Toward the Equitable Teaching of Speaking | CTLT Winter Institute

Moberley Luger, Asst. Prof of Teaching, Dept. of English Language and Literatures & Chair, Coordinated Arts Program

Craig Stensrud, PhD Candidate, Dept. of English Language and Literatures & GRA, Speaking in the Disciplines

speaking.disciplines@ubc.ca

Toward the Equitable Teaching of Speaking

Our work
- Inclusive speaking pedagogies
- How do we teach speaking (in both formal and informal contexts) in the university? What do we reward and value?
- What tacit skills do we assume our students have and what speaking styles or behaviors do we reward?
- How can genre-theoretically informed writing scholarship help us promote equity and inclusivity in speaking pedagogies?
- Building the TLEF-funded Precedents Archive for Scholarly Speaking (PASS): speaking.arts.ubc.ca

Objectives of today's session:
- Reflect on how we teach speaking at UBC – and how we might teach it more inclusively
- Share research on inclusive speaking pedagogies
- Learn strategies for equitable teaching of speaking
- Explore the PASS as a classroom resource

Plan for today's session:
- Written reflection
- Presentation
- Tour of the PASS
- Breakouts: Hands on with the PASS
- Return for general discussion

What are some barriers you have faced when asking students to speak in class (formally or informally)?

shyness

students saying something unsafe

Needing/wanting more time to formulate thoughts before speaking

some students dominating

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Need to get used to that 'weird ' silence first (as an instructor)

lack of confidence

Very hard to assign 'grades' ; I don't know how

Balancing inclusive participation with student comfort. Unconscious biases in who is being called upon?

Not in class but in workshops, shyness. Also when is research ready to present? When do you become an expert. Impostor syndrome

What does inclusive speaking pedagogy mean to you?

creating safety

I don't know; that's why
I'm here :)

Modelling both more formal and less formal
modes of speaking and presentation

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An environment where students feel comfortable participating and with recognition after their participation

different methods of engaging
different students

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use different voices in the class
materials

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Space/time for quieter participants. For
'dominating ones, WAIT: Why am I talking.
Small group vs open discussion with whole
group

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Student focus group

- "some people are really disrespectful" … "they don't even "pretend to listen"

- "sense of community"

- Desire to discuss "how the audience reacts, the protocol"

- "…like when you go to the theatre, you know …you can't be noisy, you can't be eating."

- "We're not taught that it shouldn't be nerve wracking"
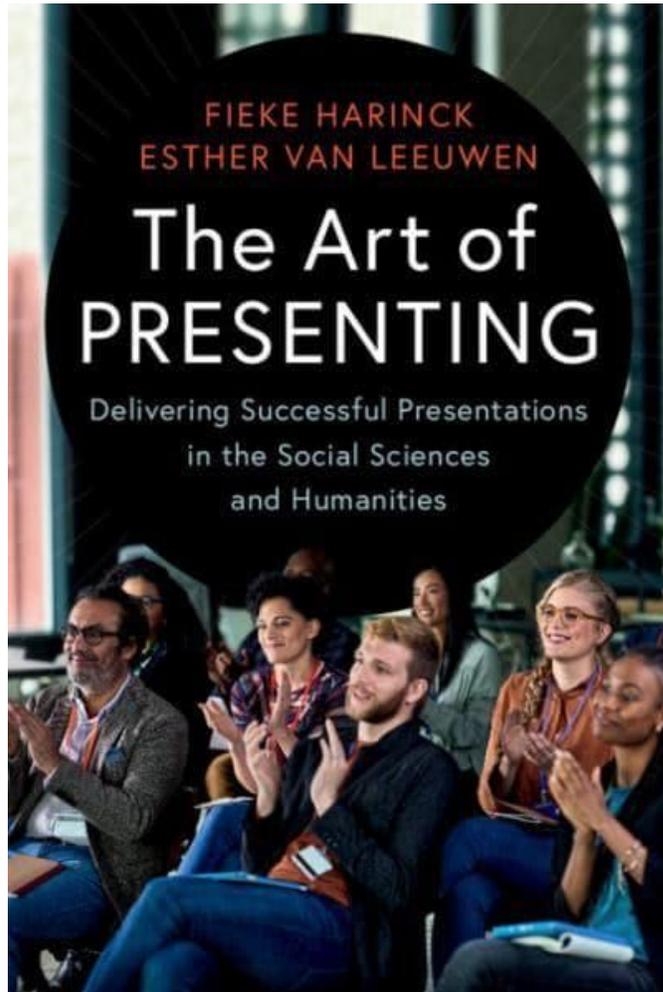
The "Top Tips" Approach

Textbooks

- "It is simple: if your clothes look dodgy (in the eyes of your audience), the audience will expect your presentation to be dodgy. If you look smart, people expect your presentation to be smart."

- "Curb your accent."

"Performance Orientation"

- "practice in front of the mirror"
- "speak clearly"
- "maintain good posture"
- "dress appropriately"
- "avoid distracting behaviours"
- Focus on "etiquette and body language" & "clarity, polish, and professionalism"
- In his review of 26 public speaking textbooks, Fernando Sanchez (2019) shows that 16 of them focused on dress (e.g. "Dress for success: Wear clothes that suggest professionalism and confidence") and 22 focused on voice (e.g. "A speaker's voice should have a pleasing pitch."

"The Performance-Communication Continuum" (Motley, 1990)

- "Performance orientation" = the goal is to make a "positive aesthetic impression "

- "Communication orientation" = the goal is to "[share] information with the audience"

- Speakers are trained to view the audience "not as a group of evaluators, but rather as receivers who respond to the speaker's message"

Toward the Equitable Teaching of Speaking

1. Confront the assumption that speaking is a tacit skill.
   - Peter Elbow: speaking is "inherently easier" for students because they have "been speaking to a variety of audiences and for a variety of purposes for many years."
2. Talk to students about what speaking in your discipline is all about.
3. Assign speaking opportunities in the context of research and knowledge-making.
4. Teach listening instead of speaking.
   - "some people are really disrespectful" … "they don't even "pretend to listen"

Teaching With Precedents

- Through precedents, we can show students what scholarly conversations look like *in action*

- A purposeful, guided exposure to precedents from various genres of scholarly speaking, and multiple disciplines of scholarly discourse, is an important step in shifting students toward a communication paradigm for scholarly speaking

Teaching Academic Genres

- Teaching the norms of academic genres can be "demystifying"

- Helps to address inequities in familiarity with academic discourse that often encode deeper structural inequities

- Through precedents, students can be immersed in academic discourse and guided to recognize its conventions

Empowering Students

- The ultimate goal: develop pedagogies capable of questioning and challenging, not just reproducing, norms in academic discourse, which can themselves be inequitable.

- Precedents vs. models: "a previous instance taken as an example or rule by which to be guided in similar cases or circumstances" (*OED)*

- Students learn to navigate and negotiate normative expectations through their own scholarly speaking

Speaking Across the Disciplines Exercise

- Choose two videos from different disciplines

- Choose six criteria for comparison

- Fill out the table with observations

- Answer the reflection questions

Speaking Across the Disciplines Questions

- *Looking over your chart, identify two commonalities between the presentations. Why do these strategies work similarly across disciplines?*

- *Looking over your chart, identify two differences between the presentations. Is there a reason that each strategy is better suited to its particular discipline?*

- *Are there are any strategies from one video/discipline that you think would work well in the other discipline? Why?*

- *If you gave your own oral presentation in one of these disciplines, which strategy do you think it would be most important to use? Why?*

- *Which norm might you choose to challenge? Why?*

Explore the PASS: speaking.arts.ubc.ca

- In your breakout groups, take a few minutes to explore the PASS – one member can screen share.

- Watch a couple of videos from the Scholarly Speaking Archive HINT: filter for 0-5 minute presentations to make sure you have enough time to chat with your group. You may only want to watch the first 1-2 minutes of each video.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How could you use these videos in your teaching? Or, if you can't envision using them specifically, what ways do they invite you to reflect broadly on inclusive speaking pedagogies? What kinds of other precedents might you find useful for your courses?

References

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