

Final Reflective Diary

COMM 395 211

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This is my last year at UBC. Most of my friends had already finished **this course [GIVE COURSE NAME/NUMBER]**, but I waited until my final semester. I was afraid to take the course because I am not confident in my English public speaking abilities, and could not convince myself to take it when I was a sophomore or junior. It was my hope that I would speak **perfect English [much more fluently]** before I registered in this course. I was very serious about practicing my oral English **in the first two years [my first two years of undergraduate studies]**, as I wanted to ensure that the people I was speaking to understood what I was talking about. I think my oral English has improved significantly in the past two years, and expected that finishing this course would give me a new understanding of public speaking.

The first thing I learned in the course was that public speaking wasn't only about **a persona's [personal OR the speaker's]** performance, but also involved interaction with the audience. My first presentation was **an informative presentation [a persuasive presentation of information], my understanding is to tell all the information I know [and my task was to provide select information about a certain topic]** to the audience. As this was my first presentation for the course, I didn't want to embarrass myself and prepared for a long time. After I finished my presentation, I thought I had done a really good job, especially given that I had had no blank moments and finished on time. A week later, when I received my **grades [grade]**, I was a bit disappointed. So, **I keep checking my videos [I watched the videos of my presentation several times]**, took Jessica's comments into account, and looked at other students' videos. I learned that a good speaker always interacts with the audience **at the beginning or at the middle of the speech [at various points in the speech]**. **Like we learned from the class that said [As we were taught in class]**, "Speakers who fail to connect with their audience will also fail to achieve their purpose." ~~that means a good public speaking is not only about send the message to the audience it also about how to connect with the audiences.~~ There are manifold ways to connect with and engage audiences, such as using visually attractive props, **or maybe use question as an introduction to attract the audience's interest [introducing the topic to the audience by asking an interesting question,]** and using body language and eye contact to give the audience a sense of participation.

NOTE: From what you say below, it appears you are referring to a second presentation.

The second thing I learned in the course was that it is important to **make a good audience survey [conduct a thorough survey among my audience members]** before making a presentation. **When I did my second presentation**, I didn't do a **very detailed [a pre-presentation survey]**. As a result, when I started asking the audience questions, their answers were different from what I expected. This made me nervous at the very beginning, so I just took a deep breath and quickly adjusted my presentation **to satisfy what I the audience appeared to expect**. Although I finished my presentation, I was not very satisfied with it. My topic was whether undergrads should immediately continue on to pursue a Master degree, or take a one year break away from school. As my audience could closely relate to this topic, I had thought a detailed audience survey was unnecessary because I expected the audience members to have the same views and thoughts as me. So, when I asked them "what are you going to do after you graduate from Sauder?" I expected them to choose one of two options: "taking a break" or "continuing to study." I was therefore very surprised when most of students said "find a job". The second presentation thus showed me that in order to design a good presentation, I should

know my audience better and always keep the audience in mind. This will ensure that I will draw my audience in when I start my presentation and that **I easily resonate [my topic easily resonates]** with the audience.

My option is marketing, as usual [As my major is marketing], I have worked on many group projects and presentations during the course of my studies. Consequently, I thought that I was very experienced at working with others in groups. However, the group in this course was quite different from **my other marketing groups, [the groups I have been part of in other marketing classes OR the groups I have been part of in other classes]**. The members of the group **all from different options [had distinct perspectives], as their varied backgrounds include accounting, finance and logistics, [OR as they have backgrounds in accounting, finance, and logistics,] while I have a background in marketing]**. This diversity allowed our group to work more efficiently. I found it interesting to work with people from different backgrounds, and enjoyed when groups members shared different opinions during meetings. Moreover, all of my group members had good time management skills. Although we were all very busy, we always found agreeable times to meet, and **every time before the meeting we always make an outline for what we will do before the meeting, to make sure we always on the same page [communicated about meeting agendas beforehand in order to ensure that we were all on the same page]**. I'm glad that my team members and I worked very well **together, we encourage each other before the presentation and we always want others to perform well [together and encouraged each other to give our best performance when we gave presentations]**. Although we were only together for one semester, I learned a lot from my team members, and they have become good friends. I think **this [that our collaboration]** is the best gift I received from the class. It brings to mind the first day I attended the Sauder School, when I anticipated learning how to cooperate with others. After four years of study, I can say that I attained this learning while coming to recognize how very important it is to know how to work effectively within a team setting. In the future, **we will have a lot of team work [I anticipate doing considerable team work as a graduate student and working professional in the field of business OR JUST I anticipate doing considerable team work as a working professional in the field of business]. No matter what background people I need to work together [I am aware that I should not focus on the different backgrounds of the people I work with]**, but should instead always follow the formula of Team Work = Synergy + Trust to ensure that a team's work as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

My third presentation was on personal commitment. After three months of **study [studying public speaking]**, I think this presentation demonstrated that I have made great improvements. I feel proud of myself when I play my video, and I can't believe that the person so full of confidence and passion in the video is me. I think there were three reasons for the success of my third presentation. Firstly, I think **I tapped into** the power of storytelling. To be a successful speaker, one must be a successful storyteller. I used a story from my childhood as the foundation of my presentation and to reflect on some of the social problems I addressed. When I look at my video, I see that I was very emotional in the presentation, **so my feelings could have easily infected the audience [which invited the audience to relate to my feelings OR which invited the audience to relate to my experiences and feelings OR which invited the audience to relate to my perceptions and feelings]**. Further, I knew that an interesting introduction and a meaningful ending are essential to a successful speech. I therefore **came up the question**

[presented a question] at very beginning of the presentation, but didn't answer the **question, and at the end I am not only gave my own answer but also put forward my own opinion of this problem [question until the end, when I also put forth my opinion regarding the problem I had discussed]**. Secondly, I think my presentation was very logical. Structuring the presentation very logically not only made it easier for the audience to follow along, but also made it easier for me to organize my speech. **Having [Developing]** a logical presentation requires one to understand the "Ergo" – which means I need to use verbal and visual cues to denote a logical structure. To help my audience understand my presentation and **hear [follow]** my logic, I consistently used direct words and phrases such as "first of all", "secondly" and "lastly". This structure may seem simple, but it worked perfectly when I needed to **list lots of reasons [present a series of points or claims]**. Lastly, I think I created effective slides for the presentation. As the presentation was on personal commitment, it required me to use a Pecha Kucha, so the audience didn't have a lot of time to look at my slides. I therefore did considerable research in order to **find the best pictures that which were easy to relate to my topic [find top-notch pictures that related very well to my topic]**. Furthermore, Power Point was an important tool that supported **our [my]** presentation, as it **is also the most direct way to convey information directly through words and pictures [conveys information directly though words and pictures]**. However, although Power Point is important, it cannot dominate the whole presentation. Therefore, I remembered the truism that "less is more" when I created my Power Point slides. All my slides were very simple and did not include many words. I also used Power Point to design a very clear chart of the data and **always highlight the useful data to help audiences to easily find [highlight data that was particularly useful to the audience]**. When I reflect on my third presentation, I think that the only problem was that I spoke too fast. I will slow down a little bit **for my next presentation [in future presentations]** to ensure that I articulate all my words clearly.

The last presentation I did for this course was an impromptu speech. I was not satisfied with my performance. I had two minutes to prepare, but didn't prepare very well. Although I came up with a lot of ideas in those two minutes, I could not figure out which two or three ideas were the best. In addition, I was a little nervous before the speech because I wanted it to be a perfect ending to the course. Obviously, this didn't happen. I did well with the introduction to the speech, but my nerves got to me and I did not deliver a good, strong conclusion. A lot of the other students did very well with their impromptu speech, so I know that that giving a good speech of this kind is not impossible. In retrospect, I feel that my **ability was [English ability was? public speaking ability was? English and public speaking abilities were?]** just not good enough. My oral English has improved a lot, but my vocabulary is still limited. Although I learned a lot of public speaking skills in the courses, I am aware that as an international student **from China**, I must enhance my **vocabulary [vocabulary and grammar]** in order to improve my English. In addition, I need to not be afraid to **talk with others in English [OR talk with English speakers]**.

When I look back at all my videos, I feel that overall, I have made **major improvements [? major improvements in my public speaking abilities OR major improvements in my English abilities OR major improvements in my English speaking abilities]**. I have always envied students who speak perfect English. Because my own oral English skills are limited, I have been afraid to express my own ideas in groups or in front of other people. In fact, I found

studying at UBC the first year to be very difficult, as I was always questioning whether **I could express myself in perfect English [my English abilities would allow me to express myself in a clear way that made sense]. I couldn't find the answer until I finished this course, and now I know I can [Now that I have completed this course, I know I need to have more confidence in my English abilities, keep practicing, and take advantage of opportunities to speak English.]**.

I cherish the opportunity [have cherished the opportunity] to study in UBC, and I am very grateful to have met lots of international students here. I used to be afraid of public speaking, because my English is not perfect and I thought people would laugh at my accent. Now I know that I may never speak perfect English, but perfection isn't necessary – I just need to keep speaking English and expanding my vocabulary. **With practice, I will get better and become more fluent.** All in all, I have benefitted from taking this course, which not only prompted me to improve my English, but also helped me to realize **my potential [? potential as a public speaker]**. I will graduate soon and there are many challenges to come. However, I think the experiences I had in this course will be of much use to me in future.

