

COMM 65200 - Final Teaching Plan - David Graye

Course: Effective Presentation Skills & Refining “Elevator Pitch” Skills

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective 1: Designing Appealing & Effective Presentations

Students will develop their ability to create impactful presentation slides that reinforce the messaging they plan to deliver. For visual design, and auditory design, students will focus on clarity, impact, and simplicity. Students will learn via interactive exercises and constructive feedback, and by the end of the course, students will be able to apply key principles of visual design, typography, and selection of images/videos to promote audience understanding and retention in various scenarios.

Learning Objective 2: Master Body Language & Inflection

Demonstrate proficiency in applying appropriate voice inflection, changes in cadence, pacing, eye contact, hand gestures, etc. Through guided interactive sessions, students will learn to employ such techniques in various scenarios. By the end of this course, students should know when and where to apply such techniques.

Learning Objective 3: Engage with an Audience

Learners will be able to engage with individuals and group settings appropriately with proper engagement techniques. By the end of this course, students will recall how to implement storytelling techniques, and effective methods for facilitating a Q&A session, and apply audience participation strategies in their presentations.

Detailed Schedule

<i>Week & Topic</i>	<i>In-Person</i>	<i>Online</i>
Week 1 Get to Know Each Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Pre-Class Scavenger Hunt● Meet in Classroom/ Introductions● Course Overview & Objectives/Syllabus● Pre-Course Discussion of Effective Presentation/Pre-Course Survey● Introduction to Body Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recap of the previous session● Online Discussion: Sharing personal experiences with Public speaking● Post a “one-minute or less”

		<p>self-introduction video in the <i>Week 1 discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video exercise: analyze body language and delivery in three TED talks
<p>Week 2 Body Language & Voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review personal experiences ● InterACTIVE: body language role-play/confidence & presence ● Discuss voice inflection ● Introduce techniques for effectively using volume, pacing, and emphasis in public speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recap of the previous session ● Simulation activity: Mystery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (See Activity 1*)
<p>Week 3 Elevator Pitch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to elevator pitches in networking and professional settings ● InterACTIVE: 3-4 person groups practicing elevator pitches (clarity and impact) ● Lecture: tailoring pitches to different people and settings ● Conciseness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recap of the previous session ● Zoom Session: breakout room practice elevator pitches ● Breakout Room Peer Feedback ● Assignment Refine & Practice elevator pitches based on peer feedback
<p>Week 4 Mystery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mystery Activity* (See Activity 2) 	<p>Week 4 Discussion Post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will reflect on their ambush experience and discuss how their follow-up meeting went ● Students identify their strengths and weaknesses at the current midpoint
<p>Week 5 Visual Aids/Design/Anxiety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact of visual aids & design in presentations ● InterACTIVE: group activity creating a presentation on a random topic from hat focusing on design, appeal, and simplicity ● Present in person ● Professor Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recap of the previous session ● Take personality test/review results ● Relaxation techniques to overcome presentation anxiety ● Watch Supplemental videos ● Read additional readings/websites <p>Week 5 Discussion Post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss personal strategies and preferred methods of overcoming nervousness when presenting.
<p>Week 6 Engaging an Audience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce methods for capturing and maintaining audience attention ● Watch social media videos & hooks ● InterACTIVE: practice storytelling in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recap of the previous session ● Submit the Week 6 survey ● Begin final presentation with all techniques

	<p>groups with engagement techniques (exercise begins after professor begins with personal story w/ engagement techniques)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion on how to incorporate interactive questions, hooks, elements, and audience participation in presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Week 6 supplemental resources ● Revisit & Improve PitchVantage simulation
<p>Week 7 Q&A Sessions & Follow-ups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce strategies for handling questions and answers during a presentation ● Deflections ● Awkward encounters/Heckling ● InterACTIVE: Roleplay (split class in two groups) and practice responding to different types of questions ● Discussion on effective strategies post-networking ● Discussion on creating meaningful/impactful presentation endings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recap of the previous session ● Continue working on the final presentation <p>Week 7 Discussion Post:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch a Ted Talk - then prepare one impactful question ● Watch a second TED Talk - then prepare a better response to an asked question or clarify the point made.
<p>Week 8 Final Presentation & Wrap-up</p>	<p>Format Switch - Week 8 first session ONLINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submit the final presentation by the end of the day @11:59pm* <p>*Two-hour grace period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refer back to the Week 1 Discussion Post Video ● Compare to the Final Presentation submission 	<p>Format Switch - Week 8 second session IN-PERSON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflection on growth from Week 1 to Week 8 ● Review key-takeaways ● Words of Encouragement ● Next-Steps/Post-course assignments ● Final Survey

Activity Descriptions

Activity 1*: PitchVantage Simulation

Refer to the PitchVantage explanation video *attached as a comment in this submission*

This activity will occur twice within the course, once in the second week and again in the sixth week. The PitchVantage simulation will allow students to see their strengths and weaknesses with a virtual audience designed to respond to pace, pauses, inflection/variability, engagement, etc.

After reviewing their results in week 2, students will continue their learning and have access to the simulation. During the sixth week, students will aim to improve their scores from the second week by applying the techniques explained throughout this course.

Measuring Progress:

To measure growth with this recurring activity. Students will not be pressured to achieve a particular score in the first round. They will have a maximum of two tries with their attempts, these attempts will not be graded and will be graded for effort/completion

With the second round of this activity, the students will be expected to score **85/100** or higher for **overall content**. Individual feedback metrics must score 80 or higher if their score is lower than 80, the student must try again regardless of whether the overall content score is 85 or above. Students will have unlimited attempts and will receive **3 points** for **extra credit** if their score is **95 or above**.

<https://pitchvantage.com/how-it-works-companies/feedback-elements/>

Additional information:

<https://pitchvantage.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwcYfHgOajg>

Activity 2:** Ambush In-Person Exercise

The ambush exercise is a mystery activity for students to check on their skills at the midpoint of the course. The ambush will have students pitch their elevator pitches to business owners, faculty, professors, and researchers who are all aware of the exercise and its goals.

The students will be clued in after the first round of pitches. The students will then become aware of the exercise and the activity's intentions and objectives. A brief break/meeting with all parties involved with the exercise will occur after the first round of pitches. The students will continue with the second and third rounds after they receive the first round feedback and the mystery is made known. Students will then receive feedback from the professors/business owners group after the second/third round.

This activity will be held in the CSUN library or building with elevators to stress the need for conciseness. The admin/professors/business owner groups who are being pitched to will be in the elevators and will be instructed to travel to the top floor and hold the “door close” button for as long as they are engaged in the conversation (max. time: 1 minute total).

The business owners/professors will have the opportunity to select students from the ambush for a second round as a mock/potential interview for open positions or fellowships on campus. This ambush is an opportunity for students to find a job in a field of their choice. Students will be encouraged to reach out to listed non-profits, organizations, businesses, etc. who were a part of the ambush.

Lecture / Presentation Materials

The following is a snippet example presentation for Week 2 (Body Language & Voice):

EXAMPLE OF LECTURE SLIIDE FOR WEEK 2 (IN-PERSON SESSION)

GOOD MORNING

SESSION AGENDA

- Review Discussion Post
- Introduce voice inflection
- Using volume, pacing, & emphasis in public speaking
- InterACTIVE Activity

1

DISCUSSION POST RECAP

- How did you feel when submitting your self-introduction?
- Did you notice moments where you mumbled, kept quiet, used filler words, lost posture, etc.?
- Walk up to three classmates you do not know and introduce yourselves
- Speak quickly and/or monotone

2

Wasn't that Terrible?

 Speeding through a presentation comes across as chaotic and not confident


 Paying attention to vocal inflection, pacing, volume, posture, hand gestures, and other aspects improve your image and enhance your messaging

Introduce yourself to 3 more people with one or more improved aspects.

3

STRATEGIES & TECHNIQUES

Watch this short TED Talk

 Which strategies do you naturally apply in daily life?



Which strategies do you need to improve upon?

4

DISCUSSION POST RECAP

- Did you notice the difference in the way I just spoke & carried myself?
- For your InterACTIVE, get into groups and discuss a random topic drawn from the hat. Use as many techniques from the TED talk as you can. Even if you don't know the material, project as if you do know it.
- Think of your favorite confident character or actor, be confident & role-play as if you are them. Project, have dynamics, & have fun.

5

MYstery?  

How can I measure these changes in the way I speak and carry myself in a public setting?

Check your computers for your new resource. The assignment has just been posted, are you ready to see what your next session will entail?

Introduction to PitchVantage Simulation

6

Additional Materials

Ambush Activity Card

Before entering the elevator with one or more business owners/professors/etc. The students will be given a card that details what is asked of them when spending time in the elevator. Students will be in a line waiting to get into the elevator (not knowing what is going on) and will be given the card when at the front of the line. The students who have the cards when at the front of the line will move off to the side and prepare for a few seconds.

The following is an example of the card to be used for the Ambush Activity:



ARE YOU PREPARED TO TEST YOUR SKILLS?

Your mission is to strike up a conversation with one or more people in the elevator you are about to enter. Business owners, professors seeking fellowship students, and corporate representatives are present in the elevator.

Look for clues: find pins, branded bags, name tags, things you have in common personally, etc. Start & maintain an engaging conversation in the elevator and relate it to your job aspirations and educational goals.

Get to the point: You will have no more than one minute in this elevator! But make sure your conversation begins and flows naturally. Do not ramble, and do not let them get bored with you.

Wrap up the conversation with a plan to **follow up** with the person you choose to engage with.



Not all networking happens at events! Sometimes you have to network in the spur of the moment. Good luck and breathe!

**DING*
GOING UP?*

Debriefing & Discussion Questions

Week 1 Discussion Post Prompt:

After reviewing the supplemental resources and reviewing your notes from the previous class, share your personal experiences with public speaking. From what we have covered, what are you familiar with? Are there things you are not familiar with? After submitting your written discussion post, post a 50-second to 1-minute self-introduction video as a reply to your submitted written post

Week 4 Discussion Post Prompt:

Reflect on your ambush activity. Were you prepared to apply your knowledge? What did you identify as your current strengths and weaknesses? If you are comfortable with sharing your

feedback, what feedback did you receive? And were you able to improve those weaker areas in the second & third rounds? Do you plan/have you followed up with any of the business owners in attendance?

Week 5 Discussion Post Prompt:

After reviewing the materials and techniques that discuss overcoming presentation anxiety, discuss which preferred personal strategies & methods of overcoming nervousness you would use when presenting.

Week 7 Discussion Post Prompt:

Watch one Ted Talk: Prepare one impactful question you would have asked the presenter if you were in attendance at this presentation.

Watch a second TED Talk: Prepare an improved question for the presenter OR improve the response given to the person who asked the question. Rephrase and improve the question OR answer in a way that is more engaging/interactive, and relate it to the bigger picture

Evaluation Plan

The following methods will be used in this course to gauge the growth and development of the students' learning:

Three Surveys:

This course will begin with a survey to gauge how many students are familiar with the material being discussed. From that point, the instructor will see how familiar the students are with the planned material if they show signs of having some familiarity with “Effective Presentation Skills” and/or “Refining ‘Elevator Pitch’ Skills.”

A second survey will be conducted in person after the mystery (Ambush) assignment. Students will have the chance to share their thoughts on where they feel they have grown the most in the past four weeks, and what aspects of communication they must work on more in the next four weeks. The instructor will analyze the answers given to pinpoint which techniques/strategies must be revisited or reinforced.

The final week has students submit their final presentation. As the students are assigned their reflection assignment, they will also be assigned a digital survey/questionnaire asking them to rate their growth and provide feedback. The goal of this survey is to analyze any potential roadblocks/obstacles, see which exercises the students responded to the most, and improve the course for the next group of students participating in the course.

Revisiting PitchVantage Simulation:

To evaluate growth in the student's presentation delivery, the class will engage with the PitchVantage simulation twice. Once graded for completion, and graded when revisited.

The following is copied from the PitchVantage: "Measuring Progress" section of this teaching plan:

To measure growth with this recurring activity. Students will not be pressured to achieve a particular score in the first round. They will have a maximum of two tries with their attempts, these attempts will not be graded and will be graded for effort/completion

With the second round of this activity, the students will be expected to score **85/100** or higher for **overall content**. Individual feedback metrics must score 80 or higher if their score is lower than 80, the student must try again regardless of whether the overall content score is 85 or above. Students will have unlimited attempts and will receive **3 points** for **extra credit** if their score is **95 or above**.

The goal of this activity is to have students unknowingly and organically develop their skills throughout the course with lectures and InterACTIVE activities. The simulation is to be used as a measurable resource for gauging students' performance, and as a valuable resource for students to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Reflection Assignments:

The reflection assignment will be conducted during the last class/ in-person meeting. Students will continue to be configured in a circular shape (socratic seminar) and discuss what strategies they resonated with most or the least. Students will also discuss which resources helped them the most or the least and which supplemental videos had the most valuable pieces of information.

This assignment can be conducted online, however, it has more potential to encourage two-way symmetrical communication by having the students discuss this material face-to-face. The instructor will note which aspects of the course were most liked or disliked, and adjust accordingly. The instructor will then lead the students into the next evaluation plan (Next-Steps Protocol).

Next-Steps Protocol:

The Next-Steps Protocol is simply a recap of the most important elements of the class and the assigning of a post-course assignment. The instructor is encouraged to frame this

post-course assignment as a mission or mystery to encourage the students to continue their education.

The PitchVantage introduction video attached as a supplemental video is this assignment submission, notes that 90% of trainees forget what was taught in their workshop or class within 12 months. Students will be encouraged to “accept their mission” to continue using the PitchVantage Resource until their access is no longer valid (until graduation) and continue to study effective presentation strategies through TED Talks, continued education, and reviewing notes created during this course.