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Presentation Issues

This activity was created to be used primarily with:

7. Listening and Speaking

Secondary skills include:

1. Creativity and Innovation
2. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
3. Initiative and Self-Direction
6. Conflict Resolution
8. Respect for Diversity
11. Big-Picture Thinking
15. Information Literacy
17. Information Technology
18. Job-Specific Skills and Technologies
20. Professionalism
21. Reading and Writing

1. Teacher will define Listening and Speaking as:

- **defining nonverbal cues:** aspects of communication, such as gestures and facial expressions, that do not involve verbal communication but which may include nonverbal aspects of speech itself (accent, tone of voice, speed of speaking, etc). Cues are a hints, intimations, and guiding suggestions, typically on how to infer what is implied. Is it humor? Is it sarcastic? Cues are how we read between the lines. These cues can also be different for different cultures, both in habit, custom, and perception.
- **employing active listening techniques (e.g., asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing what was said):** demonstrating that you are listening by providing feedback, both verbal and non-verbal (e.g., smile, posture, eye contact). Clarifying questions are asked by the listener about an aspect of the speaker's message, basically asking the speaker to repeat or frame the message differently. Paraphrasing is a statement by the listener who tells the speaker what was said in abbreviated form.
- **exhibiting public speaking skills (e.g., making presentations):** medium, message, duration, tone, and organizing information all play roles. Several do's and don'ts apply. This is a major workplace skill and can take years to master. Public speaking is also a common major phobia but can be overcome by applying certain techniques, as well as by practice.
- **articulating ideas in a manner appropriate to the setting and audience (e.g., considering the chosen communication method and audience's level of knowledge):** understanding who you are speaking to allows you to adjust your presentation to



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accommodate a certain demographic or group of listeners and what they have in common. You should be able to make certain assumptions before addressing an audience that will greatly affect the way you organize and clarify your message, as well as the message itself.

Note. Teachers practice this all the time not only with students or classes, but with coworkers, administrators, and parent groups as well. Teachers, therefore, should lean on their own professional experience to discuss different audiences and the idea of code switching.

2. Teacher will present various strategies students could use to improve their skills for a persuasive presentation, which is one in which the student will try to convince an audience to agree with them. It's probably best to stay away from sensitive political issues. Try to select a topic, based on your program.

Use this example to get them started: (this is not meant to promote the idea that all students need to go to university, so freely substitute any persuasive presentation topic of your own.)

Example: Topic of presentation: SAT scores should have no bearing on college applications.

Audience and assumptions about this audience: College application personnel (the topic of my college admission essay). I can assume that this audience knows the application process well and has reasons for using the SAT scores to influence its decisions.

Main point: SAT scores measure test taking skills more than academic knowledge and academic knowledge to date does not measure how much a learner can learn or is eager to learn from this point forward. Therefore, it is an inadequate and irrelevant tool to predict college success.

Provide minor points (at least two: "inadequate and irrelevant prediction tool" that support your thesis). Illustrate historical figures who were not successful academically in their youth, such as Einstein.

Provide the persuasive idea: "the personality of an eager lifelong learner" is what college boards should be basing their decisions. Conclude by discussing your personality as an eager lifelong learner, illustrated by images in your past endeavors that demonstrate this.

Organize: How would you group this information? (Just as it is laid out above). Refute then persuade.

Tone: Slightly humorous but not arrogant or argumentative, given the context and audience.

Medium: Video recorded of speaker, mixed with slides and images. Suitable to audience. No music. Make sure there are not grammatical or spelling errors.



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Assignment: Have students submit a short presentation on a topic that tries to convince the audience of something, not just informative. Perhaps it is an argument about why the student's grade should be raised in the class you are teaching. You might also have students consider media tools. What are the main ways to present convincing arguments today? Discuss the idea of "death by PowerPoint." Which media choices suit the workplace your students plan to enter? Think about remote presentations as well and how the pandemic affected use of virtual space. Have audience members, perhaps only you, describe why they were or were not convinced or persuaded. Did it have anything to do with issues with the presentation or argument itself?

Note: Presentation skills have a lot of crossover with Professionalism in general, or workplace etiquette and behavioral expectations. Disruption, noise, apathy, and especially distraction in the form of device use, all have negative impacts on a presenter. This might be a good time to focus on how an audience is expected to behave, given the temptation of these distractions and what an audience can do to make the best use of presentations that they don't really care about. Virtual meeting software has a whole new set of issues, including lack of audience feedback and a rough management of the tool. Especially if your students might be headed for careers that depend on remote presentations, take this time to focus on software such as Zoom and familiarize them with the abundance of tools within that virtual environment.

Additional resources:

Active Listening: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/active-listening.html>

5 Ways to Avoid a Death by PowerPoint Presentation: <https://www.mindtools.com/blog/5-ways-to-avoid-death-by-powerpoint-presentation/>

How to Give More Persuasive Presentations: <https://blog.ted.com/how-to-give-more-persuasive-presentations-a-qa-with-nancy-duarte/>