How Caffeine Can Cramp Creativity


“A recent study concluded that people who consumed 200mg of caffeine daily (1-2 cups of coffee) not only took significantly longer to fall asleep, but sleep quality was also severely diminished, preventing a full REM cycle.

A separate study at the University of East London showed that the positive effects of caffeine may be replicated by the placebo effect. Participants in the double-blind study were given regular and decaf at random. Those who thought they had ingested caffeine performed tasks faster than those who thought they hadn’t, regardless of caffeine intake.

While many people would be unwilling to give up their morning cup of joe for the energy and focus it provides, if you need to think outside of the box, perhaps don’t look to the mug.
“Make Space: How to Set the Stage for Creative Collaboration”


“Consciously or not, we feel and internalize what the space tells us about how to work.”

The physical space around us has an incredible impact on our creativity, our ability to collaborate effectively, and the overall quality of work we perform. Make Space: How to Set the Stage for Creative Collaboration from the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford (aka the “d.school”) helps teachers put groundbreaking spatial theories into practice and offers educators an introduction to spatial design concepts and realistic DIY blueprints with the aim of encouraging creativity and collaboration among their students. Information in the book is divided into five categories: Tools, Situations, Design Template, Space Studies, and Insights.

“There’s not just one ideal design for a collaborative space. The people using it should be able to transform it themselves, move things around, and create what they need for the work they’re doing at the moment.”

Tools include DIY “hacks”, blueprints and designs for various objects and furniture to fill any creative or collaborative space. Projects range from mobile and hanging whiteboard designs, to stackable foam seating, to more advanced concepts and blueprints for milled furniture conducive to a transformational environment aimed at promoting creative and collaborative work.

“Collaboration and creation aren’t bound to designated areas; they evolve throughout a space, absorbing different people, places, and perspectives.”

The situations portion of the book offers resource and furniture configuration patterns that include concepts and designs for open office seating, a peanut gallery, studio classrooms, project rooms, meeting places, and more.

Design templates describe how different locations, spaces, and resources affect people within a particular environment. Situations and design templates provide the basis for creating and manipulating a flexible space and its resources to fit particular situations and an environment’s evolving needs.

Space studies and insights describe the theories behind spatial design principles and reflections from d.school students and faculty regarding the creation and evolution of their internationally recognized space.

“With a boss or a professor standing at the head of the room, it feels like a “sage on a stage” – people are reluctant to share their ideas...Reconfiguring the physical relationship is a powerful signal that participation is truly welcome. The result is that you get better ideas out in the open, where they can grow.”

Most (successful) teachers have learned to modify their classrooms and behavior to enhance collaboration and creativity, perhaps by asking students to sit in a circle with a teacher—rather than in long, uniform lines with a teacher in front. Make Space provides theories and tools that any creatively conscious teacher (with varied resources) can use to design a new space or reimagine an existing space that will promote enhanced creativity and collaboration in classrooms of all shapes and sizes.

“Regardless of whether it’s a classroom or the offices of a billion-dollar company, space is something to think of as an instrument for innovation and collaboration. It’s not an initial, given condition, something that should be accepted as is. Space is a valuable tool that can help you create deep and meaningful collaborations in your work and life.”
Analyzing and Producing Multimodal Compositions

The EKU Department of English and Theatre in collaboration with the Noel Studio, hosted digital rhetoric scholar Dr. Dânielle Nicole DeVoss, Professor of Professional Writing in the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures at Michigan State University, for a series of workshops that took place on Thursday, April 4, 2013 in the Noel Studio’s Discovery Classroom. The workshops focused on analyzing and producing multimodal compositions.

What is a “multimodal composition?”

A multimodal composition is a piece of communication that uses more than words and letters to convey meaning. Projects could range from the simple combination of images and text to create something like a comic strip or Creativity Newsletter, to a video blog or podcast that uses video, music, and sound.

Why multimodal compositions?

Consider how saturated modern students are with technology, advertising, images and sound. Also consider the most popular forms of media you and your students experience and enjoy. Many modern “texts” go far beyond the use of the written word alone, but are most often combinations of traditional text, visuals, audio, and more.

How do you assign and evaluate multimodal compositions?

Many teachers do not incorporate these kinds of assignments into their curriculum because they are unsure how to assign and assess them. A brief introduction to the principles of digital rhetoric would make teachers and students more comfortable working within these emerging genres.

Resources for teachers and students:

The Noel Studio hosts regular workshops on multimodal composition. Check our calendar or contact us at noelstudio@eku.edu.


Videos of Dr. Devoss’s presentations are archived on the Noel Studio website for your convenience:

studio.eku.edu/danielle-nicole-devoss-multimodal-compositions
The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity would like to welcome you to our Open House on Wednesday, September 18, 2013. This event is the perfect opportunity to meet and greet members of our staff, as well as to familiarize yourself with the services and resources we offer Eastern Kentucky University students and faculty.

Along with updated modular furniture, the Noel Studio has recently installed new wall-mounted video cameras in each of our Breakout and Presentation spaces, allowing students to record high-definition videos of speeches, presentations, and more.

Whether you are new to the University or a returning student or faculty member, the Noel Studio is constantly evolving, adapting new pedagogical theory to meet your creative, communication, and technology needs. Stop in during our open house for food, door prizes, and to see how we inspire creativity and collaboration in our unique space.
Upcoming Events

Fall 2013

New Faculty Orientation
- August 7-8, 2013

Think Before You Ink: Managing Your Digital Tattoo
- September 4, 2013

Noel Studio Open House
- September 18, 2013

Check our Happenings Calendar for a complete list of events!

The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity is always looking to collaborate with faculty to design specialized workshops and events for student and professional development. Contact the Noel Studio to see how we can serve you!

Let us know if you would like an invitation to any of our events! Lynn.Phillips@eku.edu

Noel Studio for Academic Creativity
Crabbe Library
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, KY 40475
Phone: (859) 622-7330
noelstudio@eku.edu

Teaching & Learning Center
Keen Johnson
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, KY 40475
Phone: (859) 622-6519
tlc@eku.edu

Editor: Christopher Foley
christopher_foley5@mymail.eku.edu

This publication is a joint effort of the Teaching & Learning Center and the Noel Studio.