

## Evaluation of JR Briscoe's Teaching - COMM 2381: Oral Communication

February 11, 2016 – 1:00-2:30 PM

Submitted by Prof. Antonio de Velasco

### Narrative

I observed JR for a session early in the semester of his honors section of Oral Communication. He started the session promptly. All the students were ready to begin. JR led them in a kind of brainstorming exercise. In pairs, they reviewed recent news headlines to generate broader speech topics (e.g., headlines about a recent “gamer” controversy raised discussion about speeches related to gender and gaming). I noted this as an occasion of “collective invention” and also noted lots of participation and activity. JR knew his students’ names perfectly, and his rapport was easy and welcoming. The exercise worked well, too, as a warm-up to get students tuned in and engaged. Once the opening exercise was completed, JR previewed the work ahead – a lesson reviewing how to build outlines (which would be graded) for the informative speech.

The lesson was well-structured in every way. It began with immediate attention to the exact requirements of the outline portion of the speech assignment. He asked them to say back to him what those requirements were. I liked leading in this way. The technique signaled to students precisely what he expected by making *them* articulate those expectations. This left little room for ambiguity. Then he moved to the obvious (but often passed-over) question: *why* does one even need an outline in the first place? Why not just write out the speech word for word? I liked this opening because it gave students an intellectual and practical motive/rationale (beyond passing the assignment) for what he was asking them to do. From there, he answered the question of motive via a close review of the textbook’s key points on outline construction. JR conducted his review not simply by reading from the text. He accentuated basic themes via a Prezi presentation, used a concrete student exemplar of an outline, and linked specific pieces of the outline to fulfilling specific objectives of the informative speech. He also exhibited good timing and patience with questions, while keeping the lesson on track. Timing was important, because JR used the last third or so (maybe less) of the session to have students complete an interesting exercise that seemed to be a kind of hybrid of the intro exercise and the outline lesson. He randomly distributed prompts to the class, and then had each develop a speech outline based on that prompt. The prompts were light-hearted, so the stakes were not too high. This was a good thing, I believe, because though obviously pressed for time, the students seemed to enjoy the challenge. A student was randomly selected to give their recently-prepared speech. JR then led the class in a brief discussion of what they learned and how that knowledge would enhance their own speeches. The class concluded with a reminder about coming assignments, and then students were dismissed.

### Evaluation and Summary

This is now the third time I’ve observed JR teach. My main suggestion for improvement involves something I mentioned in my last observation: I think JR could do more to turn student questions directly into teaching moments. I suggest that he try jotting down, if only a word or two, what students ask when they ask it. And then he can use those notes to relay back to students what they are asking before he tries to answer himself. That will help to co-create answers that move the discussion forward and probe further into places where confusion might be hidden.

On the whole, JR has always been a strong teacher. But this was surely the best I’ve seen him perform. The organization was flawless. He is also, I realized this session, an effective public speaker himself. This is true both in terms of the traditional criteria for effective speaking and in terms of the demand from contemporary audiences for competency with visual communication. His use of Prezi in the classroom, for instance, works really well. Thus, like any good teacher of rhetoric, he models for students the kinds of techniques and habits of presentation that will enhance their own rhetorical acts. Finally, a consistency in JR’s teaching is rapport with students. He creates an environment in which students are tuned in and motivated to learn. I think this serves him and our students extraordinarily well.

Faculty Observed JR Briscoe Rank Graduate Assistant  
 Date of Observation 2/11/16 Course Observed Oral Comm 2381

**Classroom Teaching Observation**

Rating scale = (1 = very poor, 2 = weak, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent, NA = not applicable)

**CONTENT**

Main ideas are clear and specific	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del> (Excellent)
Sufficient variety in supporting information	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5
Relevancy of main ideas was clear	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
Higher order thinking was required	1	2	<del>3</del>	4	5
Instructor related ideas to prior knowledge	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5
Definitions were given for vocabulary	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>

**ORGANIZATION**

Introduction captured attention	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del> (Excellent)
Introduction stated organization of lecture	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
Effective transitions (clear w/summaries)	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5
Clear organizational plan	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
Concluded by summarizing main ideas	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
Reviewed by connecting to previous classes	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>
Previewed by connecting to future classes	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>

**INTERACTION**

Instructor questions at different level	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	NA
Sufficient wait time	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	NA
Students asked questions	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>	NA
Instructor feedback was informative	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	NA
Instructor incorporated student responses	1	2	<del>3</del>	4	5	NA
Good rapport with students	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>	NA

**VERBAL/NON-VERBAL**

Language was understandable	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5 (Excellent)	
Articulation and pronunciation clear	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	
Absence of verbalized pauses (er, ah, etc.)	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>	
Instructor spoke extemporaneously	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>	
Accent was not distracting	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Effective voice quality	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	
Volume sufficient to be heard	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	
Rate of delivery was appropriate	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	
Effective body movement and gestures	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	
Eye contact with students	1	2	3	<del>4</del>	5	
Confident & enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	<del>5</del>	

**USE OF MEDIA**

Overheads/Chalkboard content clear & well-organized	1	2	3	4	5	<del>NA</del>
Visual aids can be easily read	1	2	3	4	5	<del>NA</del>
Instructor provided an outline/handouts	1	2	3	4	5	<del>NA</del>
Computerized instruction effective	1	2	3	4	5	<del>NA</del>

**SPECIAL CLASSIFICATION NOTES:**

**STRENGTHS:** (e.g. metacurriculum, use of comparisons & contrasts, positive feedback, opportunity provided for student questions)

See attached observation.

**WEAKNESSES:**(e.g. unable to answer student questions, overall topic knowledge, relevance of examples, etc.)

See attached observation.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS RATING** . 1 2 3 4 ~~5~~

Date of Conference 3/7/2016 Observer Signature *Antonio de Velasco*