

Try these...

Handy Activities for Student Success

Linking the Classroom
to the Workplace





To learn collaboration **work on teams.**

To learn critical thinking **solve complex problems.**

To learn oral communications, **present.**

To learn written communications, **write.**

To learn technology, **use technology.**

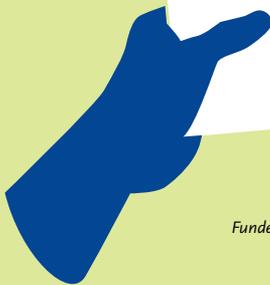
To develop citizenship, **take on civic and global issues.**

To learn about careers, **do internships.**

To learn content, **research and do all of the above.**



A New Century by Bob Pearlman



*Funded by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1988
from the California Community College Chancellor's Office
Work-based Learning Collaborative Grant #05-0157*

10 Handy Activities



Introduce Know-How Skills
Stand and Deliver

Focus on Strengths
Compose a Bio Poem



Practice Communicating
Are You Going Up?

Invite Guest Speakers
Mind Map It



Encourage Problem Solving
Ask "Why" 5 Times

Assign Informational Interviews
Role Play for Information



Build a Team
Compete in March Madness

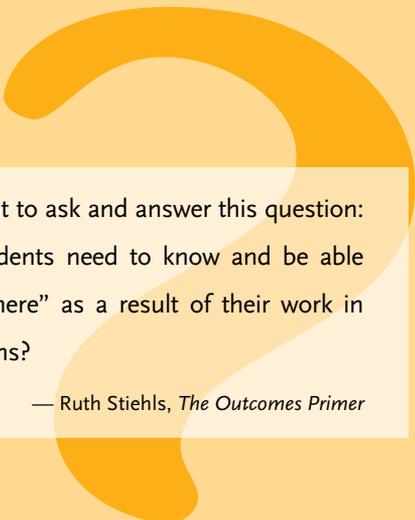
Capitalize on Diversity
Differentiate Yourself



Prepare for Change
Is It Fact or Fiction?

Promote Innovation
Create a Creature





It is important to ask and answer this question:
What do students need to know and be able
to do “out there” as a result of their work in
our classrooms?

— Ruth Stiehls, *The Outcomes Primer*



Did You Know?

When instructors create relevant, active learning experiences linking today's classroom assignments with tomorrow's marketplace, students find learning more relevant, rewarding, and practical.

The world of work has changed dramatically, and California Community College students need our help to successfully manage and thrive in today's dynamic workplace.

In the pages that follow, you will find 10 short, focused, and fun career activities. These activities will help:

- Raise your students' awareness about what they are learning in class and its broader application in their lives.
- Give students a better understanding of the skills employers seek in today's workplace.
- Provide students with career strategies to negotiate in the new world of work.

Students look to you for career direction and support. By including key career information and activities in your classes, you will be providing the guidance students need to find the success they seek.



Introduce "Know-How Skills"

Did you know? A student's GPA is not the most important hiring criteria for employers. Employers want to hire people who do well in college and have marketable or employability skills. Bill Coplin, author of *10 Things Employers Want You to Learn in College*, calls them know-how skills (KHS).

To impress employers and land the job of their dreams, Coplin, advises students to develop real-world know-how in ten crucial skill areas.

These areas include:

Work Ethic

Physical Performance

Speaking

Writing

Teamwork

Influencing People

Research

Number Crunching

Critical Thinking

Problem Solving

The Stand and Deliver exercise outlined here helps students quickly assess their marketable skills. This easy exercise identifies who has the skills employers seek in a rather dramatic way. In addition, it is a great place to begin a discussion about workplace skills and how to build them in and out of the classroom.

...Don't tell me, show me...Employers want to see the evidence of jobseekers' abilities. Encourage your students to gather work samples to validate the skills they are building.

US Department of Labor
"Occupational Outlook" Summer 2006





Stand and Deliver

Ask students some questions about what skills and education they think they need to be successful in today's workplace. Explain that the workplace is rapidly changing and employers are looking for people with a good education and marketable skills. Have students stand up and then read the following list of KHS or experiences to help them identify the skills they have.

1. If you can type 35 errorless words per minute, remain standing.
2. If you can create professional looking Word documents, remain standing.
3. If you can make effective presentations to a group, large or small, remain standing.
4. If you are able to build graphs, charts, and spreadsheets using Excel or Access, remain standing.
5. If you can determine the percentage change between your GPA in the fall and spring semesters, remain standing.
6. If you have had at least 3 experiences teaching others, remain standing.
7. If your assignments are done and ready for proofing 24 hours before they are due, remain standing.
8. If you know your FICA Score, remain standing.
9. If you have held an office in a community or professional organization, remain standing.
10. If you have completed an internship, remain standing.

If you have students who had all 10 skills, ask them some questions, especially about their internship experiences.

Discuss how each of these skills would be important at work. **Ask** students how they will use this information to help them better prepare for their careers. **Suggest** that students evaluate their own skills and document experiences that verify these skills in their portfolio.

Focus on Strengths

Did you know? After studying over 2 million people, The Gallup Organization found that top achievers in virtually every profession, career, and field of achievement built their lives upon their strengths/talents. Yet, it is very difficult for most people to identify and articulate their own natural abilities.

One way to help students focus on their strengths and gather personal information in a very non-threatening activity is to have them compose a bio-poem. Bio-poems are quick and easy to write, allow students to be creative, provide you with interesting and useful information about your students, and are FUN to produce and to share.

The bio-poem sample is just that, a sample. Add, change, or delete lines to get the information you seek. Prior to trying this assignment in class, compose your own bio-poem to model the activity and give your students more information about you. Writing a bio-poem can well exceed ten minutes, so you may want to give them time in class to begin the poem and complete the rest as an outside assignment to bring back and share.

When you put students in touch with their “personal best,” it increases their future potential.

— Marcus Buckingham

**Quick
Tip**





Compose a Bio-Poem

Hand out a copy of the bio-poem template and ask your students to write about themselves, filling in the information requested line by line. Then have them share poems with other students in class.

Suggested Format	Sample Bio-Poem
Line 1: Your first name	Sally
Line 2: Who is... <i>(4 words describing your strengths)</i>	Artistic, friendly, energetic and athletic
Line 3: Who loves... <i>(3 things you love to do)</i>	Loves to take pictures, listen to music, draw
Line 4: Who is taking this class... <i>(3 reasons you are here)</i>	Is taking this class to meet a requirement, build skills, transfer to UCSB
Line 5: Who needs ... <i>(3 things you want from this class)</i>	Needs interesting assignments, lots of collaboration, a motivating instructor
Line 6: Whose skills include... <i>(3 things you are able to do)</i>	Is a good presenter, makes awesome graphs, writes well
Line 7: Who values... <i>(2 things that are important to you)</i>	Values free time and good friends
Line 8: Who would like to have a job as ...or as ... <i>(2 jobs you would like to have)</i>	Wants a job as a clothing designer or graphic artist
Line 9: Resident of... <i>(the city you live in)</i>	Resident of Santa Ana
Line 10: Your last name	Miller

Practice Communicating

Did you know? When the National Association of Colleges and Employers recently asked employers what skill was most lacking in college job candidates, **communication skills was first**. Our students have Cell phones, BlackBerries and Palm Pilots and live by Instant Messaging and the Internet. Nevertheless, many of them get bad grades from employers on their ability to communicate.

Communication skills top the list of qualities employers seek not just for entry-level jobs but for executive and blue-collar positions as well.

Unfortunately, these qualities persistently are at the bottom of what potential recruits bring to an interview.

UP



To help your students improve their ability to communicate clearly and concisely, have them write, practice and deliver a short message about themselves. This exercise, often labeled an “elevator speech,” is a quick, effective communication tool that could be delivered to a potential employer on a trip up an elevator. Who knows? It could take them to the top!

If students can't get their message across quickly, they aren't going to get it across at all.

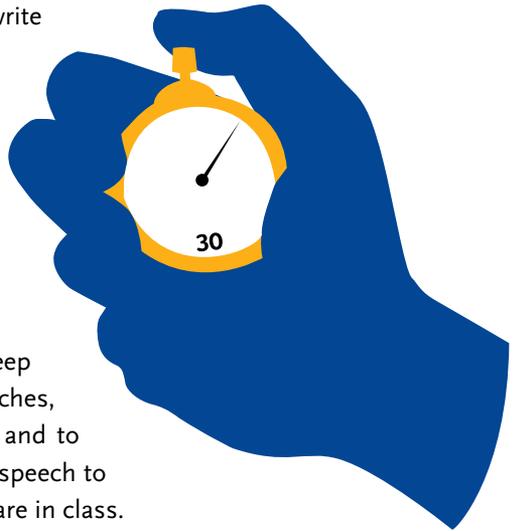
Fast Company, "The Rules of Business"





Are You Going Up?

1. Model your own personal elevator speech to help motivate and demonstrate what you are looking for.
2. Explain that in order to get to know each other, you want students to prepare a quick **30 second pitch** about themselves, using this simple format that may include:
 - *Who I am.*
 - *What career or careers interest me.*
 - *Why I am taking this class.*
 - *What is unique about me.*
3. Give students a few minutes to write their short speeches. Then divide students into groups to have them deliver their elevator speeches to each other.
4. List ways students could use this tool outside the classroom.
5. Instruct your students to keep working on their elevator speeches, improving and practicing them, and to be ready to deliver their elevator speech to you or a classmate anytime they are in class.



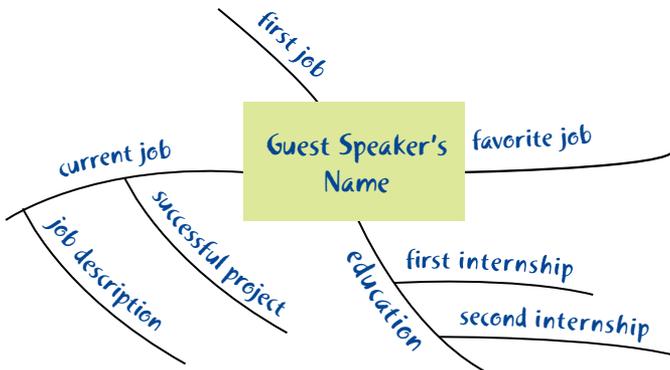
(When you have a few extra minutes, at least once a week, ask students to practice giving their 30 second introductions.)

Invite Guest Speakers

Did you know? Senior Lecturer in the Grainger School of Business, Patricia Mullins, frequently invites speakers to her classes because they are able to convey current, realistic information and a perspective on a subject not available from textbooks.

Christine Amaral, Fashion Design Instructor and Program Coordinator at Orange Coast College, finds that when her former students are invited back to speak, they captivate, engage, and motivate her young audiences.

Guest speakers are a good way to introduce your students to different jobs or careers, connect them with the skills employers are looking for in their new hires, and expose them to the new workplace realities. Guest speakers can answer many questions students may have and give them realistic suggestions about how to be successful in the world of work.



Guest speakers are one way to extend the boundaries of the classroom - bridging the world of academics and the world of work.

**Quik
Tip**





Mind Map It

As you move through this lesson, you will be working on helping students learn important workplace information and getting them “tuned in” to the value of using visual language in the process.

Here is an idea for a creative guest speaker exercise.

1. Tell your students that you have invited a guest speaker to come to class. Give them some of the background on the speaker and how he/she relates to your course.
2. Explain to your students that instead of taking traditional notes while the guest speaks, you want them to capture the information on a mind map.
3. On the board, draw a simple mind map form and place the speakers name in the middle. If you want, create three or four subtopics for students to get them started, or leave it to their own discretion.
4. After the speaker has completed his/her presentation, have students share mind maps with other students, noting how their mind maps are alike and how they are different.
5. Give students time to embellish their mind maps and to make important connections or links. Then choose one or more of the mind maps to send to the guest speaker as part of the class' thank you.



Encourage Problem Solving

Did you know? Albert Einstein, when asked what he would do if he were told that a comet would hit the earth in one hour, totally destroying it, replied that he would spend 55 minutes thinking about the question and 5 minutes solving it.

Problem solving is an important and complex skill required of individuals and workplace teams. Students need to develop the ability to apply problem-solving skills when faced with issues or problems that are new to them.



Introduce your students to a powerful problem solving tool, the 5 why's. The 5 why's, made popular by Toyota Production System in the 1970's, will help students get at the root cause of a problem fairly quickly. Asking "why" five times is a useful technique for defining and redefining a problem statement

When confronted by something they don't understand or agree with, students should be encouraged to ask five consecutive questions about it to probe deep into why the other person thinks that way.





Ask "Why" 5 Times

Hand out copies of this exercise to all your students. Have students work with a partner to ask and answer the following questions. One student should be A and the other B.

PRACTICE 1: Late Again

A: Sorry I was late to work.

B: Why were you late?

A: My car stopped on my way to work.

B: Why did your car stop?

A: Because it ran out of gas.

B: Why did it run out of gas?

A: Because I didn't buy any gas on my way to work.

B: Why didn't you buy any gas this morning?

A: Because I didn't have any money.

B: Why didn't you have any money?

A: Because I lost it all last night in a poker game.

Possible solution: _____

PRACTICE 2: Can't Find a Job

A: I can't find a job.

B: Why?

A: No one will hire me.

B: Why?

A: Because they don't know what a good job I can do.

B: Why?

A: I do not do well at interviews.

B: Why?

A: I am nervous and don't express myself well.

B: Why?

A: I need to improve my interviewing skills.

Possible solution: _____

Have student write down a problem he/she is having. Then working with a partner use the "5 Why's" tool. Ask questions like: *What did you learn using this approach?*

Assign Informational Interviews

Did you know? One of the most valuable networking and career research tools your students can use is to conduct informational interviews. Informational interviews are focused conversations to find out first-hand about a specific job or career. While informational interviews are not job interviews, they help students build their personal networks and connect them with people who have jobs that interest them.

Because students often have unrealistic career expectations, they need to meet and talk with people who have the kind of jobs they want. Because students are reluctant to contact professionals, guiding them through the informational interview process can be enormously helpful and rewarding.

Take time to discuss the value of an informational interview. Give students an opportunity to practice writing good informational interviewing questions and role-playing their informational interview. Taking these steps will give them the support and encouragement they need to make connections and learn more about career opportunities.

Note: *There are many on-line resources on informational interview strategies that include phone scripts, how to dress, writing thank you notes. Provide your students all the support they need; it will be worth it!*

According to research on networking, your students are only six acquaintances away from a personal connection to anyone in the world. Six calls away from the most incredible informational interview imaginable.

— Patrick Comb, Major in Success





Role Play for Information

1. Have students compose 3 career questions to ask someone in class.
(Examples: What kind of career are you interested in? What work do you do now? What made you decide on your career choice?)
2. Write on the board 2 or 3 additional questions you would like students to add to their list. *Who do you know that has a job or career you are interested in learning more about? Who have you interviewed that has a job or a career you are interested in having? What did you learn or what do you think you would learn from doing such an interview?*
3. Assign students a partner. Have students ask their career questions and record their partner's responses.
4. Discuss their questions and answers. Explain that what they conducted was an informational interview. Now, you want them to begin to prepare for a real-world interview.
5. Ease them into an informational interview by breaking the assignment down into small parts.
 - **Give** students a few days to decide on a person they would like to interview.
 - **Practice** in class the ways to contact and schedule the interview.
 - Have students **compose** 10 questions they would like to ask their interviewee.
 - Give them time to **role-play** the informational interview.
 - Have students **conduct** their interviews.
 - Have students **report** the interview outcomes to a group or the entire class.



Build a Team

Did you know? No longer is the work environment centered on an individual effort. The success of an organization depends on the ability of a diverse group of people to work successfully to reach a goal. Do your students have the interpersonal skills to thrive in a team-based work environment?

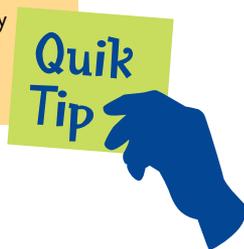
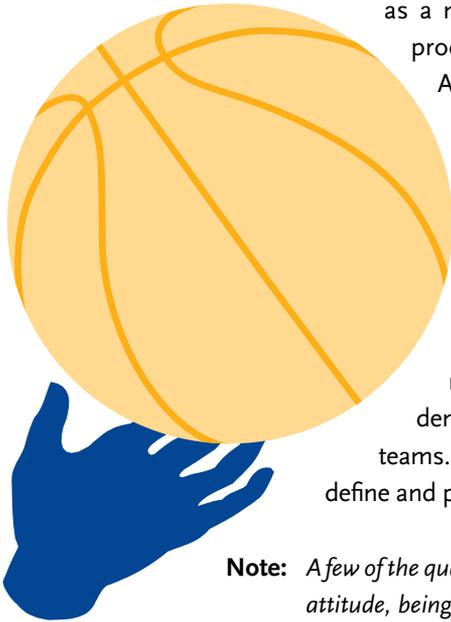
In the workplace, as in the classroom, teams are viewed as a means to motivate participants, increase productivity, and to flatten the organization. As teams are increasingly used by a wide range of businesses, from the factory floor to the corporate boardroom, developing team skills is essential to today's students.

While students often have opportunities to participate in class teamwork, they may not be aware of the interpersonal skills demanded on high performance workplace teams. This March Madness exercise will help them define and prioritize team skills important to them.

Note: *A few of the qualities employers value include having a positive attitude, being respectful of others, being trustworthy.*

Teach them to be good communicators and great collaborators so they can fully participate in the global workplace.

**Quik
Tip**

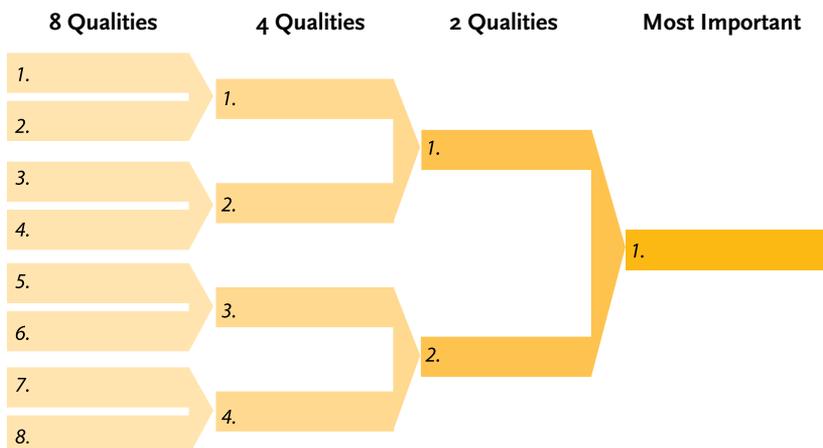




Compete in March Madness

1. Explain to students that during the semester you will require them to participate in at least one team project/activity. With that in mind, ask them to think about and list at least 8 qualities of a “good” team player.
2. Next, have students form groups with 5 to 7 members. Using their personal lists as a guide, ask the groups to brainstorm a list of 8 qualities of effective team players.
3. Instruct students to list these qualities in the format of a single elimination tournament like the famous National Collegiate Basketball Championship – March Madness.
4. Once they have agreed on these qualities, instruct teams to choose 4 qualities that are the most important. Then narrow the choice down to 2 and finally to 1.
5. Finally, ask each team the quality they decided was the most important and to briefly explain why. Discuss how and why the choices differed.

A SINGLE ELIMINATION TOURNAMENT: *Qualities of a Team Player*



Capitalize on Diversity

Did you know? While *California Community Colleges* comprise the largest and most diverse system of higher education in the world, many students are not taking advantage of this environment to learn about and build the diversity skills needed to work and live successfully in a global community. Working in and with diverse groups adds a special richness but also presents a host of challenges.

Dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, parental status, and work experience.



If we want students to develop effective diverse relationships, we must help them focus on their own diverse background, roles, and experiences. This is a good place for students to begin to define and share their own diversity.

When students have an understanding of their own diversity, they are better prepared to meet the challenges and responsibilities of working and living in culturally diverse communities.



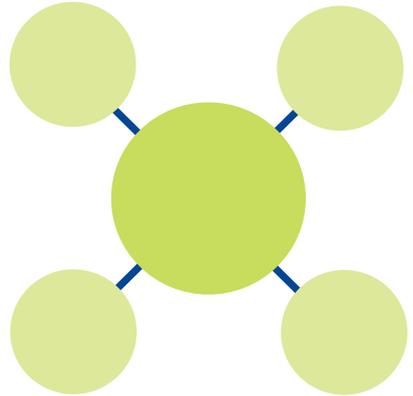


Differentiate Yourself

1. Explain that diversity is a way of looking at and encouraging an environment where people feel valued and recognized. It simply means we are all different; we all have different things to offer; and we all have different perceptions, expectations and ideas.
2. Ask students why they think a diverse population increases our productivity and creativity.
3. Have students draw the configuration of circles below.

Have students write their name in the center circle and write an important aspect of their identity in each of the surrounding circles.

These identifiers might include: mother, father, husband, student, supervisor, Buddhist, athlete, Asian American, Hispanic... They can add additional circles if they choose.



4. Have students work with a partner, and share a story about a time they were especially proud to identify with one of the descriptors used in their diagram. In addition, ask students to share with their partners a time they were ashamed, sad, hurt, misunderstood... to be identified with one of the descriptors.
5. Finally, ask students to name a stereotype associated with one of their identifiers, but that is not consistent with who they are.

For example: I am a working mother, but I am not an uninvolved parent.
I am a senior citizen, but I am not computer illiterate.

Fill in: I am (a/an) _____

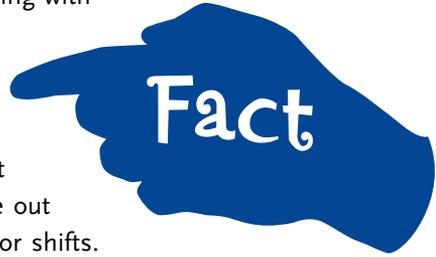
but I am not (a/an) _____

Prepare for Change

Did you know? Students are operating in a world of high velocity change that demands on-going and extraordinary behavior shifts. But changing one's behavior is incredibly difficult as our brains seem to be hard wired to resist change. New scientific studies offer surprising facts about change that are surely worth discussing with your students.

When patients were faced with the option of changing their behavior/lifestyle or facing premature death, you would expect rapid change. But the fact is that only one out of every nine patients made radical behavior shifts.

Getting a person to change his/her behavior is not only one of the biggest challenges to our health care system but for businesses trying to compete in a turbulent world, according to Harvard Business School professor, John Kotter.



Fiction

The following exercise will help you generate a discussion about changes in your discipline, the workplace, and every day life. This activity will provide your students with useful information and options to consider when trying to effectively change behaviors. This activity is based on an article in *Fast Company Magazine*, "Five Myths About Changing Behavior," May 2005.

With rapid globalization and technological innovation, the more our students can tolerate and even enjoy ambiguity, uncertainty and change, the more successful they'll be.

— Dr. Kerry Sulkowicz, *The Corporate Shrink*





Is It Fact or Fiction?

Ask students about personal changes they are currently experiencing. What kind of changes do they expect to see in their future? How do they cope with change? On a scale of 1 to 10, how difficult is personal change for them?

Read the five statements below and ask students to respond to each one as either fact or fiction. After you have completed this, give them the scientific facts about change.

1. You are more likely to change your behavior in response to a crisis.

This is fiction. The fact is:

When confronted with the option of changing your life style or die, only one in nine were willing to make the necessary changes.

2. You are most likely to change your behavior if you are motivated by fear.

This is fiction. The fact is:

Joy, not fear, is a more powerful motivator to help you change your behavior.

3. You are most likely to change your behavior if you know the facts.

This is fiction. The fact is:

Behavior change is inspired best by emotional appeals rather than factual statements.

4. It is easier to change and sustain a new behavior if you make small, gradual changes.

This is fiction. The fact is:

Radical, sweeping changes are often easier because they quickly yield benefits.

5. It is more difficult to change your behavior as you age because the brain is “hard wired” early in life.

This is fiction. The fact is:

Our brains have extraordinary plasticity, meaning that we can continue learning complex new things throughout our lives...as long as we remain active and engaged.

Promote Innovation

Did you know? A recent survey by the American Management Association indicated that 81% of CEO's considered innovation to be the single most important factor to assure the future success of their business. ***Innovation will be the engine that drives the corporate train into the future.*** Some have said, 'innovate or die'; others 'innovate or evaporate'. Whatever the mantra, 21st century success depends on workers who have the ability to be creative and innovative.

Innovation plays a vital role in creative problem solving. Innovators think out of the box. They focus on trying to find new and original solutions to the challenges they face. Innovative thinking requires an openness to new ways of seeing the world and a willingness to explore new possibilities.

Here is a quick exercise you can use to help students get in touch with the challenges of thinking in new ways. Ask students to complete this activity and then discuss some recent innovations that have created successful new products.

To encourage innovative thinking, push the boundaries in brainstorming, encourage students to think out of the box, and teach creative thinking skills.

**Quik
Tip**





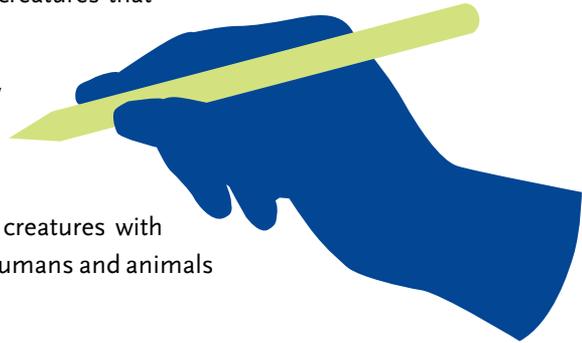
Create a Creature

1. Give everyone in the group the following task:

Imagine a creature living on another planet. In fact, this planet is not even in our solar system. It might be an imaginary planet, so it is very different from earth. What kind of animal might live on such a planet with an atmosphere so different from ours?

2. Ask students to use their imaginations to think out of the box and to draw their creature. Give them two or three minutes; it doesn't take much time.
3. When they're done, ask several people to show their creatures and describe them to the group. After hearing about four or five, ask the group these questions:

- How many of you drew creatures that had two eyes?
- How many of you drew creature with four legs or appendages?
- How many of you drew creatures with bilateral symmetry, like humans and animals on earth?



4. Explain to students that most people draw creatures with two eyes, four appendages and bilateral symmetry, even though they're free to think up anything. We use the patterns in our minds to guide us rather than try to come up with new ideas or patterns.
5. A few students will break those patterns and come up with completely new patterns. Ask those students to share their out-of-the-box thinking. Ask students some questions about thinking in new ways and why it is so difficult.