Resources & Suggestions for Teaching Oral Presentation Skills
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April 2017

This document identifies a range of resources instructors may wish to consult and offers a variety of suggestions they might consider implementing to improve the effectiveness of students' oral presentations. I organize these resources and suggestions according to the categories measured in a rubric I developed a few years ago that the university recently used to assess students' oral presentation skills both in the FYS and in upper-level departmental courses.

This 17-item rubric assesses student performance in three broad areas using a four-point scale. Nine rubric items focus on structure, with five of these focusing on the introduction, two on the body, and two on the conclusion. Four rubric items focus on the speaker's thesis, use of evidence, and source citations. The final four rubric items focus on language/style and delivery. Copies of the rubric and the rationale underlying each item contained in it are included as Appendices A & B respectively.

The suggestions and resources set forth in this document are by no means exhaustive, and I offer them primarily for their generative potential, hoping they will prompt individual instructors to devise their own creative ways to enhance students' presentation skills. I urge instructors who participated in the two assessment projects referenced above to focus both on areas where overall student scores were lowest and where their students' scores were lowest. Faculty who did not participate in either assessment project should focus on areas where their students have typically faltered on past oral presentation assignments.

Resources and Pedagogical Suggestions Related to Introductions (Rubric Items 1-5)

Resources

Warren Sandmann, "Introductions and Conclusions," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text,* American Communication Association, 2011.

> After explaining the five tasks presenters should accomplish in their introductions, this textbook chapter identifies and provides examples of 10 attention-getting devices, concluding with general advice for crafting an effective introduction. *Rubric items 1-5.*

Peep Laja, "How to Get Attention in a World That Suffers from Attention Deficit Disorder," ConversionXL website.

> This piece explores why marketers find it so difficult to capture the attention of potential buyers and, in the process, should make clear to students that the challenge of gaining the audience's attention is not unique to presenters. *Rubric item 1.*

Peep Laja, "8 Things That Grab and Hold a Website Visitor's Attention," ConversionXL website.

> After opening with a discussion of the Reticular Activating System (including the features of visual stimuli that attract attention), this piece identifies eight strategies web designers draw on

to grab and hold viewers' attention. Instructors might ask students to reflect on how speakers might adapt these strategies in their presentations. *Rubric item 1.*

Ben Parr, "The Three Stages of Attention," YouTube, 11 January 2016, 7:39.

In this short video, the author of *Captivology*, a book-length study of attention and distraction in contemporary culture, argues that rather than working like an "on/off" switch, attention instead moves through three stages of successively greater intensity, each of which operates differently. *Rubric item 1.*

Daphne Seah, "Seven Tips from Ben Parr's *Captivology* on Capturing Digital Attention," *Forbes.com,* July 2015.

This piece briefly explores the seven types of "captivation triggers" that Parr identifies in *Captivology*: unconscious responses to colors, movement, etc., framing and re/frame, disruption, reward, reputation, mystery/suspense, and acknowledgement. *Rubric item 1.*

Simon Sinek, "How Great Leaders Inspire Action," TEDx Puget Sound, September 2009, 18:04.

In this presentation, Sinek argues persuasively for granting primacy to "why" over "what" and "how." Although not specifically about presentations, Sinek's argument, by implication, suggests that while *what* speakers are going to talk about and *how* they're going to approach their topics may be important things for speakers to address in the introductions to their presentations, the more important issue is *why* they're speaking and *why* audience members ought to listen. *Rubric items 3 & 4.*

Gordon Kangas, "Giving Presentations Worth Listening To," TEDx EMU, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 8 February 2015, 10:06.

Most speakers, Kangas maintains, approach presentations by focusing on the content they want to present. Instead, he argues, they ought to focus on what they want audience members to know, be able to do, etc. when the presentation has ended. The bottom line, Kangas argues, is to have an effect. *Rubric item 4.*

Peter DeCaro, Tyrone Adams, & Bonnie Jefferis, "Audience Analysis," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text,* American Communication Association, 2011.

This chapter describes three methods of audience analysis (director observation, inference, and sampling) and five types of audience analysis (situational, demographic, psychological, multicultural, and interest/knowledge). *Rubric item 4.*

Lisa Schreiber, "Relating Your Topic to the Audience," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text,* American Communication Association, 2011, 10:48.

This audio slideshow distinguishes between "audience-centered" presenters (the ideal) and "speaker-centered" presenters (the norm), offering five tips for becoming more audience-centered. *Rubric item 4.*

Jack Malcom, "Beyond WIFM," jackmalcolm.com, 23 June 2015.

In this blog post, the author argues for the value of linking topics to audiences not merely in terms of their self-interest but also in terms of their identity and core values. *Rubric item 4.*

Jay Heinrich, "Give a Great Speech--Even a Simple Speech Can Go Better If You Follow the Advice of History's Greatest Orator," *Figures of Speech Served Fresh*, 2005.

> (1) Commonplaces: "It's all about them. You can only persuade people if you work off whatever the audience shares with you." (2) Decorum: "Fit your audience." (3) Arrangement: "Character, then logic, then emotions." (4) Apply a style filter: proper language, clarity, vividness, decorum, ornament." *Rubric item 4.*

Chris Anderson, "TED's Secret to Great Public Speaking" TED Studio, March 2016, 7:55.

> A long-time TED Talk curator offers presenters four pieces of advice, each of which features audience in a prominent way: (1) limit yourself to "a single powerful idea" that you are passionate about communicating to an audience (2) "give your listeners a reason to care," (3) "build your idea, piece by piece, from what your audience already knows," and (4) "make your idea worth sharing." *Rubric item 4.*

Melissa Marshall, "Talk Nerdy to Me," TED Global, June 2012, 4:53.

> A professor who teaches public speaking to science and engineering students urges folks in these disciplines to find ways to communicate that will enable non-specialists "to see their science as sexy, their engineering engaging." The first order of business, she argues, is to explain "why science is relevant to us," the second, to replace jargon and specialized language with stories, examples, and analogies that clarify without dumbing down. Marshall ends with a top-notch conclusion in which she distills her advice to scientists into an elegant "scientific" equation. *Rubric item 4.*

Simon Sinek, "How to Begin Your Presentation," *Presentation Essentials: How to Share Ideas That Inspire Action*, 5 May 2015, 5:56.

> In this excerpt from a larger online class, Sinek urges speakers to approach their presentations with "a spirit of giving, not selling," and he offers advice both on how to begin working on a presentation and what speakers should/should not do in the introduction to their presentations. *Rubric items 1-5.*

Pedagogical Suggestions

(1) Require students to view a presentation, ideally one related to the course theme so content goals, too, are being advanced. Afterwards, facilitate a discussion focusing, at least in part, on the introduction. Issues to address include: the rhetorical choices the presenter made in the introduction; the factor(s) that appear to have motivated these choices; whether the choices were wise ones and why; how the presenter might need/want to adjust the introduction if a key aspect, say the audience, were altered; which of the five tasks in rubric items 1-5 the presenter accomplished and how; which tasks the speaker failed to accomplish (or perhaps didn't even try to accomplish) and why. To add a comparative dimension to this exercise, instructors could ask students to view two or more presentations for analysis and discussion. Note: the TED Talk website is one good place to search for high-quality presentations by topic. *Rubric items 1-5.*

(2) Prior to their final in-class presentations, ask students to come to class prepared to deliver just their introductions. As students do this, move through the five rubric items, soliciting feedback from the other students regarding which items warrant additional attention and how these might be improved.

Instructors will, of course, want to supplement student feedback with their own. I strongly urge instructors adopting this exercise to divide the class into smaller groups that share their introductions in different sessions, as having all students share their introductions in a single session can make the final in-class presentations feel less "fresh." *Rubric items 1-5.*

(3) Divide students into small groups. Give each group a magazine that is heavy on advertising. Ask groups to peruse the magazine, generating a list of the strategies advertisers use to induce readers to pause on their pages. After the groups share their findings with one another, conclude the exercise with a discussion of how speakers, in the opening moments of their presentations, might draw on the attention-getting strategies utilized by advertisers. *Rubric item 1.*

(4) Ask students to complete Karen Fritts' two-page "Audience Analysis Worksheet." Though not focused solely on "relating the topic to the audience" *in the introduction*, this worksheet nevertheless primes students to be more audience-centered by leading them through a series of questions, all of which feature audience prominently. Samples include: "Why do you plan to develop these main points for this audience?" and "Why have you selected the supporting material you plan to use for this audience?" *Rubric item 4.*

(5) Relating the topic to speaker and to the audience are not "one-and-done" tasks relegated solely to the introduction. Instead, these tasks are initiated in the introduction but extended throughout the presentation. To help students more clearly understand this, create a timeline that charts how these two tasks play out across the course of single presentation. TED Talks well-suited to this exercise include: Caroline Goyder's "The Surprising Secret to Speaking with Confidence," Brene Brown's "The Power of Vulnerability," and Pamela Meyer's "How to Spot a Liar." Before sharing with students whatever presentation you select, instruct them to note each instance where the speaker engages in self-referencing or relates the topic to the audience. After viewing the speech, draw a presentation timeline on the board. Use student input to mark the timeline for each instance of self-referencing. For each instance, ask students to reflect on what they think the speaker was hoping to accomplish (e.g., establish credibility, appeal to the audience's emotion, demonstrate his/her difference from a person or group of people described in the speech, demonstrate his/her similarity to audience members) and mark this on the timeline on as well. Next, use student input to mark the timeline for instances where the speaker related the topic to the audience, noting *how* the speaker accomplished this. *Rubric items 3 & 4.*

(6) Students often misconstrue rubric item 3 as focusing solely on establishing the speaker's expertise on a topic. One reason students scored as low as they did on this item may well be that, after humbly and (in most instances) correctly determining that they weren't experts, they opted to skip this rubric item altogether. To address this, instructors might build into the design of their assignments a step in which in students are explicitly asked to reflect, either orally or in writing, on the related questions animating rubric items 3 and 4—namely, "why do I care about this topic?" and "why should my audience care about it?" *Rubric items 3 & 4.*

Resources and Pedagogical Suggestions for Structuring the Body of a Presentation (Rubric Items 6 & 7)

Resources

Joshua Trey Burnett, "Organizing & Outline," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*, American Communication Association, 2011.

> After explaining the difference between a "statement of purpose" and a "thesis statement," this chapter identifies and describes six frequently used organizational patterns, offers advice

regarding transitions, and concludes with an explanation of the difference between preparation outlines and speaking outlines. *Rubric items 6 & 7.*

Andrew Dlugan, "Speech Transitions: Magical Words and Phrases," *Six Minutes: Speaking & Presentations Skills, 26* August 2013.

This resource is devoted primarily to identifying twelve types of transitions and offering sample transition words and phrases belonging to each category. Examples of the types of transitions explored are: transitions between similar ideas, transition to show cause and effect, and transition from introduction to body. *Rubric item 7.*

"Using Connectives," *The Public Speaker's Page*, University of Hawaii.

This short handout focusing on transitions and signposting also covers internal previews and reviews. *Rubric item 7.*

Arsha Vahabzadeh, "Primacy/Recency," Khan Academy video, 29 January 2015, 4:50.

This short video introduces students to why humans tend to recall material that is introduced first and last more readily than material introduced in the middle. Additionally, it reminds presenters that if they want to increase the recall of material situated in the middle of their presentations, they need to take addition steps to make this material "stickier." *Rubric item 6.*

Pedagogical Suggestions

(1) The organizational pattern students adopt does much more than organize and order their main points. Instead, it determines what they include and exclude. The goal of the following exercise is to deepen their understanding of this: divide students into small groups and have each group decide on a potential topic; after describing the major organizational patterns (e.g., chronological, spatial, topical, cause/effect, pro/con, problem/solution, and comparative), ask group to sketch out the main points for potential speeches on their topic that deploy as many of the organizational patterns as possible. *Rubric item 6.*

(2) To deepen students' understanding of why the sequence in which content is presented matters and to help them make more deliberate and informed choices about this, you might create and engage students in a short experiment such as the one focusing on the primacy and recency in this short video. *Rubric item 6.*

(3) If students are going to engage in presentations that involve some sort of call to action, you might want to introduce them to Nancy Duarte's TED Talk "The Secret Structure of Great Talks" and ask them to emulate in their presentations the "hidden" pattern she sees repeated again and again in highly celebrated speeches. This pattern, which she charts in Steve Jobs' unveiling of the iPhone and MLK's "I Have a Dream," involves oscillating back and forth repeatedly between "what is" and a "what could be" before finally concluding with "the new bliss" associated with the speaker's call to action. *Rubric item 6.*

(4) To help students understand that structuring a presentation involves not only the sequencing of main points but also the sequencing of persuasive strategies, you might ask them to read the short section from Jay Heinrich's "Give a Great Speech" where, echoing advice initially articulated by classical Greek and Roman rhetoricians, he advocates that speakers first establish their *ethos* (credibility), then focus on to *logos* (logic), concluding with *pathos* (emotional appeals). To show students what this sequencing might look like/sound like in an actual speech, you might show them Amy Cuddy' TED Talk

"Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are," which not only conforms perfectly to this pattern but also offers students potentially useful advice for overcoming public speaking anxiety. *Rubric item 6.*

Resources and Suggestions Related to Conclusions (Rubric Items 8 & 9)

Resources

Brad Phillips, "Seven Great Ways to Close a Speech," Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, mr.mediatraining.com, 12 September 2012.

> Strategies covered include: delivering a summary, bookending the beginning, using a "callback" (i.e., a reference to something earlier in speech), making it personal, asking a rhetorical question, asking audience members to develop a follow-up plan, and painting an opposing picture. *Rubric item 9.*

Warren Sandmann, "Introductions and Conclusions," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text.*

> This textbook chapter introduces students to five functions of conclusions and offers three tips for successfully concluding a presentation. *Rubric items 8 & 9.*

Andy Rutledge, "Gestalt Principles of Perception 5: Closure," andyroutledge.com, 25 August 2009.

> A design professional reflects on how closure depends on a text's creator setting up of expectations and audiences/viewers "filling in" a gap based on those expectations. *Rubric item 9.*

Pedagogical Suggestions

(1) To prompt student thinking about the importance of endings and the qualities that render them satisfying or frustrating, you might ask them to reflect on their favorite and least favorite finales to television series. If so, you might find Christine Persaud's "10 Absolutely Awful TV Show Endings That Will Annoy Us Forever" and "This Is the End: The 13 Best TV Series Finales Ever" useful. *Rubric item 9.*

(2) Students often settle too quickly on a single closure-gaining technique, often the first one that comes to mind. To insure students are considering multiple options before settling on one and to give them a small audience of others to assist them in deciding which option is the best, you might ask all students to come to class prepared to share three different conclusions for an upcoming speech, informing them that, while the review will be the same in each of the three conclusions, the finale won't be. Working in small groups, each student rehearses all three conclusions, soliciting input from the others about which one works best and why. *Rubric items 8 & 9.*

Resources and Suggestions Related to Thesis, Evidence, & Citations (Rubric Items 10–13)

Resources

"How to Write Thesis Statements," Writing Tutorial Services website, University of Indiana, Bloomington.

This resources identifies the elements of a thesis statement, offers advice for generating thesis statements depending on whether or not the topic is assigned, and sets forth criteria for differentiating strong and weak thesis statements. *Rubric item 10.*

"Developing Thesis Statements," WORD Studio, St. Lawrence University.

This handout, which assists students in moving from a topic to a thesis statement, is rooted in a view of thesis statements as comprised of three parts: an assertion or claim, a "because" statement, and an unstated assumption or enthymeme. *Rubric item 10.*

Allen Brizee, "Rebuttal Section," Purdue Online Writing Lab, 11 March 2013.

This resource articulates a clear, three-part structure for rebutting potential counterarguments to one's to one's thesis. *Rubric item 10.*

Jack Malcolm, "One-Sided vs. Two-Sided Arguments," jackmalcolm.com, 21 July 2014.

After briefly reviewing factors that might lead someone to deploy a one-sided argument, the author instead advocates using two-sided arguments, citing prior research regarding their heightened persuasiveness. *Rubric item 10.*

Jay Heinrich, "The Three Basic Issues," *Thank You for Arguing*, (NY: Crown/Archtype, 2005)

Heinrich echoes Aristotle, asserting that all arguments boil down to one of three issues—blame, value, or choice. These issue play out in thesis statements set forth propositions of fact, value, and policy. *Rubric item 10.*

Lisa Schreiber, "Supporting Your Ideas, Part 1," and "Part 2", *Public Speaking Project:* (9:10)

After describing four functions of supporting material (increasing audience understanding, gaining/keeping audience attention, building speaker credibility, and offering proof), this audio slideshow identifies and describes the value of seven types of supporting material (statistics, facts, definitions, disruptions, comparisons, narratives, and testimony). *Rubric item 11.*

Julie Schmudtz & Lisa Schreiber, "Citing Sources in Your Speech," *The Public Speaking Project,* 10:29.

The last half of this audio slideshow informs speakers about the information they need to include when orally citing books, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, websites, and interviews. It also provides samples of what each type of oral citation might sound like in a speech. *Rubric item 13.*

Hans Rosling, "The Best Stats You've Ever Seen," February, 2006. 19:50.

This presentation includes jaw-dropping digital displays of data in motion, and Rosling's ability to make clear exactly what we're seeing only adds to the pleasure. *Rubric item 11.*

Hans Rosling, "Global Population Growth, Box by Box," TED@Cannes, June 2010, 9:56.

Using plastic crates and a handful of decidedly low-tech props, Rosling demonstrates that one doesn't need high-tech software and fancy digital displays to make data come to life. *Rubric item 11.*

Sebastian Wernicke, "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics (about TEDTalks)," TED Talk. February 2010. 5:59.

> In this tongue-in-cheek sendup, Warnicke harpoons those who use misuse statistics by egregiously (yet comically) misusing them himself. *Rubric item 11.*

Jennifer Aaker, "Persuasion and the Power of Story," *Future of Storytelling: Reinventing the Way Stories Are Told,* 5:07.

> This video advocates using stories when attempting to persuade. It provides evidence suggesting that stories trump statistics because they are more memorable, more impactful, and more personal. *Rubric item 11.*

Jonathan Gottschall, "The Storytelling Animal," TEDxFurmanU, May 4, 2014 (17:24).

> "It's not just that we're capable of telling stories. It's that we can't stop doing it. It's what we do, all the time. We impose story-structure on the chaos of our existences. . . . As humans, we live inside a storm of stories. . . . Nothing holds human attention like a story." *Rubric item 11.*

Andrew Stanton, "The Clues to Great Story," TED Talk. February 2012. (19:16).

> Principles that Stanton explores include: (1) "Know your punchline. Everything you do from the first line to the last is leading to one point, confirming some truth that deepens our understanding of who we are." (2) The most important commandment of storytelling is "Make Them Care." (3) "Don't give the audience four. Given them two plus two." (4) "William Archer, a British playwright, once wrote, 'Drama is anticipation mingled with uncertainty.' As a storyteller, your goal is to construct anticipation, and, if possible, to induce wonder." *Rubric item 11.*

Uri Hasson, "This Is Your Brain on Communication," TED 2016, 14:51.

> In this TED Talk, a neuroscientist shares compelling evidence suggesting that storytelling literally brings human brains into convergence. He offers visual evidence of convergent brain activity in two listeners hearing the same story in the same language, two listeners hearing the same story in different languages, and in the brain activity of a storyteller and persons listening to the same story. *Rubric item 11.*

Carmen Agra Deedy, "Once Upon a Time, My Mother . . .," TEDTalk, February 2005, 17:47.

> In the process of telling a story about her mother, Deedy reflects on the power and ubiquity of stories, skillfully demonstrating the very advice about how to tell a story that peppers the story she tells. *Rubric item 11.*

Sarah Peterson, "Overwhelmed? Here's How to Overcome Information Overload," *Huffington Post*, 9 October 2016.

> A brief discussion of what information overload is, its negative impacts, and suggestions for overcoming it. *Rubric items 11 & 12.*

Mary Roach, "Ten Things You Didn't Know About Orgasm," TED2009, February 2009, 16:43.

This presentation's vitality stems, in large measure, from an amusing tension that emerges when a normally "out-of-bounds" topic is taken up by an intentionally dead-pan presenter with access to a deep reservoir of supporting material as obscure and bizarre as it is engaging. *Rubric items 11-12.*

Pedagogical Suggestions

(1) The aspect of effective thesis statements most often overlooked in presentations assessed for this project was affording appropriate consideration of alternative points of view. To increase the likelihood that students attend to this aspect, instructors might ask students to read Jack Malcolm's short blog post "One-Sided vs. Two-Sided Arguments" and make refuting potential counterarguments an explicit part of the assignment itself. Additionally, to increase the likelihood that potential counterarguments are fairly represented before being refuted, instructors may also want to introduce students to the "straw man" fallacy and inform them of why they should avoid it. Kevin de LePlante's short Youtube video "The Straw Man Fallacy" does this quite well. *Rubric item 10.*

(2) To induce students to think more carefully about what they hope each piece of supporting material will accomplish, instructors might ask them to adopt a functional approach to evidence/supporting material. Just as creating a functional outline forces students to reflect both on what a paragraph will say and what they hope it will do, so, too, a functional inventory of evidence forces students not only to list each piece of supporting material they're going to use in a presentation but also to indicate why they are including it/what they hope it will accomplish. *Rubric item 11.*

(3) To force students to adopt a more selective approach to using supporting material, instructors might ask students to bring to class an outline indicating each spot where supporting material will be integrated into their presentation, as well as at least two (and ideally more) pieces of supporting material that they are considering using in each spot. Working in pairs or small groups, students share the supporting material they are considering using in each spot, discussing the advantages and disadvantages associated with each option. *Rubric item 11.*

(4) To enhance students' ability to make sense of and communicate quantitative data more clearly, instructors might try the following: view Hans Rosling's "Global Population Growth, Box by Box," which contains excellent displays of data in both "digital" and "analog" formats; break students into small groups, assigning each group the same or different data sets from gapminder.org; ask each group to work with the assigned data set to arrive at both a "digital" and "analog" method for displaying and communicating some key aspect(s) of it. *Rubric item 11.*

(5) In their presentations, students often use charts and graphs that they've cut and pasted from other sources. More often than not, these charts and graphs contain more information than the presenter actually needs or is prepared to walk audiences through. In these instances, this unexplained information functions as "noise." To eliminate students' tendency to cut and paste others' charts and graphs, instructors might walk students through the process of creating their own and ban them from using ones they've found elsewhere. Here is one of many resources to assist them in doing this.

(6) As Jonathan Gottschall's "The Storytelling Animal" and Uri Hasson's "This Is Your Brain on Communication" attest, extended examples, anecdotes, and narratives are among the most powerful forms of supporting material presenters can utilize. While students generally recognize effective storytelling when they encounter it, they aren't necessarily cognizant of the strategies storytellers draw on to make their stories impactful. To address this, instructors might ask students to view Andrew Stanton's "The Clues to Great Story," which identifies a handful of the many strategies that effective storytellers deploy. After viewing it, instructors might then ask students to look for these (and other)

strategies in Carmen Agra Deedy's "Once Upon a Time, My Mother . . ." and/or Casey Gerald's "The Gospel of Doubt."

Suggestions & Resources Related to Language/Style & Delivery (Items 14-17)

Resources

Gideon Burton, "Style: *Elocutio*" and "The Virtues of Style," *The Forest of Rhetoric: Silva Rhetoricae.*

> Burton defines "style" as "the artful expression of ideas," noting "that if invention deals with *what* is to be said, style deals with *how* ideas are embodied in language and customized to communicative contexts." Burton identifies the stylistic qualities prized by that classical Greek and Roman rhetoricians—namely, correctness (consistency with the norms of the language), clarity ("lack of ambiguity, absence of obscurity"), vividness (enough "for the language to reach the emotions"), decorum (the words must be "aptly fit to the subject matter"), and an appropriate level of ornateness (with "ornateness" conceived largely as the byproduct of figures of speech and rhetorical/sound). *Rubric item 14.*

Jochen Luders, "Stylistic Devices."

> This resource identifies, defines, and provides examples of 26 figures of speech, sound devices, and rhetorical tropes. *Rubric item 14.*

E. Michael Ramsey, "Using Language Well," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text,* American Communication Association, 2011.

> After opening with a focus on the power of language and the importance of the language-related choices that presenters make, this chapter offer advice for constructing clear and vivid messages, for stylizing messages by using rhetorical tropes and figures of speech, and for avoiding common language pitfalls such as the use of clichés and profanity. *Rubric item 14.*

John Bohannon, "Dance vs. PowerPoint, A Modest Proposal," TEDxBrussels, November 2011, 11:09.

> Bohannon, a scientist, contends that folks like him need to find ways to communicate their findings more clearly and powerfully to non-scientists, and in this presentation, he proves it can be done, foregoing PowerPoint and opting instead to choreograph his entire presentation with a dance troupe. *Rubric item 14.*

Mark Murphy, "Which of These 4 Presentation Styles Do You Have?" forbes.com, 26 January 2016.

> This resource identifies four presentation styles, describing the characteristics and challenges associated with each. The four styles are: the data scientist, the storyteller, the closer, and the director. *Rubric item 14.*

Emma Brudner, "The Six Types of Presentation Styles: Which Category Do You Fall Into?" hubspot.com, 6 May 2016.

> This slideshow identifies and provides video samples of each of the following presentation styles: visual, free-form, instructor, coach, storytelling, and connector. *Rubric item 14.*

Pawel Grobowski, "How to Deliver an Unforgettable Pitch by Finding Your Presentation Style."

> This blog opens by describing the presentation styles of five speakers; however, because most (if not all) of these speakers will be unknown to students and because three of the videos included are not in English, the usefulness of the opening section is minimized. That said, in the second half of this blogpost, Grabowski creates a nifty 4-quadrant map of presentation styles by charting where presenters fall on two axes: whether they are primarily "leaders" or "responders" and whether they are primarily "thinkers" or "feelers." The resulting styles are: "the fascinator" (who is focused on wisdom), "the inspirer" (who is focused on the spirit), "the energizer" (who is focused on courage), and "the performer" (who is focused on entertaining). *Rubric item 14.*

Victor Capecce, "Delivering Your Speech," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text,* The Public Speaking Project, American Communication Association, 2011.

> This chapter opens with a discussion of the four methods of delivery (i.e., impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized). Sections identifying and describing the major vocal and physical aspects of delivery follow. The chapter concludes by addressing issues related to rehearsals, the presentation space, and the equipment used. *Rubric items 15-17.*

Ron Grapsy, "Speaking with Confidence," *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text,* American Communication Association, 2011.

> After distinguishing between three types of communication anxiety (i.e., trait, state, & scrutiny fear), this chapter explores the sources and impact of speaker apprehension, concluding with a section that rehearse a variety of techniques for reducing and better managing it. *Rubric item 15-17.*

Julian Treasure, "How to Speak So People Want to Listen to You,"" TED Talk, June 27, 2014, 9:58.

> After identifying the 7 Deadly Sins of Speaking (i.e., gossip, judging, negativity, complaining, excuses, embroidery/lying, dogma), the presenter turns his attention to Four Cornerstones of Powerful Speech, which form the acronym H-A-I-L: Honesty ("be clear & straight"), Authenticity (be yourself"), Integrity ("be your word"), & Love ("wish them well"). For the last portion of his talk, the presenter turns his attention to the vocal aspects of delivery, first, identifying six aspects of the human voice (i.e., register, timbre, prosody, pace, pitch, & volume), then briefly leading the audience through a few quick vocal warmups. *Rubric item 16.*

Joe Kowan, "How I Beat Stage Fright," TED@State Street Boston, November 2013, 7:59.

> Kowan transforms his long battle with stage fright into a song in this short and entertaining presentation. *Rubric items 15-17.*

Amy Cuddy, "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are," TED Talk, 21:02, June 2012, 20:55.

> In this TED Talk, Amy Cuddy argues that our bodies can literally change our brains, that our brains can change our behaviors, and that changes in our behavior can fundamentally alter who we are. Though focused on nonverbal communication more generally, the presentation also introduces viewers to "power posing," suggesting that individuals engage in this practice for two minutes before entering into high-stress activities such as interviewing for a job or delivering an oral presentation. *Rubric items 15 & 17.*

Caroline Goyder, "The Surprising Secret to Speaking with Confidence" TEDx Brixton. November 2014, 18:55.

> In this creatively conceived and executed presentation offering three simple but valuable lessons related to "speaking with confidence," Carolyn Groyder, now a voice coach, recalls an earlier presentation that went terribly wrong. Not this time. Here, she soars. She makes her topic personal but opens space for the audience, too. She limits herself to a handful of carefully chosen stories and examples, which she uses to maximum effect. And, best of all, in a decidedly creative move, she uses a prop as her principle structuring device. *Rubric items 15-17.*

Pedagogical Suggestions

(1) While our students' presentations are generally clear, they seldom tap into the power of rhetorical tropes, figures of speech, and sound devices to make what they are saying more striking, memorable, and/or eloquent. To address this, instructors might try the following: ask students to read one or more of the Burton, Luders, or Ramsey resources (above) or devote class time to (re)introducing them to some of the major tropes & figures of speech; distribute a short, bland opinion piece—many editorials work well for this—to the class; working in pairs or small groups, ask students to maintain the orginal message of the piece but to communicate it in a way that draws on as many of the tropes & figures of speech as possible, essentially aiming for an intentionally "over-the-top" verbal style; if time permits, after sharing these with one another, have students "revise" the original piece again, this time in a more restrained but nevertheless more engaging style. *Rubric item 14*.

(2) To infuse greater creativity into student presentations, instructors may find it useful to expose students to presentations that are decidedly creative. Two that come to mind are Caroline Goyder's "The Surprising Secret to Speaking with Confidence" and John Bohannon's "Dance vs. PowerPoint, A Modest Proposal." In the former, Groyder w uses a single prop—a uniquely shaped dresser containing three drawers—to structure her presentation, opening one of the drawers for each of her three main points to reveal another prop inside it that is tied to the content she is about to explore. In the latter, Bohannon foregoes PowerPoint opting instead to choreograph his entire presentation with a group of dancers. Instructors wanting to mandate at least a modicum of creativity from their students might try the following exercise of some variation on it: after introducing students to the concept of visual metaphors, require them to use PowerPoint in their presentations but limit them to one slide for each main point, mandating that that that slide feature visual imagery that they have created and/or altered that is figuratively rather than literally tied to the content-focus of the main point. *Rubric item 14.*

(3) After students have completed one round of presentations—ideally, more—introduce them to one or more of the typologies of presentation styles set forth by Murphy, Brudner, & Grobowski (above). Afterwards, ask students to write down the style that they believe best describes their presentation(s), following this up by asking students to determine the style they think best describes the presentations delivered by each of their peers. Students may discover that while they perceived themselves to be enacting one style, their peers nevertheless perceived them to have enacted another one or ones. *Rubric item 14.*

(4) To improve how your students deliver their presentations, you might try using declamation, an exercise that dates back to classical Greece and Rome. Declamation is an exercise in which students recite all or parts of a speech or text written by someone else, with the thinking being that, as a result of not having to generate the text, they are, therefore, free to focus solely on delivering it. To make this exercise advance content goals even as it advances skills goals, you can select important speeches or written texts related specifically to your course theme, excerpting a specific portion—I recommend no longer than two minutes—that is especially salient. These declamations can be spread across the entire

semester, with no more than one or two students sharing their declamations on a given day. *Rubric items 15-17.*

(5) To focus specifically on the vocal aspects of delivery, instructors might try the following: ask each student to come to class having written out a 30-60 second segment of their upcoming presentation; have each student pair up with another; each student recites his/her passage multiple times, one after the other, each time focusing on a specific aspect of vocal delivery that you ask them to highlight. Examples of these include the strategic use of pauses, emphasis on key words, variations in volume, variations in rate, etc. *Rubric item 16.*

(6) To help students become more comfortable with and competent at executing the extemporaneous style of delivery, you might make students responsible, throughout the course of the semester, for delivering short (2-3 minute) extemporaneous speeches on aspects of whatever readings or other material you've assigned. If students names are randomly drawn for these speeches, then this practice has the additional advantage of also holding them accountable for course readings. *Rubric items 15-17.*

Appendix A

Speaker_____

I. Organization

A. Introduction	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**SCORE**
The opening moments entice the audience to continue listening	very effectively	in a generally effective manner	in a somewhat effective manner	not effectively	_____
Introduces presenter's topic & purpose	very clearly	in a generally effective manner	in a somewhat effective manner	not effectively	_____
Relates the topic to the presenter	in a clear & compelling manner	in a manner that is generally successful	with limited success	with no success or no attempt to do so	_____
Relates topic to the audience	clearly & convincingly	generally successful	with limited success	no success or no attempt	_____
Previews what is to follow	very clearly	pretty clearly	provides some sense of what is to come	provides little to no sense of what is to come	_____
B. Body					
The organizational structure deployed by the speaker . . .	clearly & consistently advances his/her rhetorical aims	generally advances his/her rhertorical aims	serves his/her rhetorical aims at times	does not serve his/her rhetorical aims or no choice of organizational pattern	_____
Speaker uses transitions/ signposting to mark the breaks between main points ...	clearly & consistently	usually	sometimes	seldom or not at all	_____
C. Conclusion					
Review of main points	clearly & fully (yet concisely) reviews the main points developed in the body of the speech	review is generally effective but suffers a bit in clarity, fullness, &/or concision	includes something of a summary but its effective-ness is limited	the speaker fails to include any sort of review	_____

	4	3	2	1	SCORE
Closure	final moments provide clear & effective closure for the speech	final moments are generally effective at providing closure for the speech	while the final moments are not effective, the speaker doesn't just trail off or resort to ver-bally signalling that the speech is done	speaker just trails off or resorts to verbally signaling that the speech is done	_____
II. Thesis, Evidence, & Citations					
The speaker's thesis/central idea is _____.	sufficiently focused, adequately supported, & appropriate consideration is afforded to alternative points of view.	sufficiently focused & adequately supported	either insufficiently focused or inadequately supported	both insufficiently focused & inadequately supported	_____
The speaker's choices re: types of supporting material (e.g., examples, statistics, quotes) on which to draw . . .	clearly & consistently serve his/her rhetorical aims	usually serve his/her rhetorical aims	sometimes serve his/her rhetorical aims	seldom or never serve his/her rhetorical aims	_____
The speaker _____ draws on a variety of appropri-ate sources to support the claims s/he advances.	consistently	generally	sometimes	seldom or never	_____
The speaker __ _____ cites his/her sources such that audience members are clear re: what information came from which source(s).	clearly & consistently	generally	sometimes	seldom or never	_____
III. Language/Style & Delivery					
The speaker's language & stylistic choices result in a presentation that _____.	is consistently clear & imaginative, memorable, &/or compelling	is consistently clear & occasionally imaginative, memorable, &/or compelling	is usually clear but seldom (if ever) imaginative, memorable, &/or compelling	suffers from a frequent lack of clarity & is generally unimaginative, not memorable, & not compelling	_____
The speaker's execution of the chosen/assigned delivery style (e.g., impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, memorized) is . . .	clearly & consistently excellent	generally strong	variable	consistently weak to the point of distraction	_____

The vocal aspects of delivery (e.g., pacing, articulation, vocal variation, & vocal energy) are _____.	clearly & consistently excellent	generally strong	variable	consistently weak to the point of distraction	_____
The physical aspects of delivery (e.g., eye contact, stance, gesture, & movement) are _____.	clearly & consistently excellent	generally strong	variable	consistently weak to the point of distraction	_____

Appendix B

Rationale Underlying Each Measure in the Rubric for Assessing Formal Oral Presentations

I. Organization Skills

Introduction

Speakers should open their presentation with a "hook" that captures the audience's attention, simultaneously introducing them to the topic and enticing them to continue listening.

While doing so is no guarantee that audience members will remain attentive, it is difficult for speakers to command an audience's attention in the latter sections of their presentations if they have not done so from the start. Moreover, even if they are successful in doing so, audience members have likely already missed some crucial content.

Speakers should reveal what they hope to accomplish in their presentation.

Just as the literature on assessment strongly urges educators to be transparent with their students about their learning goals, so, too, do public speaking texts strongly urge presenters to let their audiences in on both their general purpose (i.e., to inform, to persuade, to inspire, to entertain) and their specific purpose (e.g., "to inspire audience members to commit to community service projects that enrich the lives of the elderly").

Speakers should relate their topic to the particular audience they are addressing.

Because audience members who perceive a topic as relevant to their lives are much more likely to continue listening than audience members who do not, speakers are well advised to relate their topic to the specific audience they are addressing early on in their presentations, letting them know why the topic is significant and why they ought to care enough to continue listening.

Speakers should relate their topic to themselves.

Just as audience members are more likely to attend to a presentation when the speaker explicitly links the topic to them, so, too, they are more likely to "invest" in a speech when they understand why the speaker is "invested" in it. While accomplishing this task is typically easier when an assignment grants students substantial latitude in selecting their topics, few assignments are so prescriptive as to render accomplishing this task impossible.

Speakers should conclude their introduction by previewing the main points they will pursue in the body of their presentations.

Listening to a presentation in which the speaker does not preview what is to follow is akin to being taken on a trip in which you do not know your destination or how or when you will get there. While some individuals occasionally enjoy the pleasant surprises that sometimes accompany a trip of this sort, most prefer journeys less shrouded in the fog of uncertainty.

Body

The main points that comprise the body of a presentation should address the challenges of the particular rhetorical situation confronting the speaker.

Speakers necessarily decide what to include and exclude, as well as how to structure that which they include. These decisions should be based not on personal whims but on the confluence of the speaker's purpose and the audience being addressed. Consider two speeches advocating expanded background checks on firearm purchases: one for an audience of avid hunters who fear that expanded background checks will encroach on their second amendment rights, the other for a more heterogeneous audience, most of whom already favor what the speaker is proposing. Adopting a structure in which each main point refutes a specific counter-argument that speaker believes audience members are likely to hold makes considerable sense for the first of these rhetorical situations but little sense for the second. Conversely, adopting a structure in which each main point focuses on a specific step audience members can take to increase the likelihood that stricter background checks will, in fact, be adopted makes considerable sense for the second rhetorical situation but little sense for the first one.

Speakers should deploy clear transitions to explicitly mark the divisions between main points.

While transitions are important in both oral and written communication, because the former lacks the visual organizational cues of writing (e.g., indentation for new paragraphs, inclusion of blank spaces between sections and/or section headers), it is especially vital that presenters provide clear transitions as they shift from one main point to the next. "Signposting" is a simple, efficient, and explicit transitioning method in which presenters numerically mark their main points (e.g., "In addition to _____, a second reason for supporting mandatory term limits for senators & representatives is ____").

Conclusion

Speakers should clearly yet concisely review the main points they covered in the body of their presentation.

While providing reminders and reinforcement might be unnecessary in an ideal world where everybody "gets" and retains content the very first time they encounter it, the proliferation of "post-it" notes and "to-do" lists in our everyday lives is powerful proof that the world we actually inhabit, unlike the one just described, is fraught with lapses of memory that we need to guard against. Accordingly, speakers are well advised to clearly yet concisely review for their audiences the main points they covered in the body of their presentations. In fact, at a very basic level, public speaking can reduced to the following formula: tell the audience what you're going to tell them; tell it to them; tell them what you told them.

The final moments of an oral presentation should provide psychological closure.

While all speeches end, not all provide their audiences adequate psychological closure. One way to comprehend the difference between a speech that "just ends" and one that provides adequate closure is to consider the very different states invoked in viewers by the conclusion of an episode of an afternoon soap opera and the conclusion of an episode of a situation comedy or dramatic series. Speakers should craft the closing moments of their presentation such that the speech doesn't just trail off or end abruptly but instead feels whole, done, complete without the speaker having to resort to verbally or nonverbally signaling to the audience that the presentation has ended (e.g., "That's it," "Thank you," projecting a "Works Cited" PowerPoint slide).

II. Thesis Development & the Use of Evidence

Presenters should advance a thesis/central idea that is sufficiently focused and capable of being supported via evidence and reasoning, and, when warranted by the rhetorical situation, they should also afford appropriate consideration to alternative points of view.

Given the relatively short time frame of most presentations, speakers are unable to adequately develop and support a thesis/central idea unless it has been sufficiently focused. Moreover, if this overarching claim is not capable of being supported by an appropriate combination of evidence and reasoning, then presenters stand little or no chance of realizing their rhetorical goals. Additionally, when a substantial portion of the audience is likely to dispute the speaker's overarching argument, as well as when audience members are likely to encounter and perhaps be persuaded by counter-arguments after listening to the speech, presenters are well advised to afford adequate consideration to competing points of view.

Speaker should substantiate their overarching claim with an appropriate mix of types of supporting material drawn from an appropriate variety of types of sources.

Like writers, the three major types of supporting material speakers use to substantiate claims are examples, statistics, and testimony (including both paraphrases & direct quotations). While each type of supporting material has the potential to fulfill a range of rhetorical functions, each also carries out rhetorical functions the others are incapable of fulfilling. The amount of each type of supporting material presenters should draw on varies widely depending on the confluence of topic, purpose, and audience. In addition to drawing on an appropriate variety of types of supporting material, presenters should also draw on material from an appropriate variety of types of sources (e.g., popular, scholarly, alternative, personal interviews). Depending on the assignments, drawing on no outside sources may also be appropriate.

Speakers should orally cite their sources such that audience members are able to clearly ascertain which information came from which sources.

Citing sources fulfills the same sorts of functions in an oral communication context as it does in writing. Among other possible functions, when speakers orally cite their sources in an appropriate manner they maintain basic principles of academic integrity, bolster their credibility, and enable their audience to assess the sources of the evidence upon which they are drawing. Because a knowing which information came from which source is a fundamental aspect of appropriate oral citation of sources, it is imperative that speakers cite their sources at the moment in their presentation when they are actually integrating information from that source rather than merely providing an oral works cited list at the end of their speech or momentarily flashing a "Works Cited" slide.

III. Language/Style & Delivery

The speaker's language should result in a presentation that is consistently clear, and the speaker's stylistic choices should result in a presentation that is imaginative, memorable, & compelling.

Because the fundamental purpose of all oral presentations is the communication of ideas, speakers should strive, first & foremost, for a level of clarity that will facilitate the audience's understanding. However, because audiences often encounter clear presentations whose content is quickly forgotten, once this first threshold has been achieved, speakers should also strive to help their audiences to retain the information they communicate by crafting a presentation that is imaginative, memorable, and compelling.

The vocal & physical aspects of delivery should advance the presenter's rhetorical aims.

If the cardinal rule for style is "clarity above all else," the cardinal rule for delivery is "avoid distracting vocal and physical mannerisms." As was the case with style, however, once this fundamental benchmark has been achieved, speakers should strive to deliver their presentations in a manner that cultivates audience engagement with and understanding of the ideas they are expressing.