The Power of Storytelling

Crafting a video-pitch for successful mobilisation

COLLABORATING | Mobilisation Skills

What you will need:

- 10-50
- Group
- 60 mins preparation
- 6 hrs execution
- Monopoly money

Related Tools:

- Inviting Non-Human Stakeholders
- Purposeful Storytelling
- Future Folktales

Menu:

"Most people do not like to be told what to do but are happy to be convinced that they can do the right thing. Stories are much more effective in convincing others to collaborate with you on a shared purpose. To take a leading role in tackling grand scientific and technological challenges you need to be a great storyteller. "

—Sanli Faez

I. Overview

The urgency to address climate instabilities and ensure sustainable life on Earth requires a transformative approach in science and engineering. This entails embracing open science principles and collaborative practices to avoid research waste and repetition. However, making a project accessible to the public is not enough to generate interest and participation.

The power of storytelling cannot be underestimated, as it plays a crucial role in mobilising and engaging potential contributors to join development initiatives.

Students must comprehend the distinctions between storytelling and reporting, as well as how storytelling can encourage others to contribute positively to the project. In technical projects and engineering solutions, collaboration should be the norm and mastering the skill of storytelling is essential for successful mobilisation.

Learning outcome

- The student can apply storytelling techniques to inspire and mobilise others to engage in a shared purpose

II. Learning Activity

Students strengthen their communication abilities and effectively captivate potential stakeholders, investors or collaborators with their innovative ideas. They will acquire the skill of crafting and delivering a compelling narrative through a concise 90-second video, specifically designed to ignite inspiration and foster active participation in their project.

1. Recognising the Impact of Storytelling

30 mins

Ask the students to prepare for this class by watching a knowledge clip about the power and significance of storytelling.

In class, encourage a discussion on the distinction between crafting a story and presenting results. Divide the students into groups and assign one student from each group to choose their favourite sport or hobby and convey it through a short story that motivates their peers to take part.

After each student shares their story, prompt a discussion on the storytelling elements employed in their narrative, such as considering the audience, the intended goal and the actions the audience is encouraged to take. Encourage the students to reflect on how they endeavoured to make their story captivating and motivating.

Tip: we recommend implementing this activity when students are nearing the conclusion of a course that involves collaborative work on a project, prototype or creative concept.

2. Creating a 90-seconds Pitch

2 hrs

In the final stages of the course, after the students have collaborated on a project, prototype or creative concept, instruct the team responsible for the project to craft a 90-second written pitch. This pitch should effectively communicate their ideas and objectives.

Tip: provide instructions for creating a 90-second pitch.

3. Creating a Compelling Video Pitch

2 hrs

Encourage the students to translate their written pitch into a compelling storyboard. A storyboard is a sequence of illustrations or images that represent key scenes or moments of their video pitch, allowing for a visual narrative structure.

Next, invite them to gather or create the required props, images and sounds to create a video pitch. Emphasise the significance of capturing the viewers' curiosity and inviting them to contribute to their project.

Tip: use this short instructive video to guide students through the video-making process.

4. Receiving Feedback

1 hr

Start by playing the videos of the presenting teams for the entire class to watch. After each video, ask the students to provide feedback on the presentation. Collect the feedback for each group and encourage students to participate actively in discussing it within their respective groups. Wrap up the activity by inviting each group to summarise key points or highlight valuable insights gained from the feedback discussions.

Please note, as part of assessment *for* learning, students provide peer feedback on the five elements of storytelling using the reflective questions.

5. Engage in Peer-Investment on the Best Pitch

30 mins

Ask students to distribute a total of 100 units of 'monopoly money' as a symbolic investment token between the different projects. Encourage students to provide a reason for their investment and an expectation for the project owners on the back of their investment notes,

so that the video-makers can learn from this investment round and gain insights into what resonated with their peers.

Conclude the activity by inviting the students to reflect individually.

Please note, as part of assessment *as* learning, students reflect individually on the peer feedback they received using the reflective questions.

III. Assessment

To enhance the assessment *for* learning and promote a collaborative learning environment, peer feedback on the video presentations is incorporated in Step 4. Peer feedback provides valuable insights and perspectives from fellow students, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the storytelling aspect of the presentations.

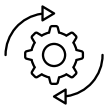
Furthermore, as part of completing Step 5, students are encouraged to include a personal reflection on the feedback they have received.

Purpose

Assessment *for* learning (formative assessment) aims to gather evidence and provide feedback on students' learning during the learning process
Assessment *as* learning aims at strengthening the learning process and the development of metacognitive skills. It empowers students to direct their own learning and to become independent, critical self-assessors.

Roles

Peer-assessment and self-assessment



Characteristics

Assessment of group work

Materials

Reflective questions

Assessment

Peer assessment

Assess your peer on the following five elements of storytelling:

1. Engagement: Does the pitch/video capture and hold the audience's attention?

   What aspects of the pitch/video made it successful in that area?

   What parts could be improved to make it more effective in that area?

2. Convincingness: Does the presentation make a clear and compelling case for the topic or idea being presented?

   What aspects of the pitch/video made it successful in that area?

What parts could be improved to make it more effective in that area?

3. Truthfulness: Are the claims and statements backed up by evidence or credible sources?

What aspects of the pitch/video made it successful in that area?

What parts could be improved to make it more effective in that area?

4. Honesty: Does the pitch feel sincere and avoid hype or exaggeration?

What aspects of the pitch/video made it successful in that area?

What parts could be improved to make it more effective in that area?

5. Inspiration: Does the pitch inspire action or change?

What aspects of the pitch/video made it successful in that area?

What parts could be improved to make it more effective in that area?

Assessment

Individual reflective questions

What insights did you gain from evaluating others' videos and how would you incorporate these insights into your own video?

How did receiving investments and feedback from your peers influence your understanding of your project's strengths and areas for improvement?

IV. Key Advice

Knowledge clip (Step 1): Why Storytelling is more trustworthy than presenting data by Karen Eber

Instructions for creating a pitch (Step 2) can be downloaded below.

Instructive video (Step 3): How To Use Video Effectively to Communicate Science: 10 Tips

Key Advice

Instructions for creating a pitch

1. Begin by outlining the core message or goal of your pitch. Clearly state what your project aims to achieve or solve.

2. Identify the main features, benefits or unique selling points of your project. Highlight what sets it apart from existing solutions or approaches.

3. Structure your pitch in a logical and engaging manner. Consider including an attention-grabbing introduction, a concise explanation of the problem or need, a description of your solution or idea and a compelling conclusion.

4. Ensure that your pitch is concise, coherent and easy to understand. Avoid jargon or technical terms that may confuse your audience.

5. Once you have finalised the written pitch, take it a step further by visualising the key elements of your idea using illustrations, diagrams or sketches. This will help communicate your concept more effectively.

6. Review and refine your written pitch, ensuring they align with the overall message and goals of your project. Seek feedback from your peers or teacher and make necessary adjustments to enhance clarity and impact.

V. References

Dahlstrom, M. F. (2014). Using narratives and storytelling to communicate science with nonexpert audiences. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 111(supplement_4), 13614–13620. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1320645111

Moezzi, M., Janda, K. B., & Rotmann, S. (2017). Using stories, narratives, and storytelling in energy and climate change research. Energy research and social science, 31, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.06.034