

The Persuasive Message Strategy Presentation Reflection Assignment

Now that you have completed the Message Strategy Presentation and received feedback from me, this short assignment asks you to reflect on the learning you accomplished by doing the MSP project. A substantial amount of educational research shows that students who take time to formally think about (reflect on) how they went about class assignments and what they learned, both good and bad, get more out of the class experience. What is learned is remembered longer and is more likely to be useful to the students in other situations in the future. Learning experts refer to the outcome or product produced as a result of a learning experience as an “artifact.” In this case the “artifact of your learning experience is the presentation you gave to the class on your message strategy (including your outline and the visual aid/PowerPoint you used). I am asking you to write a reflection statement in order to help you “cement” what you learned in the MSP assignment and help you consider how this experience may be useful to you in the future as a communicator.

For this assignment, write a structured reflection (maximum 2 pages, single spaced, 11 pt. font, double-space between paragraphs) on what you accomplished in the MSP. (COMM majors can use this assignment for one or two of the required reflection entries in their senior electronic portfolios). Follow the directions below carefully. As you write, assume the reader knows a bit about Communication Studies but is NOT familiar with the details of our class (for example, a senior COMM major who did not take Persuasion class).

Paragraph #1 – Overview the Source of the Artifact: Describe the context of the MSP assignment in terms of the class/term project in which it was produced [e.g. “This artifact is the outline/PowerPoint slides for a presentation I gave in COMM 339. The assignment for this presentation asked students to design a persuasive message and then explain to the class how the message wisely used persuasion theory and appeals.”]

Then you should **identify the thesis** or the central idea/concept of the message strategy presentation. [e.g. “MY MSP makes effective use of theories x, y, and z as well as appeals A and B in order to create a powerful message that persuades”]

Follow that with a **description of the audience** for your message [e.g. “The audience for the MSP was members of the COMM 339 class and the professor who are quite knowledgeable concerning persuasion theory and appeals.”]. If there are aspects of the presentation that were intended specifically for this audience, point out those features of your presentation [e.g. “Since all members of the audience were familiar with persuasion theory, I was able to use a professional vocabulary and didn’t need to explain at length the theories I used.”]

Then **describe the purpose of the presentation** (that is, the effect you hoped would result from delivering the message. “My goal was to convince the class and professor that”).

Paragraph #2 – Discuss the content you chose to include in the MSP and why that content was a good choice. (Especially note how your knowledge of the audience, classmates and professor, influenced what you chose to include and what you did not include) [e.g. “I included theory x because it is a central route theory that fits well with the likelihood that when receiving the persuasive message I created receivers will be engaged and thinking about my arguments due to the fact that....”] Be sure to give examples found in your artifact (outline or ppt) to make your discussion of content selection concrete.

Paragraph #3 – Discuss those features of the MSP oral presentation that make it a good, well-constructed presentation of its type. Since it is an oral presentation (can be used in the “message” section of the COMM portfolio), talk about features of your class presentation that make for a good oral presentation (e.g. use of an effective visual aid, your solid delivery, how you organized the presentation into main points, attire, eye contact, energy levels, etc.). Include things your COMM 101 instructor might have said about this presentation.

Paragraph #4 – Identify the various items of persuasion knowledge (this assignment can also be used in the “application of knowledge” section of the COMM portfolio) that are used/mentioned in the presentation **AND explain them briefly** so the reader understands the knowledge you are applying [e.g. “In this assignment I use the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion to determine whether or not the viewer of my message will be in the central or peripheral route. ELM predicts that the effectiveness of a persuasive message depends on the degree to which a receiver thinks about a message and processes its content (that is, how much does the receiver “elaborate” on the message’s argument?). If the receiver is thinking, engaged and “elaborating,” persuasion is occurring in what is called the central route. If” Using that knowledge I applied theory x and appeals such as 1 and 2 since they fit the central route, which I expect my audience to be engaged in.” Theory x applies to my messages by requiring that the message follow these steps: ...”] The previous example shows the reader you understand the knowledge you applied in the presentation.

Paragraph #5 – Use concrete, specific examples (that is, cite places in the outline or ppt) to show how you have used concepts (explained above in paragraph 4 of your reflection) to apply to the topic of your MSP. [e.g. “For example, in section III.B. of my MSP outline I show the parts of my brochure that fit the four steps in Hovland’s Theory. Further, the appearance of the phrase “Get Buff in the Huff” three times in the brochure is an example of two appeals used together: a heuristic and repetition.”]

Grading: I will grade your reflections on the final scale: 3 – Very Good, follows directions accurately, quite substantive and use of terms is sophisticated and accurate. 2 – Good, follows directions accurately but is less substantive. 1 – Acceptable (for this assignment), mostly follows directions but has clear weakness in adequately completing all that is asked and/or includes inaccuracies or little substance. 0 – a Rewrite is required or a penalty will be applied.

Those scoring a “3” will have 4 points added to your final exam grade. Those scoring a “2” will have 2 points added to your final exam grade. Those scoring a “1” will receive no change to your final exam grade. Those scoring a “0” and who do not rewrite and raise their score will have 3 points subtracted from your final exam score.

Reflection assignment due: November 21

COMM Majors: Save the file of this reflection paper for your portfolio along with the outline of your presentation and your PowerPoint slides file. Generally I would evaluate your reflection as passing if it appeared as written in your portfolio assuming if you get a score of “3” or “2”. A “1” or “0” would likely be not passing if it appeared unrevised in your portfolio.