

This one-page column will present practical teaching tips in sufficient detail that ChE educators can adopt the tip. The focus should be on the teaching method, not content. With no tables or figures the column should be approximately 450 words. If graphics are included, the length needs to be reduced. Tips that are too long will be edited to fit on one page. Please submit a Word file to Phil Wankat <wankat@ecn.purdue.edu>, subject: CEE Teaching Tip.

TEACHING TIP: ELEVATOR TALKS

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Both industry and ABET require that engineering graduates can communicate. Clearly the best way to achieve this is to have frequent assignments throughout the curriculum requiring writing and oral presentations. Unfortunately, oral presentations tend to require a significant amount of class time. An alternative oral presentation is the “elevator talk.” The scenario: a student steps into an elevator with someone she needs to persuade or sell. For example, the student may want to convince the person to hire her. She has from one to two minutes to do this.

I assigned the topic to the students (ask for a job), gave them the time (two minutes), gave them a copy of the scoring rubric (Table 1), and told them to prepare a talk that they will present extemporaneously, without visuals. There was no written assignment. In class, I assigned the “boss” for each person. Students were

told to assume that they knew the boss well enough to talk to. Presenters and bosses went to the front of the room and stood in the elevator. Talks were timed for a strict two minutes. Since two minutes is actually fairly long, most students finished early and had to do something—perhaps just stand there—for the remaining time. If they weren’t finished at two

minutes, the elevator door opened anyway and they had to summarize very quickly.

The students saw the relevance of elevator talks and were well prepared. Grading the talks with the scoring rubric was straightforward and I was able to finish the grading while the next pair walked to the front. Since it takes less than 30 seconds to change speakers, 20 two-minute talks can be done in a 50-minute period.

While not eliminating the need for more formal presentations,

elevator talks can provide an easy way to include oral communication in courses that normally would not have time. Grading all of the talks with the scoring rubric and then saving copies provides evidence for ABET that all students have been assessed and can do oral presenta-

Attribute	Not Acceptable	Barely Acceptable	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Logical topic order	Disjointed; no organization	Parts out of order	Organized by guidelines	Superior; enhances communication
Appropriate time use	Far too long or too short	Somewhat long or short	Appropriate length	
Objective	Not stated	Poorly stated	Clearly stated	
Background & Significance	Neither stated	Only one stated	Both stated	Both clearly stated
Conclusions	None	Present, but not logical	Logical & clearly stated	Logical & superior explanation
Presentation mechanics*	Many distractions	Some distractions	No distractions	Superior presentation
Response to questions (if any)	Not responsive	Incomplete	Clear and direct	Complete
Focus on person speaking to	Not focused; distracted, no eye contact	Some focus; some eye contact	Focused with good eye contact	Totally focused; excellent eye contact

* voice, poise, mannerisms

tions, at least at the barely acceptable level.

REFERENCES

- Mitchell, B.S., and V.J. Law, “Community-Based Presentations in the Unit Ops Laboratory,” *Chem. Eng. Ed.*, 39(2), 160 (2003)