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# “THE PHOTO LOTTERY”: NAVIGATING AND ADAPTING TO PRESENTATIONAL AIDS IN THE CLASSROOM

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## **RATIONALE**

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Nothing can test a student’s speaking ability more than having them incorporate an image of a chicken while they try to sell their audience a calculator. Often individuals are hard pressed to prepare quality presentations in limited time frames. Thus, it is essential that students learn how to prepare organized and engaging speeches while incorporating visuals to be more competitive as they enter the workplace.

“The Photo Lottery” classroom activity uses random student-selected visual aids to help them learn and incorporate images in public speaking or presentation-based courses. Not only does the activity sharpen students’ speaking abilities, but also it improves their critical thinking and audience adaptation skills. This flexible activity is student driven and allows participants to shape the learning outcomes. “The Photo Lottery” pushes students to make quick decisions to persuade their audience. It is a fun activity to get students more comfortable speaking in the classroom!

Impromptu speaking has been long been linked to benefits of decreasing communication apprehension (Rumbough, 1999). Successful speaking practices have also been linked to practice with limited preparation time (Preston, 1990) and the incorporation of visual aids (i.e., images) (Schreiber, et al. 2012). More recently, audience adaptation continues to be an essential tool of effective speaking (Seroka, 2021). In addition, critical thinking skills are another important skill in practicing successful public speaking strategies (Wagner, 2019). The Photo Lottery combines these important speaking skills into a creative, fun, and useful activity.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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- Present an organized and persuasive speech with limited preparation
- Recognize the importance of audience adaptation
- Critically evaluate how to develop an argument that is well adapted to the intended audience.
- Effectively incorporate images into a presentation
- Develop confidence in giving a speech in front of an audience
- Engage in strategies to reduce speaking apprehension

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## **EXPLANATION OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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The activity also pushes students to work on their audience adaptation skills as their goal is to present a sales pitch for their item in a short amount of time. “The Photo Lottery” is a great way to engage students and test their ability to quickly organize a speech, adapt to their audience, and practice their delivery.

## PHOTO LOTTERY INSTRUCTIONS

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Note that this activity requires preparation (at least one day) for students and instructor and time to compile a simple PowerPoint presentation.

1. Ask students to find an appropriate image and email it to you without context. (Photos can be found online or be images that the students have taken). Try to push students to select images that aren't stock images or generic nature photos.
2. Next, once you have all of your photos from the students, compile them in a PowerPoint presentation (one photo per slide with a blank slide in between each photo).
3. When you are ready to do the activity in class ask each student to pull out a random object that they brought with them that day (backpack, calculator, gum, etc.)
4. Give the students a few moments (1-5 minutes) to brainstorm a short 1-minute pitch selling their object to the class.
5. Have students come up one by one to pitch their products.
6. Give students a clicker to the class presentation and tell the students to perform their 1-minute pitch and to incorporate the first random image of the presentation. Students must adapt their idea to include whatever is on the screen. You can also hold the clicker yourself to time when you would like them to incorporate their image

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### DEBRIEF

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To debrief this activity, ask students a series of questions that allow them to reflect on how they navigated the impromptu process. Specifically, ask them to reflect on their speech organization, audience adaptation, and delivery.

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### ADAPTATIONS

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1. Have students write down potential audiences (A group of 5-year old's, scientists, etc.) Then have students select an audience at random to adapt their pitch to along with the presentation image.
2. If you make your PowerPoint long enough, the speech can be extended to incorporate multiple images increasing the difficulty of the activity.

## STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

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*"I really liked this activity it was a fun way to learn about presenting"* – Sophomore, Public Speaking Student.

*"I'm terrified of speaking in front of groups. I liked how this game made impromptu speaking less scary"* – Sophomore, Public Speaking Student.

*"It was fun that we all were able to pick our own images. This was my favorite activity from the class."* – First year Business Communication Student.

## REFERENCES

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