**Types of Individual Assignments**

1. Traditional Extemporaneous Individual Presentations

 Each student is responsible for his/her own work

 The term *extemporaneous* means that the material is delivered from notes,

 not read from a manuscript.

 It is very helpful to require a detailed, cited outline and a works cited list

 as a part of all presentation assignments.

 2. Student Teaching

 We learn much more about our subjects when we teach them

 These assignments might require more coordination with the course

instructor. A preliminary meeting with the instructor and review of an outline of the teaching session might be a good idea, especially if students are going to be held responsible for the material on an exam.

 3. Individual Debates (Often a team or group activity)

 Especially useful for developing and understanding arguments

 on many sides of an issue

 Especially useful for working with argument rebuttal

 If done effectively, encourages students to master subject and

 think flexibly about it

 However, to be effective, students need to be familiar with all possible

 objections to their arguments and be able to refute those objections flexibly in an actual debate. Students also need to have research available to support their arguments and counter-arguments.

 Sometimes encourages “argument as sport” which emphasizes

 style and popular appeal over argument and sources

4. Student-moderated discussions

 Can sensitize students to the issues surrounding effective

 discussion

 Encourages students to examine the text at the focus of the

 discussion more deeply

 Students are often very responsive to student leaders, perhaps out of

 sympathy

However:

Students often focus discussion at the summary level

 Students often have difficulties with follow-up questions to take

 discussion deeper

 Students are sometimes less experienced at encouraging

 participation

 5. Response and/or Q & A related to instructor presentation, assignment, or student

 presentation

 Does not have to take significant classroom time all at once

 Teaches important skill, especially in some disciplines

 Encourages mastery of material and flexibility of

 communication

Can be difficult to respond and question if student has not mastered material.

 Because students are sometimes asked to question or respond to

material that they have not chosen, they may ask produce irrelevant or tangential responses

6. Role-Playing (Sometimes a group assignment)

 Holds student interest

 Allows students to experience “virtual” reality which may make

 content more understandable and easier to retain.

 Sometimes difficult to get students to take it seriously

 Sometimes difficult for students to transfer objective

 knowledge into improvisational context

7. Interviews

 A research method which can be very useful and is often

 neglected

 Can add depth and meaning to traditional research

 Often provides the opportunity to form new relationships and

 perspectives

 Students can sometimes have difficulty finding interview

 subjects

 Students need background in conducting informational interviews and

 using information obtained through them