

## Faculty Matter Teaching Tip #11: Encouraging students to engage in each others' presentations

In many courses, considerable portions of class sessions during the final weeks of the semester are devoted to student presentations. These assignments – and the preparation that goes into them - provide valuable opportunities for students to delve into topics of particular interest, to develop important public speaking skills as they plan and execute a formal presentation, and to collaborate with fellow students when they need to work as a team. **Most students become fairly enthusiastic about the material *they* get to explore so deeply. One of the challenges for faculty, however, is to ensure that students be as engaged in (and reap benefits from) their *classmates'* presentations.**

A common strategy is to simply hold students accountable for the information contained in the presentations on the final exam. Below, we provide a few additional suggestions that are designed to prompt students to more intentionally make connections between the content of the presentations and ideas that have been of interest to them throughout the course.

### BEFORE the presentations

- Have each student create and share a brief summary of their upcoming presentation (one paragraph in length or so). Have students then formulate one or two questions about *several other students'* topics, based on the summaries. This can be done on-line (using the discussion features of Canvas), or in class (as a gallery-walk, where each student prints out their summary and the class then circulates, reads the summaries, and writes their questions on sticky-notes which are placed adjacent to the summaries). If it is feasible, presenters can address some of these questions in their actual presentations.
- If time permits, facilitate opportunities for students to work in groups of 3-4, and rehearse their presentations with each other. Once students serve as “audiences” for each other, have them probe linkages among their topics, or between topics and issues raised in the course more generally.

## THE DAY OF the presentations

- Allow time after each presentation for brief Q & A, to clarify any points of confusion. Encourage students to note how what they have just heard aligns with something they have discovered, as a result of the research they did for their own presentation.
- Allocate a few minutes near the end of class period for *small-group discussion of the day's presentations*. Have one student in each group record the essence of the conversation. Provide prompts, as you deem useful (what was interesting/surprising; link to their own topics or to course themes; etc...)
- Have students create worksheets or quizzes for other students to complete during their presentation. Students can compare and discuss answers after the presentation.

## AFTER the presentations

- Have students post comments about several of their classmates' presentations (using the discussion features of Canvas). Provide prompts, as you deem useful (what was interesting/surprising; link to their own topics or to course themes; etc...)
- If students will be submitting a paper based on their presentation, have them include a section where they explicitly address a connection between what they have studied in depth and one or more of their classmates' presentations.