



# A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO IMPROVE ORAL PRESENTATIONS

(Accounting Students Make Presentations! You're Kidding, Right?)

**Contact Information:**  
Debra Kerby, Ph.D.  
School of Business  
Truman State University  
100 East Normal Street  
Kirksville, MO 63501  
660-785-4363  
dkerby@truman.edu

**Debra Kerby and Jeff Romine**  
Truman State University, Kirksville, MO

## Motivation for Requiring Presentations

- Link program objectives to University's liberal arts mission
- Fulfill the mission and objectives of the School of Business and Accounting Programs
- Address the concerns of the accounting profession
- Develop students' professional presentation skills
- Stimulate students' higher order thinking skills
- Build students' collaborative relationships with peers



## Missions and Objectives: A Linked Set

**University (excerpts)**  
The mission of Truman State University is to offer an exemplary undergraduate education to well-prepared students, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, in the context of a public institution of higher education. . .

**School of Business**  
We graduate prospective leaders who are ethical, broadly educated problem-solvers, effective team players, clear writers, and articulate speakers.  
We cultivate a community of learners by emphasizing:

- A rigorous, broad academic experience,
- Effective communication skills,
- Highly selective admission of students, and;
- Teaching, while valuing applied and instructional scholarship and service.

**Accounting Program**  
Building on a liberal arts and sciences education, Truman accounting graduates will integrate analytical, research, communication, interpersonal, and leadership skills with business and financial knowledge to be effective financial professionals and prospective leaders.

**Accounting Program Oral Communication Learning Outcomes**  
*Undergraduate:* Deliver a well-organized oral presentation using content, language, and delivery appropriate to the audience and situation.  
*Graduate:* Orally deliver information in a professional manner and interact with the audience to enhance interest or understanding

## Strategy for Improving Presentation Skills Planning

Three courses selected as oral presentation assessment points.

- Introduction to Management Accounting (sophomore)
- Accounting Systems Integration and Data Extraction (senior)
- Management Accounting Seminar (graduate)

Assignment characteristics differ to foster competency development.

- Group versus individual
- Shorter (3 – 5 minutes) versus longer (50 minutes)
- "Facts and information" versus "prompting interaction"

Oral Presentation Course Plan					
Class:	Level	Who	Task	Length	Focus
Introduction to Management Accounting	Sophomore	Group	Company Analysis	3-5 min. each	Fact based
Accounting Systems Integration and Data Extraction	Senior	Individual	Topical Presentation	15-20 min.	Fact based
Management Accounting Seminar	Graduate	Individual	Lead Case or Article Discussion	40-50 min.	Interaction expected

## Implementation

Distribute and discuss the descriptions of the oral presentation competencies.

- Communicate expectations for development as a presenter
  - Novice
  - Proficient
  - Advanced

LEVELS OF ORAL PRESENTATION COMPETENCY	
<b>1. Content</b>	<p><b>1 (Novice)</b> Identify or state purpose of multiple purposes. Organization is inadequate and does not suit audience.</p> <p><b>2 (Proficient)</b> Organize a clear, coherent, strategic presentation and effectively integrate content of audience. Organized in a suitable logical manner and provide adequate transition among ideas. Clearly distinguish between main and sub-ideas.</p> <p><b>3 (Advanced)</b> Highlight content presented purpose and audience interest of audience. Organization contributes to full development of audience. Presentation is clear, coherent, and strategically effective.</p>
<b>2. Provides content</b>	<p><b>1 (Novice)</b> Provide a range of analysis or information to audience. Developmental sequence of information is not clear and does not suit audience.</p> <p><b>2 (Proficient)</b> Select and organize appropriate to audience and assignment. Selects content relevant to audience and clearly communicates main ideas. Clearly explains ideas with sufficient detail. Clearly explains important issues and data.</p> <p><b>3 (Advanced)</b> Make audience aware of audience's interests. Clearly explains important issues and data.</p>
<b>3. Presentation should be well organized and delivery should be professional and engaging.</b>	<p><b>1 (Novice)</b> Presenters read from notes, making use of visual aids. Visual quality poor, ineffective. Includes inadequate or no eye contact. Includes minimal eye contact. Includes minimal eye contact. Shows little interest in the topic. The use of visual aids adds little to the presentation or distracts from the presentation.</p> <p><b>2 (Proficient)</b> Make appropriate eye contact with audience. Visual quality including delivery of content is good. Presenters make eye contact with audience. Includes appropriate eye contact. Includes appropriate eye contact. Includes appropriate eye contact.</p> <p><b>3 (Advanced)</b> Eye contact is used to engage audience and communicate. Visual quality and delivery are excellent. Presenters make eye contact with audience. Includes appropriate eye contact. Includes appropriate eye contact. Includes appropriate eye contact.</p>
<b>4. Presenters interact with audience in a professional manner.</b>	<p><b>1 (Novice)</b> Presenters do not interact with audience. Presenters do not interact with audience. Presenters do not interact with audience.</p> <p><b>2 (Proficient)</b> Presenters interact with audience through questioning or related activities as appropriate to the audience and assignment.</p> <p><b>3 (Advanced)</b> The presenters interact with audience through questioning or related activities as appropriate to the audience and assignment. Presenters use appropriate questioning to engage audience. Presenters use appropriate questioning to engage audience. Presenters use appropriate questioning to engage audience.</p>

## Implementation (cont.)

Students complete assigned task, give oral presentations, and receive feedback.

- Professor completes a standardized assessment rubric
  - Scale is from 1 to 3 with 2 being proficient.
  - Copies are returned to students for feedback.
- Presentations are videotaped in selected course sections

## Closing the Loop

Individual student ratings are reported to the School of Business Assurance of Learning Committee.

- Committee summarizes results and reports findings to discipline faculty for discussion and any necessary action.
- At graduation, a "2" or proficient rating is the goal for each competency.
- Selected rubrics and recordings are reviewed by all faculty to assure inter-rater reliability

Summary of Rubric Assessment				
2 = Proficient				
Competency	Sophomore Spring 2006 n = 155	Sophomore* Spring 2007 n = 51	Senior* Fall 2007	Graduate Fall 2006 n = 24
Overall Organizational Pattern	1.9	1.7	n/a	2.4
Overall Understanding of Content	1.8	1.9	n/a	2.5
Overall Audience Awareness	1.9	2.0	n/a	2.4
Overall Eye Contact	1.7	1.8	n/a	2.4
Overall Physical Delivery	1.9	1.9	n/a	2.2
Overall Vocal Qualities	1.9	1.8	n/a	2.2
Overall Visual Aids	1.9	2.0	n/a	2.2
Overall Interactions	1.7	2.0	n/a	2.4

\*Audiere sections only  
\*\*Presentation requirement added for academic year 2007-08 in response to assessment feedback

