The room, on first entering, does not appear to be a normal college classroom. The students are all playing a different type of musical instrument as they improvise a song together. The leader of the band waves his arms in his best imitation of a director. The students tooted, drummed, strummed, whistled and rang. They laughed and looked embarrassed or pleased at their attempts. At the end, the teachers called the groups back together. Now came the challenging part – relating what they had just done to the lesson on leadership. Rather than simply imparting the principles, they asked questions of the students and facilitated discussion. The students discussed the challenges of following each other while also doing their individual parts. When asked later, the students remarked on how challenging and memorable the exercise was.

What teacher (and students) wouldn’t love this kind of classroom interaction, as opposed to drily sitting and listening to a lecture, where the content may be forgotten as soon as the test is over? For many topics, such as business, science, math, technology, research-based disciplines, creativity can seem contrary to the teaching goals. Many may think those topics are best kept in the humanities classes of music, art, literature, etc. In fact, incorporating creativity can be helpful in any type of classroom.

This paper will focus particularly on incorporating creativity into a research writing class. First, a defense of creativity in education will be established. Since the context is a Christian school, an examination of a theology of creativity will also be included in this section. Second, there will be an exploration of the challenges of creativity and developing one’s voice while fitting within the research writing genre. Finally, practical ideas for classroom activities, teaching methods and assignments will be generated. Creativity should be incorporated into college classes, as typified by teaching research writing as an art form.