Just In Time Delivery:

Evaluating Public Speaking

PART 1: The Presentations

Introduction: Building an environment

1. Although you are not expected to teach public speaking in the engineering classroom, providing guidance to the presentations will benefit your students immensely. These pages offer suggestions for providing support for your students as they develop their presentations.

2. How you view your classroom and your role as the instructor is crucial. While you present lessons to the class as a whole do not lose sight of the individual students (i.e. students make progress toward different goals at different speeds).

3. The classroom environment is created and maintained through your example and leadership. It is up to you to help foster a creative, open, encouraging environment in which the students feel comfortable to participate. With that said, you cannot control how your students feel, but you can control how you talk to them, respond to their questions, present assessments, and engage them during activities, all of which will contribute to successful presentations. If you are "into it" or believe what you are saying, then they will be more willing to have that attitude as well. Enjoyment is contagious and remember, it all in your *delivery*!

Instruction: Building a speech

What is a Speech?

1. A speech is not simply an essay that is read aloud, yet many students will approach public speaking this way. Many will want to write their report and then stand up and read it to the class. However, there are both similarities and differences between the two and fleshing these out will help your students think about the two differently. Working through this with your students will help them see the uniqueness of oral versus written formats and establishes a template for them moving forward (they need to know what is expected of them in both formats).

2. Emphasize that for oral presentations, we use *simple concrete language* for the ear. In other words, encourage them to use language that is easy for their audience to understand. The audience only has one chance to make meaning of a speech (public speaking is *dynamic* – where the audience is **not** able to go back and "rehear" a speech). Emphasize for them that public speaking is highly different from the written form, where individuals have the chance to go back and reread something if they do not understand the text.

3. Speeches also need to be highly organized for the above stated reasons as well as keeping speakers on target. Therefore, some repetition in the presentations needs to be encouraged: they will need previews, internal previews, internal summaries, and use

several transitions (signposts) throughout the speech to move the audience through different points of the presentation.

4. Oral presentations are also immediate, meaning speakers receive feedback from the audience while speaking. The audience is affected by all senses based on how the speaker is able to use both verbal and nonverbal communication effectively. Hence, a speaker can tell if their audience is engaged and interested or bored and confused. A speaker needs to be able to read their audience in the moment and adjust their delivery and content for their audience.

5. Thus, addressing how to be a good audience member is also an important component of teaching public speaking. Encourage students to sit upright and to remove any distracting materials from their desks. An attentive audience will help speakers succeed.
   a. Example exercises:
      i. Ask your students to help you generate a list of how oral and written communication are both similar and different.
      ii. Present a report to the class and ask them how they would make this piece of writing into a speech (this could be done as a class or in groups).

Speech Organization

1. Starting the speech off with strong thesis and preview (road map) statements is the foundation on which the entire speech is built and organized. Verbal and visual transitions are key to moving an audience through the speech. Give them examples of how they can organize a speech verbally (e.g. first, second, etc.) as well as visually (e.g. gesturing to emphasize a point). Again, encourage the use of simple concrete language. Please reference our online *Public Speaking Manual* for more detail—LINK:.

   a. Example exercise: Ask your class to list all the ways they can think of in which a speaker is able to transition between points in a speech (This could be done as a whole class or in groups). Encourage them to be creative, but acknowledge the importance of being clear when moving your audience from point to point.

Oral Presentation

1. Verbally
   a. Words matter. Encourage your students to use vivid language and active verbs.
   b. Voice matters. Help them with developing tone, vocal variety, diction, volume, pace, and vocal energy. Make sure students show excitement with their voice and are not monotone as students present. All of these verbal delivery cues are important for students to present their projects with confidence. Try to help students understand how these vocal delivery cues can negatively impact one's speech such with verbal fillers.

      i. Activity: Have students work on some tongue twisters to get students to work on their pacing, diction, as well as their pronunciation of words.
2. Nonverbally

a. Poise counts. There is a balance between the verbal presentation and the eye contact, hand gestures, and position of the speaker that should be stressed and practiced. Also, make note to have students practice their posture (standing up straight verses leaning off to one side or leaning on something in the classroom).

Implementation: Building a speaker

1. Practice. Practice. Practice.
   a. The clinics provide students the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on their oral presentations. Remind them to take the clinics seriously and to practice before their clinic day. Reference the *JIT Public Speaking Manual*.
   b. If you have time, have your students watch other speakers (e.g. presidential speeches, acceptance speeches, even examples of failed speeches) and discuss what was good and what could have been done differently. Ask about the audience, the transitions, the thesis statement, anything – watching speeches is a great catalyst for discussion. Consider also having your students watch poor speakers and get students to understand how nervous energy can negatively impact one's public speaking abilities. Explain that we tend to pace, shift our weight, use dramatically gesture, etc. as a way for our body to release nervous energy.

2. Stress the importance of outlining.
   a. Discuss with your students the importance of outlining their presentations, referencing the *JIT Public Speaking Manual*.

3. Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of visual aids.
   a. They can help illuminate and emphasize, but they can also be unpredictable and confusing. Do not allow them to take away from the content of the speech (e.g. too much text in a PowerPoint presentation). The proper use of visual aids should be modeled in your lectures.
   b. Tips for Using PowerPoints:
      i. How you support your oral material with a slide
      ii. Use PowerPoint slides sparingly
      iii. Balance creativity with clarity
      iv. Avoid relying on text – use visuals: graphs, diagrams, annotated photographs
      v. Limit number of bullet points/number of words per bullet point
      vi. Make sure visual aid is large enough – large font and clean/use color contrast
      vii. Avoid animation effects/sounds

    c.   Activity: Have your students look up the "Turboencabulator" videos on YouTube. The presentation and tone of the presenters' voice comes off as a well composed technical presentation but the content is lacking. Discuss as a class.

PART 2: The Assessment

The need for assessment

1. We use the clinics for practice and assessment. Assessment is a way to articulate the areas that need improvement and the areas in which the student performed well so they can continue to improve as public speakers.
2. The clinics are not meant to be sites for grading students' work. Your role here is to help your students perform well on their final presentations and to develop successful public speaking skills that they can bring into their engineering careers. Thus, your evaluation of their presentations needs to be honest, clear, and supportive. In your initial feedback <u>always</u> point out where students did well before moving into your critique and suggestions.
3. Assessment also helps establish your individual norms and standards. Public speaking can be seen as a very subjective performance to evaluate, but with clearly established rubrics, your personal norms, and consistency throughout, you will help your students and yourself eliminate the uneasiness of subjectivity.

The challenge of assessment

1. To assist the alignment of perceptions between you (the evaluator) and the student (speaker) on the quality of the presentation a detailed rubric with comments is essential. We have examples attached below; ideally all sections of your course use the same rubric for the clinics and final presentations. Such efforts ensure consistency and validity (see Jonsson, A. & Svingby, G. "The use of scoring rubrics: Reliability, validity and educational consequences," 2007).
2. When assigning the presentations, go over the rubric in class, so students know exactly what is expected of them for the clinics and final presentations.
3. During the clinics, you will *evaluate in the moment,* which takes practice as you must listen and write at the same time. However, taking notes while students present will prevent you from forgetting important feedback. Use the rubric to take notes and with practice you will have your own system for doing so.

Creating an assessment

1. As stated above, use the rubric for the assignment.

2. Also as stated before, introduce your assessment strategy (rubric) to your students in advance. Consider distributing hard copies and go over the rubric in class when assigning the presentations.

3. Ideally, give 2-3 comments for improvement and always (even if you find it difficult) find something constructive to say about the presentation. Use the sandwich method (see example below).

4. Your feedback at the clinics will be immediate and verbal. Have the student take notes as you provide verbal feedback and follow up your feedback with your rubric and notes.

5. Be aware of your handwriting. If you have terrible handwriting you may want to type your feedback.

6. Sandwich Feedback Example:
   i. Overall content for the presentation was well developed. You set up the problem effectively. Good use of data and diagrams to present your design decisions. Watch out for your fillers words such as "um," "uh," and "like." Also, make sure to watch your non-verbals, specifically, your posture and gestures. You had your arm crossed during most of your presentation, which can be off-putting to your audience. Make sure to gesture with both hands and stand up straight. Solid conclusion with reviewing your project's solutions. Do consider adding a "what next" as your final point for your final presentation.

Part 3: The Presentations

1. Timing
   a. Emphasize that the presentations should not exceed the allotted time, since it cuts into the time for other students and can dramatically impact the schedule.
   b. Establish how you are going to work the timing. You cannot listen, take notes and time the speech at the same time.
   c. If a student is running over do not hesitate to cut them off. The other students cannot afford to have a classmate go way over his/her allotted time. Stating clearly "Time" should suffice. Make sure you say thank you to all presenters (even those who run over time).

2. Preparation
   a. Students sign up for clinic days via PACE on your course website.
   b. The Clinic Coordinator (CC) posts the speaking schedule on the course Website and keeps a hard copy as back up.

3. Clinics
   a. Arrive to the clinics at least ten minutes early and check in with the CC.

b. Do dress professionally as we ask the students to.
c. Have writing materials ready to go before the presentations begin.

d. The clinic coordinator will:
    i. Have a way to manage timekeeping
    ii. Make sure the room and equipment are set up for the presentations
    iii. Post a sign for the door (e.g. "please wait for applause before entering") to prevent interruptions
    iv. Bring a hard copy of the speaking order and post it on the board
    v. Make sure there are enough grading rubrics.

Part 4: Rubrics and Feedback

JIT Presentation Rubric

Content:
- The presentation conforms to all stated guidelines in the assignment sheet.
- The presentation has a clear problem statement.
- The presentation describes key design decisions.
- The presentation justifies the project by showing how it solves the problem.
- Visual aids are clear, easy to follow and provide proper citations.
- The presentation uses appropriate language for the audience.
- The presentation uses appropriate examples for the audience.
- The presentation conclusion reviews how the solution performs and/or offers possible future directions.

Organization:
- The presentation features an effective attention getting device.
- The presentation has a clear thesis (problem statement) and an effective preview statement that previews the major points.
- The presentation uses transitions appropriately and effectively.
- The main points are presented in a logical fashion.
- The presentation contains simple concrete language for the audience to follow.
- The presentation's conclusion adequately summarizes the speech, restates the thesis and provides an adequate set of closing remarks.
- Each presentation includes oral citations.

Delivery:
- The speaker's physical posture is appropriate; the speaker is standing upright and is not swaying or otherwise distracting with posture.
- Gestures are big and engaging.
- The speaker's gestures are appropriate to the speech.
- The speaker is making eye contact at least 70-80% of the time.

- The speaker makes eye contact with most or all of the audience.
- The speaker does not glance at his or her visual aid during the presentation (except to gesture to relevant portions).
- The speech is delivered extemporaneously, with minimal use of notes.
- Verbal fillers are kept to a minimum.
- The speaker's volume and rate of speech are appropriate for the audience.

FEEDBACK GUIDELINES

Content:

- Clarity: was the thesis stated clearly? Were the main points easy to detect? Was the relationship of the main points to the thesis obvious and appropriate?
- Organization: did the presentation ensure that the audience recognized and remembered the organizational structure?
- Were reliable sources and data used during the presentation? Were they cited in a manner that was easy to follow?
- Was the purpose of the presentation explained clearly and sufficiently?
- Introduction: did the introduction capture the attention of the audience quickly? Did the introduction establish the significance of the project?
- Were smooth transitions employed to move through the presentation and provide signposts for the audience?
- Did the conclusion describe the solution's perform? Include possible future directions?

Delivery:

- Did the speaker deliver the presentation from minimal notes?
- Did the speaker use conversational delivery rather than reading from full-text?
- Did the speaker maintain good eye contact?
- Is it clear that the speaker prepared in advance for the presentation?
- Did the speaker flow smoothly or did the speaker search for words? Use fillers such as "Um"?
- Did the speaker emphasize key ideas vocally? Did the speaker use an effective volume, pitch, and pace with the speaker's voice?
- Was the speaker energized and enthusiastic?
- Was the speaker speech free from distracting mannerisms? Rocking, unnecessary gestures?

Overall Quality of the Presentation:

- Was the speaker's delivery/presence received by the audience?
- Does the presentation address the strategies/purpose for the assignment?
- Is the presentation based on sound reasoning and evidence?
- Is the speech well-organized and well-delivered?

Feedback:

- Response will be concrete and detailed.
- Response will highlight strengths; discuss weaknesses.
- Response will work to improve, not frustrate.
- Response will not be a static reaction, rather an individualized account of the specific moment.

Part 5: Practice

In order to prepare for the clinics, we have selected two speeches for you to view and practice *evaluating* each speech. Evaluating speeches is important but also a technique you must practice responding in the moment, which includes being able to take notes that provide good critical feedback for the student. Please make sure to look at the attached sample speech rubric below on how to grade each speech. While watching, note the following:

1. Take notes as you are watching as if this student is one of your own. Take notes on content, delivery, organization, purpose, clarity of ideas, use of sources, etc.

2. Take notes as you are watching on the student's delivery. Take notes on posture, movement, eye contact, gestures, tone, vocal energy, etc.

3. After watching each speech, use the grading rubric and write down at least two strengths of the student's speech and two areas that need the most improvement.

4. After you have watched all speeches, rank them. Why did you rank them the way you did? What aspects of the speech weighed more heavily on your decision?