**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