Lesson Plan: How to Write Agendas and Meeting Minutes

Tabitha Hart Department of Communication Studies San José State University

Lesson: How to Write Agendas and Meeting Minutes

Timeframe: 60 minutes

Target Audience: Undergraduates, any major or year

Materials needed: "How to Write Agendas and Meeting Minutes" PowerPoint deck, laptop and projector, hard copies of "Sample Meeting Minutes" for each student, hard copies of homework assignment for each student

Note: The instructor should revise the meeting background (slide 15) and meeting agenda (slide 16) to suit class-specific needs and interests.

Objectives: After this lesson, students will be able to

- explain what an agenda and meeting minutes are and why they are useful.
- identify the key components of agendas and meeting minutes.
- indicate strengths and weaknesses of sample agenda items and meeting minutes.
- prepare a set of meeting minutes.

Background: Although this lesson was originally developed for students enrolled in a Communication Studies course on Business and Professional Speaking, it is suitable for undergraduates of any major. No prior work is required for the students. The accompanying Power Point slides are designed as simple visual cues to help engage the students in the lesson material.

Introduction to Lesson [5 minutes]:

Agenda (write on board):

- 1. Before a meeting agendas
- 2. During a meeting using agendas
- 3. After a meeting minutes
- 4. Hold a small group meeting
- 5. Homework meeting minutes
- Show slide two and define the term *meeting*. A meeting takes place when people come together (whether for work, clubs, sports, school, volunteer organizations, etc.) for a purpose.
- Show slide three and pose these discussion questions to the class:
 - O What was the last meeting that you attended?
 - What made that meeting satisfying/unsatisfying?
- Let students discuss the questions briefly with a partner before sharing their answers with the group. Student answers will likely include problems such as no set time frame for the

- meeting, no agenda or plan, lack of participation, etc. Highlight these answers since they connect with the larger points covered in this lesson.
- Show slide four and tell students that effective meetings are structured through writing. Point out the anticipated lesson takeaways listed below.
 - o Meetings are already a common element of your school/work/leisure routines
 - Meeting effectiveness can be weakened by not planning, not preparing a good agenda, not following the prepared agenda, not recording the decisions made, and not following up on decisions and plans.
 - o Meetings are structured through writing before, during, and after the event.

Procedures [45 minutes]:

Step 1: Before a Meeting: How To Write Good Agenda Items [5 minutes]

- Show slide five and tell students that before a meeting takes place, an agenda should be written out and distributed. Agendas are a powerful form of writing because they
 - o help groups *structure* communication activity.
 - o help people stay focused and on task.
 - o provide a checklist of what exactly needs to be accomplished.
 - o ensure that meeting activities run according to time constraints.
 - o generally make meetings more organized and productive.
- Show slide six and tell students that good agenda items are
 - o specific.
 - o results-oriented.
 - o timed.
 - o realistic.
- Show slide seven and point out that the sample agenda items on this slide meet our criteria. All of them are timed, specific, realistic, and results-oriented.

Good agenda items that are specific, goal-oriented, timed, and realistic

Brainstorm *news items* for bulletin (10 min)

Choose *the logo* for the website (15 min)

Identify pros and cons of using Twitter (12 min)

Update team members on *budget* (6 min)

Step 2: Activity: How To Write Good Agenda Items [5 minutes]

• Show slide eight and point out that these are bad agenda items that do not follow our criteria.

Bad agenda items that are NOT specific, goal-oriented, timed, or realistic

Grad school applications

Talk about financial aid

Discuss marketing

Create political campaign

• Ask students to fix these agenda items according to our criteria (see slide six). Review as a group.

Step 3: During a Meeting: Using an Agenda [2 minutes]

- Show slide nine and point out that during a meeting the agenda should be used and followed as closely as possible.
- Show slide 10 and tell students that, when using an agenda, the meeting participants will need to select three people to act as the meeting chair, the meeting note-taker, and the meeting time-keeper. Each of these people will also participate in the discussion.

Step 4: After the Meeting: Writing Meeting Minutes [5 minutes]

- Show slide 11 and tell students that meeting minutes are written and distributed shortly after a meeting takes place. The speed with which they are finalized and distributed depends on the norms of the organization. As they go forward, students will need to discover the expectations for finalizing and distributing minutes in the company/organization where they are holding meetings.
- Show slides 12 and 13 and distribute hard copies of the sample minutes. Point out the required components of meeting minutes and explain as needed.
 - o Agenda an exact copy of the meeting agenda, including allotted times
 - o Attendees who attended, who was absent, who came as a guest
 - o Summaries of each agenda item discussed detailed enough so that anyone who was not present would get the gist by reading the minutes
 - o Action items the next steps agreed upon during the meeting, including what needs to be done by who and by when

Step 5: Activity: Comparing and Contrasting Sample Meeting Minutes [8 minutes]

- Show slide 13 and introduce the activity on comparing and contrasting sample meeting minutes. Have students work in pairs to analyze the sample minutes that you distributed in the previous step. Have students reflect on the following questions:
 - What are the strengths of these sample minutes, i.e. what is helpful, appealing, etc.?
 - What are the weaknesses of these sample minutes, i.e. what is unhelpful, unappealing, etc.?
- After two or three minutes of discussion, debrief as a group. As you debrief, highlight the following aspects of meeting minutes:
 - Level of detail. Provide enough details in the minutes to make them comprehensible to someone who was not there. As time goes on participants will forget the details, so having them in writing is will provide organizational memory.
 - Formatting. Formatting should be clean, appealing, and enhance (rather than
 detract from) readability. Clear headers help the reader locate different types of
 information. Sufficient spacing helps delineate where sections begin/end.
 - Structure/ordering. Meeting minutes have an expected structure. The components discussed earlier (agenda, attendees, topics discussed, decisions made, and agreed-upon next steps i.e. action items) should all be included, and ordered in the same sequence.

Step 6: Activity: Small Group Meetings [20 minutes]

- Show slide 14. Tell students that they will now work in groups of 3-4 people to hold a 15-minute meeting using an agenda provided by you.
- Show students the agenda on slide 16. Tell students that as they engage in the meeting, they must
 - o stick to the agenda.
 - o monitor the time.
 - o participate in the discussion.
 - o take notes.

Note on the agenda: Select a meeting topic suitable for your class. I chose a departmental study abroad program and included some background on slide 15. Modify the agenda on slide 16 to fit your topic.

Sample topic

Our department is planning to offer a new study abroad course to all majors. The course will be held in Berlin, Germany for three weeks in summer 2014. How can we best promote this course to our majors?

Sample agenda

- 1. List five possible methods to promote the program. (5 min)
- 2. Identify strengths and weaknesses of each method. (5 min)
- 3. Vote for the three best methods. (2 min)
- 4. Write three action items. (3 min)
- For the next 15 minutes allow students to hold their meetings. Ensure that all students are participating in the discussion and taking notes.
- Stop the meetings after the allotted 15 minutes are up.

Closure/Evaluation [5 minutes]:

- Ask the class the following questions:
 - What was interesting and/or challenging about this material on agendas and minutes?
 - What questions do you have about agendas and/or meeting minutes?
- Show slide 17 and highlight what students have learned from this lesson. Students can now
 - o identify key elements of successful meetings.
 - o write specific agenda items with clear outcomes.
 - o identify the key components of meeting minutes.
 - o hold a meeting using an agenda.
- Distribute the homework assignment (included below) and explain that each small group
 will use its notes from the in-class meeting activity to prepare one set of meeting minutes
 collaboratively.

Writing Meeting Minutes (40 points)

In class we have been working on the topic of conducting and participating in business meetings. For this assignment, you will collaboratively produce a written document while also enhancing your ICT (information communication technology) digital literacy. Specifically, you jointly prepare one set of **meeting minutes** using the Google Drive platform and its "Comments" and "Revision History" features.

I will evaluate the quality of the ideas in your meeting minutes, as well as the manner in which they are communicated through writing. The meeting minutes should follow the content, structure, and formatting protocols covered in your textbook and in class. As someone who wasn't participating in your meeting, the minutes should tell me in sufficient detail exactly what you discussed, what decisions were made, and what recommendations you are making.

I'll also be evaluating the degree of participation across the group, as indicated by what each person typed into the document, including content, comments, and revisions.

You must prepare your meeting minutes collaboratively using Google Drive. To get started with Google Drive, go to the following website: http://www.google.com/drive/about.html. For helpful videos, see the "Additional Resources" list at the bottom of this page.

INSTRUCTIONS

To complete this assignment, do the following:

- 1. Work with the same people whom you held the in-class meeting with.
- 2. Immediately after class, one person in the group should create a new Word document in Google Drive and give access to all group members. Each member should have "edit" access. Learn more at https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2494822?hl=en&ref_topic=2816927. You

must also give "Edit" access to your instructor, Dr. Hart: tabitha.hart@sjsu.edu.

- 3. Once you have access to the document in Google Drive, you can view, edit, and modify it 24/7. You can see and make changes in real time.
- 4. While the homework assignment window is open, **each person must actively contribute to (a) writing, (b) editing, and (c) commenting on the document.** Each person must use the "Comment" feature at least three times. I will be able to track each person's activities, contributions, and time spent on the document using Google Drive's "Revision History" feature. More on the "Revision History" feature can be found at https://support.google.com/drive/answer/190843?hl=en.
- 5. To receive credit, submit a link for me to view the completed minutes on Google Drive. I must be able to access the "Revision History" feature of your document. To learn more about how I will be grading the minutes, see the rubric attached to this assignment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

What is Google Drive? http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpOmuG3HfPo

Google Drive's Comments and Revision

History: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nAMv1bv5Is

Google Drive's Comments: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zmOYziFKZw

Lesson Analysis:

This lesson includes a combination of activities (compare and contrast, hands-on activities, large-group discussion, small-group discussion, etc.) to appeal to different learning styles. It also covers a topic (meetings and meeting minutes) that is highly applicable to students' routines, and it teaches them a measureable skill (how to write meeting minutes) that they can use right away.

On a cautionary note, this lesson covers a large amount of complex material in one short class session. It requires that students work in small groups, which can be challenging if students are not accustomed to it. For this reason, I like using a homework platform (like Google Drive) that tracks participation; this approach ensures that everyone can be held accountable for contributing equally.

STEP Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

Date/time: July 18, 2011, 6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

Attendees: Willie Good, Chilton Rogers, Margie Labadie, Michele Vine, Deb Smith

Absent: Johnny Roberts
Guests: Bob Schaumleffel

AGENDA

1) Welcome and Announcements (15 minutes)

- 2) Share drafts of strategy statements for each committee (30 minutes)
- 3) Discuss and improve drafts (75 minutes)
 - a. Does each draft have a clear "issue for implementation"?
 - b. Does each draft explain its expected impact?
 - c. What additional information is needed in each draft?

MINUTES

Agenda item #1 -- Welcome and Announcements

- The new Town Manager, Bob Schaumleffel, was introduced.
- A blog has been created for the STEP Project.
- Chilton offered to help each of us organize our draft presentations for the September board meeting.

Action items

- Everyone should look at the new blog. Send news items to Deb for posting.
- Committee leaders need to set up one-to-ones with Chilton by next month.

Agenda item #2 -- Share drafts of strategy statements for each committee
The leader of each committee read out their draft strategy statements. Margie read
"Broadening Education" & Caroline read "Leadership". The "Entrepreneurship" draft
wasn't available.

Action items

- The Entrepreneurship group will email their statement by tomorrow, 10:30 AM.
- Everyone needs to revise their statements using the Goldfield town statement as a model. Chilton will email out the Goldfield model tonight.

Agenda item #3 – Discuss & Improve Drafts

We broke into three groups (Broadening Education, Leadership, & Entrepreneurship) to discuss the agenda questions. We then rewrote our drafts to have the same detail & structure as the Goldfield model.

Action items

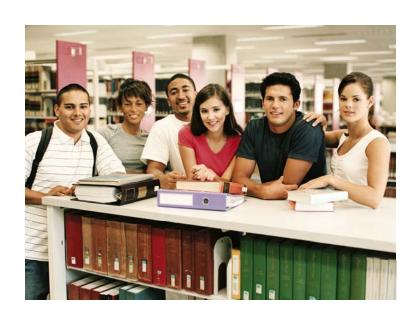
• Everyone needs to use the same strategy template. Each group leader should send their revised draft to Deb by 5:00PM next Friday.

Participatory Governance Council Meeting Summary

Meeting attended by:	ADMINISTRATORS: Andre Barnes, David Dore;	
	Podenski, Karen Saginor, STUDENTS: Bouchra Simmons, Shannell Williams	
Absent:	Athena Steff, Karl Gamarra	
Date:	December 18, 2012	
Time:	3:00pm-5:0pm	
Agenda Topic #1: Introductions		Deadlines:
Notes:		
After introductions of council members, each constituent group described		
the process used to select their representatives.		
Action Items:		
All groups must identify alternates to attend in the absence of a rep		By our next scheduled meeting.
	articipatory Governance Policy	
Notes:		
Policy #2.07 was reviewed. The Council can make 'recommendation' to the		
Chancellor for a new committee or workgroup. The Council cannot		
establish committees or workgroups. The Council is a 'recommending		
body', not a decision-making	g body.	
Action Items:		Andre will inform the Council
The correction to Policy - Item V.A. needs to be made.		Secretary by next week.
Agenda Topic #3: Handling Public Comment		
Notes:		
Members questioned how public comment would be handled through the		
council. Several reps suggested that every agenda should include a Public		
Comment time slot. Constituent groups need to ensure that their rep		
shares information. As an example, the Student reps have a website and		
are willing to share the web structure.		
Action Items:		Bouchra will email sample web
Ensure the web site is updat		structure to the group on Monday.
Agenda Topic #4: Discuss D	RAFT organization chart	
Notes:		
Program Review should be a subcommittee under Annual Plan and Budget.		
Student development issues will be addressed under through Program		
Review and approved by the	e Budget Committee.	
Action Items:		By our next scheduled meeting.
Change org chart to Annual Plan/Budget/Program Review		
Ensure that Student Development is addressed through the Program		
Review process and by the E		
Meeting Adjourned. Next Meeting: 3 rd Thursday of each month, 3-5pm MUB 140		
11100 140		

How to Write Agendas and Meeting Minutes

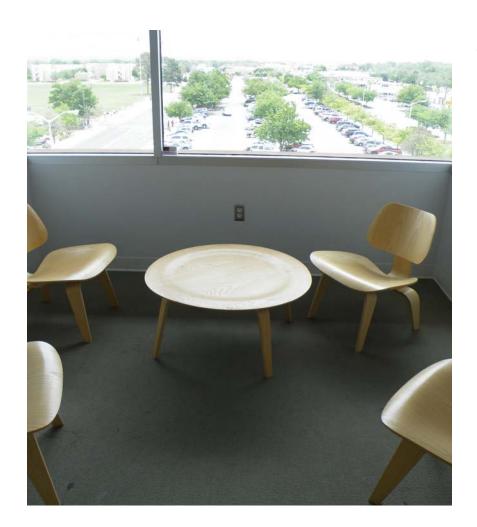
Dr. Tabitha Hart Tabitha.Hart@sjsu.edu



What is a meeting?



What is a meeting?



Think of a recent meeting you attended.

What made it satisfying or unsatisfying?

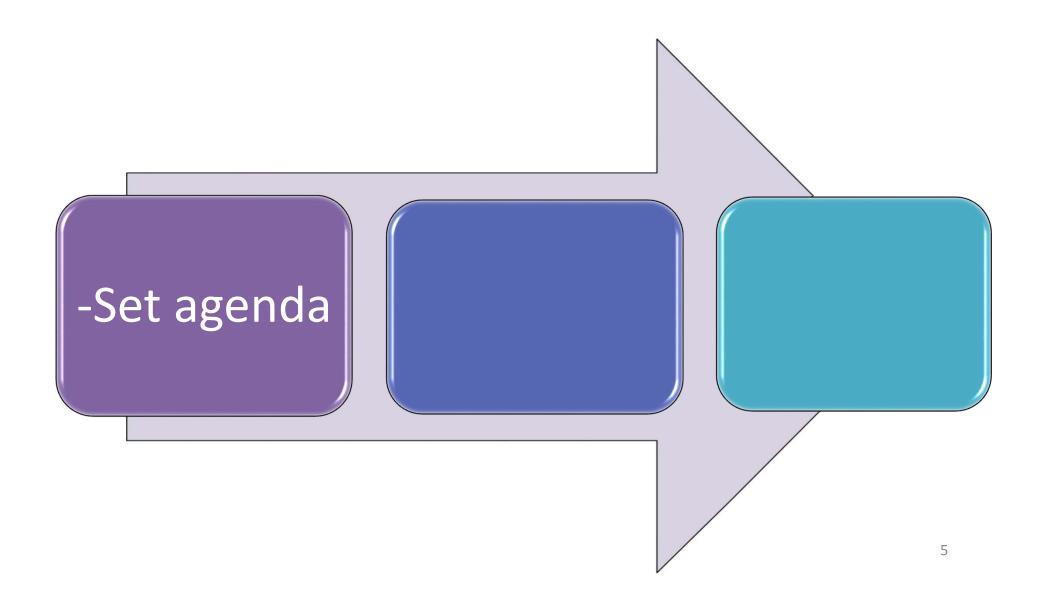
Why?

Effective meetings are structured through writing.

before - during - after



Before the meeting



Good agenda items



- Specific
- Results-oriented
- Timed
- Realistic

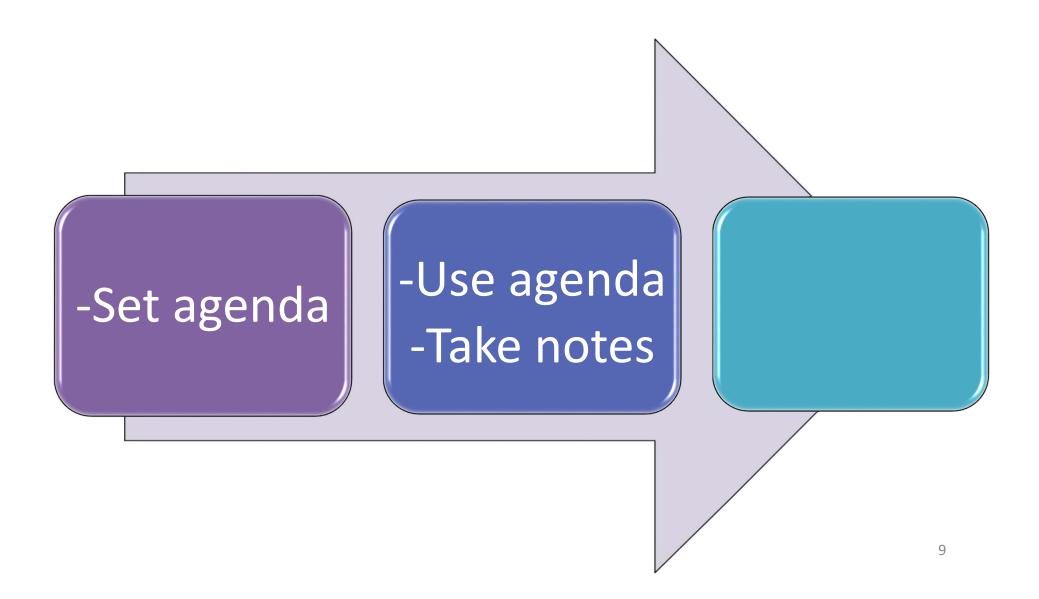
Specific, results-oriented, timed, realistic

- Brainstorm news items for bulletin (10 min)
- Choose the logo for the website (15 min)
- Identify *pros and cons* of using Twitter (12 min) ✓
- Update team members on *budget* (6 min) ✓

Fix these agenda items

- 1. Grad school applications
- 2. Talk about financial aid
- 3. Discuss marketing
- 4. Create political campaign

During the meeting

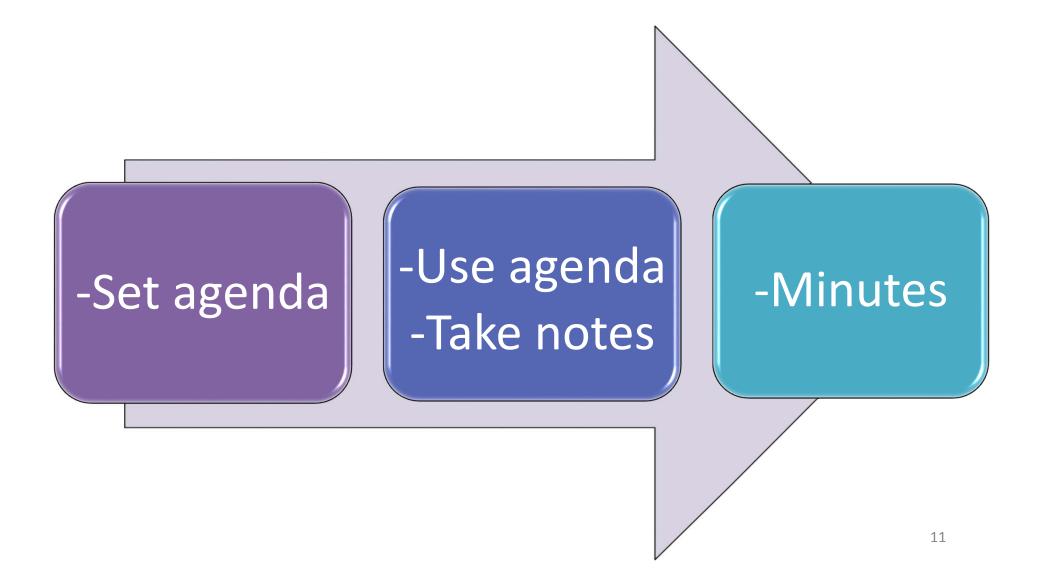


Using your agenda



- Assign roles
 - chair
 - note taker
 - time keeper
- Follow agenda
 - topics
 - times
 - participation

After the meeting



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Everyone should look at the new blog. Send news items to Deb for posting.

Good meeting minutes



- Complete
- Detailed and concise
- Action items that tell us
 - -what
 - -who
 - -when

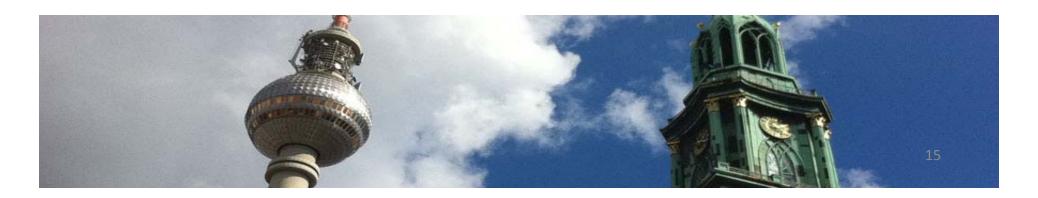
Activity: Hold a meeting



- Assign special role (time keeper).
- Let functional roles emerge (p. 199).
- Everyone must take notes and participate.

Study COMM in Berlin, Summer 2014

- COMM 164F, Comm & Global Organizations (4 units)
- All majors and levels
- All students registered at a U.S. university/college
- June 23 July 11, 2013 (3 weeks)
- Program leaders:
 - Bettina Brockmann <u>bettina.brockmann@sjsu.edu</u>
 - Tabitha Hart <u>tabitha.hart@sjsu.edu</u>



Berlin study abroad meeting agenda



- 1. List five possible methods to promote program (5 min)
- 2. Identify strengths and weaknesses of each (5 min)
- 3. Vote for the three best ways (2 min)
- Write three action items (3 min)

Relevance and take-aways

- Identify key elements of successful meetings.
- Write specific agenda items with clear outcomes.
- Identify key components of meeting minutes.
- Hold a meeting using an agenda.

