

# Fostering Effective Public Speaking Skills

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# Fostering Effective Public Speaking Skills

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## 1. Introduction

Japanese university graduates today are embarking on a journey into a brave new world, for which relatively few of them are adequately prepared, a world in which no one will be signing their paychecks until retirement, where simply saying “yes” to superiors will no longer suffice to survive and thrive in the workplace. One important skill set that all students should possess before they begin job-hunting is the ability to do effective public speaking. In

his book entitled, *TED Talks: The Official Guide to Public Speaking* (2016), Chris Anderson, President and curator of TED (<https://www.ted.com>), asserts that “however much public speaking skills matter today, they’re going to matter even more in the future” (227). He further states that he has “become convinced that tomorrow, even more than today, learning to present your ideas live to other humans will prove to be an absolutely essential skill for anyone leaving school and looking to start a meaningful career” and for “anyone who wants to progress at work” (227).

Certainly, requiring undergraduates to take a course in public speaking is a step in the right direction; however, for many Japanese students, especially those who tend to be somewhat reticent or shy, the prospect of having to make presentations in English in front of their peers could literally leave them speechless. This article outlines a series of steps that serve to build students’ confidence and develop the skills needed to enter the arena of public speaking. Through the tasks in this process, students are gradually able to move beyond stage fright and begin to focus their message, find their voice, and express their ideas effectively. The process was briefly referred to in an article entitled, “Developing Global Communication Skills,” which appeared in volume 31 of *Tama Bulletin* (Bollinger, 2015). This article elaborates on the process and includes additional tasks and techniques.

## 2. Why are public speaking skills more relevant today?

Before focusing on the process, let us briefly consider why public speaking skills, which have always been an important and effective skill set, are now more important than ever before. As with other major social trends and global and economic transitions over the past two decades, the key factors driving this change are ramifications of ever-evolving advances in information and communication technology and ever-expanding globalization. As Anderson observes, a “great driver of the renaissance of public speaking is the epic technological shift that has given us all visibility to each other: the Internet, and in particular, the rise of online video” (238). He further asserts that online video is responsible for making TED “one of the pioneers of a new way of sharing knowledge” (238).

For the first time in history, it is possible for anyone with Internet access to learn from

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some of the world's greatest teachers and mentors, which represents limitless possibilities in terms of developing human potential. An example of this is evident in a recent interview with Jim Courier, winner of four Grand Slams in the early 1990s, lamenting the dearth of American male tennis players in the U.S. Open. He explains that “players around the world are better than ever, with all they need to reach the top” (2017). Courier continues,

I think we have to understand that the world is very different than it was when Americans had nearly 50 percent of the top 100 players. We had the best coaching systems. We had the best information. The world wasn't flat, to borrow Tom Friedman's book title. Information wasn't democratized amongst the Internet. (2017)

Another phenomenon sparked by this medium of global visibility is the interactive component of peer teaching and learning. According to Anderson, instant access to the world's best talent has created “a massive incentive to improve” on what currently exists, which he refers to as, “crowd-accelerated innovations” (243-244). Global talent, ideas, inventions, etc. are being mined and marketed by and to millions via online video and video conferencing on an ongoing basis. These trends, which are fueling global competitiveness, highlight the need to develop effective public speaking skills in order to remain relevant and viable in the global economy.

### 3. Skill-building process

The process described herein was designed for use in a public speaking skills course spanning two academic semesters. However, it can be adapted for use over one or two semesters in multi-level communication courses, academic skills courses, or content based courses. Individual tasks or various steps in the process can also be used to provide additional scaffolding in courses where presentations are a feature of an existing curriculum. The first semester curriculum for the public speaking skills course includes “impromptu” speeches, group presentations, and *pechakucha* presentations. During the second semester, students give informal speeches, followed by Q&A sessions, and then focus on creating charts and graphs for business presentations, which are video recorded. The video recorded presentations are viewed and critiqued as part of a peer workshop. For their final

presentation, students do interviews outside of class and report on their findings. At the end of each semester, students submit a portfolio of work completed during the term, and as part of their final portfolio, students assess their own learning in the course.

### 3.1 “Impromptu” speech

In the first class, students introduce themselves to a partner(s) in pairs or small groups by talking about familiar topics such as their hometown, hobbies and interests, club activities, part-time jobs, etc. Then for the first speaking task, each student chooses one or two of these topics, or any other familiar topic(s), to talk about for two minutes. It is important that students select topics that they can talk about easily, without doing any research or attempting to memorize any new information. Students are also encouraged to choose topics that they enjoy talking about and to adopt a conversational speaking style, as if they were talking to a friend. Some students choose to talk about one topic for the entire time, while others opt to talk about two topics for one minute each, or to talk mainly about one topic and then switch to the other topic for the time remaining.

The stated objective of the “impromptu” speech is for students to practice making eye contact with the audience rather than looking at notes or simply reading their speech. Prior to doing the “impromptu” speeches, students participate in paired tasks and small group activities, featured in the course textbook, *Speaking of Speech: Basic Presentation Skills for Beginners* (Harrington & LeBeau, 2009), to practice using gestures and making eye contact, which are typically challenging tasks for Japanese students. Students are also encouraged to use gestures and make eye contact while practicing their speech in pairs. They can use notes during these practice sessions, but not during the actual speech.

Another objective of the “impromptu” speech is to ease students through their initial bout of stage fright by doing a relatively simple, unassessed task that they have practiced several times with a partner. Many students have never made a presentation in English or in Japanese, so naturally, they feel quite nervous. However, the fact that this task is not assessed tends to reduce the pressure that they feel. In addition, students are reminded throughout the process that it is unnecessary to memorize their speech and that it is okay to make mistakes. During the “impromptu” speeches, audience members are generally supportive, as they are

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all “going through it” together. In oral feedback following the task, students often indicate that they enjoyed listening to their classmates’ speeches and learning more about their peers.

### 3.2 Tour presentation

The next step involves making a PowerPoint presentation in a team of two or more members. While some students have used PowerPoint before, relatively few have had an opportunity to make a PowerPoint presentation in English or in Japanese. Together with their partner(s), students select a destination in Japan and plan a tour for international tourists. After researching their destination, they select which places to visit, things to see and do, types of restaurants, and means of transportation to include in their presentation.

Following a demonstration of how to use PowerPoint and a tutorial on creating effective visuals, students work together to plan, design, and produce their tour presentation. Each student is responsible for creating the slides for either a morning tour and lunch or an afternoon tour and dinner. Subsequently, students prepare the speaking part to accompany their slides, adding gestures and voice inflection, and then practice their presentation and memorize their speech. The final step is to combine their slides with their partner’s slides to create a single Power Point presentation.

During this process, students view sample student presentations, focusing on particular features to emulate or avoid in their slides, such as using key words or phrases instead of using sentences. Students also focus on and practice using various types of voice inflection, (e.g. stressing, stretching, pausing). This is accomplished, in part, by watching and analyzing the elements of recorded speeches online. TED talks (<http://www.ted.com>) provide a limitless and easily accessible source of short, effective speeches that are appropriate for classroom use. One example is Jay Walker’s TED talk entitled, “English Mania” (2013) in which, he uses gestures and voice inflection, along with vivid images to very effectively convey a powerful message in less than five minutes. To facilitate comprehension of the content of speeches, students can watch them with English subtitles and/or access speech transcripts online. In addition to analyzing presentation techniques of various speakers, students can also practice shadowing speeches to gain proficiency in using various types of voice inflection.

Prior to giving their presentations in class, students practice together with their partner(s) and provide oral feedback. During the class presentations, students assess the presentations of other teams and provide written feedback using a presentation evaluation form. After all teams have presented, the teacher provides oral feedback to the class as a whole, and subsequently provides feedback to each student individually, focusing on positive aspects of speech delivery, language use, design and content of slides, etc. and aspects of the presentation that can be improved. In a similar manner, peer and teacher feedback are provided for other assessed tasks in the course. Following their presentations, students complete a Group Project Report which describes the role of each team member in planning the presentation, finding information and images, preparing the slides, and writing the speech text.

### 3.3 *Pechakucha* presentation

The *pechakucha* presentation format, created in Tokyo in 2003 by two architects, Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham, consists of 20 slides that advance automatically, while a presenter describes each slide in only 20 seconds, for a total presentation of six minutes and 40 seconds. Although this format was originally designed to limit the length of presentations in Klein and Dytham's architectural firm, it has since become a global phenomenon, and *pechakucha* events are now held in over 900 cities worldwide. After a brief introduction to the *pechakucha* format, students watch two *pechakucha* presentations online (Hitchins, 2013; Daigo, 2013), and then explore the *Pechakucha* website (<http://www.pechakucha.org>), which features presentations on a wide variety of topics from contributors around the world. Students may choose to watch other presentations outside of class to gain familiarity with the format.

For the *pechakucha* presentation, students again work with a partner, and each student creates 10 slides which are then combined with their partner's to form a single *pechakucha* presentation. For this project, students have the option of recycling a topic introduced in their "impromptu" speeches (e.g. hobbies, hometowns, part-time jobs), or exploring a new topic. Prior to choosing a shared theme, students view sample student *pechakucha* presentations about topics such as world heritage sites, travel destinations, future goals or dreams, wish

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lists, club activities, school trips or vacations etc.

After choosing a theme and starting to select images to use for their presentation, students watch a *pechakucha* online tutorial (Benigni, 2012), and then do an in-class workshop, during which they create 10 blank slides and set the timing to automatically advance each slide after 20 seconds, as demonstrated in the tutorial. Students then add any remaining images to the slides and prepare a brief description to accompany each slide. Subsequently, they practice their presentation, making adjustments as needed to insure that their speech coincides with the automatic slide transitions. Although this is a challenging task that requires considerable practice, the repetition can serve to facilitate memorization and boost students' confidence and poise. Finally, after combining their slides with their partner's slides, each team practices their presentation together before presenting it to the class.

Having already gained some familiarity with the basic elements of speechmaking, (e.g. eye contact, gestures, voice inflection) and requisite computer skills during their initial presentation, students are able to recycle these skills and explore new ways of sharing their ideas with peers to convey a message or make an impression on the audience. Some students choose to interject a little humor into their *pechakucha* presentations through the use of humorous images, observations, or anecdotes. Each presentation is unique, and audience members are generally interested and engaged in the process of watching the way in which each presentation unfolds. In addition to drawing on students' creativity, this task provides another opportunity for authentic communication in which students can share their own experiences, hopes and aspirations, and can learn more about their peers.

### 3.4 Internet search techniques

During the second semester, as students research topics for their individual presentations, they are often overwhelmed by the plethora of information available online and are at a loss when attempting to select resources that are suitable for their presentations. To develop better online search techniques, students practice using speed reading strategies, such as skimming and scanning, to more quickly determine which resources may contain information relevant to their topic. For one practice task, students use these strategies to quickly locate specific information and details in a news article entitled, "Startups test global waters in contest:



Domestic entrepreneurs pitch ideas at high-profile technology event in Tokyo” (Mie, 2012).

Through this task, in addition to honing their search techniques, students also become aware of an annual English speech contest in Tokyo, where young Japanese entrepreneurs have an opportunity to acquire funding to start their own businesses by making five-minute PowerPoint presentations in English to an audience which includes venture capitalists. Knowledge of this contest serves to highlight the importance and potential benefits of both English fluency and presentation skills. One of the challenges that the entrepreneurs face is responding to judges’ questions in English, following their presentations. Students have an opportunity to grapple with a similar challenge by responding to questions during a Q&A session, following their next speech.

### 3.5 Informal speech and Q&A session

As a warm up activity during the first class of the second semester, students talk with a partner about what they did during the summer break and ask their partner a couple of questions to find out more information. The following week, after reading and discussing the speech contest article referred to in the previous section, students prepare to give an informal two-minute speech about their summer vacation or another familiar topic of their own choosing. Prior to giving the speech in the next class, students practice their speech with a partner who asks them a couple of questions about their topic. Following their informal speech, students do a brief Q&A session during which they respond to three to five questions from the audience. As students are required to formulate their responses in real time without any advance preparation, this proves a challenging task, which in turn, serves as preparation for the Q&A session that students do following their final presentation.

### 3.6 Analyzing speech elements

To review and synthesize elements covered during the first semester, students focus on the types of gestures, voice inflection and visuals used in a speech by Jean-Paul Nerrière, a former IBM marketing executive and one of the creators of Globish, a simplified version of English that is used by business professionals around the world to facilitate global business. In the speech, Mr. Nerrière (2009), explains why he created Globish and introduces his book

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entitled, *Globish the World Over* (2009). As the speech itself is in Globish, it is relatively simple for students to understand its content. Subsequently, using an outline of the speech and a copy of the speech transcript, students analyze the structure of the speech, identifying the introduction, the sections describing each of the main points in the body, the conclusion, and the sequencers and transitions used to order the information and connect the various parts of the speech. After deconstructing the speech in this way, students are better prepared to order and organize the information in their own individual presentations.

### 3.7 Business presentation

For the first individual presentation, each student chooses a topic related to one of three broad, business-related themes: (1) a comparison of two or more companies, products or brands; (2) a business innovation; or (3) a domestic or global business trend. After researching their topic, students select three or four main points to cover in their presentation, find relevant data, and create effective visuals to convey that data clearly and simply to the audience. The presentation format includes a title slide, an overview slide that lists the three or four main points, one or more data slide(s) for each of the main points, and a conclusion slide that restates the key points covered in the presentation.

A challenging aspect of this project for many students is creating two or more different kinds of charts or graphs to use in their data slides. After watching a demonstration on how to create charts and graphs, students view sample student PowerPoint slides, focusing on effective and ineffective aspects of slide design, content, and organization, and then watch two versions of model presentations that clearly demonstrate differences between effective and ineffective visuals and ways to present visuals effectively. Subsequently, during student/teacher conferences, students outline the main points that they will cover in their presentation and the types of charts, graphs and other visuals that they will use in their data slides. Throughout the process, students can also confer with a partner to get feedback on their ideas, suggestions on creating visuals, and/or to practice their presentations. Another challenging aspect of this project is that each student's presentation is video recorded by a partner or the teacher during the class presentations.

### 3.8 Peer workshop

The video recordings form the basis of a peer evaluation process or peer workshop that students do in pairs. During the workshop, students view their and their partner's recorded presentations, then comment briefly on their impressions of the speeches and ask for their partner's feedback on a list of ten points, adapted from criteria devised by Chris Anderson for use during rehearsals of TED talks (153-154). Subsequently, students provide written critiques of both presentations, using a self-evaluation form and a peer evaluation form, the formats of which are similar. Using a five-point scale, students assess various aspects of speech delivery (e.g. posture, eye contact, use of gestures, voice inflection) and the quality and use of visuals (e.g. design, content, organization). In addition, students note three positive aspects of each presentation and three ways in which each presentation could be improved. After completing both evaluations, the forms are given to the teacher, who returns the peer evaluation form to students to give to their partner. Because this process challenges students to reflect on their own work and performance and identifies specific ways in which they can hone their skills and enhance their effectiveness as presenters, it can serve as an impetus for significant improvement in their final presentations.

### 3.9 Interview project and presentation

For their final presentation, students do interviews outside of class in order to learn from interviewees' first-hand experience and then share what they have learned with their peers. For the interview, students select one of the following five options: (1) someone who has lived abroad for a year or more; (2) someone who has participated in an internship; (3) someone who has done volunteering; (4) someone who has been successful in job-hunting; (5) or someone who works in a field, company or an industry that the student wishes to enter upon graduation. The purpose of the interviews is to gain knowledge, tips and suggestions, relevant to some experience that students wish to pursue prior to graduation, which may prove valuable in the job-hunting process.

In preparation for these interviews, students do in-class interviews with some of their peers in small groups of three to five students. During these peer interviews, students practice asking and answering questions about experiences related to such topics as living or

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studying abroad, doing homestays or internships, volunteering, etc. Using a template of ethnographic interview questions, based on the work of anthropologist and ethnographer, J. P. Spradley (1979), students interview several peers, selecting or adapting questions relevant to each interviewee's situation and experience, as well as asking their own questions and follow up questions.

To gain further proficiency in interviewing, students in some classes also interview a guest speaker. In preparation for these interviews, students research and discuss information related to the guest speaker's area of expertise and prepare questions to ask during a Q&A session following the speaker's presentation. Prior to the presentation, students role play the Q&A session, with the teacher playing the role of the guest speaker. The guest speaker's presentation and Q&A session can serve as a model for the students' own final presentations.

For their individual interviews, students select or adapt questions from the above-mentioned template, add their own questions, and are encouraged to ask follow up questions to obtain more detailed information about their interviewee's experiences. Following their interviews, students select three or four main points to focus on in their presentations. In addition to providing additional practice in the speech-making skills and techniques acquired in the course, this presentation format challenges students to synthesize and share information from their interviews that they found to be significant and which they believe will be relevant to their peers. During a Q&A session following each presentation, students in the audience can ask questions to clarify their understanding or inquire further about the details of an interview. By providing an opportunity for authentic communication and meaningful exchange between presenters and their peers, this task serves to further develop students' ability to connect with and interact with the audience.

### 3.10 Portfolio assessment

At the end of each semester, students submit a portfolio of work completed during the term. For the first semester, this includes the PowerPoint slides and presentation texts for the tour presentation and *pechakucha* presentation, along with the Group Project Report. Similarly, the portfolio submitted at the end of the second semester contains the PowerPoint slides and presentation texts for the business presentation and interview presentation. In

addition, students prepare a self-assessment of their learning in the course. (Please see appendix.) The use of portfolio assessment can serve to develop students' organizational skills and can provide students with a sense of accomplishment and reflect the progress that they have made during the course.

#### 4. Discussion and feedback

As noted previously, prior to taking the public speaking skills course, many students have never made a presentation in English or Japanese, with or without using PowerPoint, so initially, most students are quite nervous. Therefore, a primary objective throughout the course is to stimulate students' interest and engage their participation in the creative process so as to focus their awareness and attention on the message that they wish to communicate and the way to convey it most effectively. Esenwien and Carnegie (2016) emphasize the necessity for complete and undivided attention to the message a speaker wishes to convey. "Divide your attention and you divide your power" (Chapter 8, para. 5). Rather than simply reciting words from memory, it is crucial for a speaker to remain focused on the meaning of the message in order to convey it effectively. "If the thought beneath your words is warm, fresh, spontaneous, a part of your *self*, your utterance will have breath and life. Words are only a result" (Esenwien & Carnegie, 2016, Chapter 8, para. 8). This shift from an inward focus on anxiety to an outward focus on conveying meaning via the task at hand can serve to transform students' nervous energy and adrenalin into drive and enthusiasm.

How can this be accomplished? In addition to detailed written and oral instructions outlining the structure, content and format of each presentation, providing additional scaffolding (e.g. watching model presentations, viewing sample student PowerPoint slides) to show various interpretations of a task can spark creativity and prove useful in helping students conceptualize a task. Maximizing the choice that students have in the selection of presentation themes and topics also serves to stimulate their interest and engage their participation. Providing opportunities for authentic communication about topics of interest to presenters will, in turn, increase the likelihood that their presentations will hold the audience's attention. Moreover, sharing information that is relevant to both presenters and

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the audience can facilitate meaningful exchange and interaction. Achieving this type of connection with the audience through clear and consistent focus on the message that one wishes to convey is the goal of any presenter. Chris Anderson refers to this ability as “presentation literacy.” Empowering students to begin to develop presentation literacy and gain confidence in their speaking ability through the process described herein is the primary objective of the public speaking skills course.

What do students say about the process and their learning experience in the course? Below are observations and feedback from students’ “Self-assessment of Learning” forms, completed at the end of the course, and from course feedback forms. The comments in the first section are related to various aspects of students’ learning or experience in the course. The second section contains typical responses to the question, “How do you think that your learning in this course may be beneficial in the future?”. (Some of the comments below contain errors in spelling or grammar that are unedited.)

### Learning experience in the course

- *I usually get nerves [sic] when I speak in front of somebody. However, in this class, I learn that I should speak confidently.*
- *I enjoyed making good presentations with my friend.*
- *I enjoyed making speech in English.*
- *I think it is very easy to understand what we should pay attention to when we have a presentation.*
- *I enjoyed listening to other group of presentations.*
- *I enjoyed talking with others in English, not only speaking.*
- *I could learn about way of presentation in English for the first time. It was very interesting for me.*
- *I enjoyed presenting in front of audience with using powerpoint. This was my first time to present in English so I was nervous at first. However, this was good experience for me.*
- *I worked very hard and practiced many times. I was very nervous before the presentation but after that, I feel confident.*

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- *I enjoyed making presentations and talking in front of a lot of people.*
- *I enjoyed planning the presentation and making English script.*
- *We made some presentations using skills that we learned in this class. Every time, I tried use new skill, that challenge was fun.*
- *I didn't memorize my manuscript well, but I try hard to memorize it. Then I could have a confidence!*
- *Presentation in the front of audience was very good experience for me. I was very shy and I strongly think that I am bad at English. But this experience change me. I became to enjoy presenting!*
- *It was so useful for me to explain what I want to tell audience correctly in English.*
- *My English skills improve very much.*
- *To learn by heart English script was difficult for me. So I practiced many times.*
- *I learned the way of presentation and the importance of gesture. I think that gesture can help us to communicate smoothly. And, I learned eye contact is very important when we do a presentation.*
- *I learned how we do the presentation so that the audience keep interested in our speech.*
- *I am often tense. Therefore it was hard for me to talk in front of many people. However, I took this class for one year and was able to make a speech many times, so I gained courage.*
- *I don't like English. So I don't like English class too. But I experienced talking in English in this class for one year. So I wasn't hard to talk in public in second semester and I learned to think that it is fun to speak in English.*
- *When I looked the outline of this class, I thought that I could not follow this class because I am not good at using a computer, but I have cooperated with everyone, so I could follow this class. Actually, presenting was very fun and interesting.*
- *It was hard work for me, but when I finished doing speech, I felt a sense of achievement.*

“How do you think that your learning in this course may be beneficial in the

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future?”

- *I will use power point at the office.*
- *When I am businessman, I can have self confidence.*
- *I think that global communication will be important. We may do speech in English at a company. So this course is good practice for my business life.*
- *I believe this course will help me talk with foreigners in the future.*
- *I will not be ashamed when I am going to speak English in front of many people.*
- *I think it will be good benefit for my future. We rarely make a speech in English, so it was a good chance to do it.*
- *I think this course will be useful in the future because I want to work to use English. When I have to speak to many people, this experience is good.*
- *English is an official language so if I become a working member of society, I think I must make presentation in English.*

## 5. Conclusion

Presentation literacy in the 21st century, similar to computer literacy in the previous century, is a crucial component to achieving success in myriad fields. In addressing a group of business students at Columbia University in 2009, billionaire Warren Buffet, Chairman and CEO of Berkshire-Hathaway, emphasized the significance of mastering the art of public speaking, referring to it as “an asset that will last you 50 or 60 years, and it’s a liability, if you don’t like it and are uncomfortable with it, that will also last you 50 or 60 years, and it’s a necessary skill” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qeRDAkC9IQ>). However, until he took a course in public speaking from the renowned Dale Carnegie, the soft-spoken Nebraskan native lacked confidence in his own ability as a public speaker. Now known around the world as an extremely gifted and effective speaker, Buffet is comfortable addressing diverse audiences, from university graduates to the industry moguls who attend his annual Berkshire-Hathaway shareholders’ meetings. Echoing the sentiments of Warren Buffet, Chris Anderson states, “We think presentation literacy should be a core part of every school’s curriculum, on a par with reading and math. It’s going to be an important life skill



to have in the decades ahead” (245-246). Consequently, 2014 saw the launch of TED-Ed Clubs, a free program for schools which provides 13 weekly sessions that prepare students of all ages to give their own TED talk.

“Creative knowledge” is defined by Anderson as “the skill set obtained by exposure to a wide variety of other creative humans” (236). Rather than focusing on one area of specialization, creative knowledge comes from listening to experts in such diverse fields as psychology, neuroscience, history, evolutionary biology, anthropology and spirituality. Anderson describes how knowledge from one field can spark creativity or inspiration or provide a catalyst to innovation in another seemingly unrelated field, and he suggests that we are “entering an era where we all need to spend a lot more time *learning from each other*” [author’s emphasis] (236). According to Anderson,

the first great driver of the public-speaking renaissance is that the knowledge era we are entering demands a different type of knowledge, encouraging people to be inspired by those outside their traditional specialties, and in so doing to develop a deeper understanding of the world and their role in it (237).

In conclusion, it is incumbent upon university educators to prepare students for the challenges that they will undoubtedly face upon entering the workforce by fostering effective public speaking skills as an integral part of the curriculum. While it may be impossible to predict which students will become leaders or advocates in the future, presentation literacy can prove beneficial to all students in pursuing their career aspirations and realizing their full potential. Although students were traditionally taught to remain silent and refrain from expressing their opinions in deference to others, it is crucial that students today be encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions and be empowered to share their ideas with the world. This could, in turn, serve to boost the economy and benefit the society as a whole by unleashing the latent creativity and untapped talent and potential of the current and future generations of university graduates.

#### Appendix: Self-assessment of Learning Form

- 1) What did you learn in this course?
- 2) Which aspect(s) of the course did you find challenging? How did you try to overcome

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the challenge(s)?

3) Briefly comment on the following tasks:

Impromptu speech

Tour presentation

*Pechakucha* presentation

Informal speech and Q&A session

Business presentation

Peer workshop

Interview project

Final presentation

Portfolio assessment

4) How do you think that your learning in this course may be beneficial in the future?

5) Other comments:

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