

## **Title: Words Work: Using Writing and Speaking to Teach Critical Thinking Skills**

This workshop will assist instructors in integrating short or informal writing assignments and group discussion into their courses in order to help students to become more engaged in the learning process and to learn the material more thoroughly without placing additional burdens on the instructor.

Good communication skills, both written and oral, are near the top of most lists of desired skills employers seek in potential employees. Further, improved critical thinking and analysis increase problem identification and problem solving abilities, skills fundamental to good research, hence of value to both our undergraduate and graduate students. Additionally, the educational value of extension programs can be enhanced by more active participation and improved communication among program participants. By focusing on communication skills and critical thinking, this workshop will enhance learning both in and out of the classroom.

The program will engage participants in group learning activities, case discussions, writing activities, small group discussion, group presentations, and large group discussion. Participants will have the opportunity to improve upon a writing assignment, develop a draft of a new writing assignment, and/or create a speaking assignment, while working in small groups to provide peer feedback.