

Presentation & Public Speaking Journal

Professional Communications OER: Presentations

Introduction

Many skills in the discipline of communication require practice and active attempts to improve. Sustained reflection through the use of journaling is one strategy to steadily improve your presentation and public speaking skills. Journaling also makes your progress more visible; as you look back over your notes, you can mark the changes in your confidence and approach to developing/planning presentations. This journal is simply a starting place for you to reflect on specific activities your instructors assign throughout your college or university classes, but you can also include activities you engage in in your day-to-day life, such as MC-ing your friend's wedding or chairing a meeting with a group or club you're involved in.

Some things to keep in mind overall:

- Every presentation you make will afford you successes and opportunities to learn. This is normal and part of the process of improvement. Even highly experienced presenters use every presentation to improve the next.
- Your instructor, classmates, and other audience members may provide you feedback after your presentations. This may provide a wide range of perspectives, from your verbal and non-verbal techniques to your visual aids, etc. This feedback is only useful if you keep track of both the feedback and the presentation it was related to.
- Although you may receive feedback from several sources, only you can improve your presentation skills. This is done through integrating feedback from others, your own reflections, and purposeful planning.

Context for Use (for instructors)

Students write in their journal throughout the entire semester. There are times when the instructor assigns directed entries to be written in class, and other entries (the majority) are written outside of class.

This journal will include some direct suggestions for activities that will be reflected on, and also some general guidelines for keeping a learning journal for presenting and public speaking. Some reflection prompts have been adapted from Creative Commons–licensed materials. These questions can easily be identified by the [CC] that is attached to them. Detailed information about the source of these questions can be found in the attribution statement at the end of the document.

Process:

This journal can be kept in a document on the computer such as this very document, handwritten (either on a printout of this or in a notebook), or you could record your reflections using an audio device such as your phone or iPod. Instructors may require specific formatting and processes for journaling that are written, audio, or a combination thereof.

Formatting Suggestions

- For each entry include the date and the title of the entry (e.g., Wednesday, December 16, 2015. *Informative Presentation about Learning Journals*)
 - keep titles short and descriptive (use keywords)
- Decide if you will keep the written portion of your journal in digital format or in handwritten, paper format

- Typically, entries will be about 125 words (about $\frac{2}{3}$ of a page depending on your font choice or the size of your handwriting)
 - Even though this is primarily a written journal, you are encouraged to include visuals. The word count should still be adhered to, and the visuals that are included should not make the entry exceed one-page.
- If making references to course materials, or materials you find yourself, be sure to include proper citations.
- If including any content that you did not create yourself or that you made as a derivative of another's work, make sure you attribute their work.
- Use this journal for reflections only. Do not include other course materials in the journal.

Journal Content

Directed Entries

These will be reflections on specific course assignments and activities. **Use the assigned title for the entry.**

Self-Directed Entries

These may be on topics of your choice that relate to the topics being discussed in class for a particular day, or week. These may also be on communication events from your personal day-to-day life observations or experiences. You should clearly express the topic and your thoughts/reflections about the subject or event. Avoid merely describing an event or listing things in chronological order; a journal is not merely a place to record what you did and when. The purpose of a self-directed is to identify opportunities for growth and create purposeful points of action.

The purpose of the journal is to reflect substantively and often. The only restraint is that it should be related to communicating through presentations. The rest is up to you.

Your Presentation Style

Sample Directed Entries

My Personal Goals

(independently outside of class)

List 3–5 goals you have for yourself in relation to your ability to effectively deliver Presentations and Public Speaking during this course.

Communication Apprehension and Anxiety

List the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension you experience in preparation for, or during, a presentation. (independently outside of class) ^{CC-BY-NC-SA}

- Which ones are you most interested in learning to manage?
- How might you work toward managing these symptoms?

Characteristics of an Effective Speaker

(paired with in class discussions and activities)

Part 1:

Find a video or audio clip of a favourite presenter/podcast/newscaster of yours. Share this clip with the class (either by link in the LMS or bringing it to class physically).

Answer the following before attending the next class:

- What is this person doing that you like? Don't like?
- Why do you think they are a successful presenter?
- What characteristics do you think you could emulate?
- Is it a good idea to try to emulate speakers you admire? Why or why not?

Part 2:

Locate a speech on YouTube. While watching the speech, (independently outside of class), take note of the following:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the speaker's content and delivery
- What three things could the speaker improve on?
- What three things did you like about the speaker?
- If you were to deliver the speech, how would you do things differently?

*You may wish to refer to the chapter [Your Presentation Style](#) for guidance.

Part 3:

Characteristics of effective and ineffective speakers. (think-pair-share in class)

- Review your lists of speaker characteristics. What three qualities do you believe are most important to be a successful speaker? Explain.

Part 4:

What three elements of verbal, and non-verbal, delivery do you believe are most important to a speaker's credibility and why? (Independent, outside of class)

Effects of Listening

Reflect on a situation in your personal life where poor listening skills created a problem.

- Briefly describe the situation, then spend the bulk of your reflection analyzing what went wrong in terms of listening and how, specifically, effective listening would have made a difference. CC BY-NC-ND

My Trigger Words

Spend a few minutes brainstorming your trigger words. CC BY-NC-ND

- What are the words that would provoke a strong emotional response in you?
- List three concrete strategies you might use to combat this while being an effective listener.

Effective Listening and Barriers to Understanding

(paired with in-class activity and discussion)

- Briefly describe the role of the three A's of active listening, and how the three barriers affected your ability to answer the question "How many stops did the bus make?" Are there other examples you can provide where these barriers played a role in your understanding or misunderstanding of a message?
- What are some ways you can either leverage the three A's of active listening or overcome the three main barriers to effective listening?

That's Not What You Said

(paired with in-class small-group activity)

- Now that you have actively tried to use verbal and non-verbal techniques to enrich the words used in a message, describe other instances where verbal, non-verbal, or both types of techniques have been used by you or others effectively (or ineffectively) to convey a message.

Listening Distractions

(paired with in-class pyramiding discussion)

- Review your notes of the distractions and filters that may be at play while someone is speaking.
 - What themes are present in the distractions? Can you categorize the types of distractions as physical, physiological, psychological, and semantic? Are there items that were listed that do not fit into one of these categories?
 - What themes are present in the filters?
- What strategies or filters have you not tried before that you would like to try? Why and how?

Verbal and Non-Verbal Techniques on Television

(independent, outside of class)

- Choose a television personality you admire. What do you like about this person? Watch several minutes of this person with the sound turned off, and make notes of the non-verbal expressions you observe. Turn the sound back on and make notes of their tone of voice, timing, and other audible expressions. CC-BY-NC-SA

Movement in Your Speaking

(independent, outside of class)

****When completing this activity, ensure you have the *express permission* of all those involved!****

- Ask a friend or family member to record you while you are having a typical conversation with another friend or family member. Alternatively, you could set up your recording device on a tripod or on a table across the room. Watch the video and observe your movements and facial gestures. Are there gestures or facial expressions you make that you were not aware of? What would you do differently if you were making a presentation?

JOHARI Window Feedback and Reflection Exercise

(paired with in-class/outside-of-class exercise)

After completing the JOHARI exercise, answer the following:

- Who did you ask for feedback and why?
- Did any adjectives appear in the *Open Self* or *Blind Self* cells that surprised you?
- Are there items in the *Hidden Self* cell that you had hoped would appear in the *Open Self* cell or vice versa?
- Are there items in the *Blind Self* cell that you are happy with? Unhappy with?

- Now that you are aware of the adjectives that both you and others would use to describe your personality, how might these perceptions affect your relationship with the audience during a presentation?
- If there are items you wish to move from the *Hidden Self* cell to the *Open Self* cell, or items you are unhappy with in the *Blind Self*, brainstorm some strategies for improvement, including activities, timelines, and ways to find out if you are making progress.

Chapter 1 Final Reflection

What piece of advice from the chapter did you find most useful and why? How might it impact your preparation or practice for delivering presentations?

Self-Directed Entries

(begin your self-directed entries here)

Developing a Presentation Strategy

Sample Directed Entries

Attention-Grabbing Devices

(independent, out of class)

- Imagine that you've been asked to speak at a business luncheon and the host has asked you to keep it serious but lighthearted. Which type of attention-grabbing device would you use? Why?

Selecting Style and Format Based on Topic

(independent, out of class)

- Develop a list of five potential speech topics. For each topic, think of a setting in which a speech on that topic might be delivered. For each topic identify the

introduction delivery strategy you would use. (Extension: which topics would benefit from visual aids. If they would, describe how you might use them.)

Chapter 2 Final Reflection

What piece of advice from the chapter did you find most useful and why? How might it impact your preparation, or practice for delivering presentations?

Self-Directed Entries

(begin your self-directed entries here)

Presentation Aids

Sample Directed Entries

Making Charts and Graphs

(paired with class activities)

Part 1:

Which chart or graph of yours did you think was most effective? Why?

Part 2:

Which chart or graph of yours did your peers think was most effective and why? Did they choose the same chart as you? Why do you agree or disagree with their selection? How might this affect how you create charts or graphs for future presentations?

Critiquing Presentational Slides

(independent, outside of class)

Part 1:

Presentational slides from speeches are sometimes available online. Search for and evaluate three sets of presentation slides you find online. Identify three ways that the slides could be improved to be more effective presentation aids. CC-BY-NC-SA

Part 2:

Find a speech on YouTube and see what types of presentation aids the speaker uses. Does the speaker select appropriate aids? How could you have made them better? Were there any missing presentation aids that should have been in the speech? CC-BY-NC-SA

Part 3:

Explain the differences you felt as an audience member between your interaction with the slides (without a speaker) in part 1, and the presentation (with a speaker) in part 2?

Chapter 3 Final Reflection

What piece of advice from the chapter did you find most useful and why? How might it impact your preparation or practice for delivering presentations?

Self-Directed Entries

(begin your self-directed entries here)

Communicating with a Live Audience

Sample Directed Entries

Speech to introduce a classmate: A pre-speech speaking activity

(paired with in class activity)

- Following the in class activity reflect on how you felt during the speech, reactions from the audience, and feedback from the audience.
- You may wish to use [this rubric](#) to guide your reflection questions.

Self-Introduction Speech

(paired with in-class activity)

- Following the in-class activity, reflect on how you felt during the speech, reactions from the audience, and feedback from the audience.

- You may wish to use [this rubric](#) to guide your reflection questions.

Table Topics (in-class impromptu speech)

- Following the in class activity reflect on how you felt during the speech, reactions from the audience, and feedback from the audience.
- You may wish to use [this rubric](#) to guide your reflection questions.

8 Elements of Communication for Presenting

(independent, out of class)

- Which of the 8 elements of communication do you think has the greatest impact on the way an audience interprets a message? Explain your answer.

What to Wear (or not!)

(independent, outside of class)

- Write down 3–5 to five presentation topics and include who the audience for each presentation might be. Would you dress the same for each presentation? Why or why not? What considerations impact the way you would dress for each presentation?

Key Considerations of Non-Verbal Presenting

(independent, outside of class)

- How are speakers who do not make eye contact perceived? What suggestions would you give to speakers to improve their eye contact?
- How are speakers who stand rigidly behind a podium perceived? What suggestions would you give to speakers to improve their body movement?
- What are some strategies you might use to make sure your non-verbal communication is effective leading up to and during your presentations?

Speech Analysis Discussion

(online/blended online/LMS)

- After completing the discussion review the replies your peers made on your analysis, watch the speech you selected again. Do you agree with your peers' replies? Why or why not?

Critiquing an Informative or Persuasive Speech

Locate an informative or a persuasive speech on YouTube. Watch the speech once in its entirety, and then watching it a second time, answer these questions. CC BY-NC-ND

- What attention-getting technique was used? Was it effective?
- Did the speaker establish his/her credibility effectively?
- Was the thesis or purpose of the speech clear?
- Did the speaker preview the main points of the speech?
- Did the main points of the speech correspond with the preview?
- Did the speaker prepare the audience for the end of the speech?
- Did the speaker present any final appeals? Was this effective?
- What type of clincher (closing technique) was used? Was it effective?

Chapter 4 Final Reflection

What piece of advice from the chapter did you find most useful and why? How might it impact your preparation or practice for delivering presentations?

Self-Directed Entries

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Your Presentation Style Reflections:

- Original activities contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum
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- Exercises created by Anonymous for *Principles of Nonverbal Communication* in *Communication for Business Success*, previously shared at <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/communication-for-business-success/s15-01-principles-of-nonverbal-commun.html> under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license](#)
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- Exercises adapted from “Types of Presentation Aids” in *Public Speaking: Practice and Ethics*, created by Anonymous, previously shared at <http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/public-speaking-practice-and-ethics/s18-presentation-aids-design-and-u.html> under a [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license](#)
- Chapter 9 Review Questions and Activities. Authored by: Warren Sandmann, Ph.D. Provided by: Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN. Located at: <http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html>. Project: The Public Speaking Project. License: CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives