

THE ASSIGNMENT

For the Successful Presentation module of the Capstone, you will be developing a five-to-ten-minute draft version of your presentation.

Because this is the third module in the Capstone MOOC, you are not coming to the assignment cold. By now, you've already decided whether you're working with the Clarity Guitar Capstone or the Challenge Capstone, and you've done some solid thinking about what you're trying to communicate. More, you've written draft versions of your memo and your slide deck, as well as gotten some significant feedback on your work. Thus, your work in this module is in part about reflecting on the critical information in your written and visual elements, and adapting that information to your oral delivery. ***These two tasks involve thinking carefully about your previous efforts and on who you are as a public speaker.***

All the learning objectives for this module essentially can be broken down into these two activities, ***reflecting*** and ***adapting***. Below, I've laid them out as a process:

I. REFLECTING: A large amount of the work of this project concerns reflecting smartly on what you have already done and extracting the parts of your memo and slide deck that you want to present verbally.

1. **Analyze** the memo and slides you've built in the previous two modules. This is an opportunity to think through the feedback you received in the peer grading exercises. Some of that feedback you may disagree with, but people have different perspectives and something you see clearly may be opaque them (and the exact opposite may be true as well). Instead of taking their criticism personally, try to see how you can make your point so that it encompasses their perspective as well as your own. ***Analyze your own work to make your weaknesses stronger and your strengths brilliant.***
2. **Determine** the absolute essential points you need to communicate in your presentation. Remember: a memo and a visual serve different functions than a presentation. Your goal should be to use the different modes of communicating—writing, visualizing, and speaking—to reinforce one another in an overlapping fashion, not to duplicate one another. Points that can be very impressive in a written document—lists of specific facts, complicated numerical calculations—often become tongue twisters in a presentation; similarly, an image or design can often communicate something far more effectively than any amount of words. ***Determine what elements of your previous work you want to communicate orally and what elements need to appear in writing or in design. The points you want to communicate orally are your Modular Content Units. Write them down.***
3. **Synthesize** those essential points into one compelling point that speaks to your audience. At the end of this process of reflection, stand back and ask yourself what is the broadest and most profound point you are trying to communicate. This is a moment to gather your thoughts together into a single common denominator, that ***One Compelling Point*** that communicates what you want to say. ***Synthesize your entire presentation by pulling back from the details and asking yourself, "what am I trying to communicate?"***

II. ADAPTING: Creating your presentation involves thinking of your **One Compelling Point** and your **Modular Content Units** in dynamic terms.

1. **Compose** a draft presentation script that communicates not just your point but who you are. To a large degree, all you have to do here is adapt the memo and slides to a script. Pull **Keywords** from your memo. Use the slides to drive home the **Keywords** where necessary. Still, while your memo and your slides stand apart from you as created objects, you are your presentation. Thus, as you compose your draft, use the **Formula** to present yourself. No matter how intimidating your audience is, they are only human beings. You are a special person and have important things to say to them. ***Compose your draft according the Formula, and remember: you are a person speaking to other people.***
2. **Create** a draft video for your peers to evaluate. Your draft video is the performance of your script. For this version, I emphasize three points. (i.) First, **experiment** in advance with how you want to integrate your slide deck. Perhaps you want to use detailed, highly-designed slides. How will you deliver them? Perhaps you want all the focus on your performance, and don't want slides at all. Perhaps you want to simply use one image, and that image is better delivered as a handout. (ii.) Second, **focus on your audience**, think about what your saying, and speak to them. Even if you are delivering your script in private, imagine your audience and speak directly to them. (iii.) Finally, following the second point, **do not be afraid to leave your script**. That is, if you are truly focused on your audience, you will pick up on cues from them. These cues will tell you what to emphasize and what to leave behind. Trust yourself to hear the audience. ***Create your draft presentation as a dynamic performance of the story you want to tell, not as a static rendition of your written script.***

As with the videos you made for my MOOC, I urge you to keep your recording process as simple as possible. Since this is just a draft presentation, you can have a friend record you or simply record yourself using your phone as in selfie mode. For this exercise, you do not necessarily have to integrate your slide deck; however you can either simply show the slides behind you or, if you have some computer editing equipment, you can integrate the slides after you have filmed yourself. In all cases, again, I urge you to take the most simple route possible.

3. **Evaluate** your peers' drafts as well as your own. Evaluating your peers is essential to mastering the art and science of successful presentation. It is the place in which you stop becoming a student and start becoming a teacher. ***Evaluate your peers as if you were their only teacher.***

The purpose of this exercise is twofold: it teaches you how to work critically with your own materials and it brings you closer to a polished final presentation.

Best of luck!

Onwards!

