Self-evaluation of Introductory Presentation

# Task and Deliverable

Review the video-recording of your Introductory Presentation and prepare a memo detailing your self-evaluation. This will help you to set goals for yourself during the semester and give your tutor an idea of how to help you achieve them.

To analyse your presentation skills, view the video of your presentation in a systematic way. Assess your strengths and identify opportunities for improvement, then set goals for improvement and begin developing some strategies for achieving your goals.

Submit your self-evaluation memo as instructed by your tutor.

# Guidelines for Reviewing Your Presentations

Before you write your self-evaluation memo, analyse your presentation from several perspectives. To get the most out of this exercise, it is recommended that you view your video several times. This will allow you to better assess your strengths and identify opportunities for improvement.

# Viewing Your Video

Here are some suggestions for viewing your video systematically.

*1. Watch alone and uncritically*

Watch the video alone so that you won’t be defensive or self-conscious. Get used to seeing yourself from the outside. Relax and watch uncritically, taking in how you sound and how you look. Especially notice some of the aspects of your performance that may have bothered you during the talk. You may find that in watching the video, you do not find them so consequential. Also notice anything about your performance that seems very characteristic of you *(“I do that all the time!*”), as well as anything that strikes you as unfamiliar (“*I never do that!*” or “*I can’t believe I did THAT!*”)

*2. Watch again, assuming a more critical stance*

Watch the video alone again but with a more critical stance. Look and listen to that presenter (you) as if he/she were one of your classmates. Would you (as a classmate or tutor) be impressed by the “you” (the presenter) in the video? What would you say the presenter’s greatest strength is, and what is his/her most troubling weakness? What would you tell the presenter if you wanted to facilitate his/her development?

Focus on the non-verbal and verbal aspects of delivery – does the presenter hold the audience’s attention? Focus on the message – does the presenter’s speech leave an impression?

* **Focus on the non-verbal aspects**

Play the video but mute it so you can focus on just the body language. This will show you how you are communicating non-verbally. Observe your:

1. posture
2. gestures
3. body movement
4. facial expressions
5. eye contact

Do you see any signs of nervousness, e.g., adjusting hair or clothing, fiddling with fingers, rocking or swaying? Take note of what you observe – positive areas as well as problem areas.

With the sound off, you will become aware of how you “come across” to others. Do you frown or look friendly? Do you look bored or animated? Eventually, these kinds of questions should lead you to others, such as, “*Do I like this person?*” “*Would I trust this person?*” Looking at your non-verbal communication should give you a revealing portrait of how others perceive you.

* **Focus on the verbal aspects**

Play the video a second time with the sound on. This time, turn off the visual (or close your eyes) and just listen to your voice. Pay attention to:

1. speed
2. volume
3. stress
4. articulation
5. pauses

What does your voice tell you? Does the voice sound confident, enthusiastic and competent? Does the voice *know* anything? Does the voice *believe* what it’s saying? Does the voice sound *interested* in what it’s saying? Again, make a list of positive areas as well as problem areas.

* **Focus on the message**

Now open your eyes. Play the video again – watch *and* listen to the video. Based on your observations so far, try to match your non-verbal communication with your verbal communication. Do the two fit together?

Listen closely to what you’re saying. Does your message convey your developing professional ethos? Is there a focal point or theme for your talk that establishes your credibility?

*3. Watch with others*

Invite a friendly audience to watch with you. Sit slightly away from your fellow viewers so that you can watch them watching you. By attending to their responses, you may learn whether your review of yourself matches up with others’ perspectives.

After the video is over, get feedback from them, but do remember that their non-verbal responses may be more honest than what they tell you. If you are uncertain whether the video fairly captures your speaking style, ask your friends if the video represents your typical performance.

# Writing the Self-assessment Memo

Now you are ready to write your memo. Evaluate the overall impact you experienced from watching your video, as well as the feedback from your friends. Of greatest importance, examine your skills in the light of your own ideas about your presentation skills and your sense of what kind of business person you would like to be.

Based on all of these perspectives, identify what you now believe to be your major strengths as a speaker and your biggest opportunities to improve.

1. **Set goals for improvement**, supporting your objectives with observations of your performance (aspects that you felt to be weaknesses), and suggest some specific strategies by which you might try to reach your goals.
2. **Evaluate your skills** against the assessment criteria (refer to the *Rubrics for Spoken Communication*, available on the Main Course Site). Your memo should neither exaggerate your abilities nor critique them unrealistically.
3. Take a step back and **think about your preparation** for this presentation. Did your approach or procedures negatively influence your performance? Would different preparation methods help you speak more effectively? How can you modify your process for preparing such presentations in future?

Include all of these in your self-evaluation memo. Although you should briefly describe the methods you used in assessing your video (e.g., getting two friends to view your video with you), do not go into detail about such matters. Focus on your performance and what conclusions you have drawn from it.