult task. Carolyn Bliss, assistant professor for the department of undergraduate studies, said that she gives creative assignments so that she doesn’t get the same answers over and over.

For example, for her UGS freshman LEAP course, Bliss gives an assignment asking the students to write a reflective autobiography. The assignment asks students to reflect their personal version of the American dream and relate it to texts they have read in class. The catch is that they are not allowed to write an academic compare-and-contrast paper. They are allowed to use any other genre they want, such as a personal letter, a play or movie script, or even a dialogue between friends.

The idea behind this type of assignment is to get students to think and demonstrate that they know the material well enough to apply it. Bliss stated, “The more creative responses are my favorite, but students can still get an “A” if they present a good solid argument.”

Bliss believes creativity is “when someone takes a set of ideas and facts and puts them with another set of facts and ideas to see what happens... it’s in making connections.”

Bliss’s perspective implies that creativity is more than an artistic expression. In the classroom creativity is a skill students use to relate course material to their life. She said, "creativity is about pulling things together and encouraging independent thought, which lets students see that they have a role in creating knowledge.”

Many instructors’ main reasons for implementing creativity into assignments is to determine whether their students are learning the material in the course or if they are simply
regurgitating the information in order to obtain a good grade. Professors cannot be confident that students will retain information they are given if they are not required to use a certain level of analytical thinking to produce a form of "creative" work.

Aaron Phillips, an instructor and lecturer in the writing program commented, "creativity is a process of thought. A creative person is someone who thinks creatively and needs to express that. Writing is a creative process in itself, choosing to use one word from all the others is creativity." Furthermore, Phillips suggests, "When assessing students' creativity, it comes down to if they have the ability to make a point in coherent English, which is uniquely his or her own."

Taryn Lillie, freshman studying modern dance remarked, "In my improv dance class we are graded on creativity in our dances, but also on the effort put into it. They want to see that we are not just using the steps we have been shown in class, but also adding our own personal twist to it." Between Lillie and Phillips it is clear that in order to produce something creative you must add "you" to the work. Whether the assignment is to dance, write a 10-page paper or build a machine each process includes applying personal knowledge, which leads to creativity.

However, not all assignments require a high level of creativity. Some assignments only ask students to utilize and present information so that professors know they understand it. This is the case for many engineering students. Many people assume that engineers do not need a high level of creativity. However, their field requires they apply concepts learned in class to create solutions for everyday problems. For example, students design products that they know are beneficial to many, such as designing wrist guards for snowboarders.

Students apply experience as well as knowledge and rules learned in class to create something new. As a result, the evaluation process is based on the success of the idea and its ability to work rather than how creative the idea is. Whether the field is mechanical, chemical or medical engineering, the ultimate goal is to solve a problem using a unique and original plan. According to senior chemical engineer major Ken Buley, "Professors want students to be creative, to produce proposals and ideas and then expand in the area of engineering given the tools they have taught us."

Buley, like many others, believes that it is impossible to generalize evaluations of creativity within each discipline.
Jonathan Butner lectures to his psychology students, emphasizing creative applications of traditional methods.
This may explain why professors' personal opinions need to be integrated into the evaluation process. Professors are not grading a multiple choice test where there is only one right answer; there is no right or wrong when grading creative assignments.

While students do not agree that their creativity should be graded in assignments and projects, they do understand that it is a necessary element of a complete education. Creativity in the classroom allows students to understand even the most complex material with ease. Dr. Jonathan Butner, professor of social and quantitative psychology stated, “creativity can be taught, in the sense that it is a recombination of ideas with the addition of new insight. Therefore, professors need to show students how to do that, and if it is done in a creative way, then students are going to understand concepts better and retain them longer.”

Professors use creative assignments to see if students are capable of integrating course information to their lives. If students are not required to be creative in some way, then professors could be hurting students more than helping. In the “real” world, there is no clear-cut answer. Therefore, professors who teach a black and white technique may actually be doing a disservice to their students by restricting their ability to problem solve.

Creativity, when used to make connections with material that would otherwise have been overlooked, is considered to be helpful by students. However, many wish that they were not graded on the amount of creativity that was put into the assignment. For example, if they are required to produce a piece of work in an art class, many feel that being given a low score because it was not “creative” enough restricts their creative potential. Students simply do not want to adhere to their professor's definition of creativity and many would rather that grades were based on their effort in a project or assignment.

Evaluating a student’s creativity skill is a mixed bag. Overall, students respect professors who implement creativity into their courses. Many believe creativity is not something that should be stifled and professors who allow students to be creative are favorable in the eyes of many. Likewise, students believe that it is important for professors to be creative in order to facilitate the learning process.

With these ideas in hand it appears that there is no easy solution to the criticisms of evaluating and grading creativity in an academic setting. Nevertheless, creativity is a tool that is integral to the learning process. Professors who encourage students to think “outside of the box” may broaden the students’ horizons and facilitate more creative thinking.
LITERATURE

on Creativity

THE CHEESE MONKEYS:
CONFORMITY BECOMES INDIVIDUALITY IN THIS NOVEL

BY LYNDSEY SCULL

I was home from work and exhausted. If one more customer had asked me for a “lotta”, I would have seriously considered homicide. Obviously, I was ready to not think about or smell like coffee anymore. I just wanted to read. A friend had loaned me Chip Kidd’s, The Cheese Monkeys and I was anxious to delve into its supposedly deliciously sardonic depths...

“Ladies and Gentlemen, behold: The Enemy:”

He raised the blinds, and there was the street below. Townies going up and down the land. Greased efficient gears in the Village engine. Harmless.

“Relentless. Unstoppable. You cannot hope to defeat them…”

These people, they were the enemy? I was barely finished with the prelude and I was already confused. Looking out my own window, I encountered a strikingly similar scene as the one depicted in the novel. People going about their routine lives… driving their cars... going to their jobs... each day no different from the previous…simply a cog in the urban engine. A-ha! The blinds were lifting.

And so unfolds a coming of age story that is profoundly relatable to anyone who has questioned the given traits of Western world thinking. Three graphic design students attending college in the suppressive era of the 1950s realize that society is essentially a factory, churning out uniformity and mental numbness. The trio begins to realize that to avoid becoming “the enemy”, their thought processes must undergo careful consideration of everyday life.

“The Venus de Milo. Do you really think anyone would give a good whoop about it if it were intact? Okay, maybe it would be still stuffed away in some museum, but we wouldn’t know about it, I wouldn’t be talking about it right now. It—she’s in our heads because she has personality.”

Who pays attention to the mundane? To be unforgettable a person, sculpture, or even idea must have an idiosyncrasy to it. The Cheese Monkeys continuously emphasizes this point of individuality and distinction. Individuality is a sacred right to which everyone has access. To conform and slip into a societal mold is to deny oneself the opportunity to live creatively and define life.

Winter Sorbeck, one of the principal characters, the graphic design professor, affects three students more profoundly than most college instructors. His demanding and demeaning criticisms of their work and attitudes shock them into realizing the faults of living life under conformity’s thumb. His shrieks and accusations actually mask a very caring and driven mentor that shows them, eventually, that creative design is not just an academic skill, it helps to define the world.

“You are a designer. You have to eat the world with your eyes. You must look at everything as if you’re going to die in the next five minutes.”

Winter Sorbeck stresses the beauty that exists in every object, not just creativity in the classroom. His most valuable gift to his students was the concept that creativity can be devoured and contrived from every scene, if one is aware enough. The shift of perspective takes place when a life of insipidness and acceptance is jettisoned and replaced creativity and individuality as main priorities.

Winter Sorbeck preaches that every person is presented with two options: to accept a life of monotony or to seize the world and to inject creativity and individuality into everyday activities.

I suppose even making a “lotta” can be beautiful.
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS: 
CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

BY AMY SCHOFIELD

"S"

it back, relax, and enjoy the show" is a phrase
that students don't typically hear during their
college career. For most universities, the classroom
environment is a standard lecture hall with uniform structure.
Each student sits in a desk or chair and listens to a lecture where
minimal participation is encouraged. The tediousness of this
day-to-day drudgery can cause students to become apathetic
about the effort they put into their education. In order to create
a productive learning environment, the classroom needs to have
increased levels of creativity and innovation.

Creativity is an essential aspect of any learning atmosphere.
Some people would even venture to say that a person can't
learn without creativity. Dr. Charles W. Prather of SUNY
Buffalo studied the "climate for innovation," or, in other words,
creativity. His study showed that "personal enthusiasm and the
level of your innovativeness paralleled the work environment."
Prather's study expands across various fields, and may easily
be applied to education and the classroom environment. His study
explained nine aspects of a creative/innovative learning
and working structure.

- "Challenge," by emotion, mentally, and through
  commitment,
- "Freedom," in terms of deciding how to do things,
- "Idea Time," meaning having the time to think things
  through before acting upon them,
- "Idea Support," which means having the resources/ability to
  be creative,
- "Trust and Openness," meaning being able to feel
  comfortable in the provided environment,
- "Playfulness and Humor:" it must be OK to have fun,
- "Conflicts," which implies the absence thereof,
- "Debates:" a crucial aspect for creativity to bring about the
  issues at hand, and
- "Risk-Taking," meaning that failure is OK, which promotes
  trying new things.

Each of the nine aspects of creativity in a specific environment
can be integrated into the college classroom to stimulate
creative thinking. At the University of Utah students and
instructors expressed consensus that most of the time creativity
is needed for a more enhanced learning environment.

Mike Ballif, an instructor of Marketing 3000 at the School
of Business, believes that creativity is not optional in the
classroom, "you can't live without it!" When asked how and
if students are able to learn the so-called skills of creativity
he responded that there are "basic biological needs...then
there is work and recognition and appreciation, accolades,
achievement, etc. If you're clever and you watch your students,
there are ways you can get that. It takes an instructor who is
paying attention to the student." Ballif's class is an adventure
each day. Most students have no idea what to expect when
they walk through the classroom door. "I poke fun at myself....
I seem to have fun, and then they get over a lot of that resistance
to learning through creativity," said Ballif.

The problem with university classes is that they sometimes
don't allow for creativity in the classroom. Ballif believes "the
system is a little bit biased against it, not in humans, but in a
structural sense. It takes the instructors to foster that! In other
words, the mechanics are against it." In order to get over the
structural barriers of the classroom environment and its anti-
creative ambiance, he suggests "surrender[ing] to the discipline
and find the things that turn you on." When it comes to the
importance of creativity, Ballif is positive that it's "the number
one importance; it ranks right up there with knowledge. You
have to be creative to get the message to sink in."

To some students, it appears that the structure is completely
liberal in its allowance of creativity for instructors and students.
Ashley Wilson, a graduate student who is getting her teaching
certificate in special education, says that the system gives
teachers "a lot of freedom in assignments and lectures. They can
vary things and be creative as far as what the students should
get out of the class." Wilson believes "creativity is really good
because if everything was really structured or uniform it would
be really boring, which would delay any chance of diverse
thoughts. Education would be just the same for everyone."
Creativity fosters a different environment of each individual student. It is something that can be learned through the fostering of innovation in the classroom by the instructor.

A structured syllabus is typically a large part of any course, but the syllabus doesn't need or have to limit the instructor's ability to be innovative and creative. LaDon Roeder, a doctoral student in the department of educational leadership and policy believes "it truly does take a well thought out syllabus of assignments, class material, and delivery methods in order to allow for creativity." However, "part of creativity is being able to let the class go in another direction and reach the same outcome," said Roeder. A lot of creativity in the classroom tends to be situation dependent. Roeder said that group projects are an example of a specific structure. "With group projects, it's difficult to let the students know they can take risks. Additionally, class size plays a part in the comfort and creativity level within groups and class members." Roeder is convinced that the instructor has the most potential to foster creativity in the classroom. "There is an aura around creativity."

Matthew Burgemeister, senior studying economics said, "for me the classes that I've learned the most from are the ones I'm most interested in and most excited about, which means they are entertaining and keep my focus." Burgemeister remembers that all of the professors used a variety of teaching styles. "People learn in different ways, so the more ways a professor can increase classroom creativity, the more students they reach, and the more [students] think about the subject," said Burgemeister. However, sometimes creativity is limited by university structure. 

As a student, Burgemeister believes that time limits the level of creativity in the classroom. Even still, creativity is forever able to impact the level of learned material in the classroom environment. Burgemeister says, "people are never taught how to be creative. I don't even think that the classes we have to teach students how to think critically teach students to think critically. Creativity and critical thinking should start at the 1000 level, but most teachers don't foster that - they just want to teach what they want you to know."

Sadly enough, Burgemeister, like other students, believes that one can get through college without being creative at all. "You can pass your classes and graduate without any creativity or critical thought." However he does think that to have the best education, a student needs to see the creative side of things. Getting the most out of the college education students work so hard for is typically more rewarding when it is enjoyable and innovative.

Each department at the University has its own way of being creative in the classroom. The College of Science has a more difficult time when allowing for creativity in the classroom because so many aspects are black and white. Even still, creativity is important. Trisha Jorgensen, pre-med student, said "even though it's the science department, professors need to be creative in their teaching styles if they want their students to be creative in their work that they do in the classroom." Jorgensen believes that the structure of the University allows for creativity in any department. "I think it's more challenging for professors in certain fields such as science and math, but if they take the initiative they can be creative." Overall, creativity is still important, no matter what the class is. "I think that the more creative the learning process the more you will learn. If you use a creative learning style, you're going to remember it so much easier than just reading your textbook." Jorgensen believes that "challenge" is an essential element of creativity. Of students, she said, "challenging them to step outside their normal boundaries will allow them to be creative. But you can't challenge them so much that they give up."

Joel Arvizo, health promotion and education major agrees with Jorgensen: creativity is a significant part of a student's education. "I think it's essential, just because even for students whose majors are more analytical and quantitative, it allows them to connect their course work to real life, because life in essence is all about creativity," said Arvizo.

Creativity in the classroom is a substantial part of a college education. Most students and instructors will agree that creativity is important, but the challenge is to break down the barriers of organizational structure. Maybe Prather's study will help university students and instructors have more insight on the elements of incorporating and improving creativity in the classroom.
PAPERLESS CLASS
DR. DEIDRE TYLER
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY

My adventure with having a paperless class has been one that took me on a journey. I decided to embrace the paperless class with the assistance of WebCT this semester. At the beginning of class I told my students that we would have a paperless class environment. I would not be grading any papers that are handed to me this semester. The only papers that would be graded would be the papers submitted via WebCT. I also explained to the students that I would offer them a short tutoring of WebCT after class.

A paperless class is like exploring an unknown adventure. You really don’t know where this adventure is going to take you but the journey can be exciting. As a result of having the paperless class, I have noticed the following advantages for students and instructors. First of all, students are able to submit their assignments before the assignment is due. This gives the student flexibility because many students want the option of turning in work early. Secondly, the instructor can grade papers in the paperless class on line without having to collect and organize paper. Have you ever lost a student’s paper before and later found it another stack of papers. Well, in the paperless class this won’t happen.

So far the paperless class is working and the organization that goes with the paperless class is amazing. I have instructed my students to save their work as their entire name. Next semester try the paperless class.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION
JESSICA DURFEE
Lessons Editor, Teaching Research Fellow

As a student and a future faculty member (the joy of leading a double-life as a graduate teaching assistant), I’ve seen creativity in the classroom from both sides of the chalkboard.

As a student, the most creative professors were natural risk-takers. They made teaching look effortless. They would casually stitch streams of thought and stretch minds in class discussions.

As an instructor, I initially found it difficult to incorporate creative thinking into my lesson plans and assignments. I tried to encourage creativity, but soon found that I was pushing my definition of creativity on the class. After one semester I realized that instead of forcing my conception of creative thought I should be working to facilitate the students’ creative energy-flow. I had been over-intellectualizing creativity and imposing it upon my students. Creativity can’t be forced.

Students need to find their own mode of creative expression. Students need to determine their own boundaries then explore beyond them for themselves. Students need to work reflexively in order to find true creativity. And as instructors we can facilitate that process.
THE CREATIVE CLASSROOM
JENNIFER SCHMIDT
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, MASTER OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

A creative classroom environment should be respectful, welcoming, interactive, open, and fun. You can work hard and have fun at the same time. I believe this kind of environment is more productive.

I try to teach creatively. If I am creative in my teaching, I am a role model for my students. I keep things somewhat off-center or off-balance in the classroom. I vary the format or structure of the class and I introduce unexpected surprises. Surprises are good, as is laughter. However, surprises are just that. If you attempt to constantly surprise someone, eventually the surprise itself will become commonplace. In my opinion, desirable classroom dynamics can be compared to music in that you must provide variation in the tempo, volume, key, or meter to keep things interesting and exciting. If the volume is constantly loud or if the tempo is always very fast, the music loses its impact. Then there are no surprises; the music becomes noise and we begin to tune it out or turn it off.

To be creative and promote an environment conducive to creativity, our minds must be knowledgeable, active and flexible. They must be knowledgeable with respect to the tools and information that will be used to create; active to be engaged and enable the dynamics necessary to assemble tools and ideas; and flexible to jump from where you were to a new thought or idea. Everyone is creative and everyone can become more creative. We can practice being creative much as we practice activities such as sports, dance, public speaking, martial arts, and music. When you have done something many times, success eventually becomes effortless. It is my hope that with enough practice, creativity will become like a pair of ski goggles that you slip on and forget about as you effortlessly ski though the vast potential of your ideas.

Initially I give creativity full attention in the classroom. By reintroducing and reminding ourselves of it, we can welcome it into our thoughts and activities. However, sometimes creativity is like the sun; you do not want to look right at it or the momentum of the moment might disappear. Instead, you should allow it to illuminate your ideas, provide the warmth to incubate them, and the energy for them to grow.

With this environment and framework in mind, I create occasions for students to utilize their creativity by providing various topics, assignments, and opportunities for discussion. As a class, we want to see creativity in action, not just talk about it like a specimen in a petri dish. Sharing ideas can be a key part of the creative process. When the group shares ideas, we can build upon these ideas to create something even more extraordinary.

If you would like to contribute your PERSPECTIVE on issues such as religion on campus or dealing with the problem student, please contact Jessica Durfee at durfee-j@ugs.utah.edu.
CHRISTOPHER GINO DEAN currently works as a graphic artist for Undergraduate Studies and CTLE. When not sitting in front of a computer, he is probably writing a song on his guitar.

JESSICA DURFEE is a graduate student and research fellow in the department of communication. She is focusing her research on how interdisciplinary teams communicate to solve complex environmental problems.

DOUG HAGEMAN is the administrative assistant for CTLE. He is working on his MA in international relations, which helps him better understand his mania with all things Star Wars.

MARIE HENDRIKSEN is a senior majoring in mass communication with an emphasis in public relations. She works at Primary Children’s Medical Center in Special Events and Corporate Giving. She is the mother of five children - two of whom are attending college simultaneously with their mother.

BECKY JENSEN graduated last semester. She hopes to go on to law school in San Diego, her hometown.

KIRA JONES is a communication and psychology major. She will eventually graduate in 2005 and write for a magazine in New York City, in addition to writing several best selling novels... but until then she can dream.

SARAH LEYMADER graduated last August with a bachelor's degree in English with an emphasis in British literature. She hopes to write or edit professionally.

JAMES MARTIN is a film studies and communication graduate who plans to join the Master's program in the fall. He hopes to write and direct feature films as a part of a productive career in Los Angeles.

SARAH PLUMMER recently received her bachelor's degree in communication, emphasis on journalism, and a minor in creative writing. Her favorite things are reading, writing, and spending time with her husband. Now that she has graduated, she hopes to find a real job that involves at least one of those things. Wish her luck.

STEPHANIE RICHARDSON continues to enjoy her dual appointment as Director of CTLE and Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing. She thinks the staff of lessons are extraordinarily creative.

AMY SCHOFIELD is involved with ASUU, RHA, The United Leadership Council, Union Board, Late Night Programming, Football Fan Club, and Concert Chorale. She hopes to obtain a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs.

LYNDEE SCULL entertains lofty goals. She dreams of working in the magazine industry, traveling and writing and traveling some more. She spends her summers camping and Frisbee playin'.

SPENCER SUTHERLAND graduated with a degree in communication. He hopes to become an astronaut.

RUBY WANG plans to graduate in 2005 and pursue her love of piano teaching and performing. She also dreams of going to graduate school in New York and working for the magazine industry. She loves swimming, traveling, working with people, and snowy winters!