SJSU | DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

WB-PLAYBOOK

Suggested Assignments and In-Class
Simulations for English 100WB Courses

Contents

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

powering SILICON VALLEY

About This Playbook

"Creativity, as has been said, consists largely of rearranging what we know in order to find out what we do not know. Hence, to think creatively, we must be able to look afresh at what we normally take for granted."
— George Kneller

Now more than ever, students seek courses with more "real-world" connections, impact, and practice. The purpose of this playbook is to give instructors new to teaching the 100WB format more options to explore when creating assignments and in-class business simulations. Students who have completed my ENGL100WB course have indicated through a survey that these assignments and business simulations have certainly helped them 1) complete their other college courses, 2) obtain their first entry-level job, and/or 3) perform their first post-graduation or current job.

The playbook complements the lessons in *Excellence in Business Communication* (Bovee and Thill, 12e) quite well and can all be completed by students during the 16-week semester. Students will write on average of 11,689 words after completing assignments in the playbook.

Handshakes

Business professionals will shake hands with nearly everyone they meet throughout their careers. It's one of the most common, fundamental business greetings in the United States and perhaps globally. What better time to practice this business simulation than during the first day of class?

WEEK 1: Business Introductions

Delivering the perfect business handshake becomes second nature over time and with practice—our students will benefit from more handshake and business introduction practice prior to graduation.

1   Without offering much introduction or instruction for this assignment, simply ask two student to volunteer and stand in the front of the classroom. Instruct students to shake hands and introduce themselves upon meeting. The lack of detailed instructions empower students to improvise and problem-solve.

Provide immediate feedback. Did students 1) stand up straight and square their shoulders and hips off to the person before offering their hand, 2) offer their hand slightly sideways to improve contact and grip, 3) make eye contact and smile when shaking hands, 4) observe the right amount of personal space, 5) avoid shaking the hand for too long, and 6) shake hands firmly (especially for females)? **2**

3   After a sufficient number of pairs have practiced the handshake, perform the simulation again in groups of 3, 4, and 5 students. Remembering names can be tricky, especially on the first day, but students will adapt and become more acquainted with their classmates.

OPTIONAL: Record the handshake exercise and share with students. Videos help students pair the verbal critiques to their actions. Students are often unaware of their movements or nervous habits until they are pointed out to them. **4**

The Story of You

Biographies are no longer a personal chronological timeline of events. Carefully positioned biographies accent an individual's brand identity and help manage perception. New employees are often asked to introduce themselves to the team. Students should pretend to do the same in this business simulation and learn the importance of establishing a good first impression early on in their careers.

Week 2: Biography

Who are you? How would you like to be perceived?

Managers often ask new employees who join their team to provide them with a short biography. Bio content is used to construct a brief welcome message: "Please join me in welcoming Jaden Rimes as our new Accounts Payable Manager. Her start date is next Monday, August 31, and Roy's old office has been assigned to her. Jaden comes to our group with over 25 years of combined experience in cost accounting, finance, and international tax accounting. Siemens, Brocade, and KLA Tencor are just a few of the companies she's been with. When she's not busy counting beans, Jaden enjoys kite surfing, gardening, and volunteering at Sacred Heart. I hear she's pretty good at volleyball too, so let's cajole her to join our company league."

Keynote speakers are often introduced by a preceding speaker. If the introducer is not familiar with the speaker's background, a biography certainly helps. When job hunting, we often read the executive staff's biographies posted on the company's website to ensure that the leadership is setting the right corporate culture for our individual work habit needs. Bottom line . . . written biographies and their verbal equivalent (The Story of You) are used pervasively.

INSTRUCTIONS: This assignment consists of four parts.

1 HAND WRITE a ONE PAGE biography. Use any desired format or style (outline, cluster, etc.). This is your time to CREATE and this page should look MESSY!

2 REVISE, EDIT, and PUBLISH (aka type) your one page biography into a word processing application (such as MS Word).

3 CONDENSE and DISTILL your a one page biography into a ONE PARAGRAPH biography (approximately 3-5 lines). Word choice and sentence structure are exceedingly important elements to consider. BE CONCISE!

4 PREPARE a brief (1-2 minute) introductory SPEECH (The Story of You) in front of class. Bring video recording device with enough memory to record at least 5 minutes.

FEEDBACK: Provide immediate feedback during The Story of You presentations. All students in the audience should complete feedback forms. Live critiques help students acknowledge issues and make corrections on the fly. Preparing students to move beyond interruptions will also prepare them for Silicon Valley work culture.
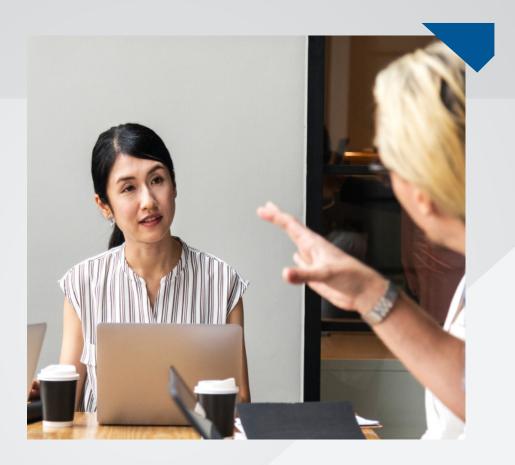
For written biography feedback, show examples of professional biographies of keynote speakers and industry executives. Give students the opportunity to analyze the key messages and branding embedded in each.

Executive or Staff Briefing

Briefs are commonly used in industry to keep busy executives abreast of important issues. For instance, the White House Press Secretary briefs the press about the latest news concerning the executive office. The press then informs the public through the media outlets. In this assignment, students will create an EXECUTIVE BRIEF on the intercultural communication preferences of a city and country of their choice. Second, they will BRIEF the entire class on their findings.

Week 3: Executive Brief

Execom managers are often responsible for making their executives look and sound good. Clear, concise, coherent writing and organization are critical in briefing kits. Busy executives do not have time to read pages upon pages of block text; yet, they must be well informed.

This assignment is designed to give students the opportunity to learn:

1. Verbal and nonverbal intercultural communication preferences of another country, expanding upon the ideas presented in Chapter 3 of *Excellence in Business Communication* (Bovee and Thill, 12e) and putting those theories into practice

2. The process of constructing an INFORMATIONAL business document commonly prepared for busy executives in industry

3. Credible sources for information. Library databases are both credible and convenient to use for gathering research data

Week 4: Market Research

> **"** One manager we interviewed kept a resume and cover letter sent to her from eight years ago. She has shown it to countless colleagues and uses it as an example of what not to do. **"**

PRIMARY RESEARCH: This assignment is designed to give students the opportunity to conduct primary market research and answer the million dollar question: What will prompt a hiring manager to contact me for an interview? Students will work in pairs and the class will collectively gather vital insight that will enable students to write more effectively targeted resumes and cover letters. Stu-

dents will practice business handshakes from week one as well as practice conversing in a business professional manner.

SECONDARY RESEARCH: Encourage students to use resources at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Barnes and Nobel, or the SJSU Career Center to round out the primary research data. Use a shared spreadsheet so the entire class has access to the data.

What do hiring managers look for?

Through this assignment, students will have the rare opportunity to interview hiring managers and understand their preferences before they begin their resume writing and job interviewing journey.

Possible questionnaire questions may include:

COVER LETTER
1. Do you read cover letters? Yes/No
2. Is it important for a resume to be accompanied by a cover letter? Yes/No
3. What are the most important elements of a cover letter?
4. Do typos, grammar, or spelling errors in a resume, cover letter, or thank you note hurt the applicant? Yes/No

RESUME
1. Does presentation (type of paper resume is printed on, style of resume, formatting, overall packaging, etc.) matter? Yes/No
2. What is more important: presentation or the actual content in the resume?
3. Do you contact references? Yes/No
4. What is an acceptable length for a resume?
5. How important is the college where the applicant received his or her degree in your decision to hire? (Are brand name universities given preference over state universities?)
6. What areas on a resume do you read first?
___ Objectives
___ Summary of Qualifications
___ Work History
___ Education
___ Additional Training or Miscellaneous
___ References

THANK YOU LETTER
1. Is it important to send a thank you card or letter after an interview? Yes/No
2. Which is more appealing to you? A hand-written thank you card, a simple thank you email, or a formal, typed, and posted thank you letter?
3. Does it hurt the applicant if he/she does not send a thank you card or letter? Yes/No

DEMOGRAPHICS
1. Job title
2. Line of business
3. Number of interns or entry-level candidates hired last year? Over career?

1

Library Research

2

Interaction with Hiring Managers

3

Peer-to-Peer Collaboration

Create a market research questionnaire for the entire class to use. Keep it consistent so future sections may collect a database of helpful insight. Students will use the information to not only write grammatically correct resumes and cover letters, but also documents that will get them noticed!

Week 5: Brand Identity

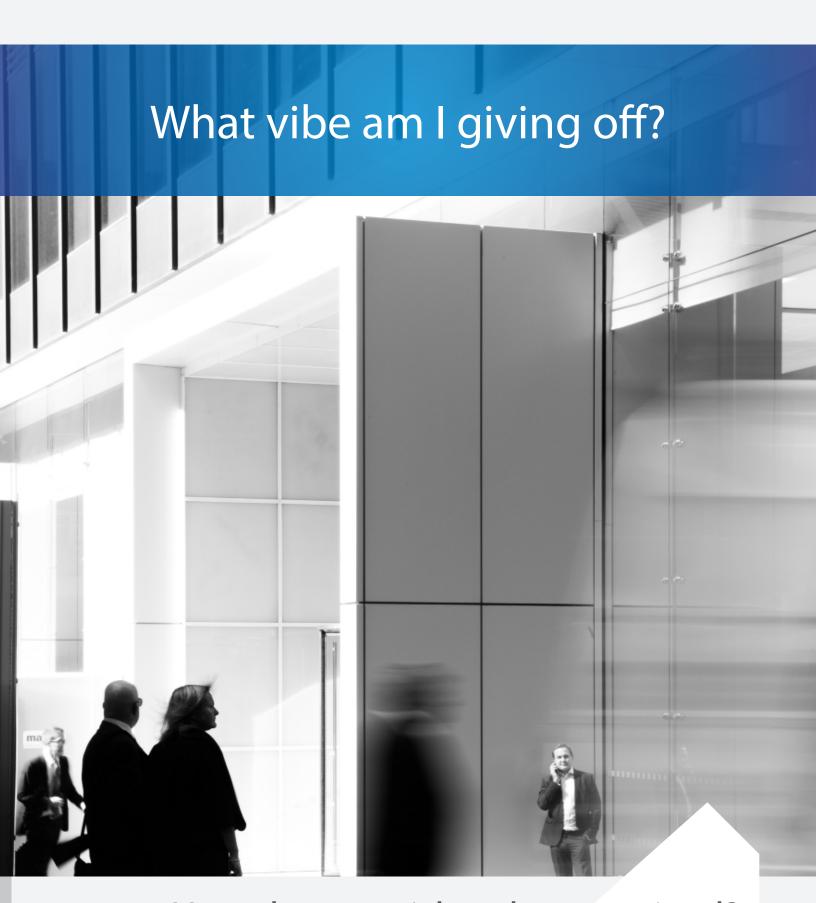Brand identity is a marketing term widely used to describe how a business wants to be perceived by its customers. Some companies like Starbucks, Nike, and Apple invest a great deal of time and money building and establishing their brands. Establishing a personal brand (What do you stand for? What are you about?) is important for people too.

Most students probably are not familiar with the line: Your reputation precedes you. If not, explain that it means that someone is able to form an opinion about them without ever meeting them because the things they have said or done, good or bad, are public knowledge. For example in high school, Student A might have had a much higher GPA than Student B who won the title for Most Likely to Succeed, but the perception Student A gave off to the student body simply did not correlate to actuality. Enabling students to understand this concept and helping them begin the journey of establishing their own brand identity will help them be more effective at writing resumes and cover letters and participating in job interviews.

Ask students to distribute a branding questionnaire to 1-3 people who know them very well. Then evenly distribute the remaining questionnaires between people that 1) they are not well acquainted with but believe to have made a favorable impression at some point, and 2) they are not well acquainted with but believe to have made a negative or no impression. Summarize findings and discuss research highlights in class.

What vibe am I giving off?

How do you wish to be perceived?

Mock Job Interviews

Ask students to arrive to class fully dressed as they would for a job interview so that you may assess their attire and make any necessary suggestions. Be sure to interject inappropriate questions (Are you married? How old are you? What is your current salary?) to test students and help them recognize questions that they should not be asked and need not answer.
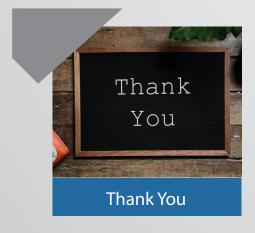
Week 6: Resume | Cover Letter | Post Interview Thank You Letter

Cover Letter

Solicited application letters or letters of interests may be rather old school in this day and age; however, survey data shows hiring managers and recruiters still read them. Discuss the best strategy to exude personality, passion, and brand.

The average amount of time a hiring manager or recruiter spends reading a resume is 7 seconds. In the technology sector, HR managers often receive over 300 resumes per job requisition. Discuss the best methods for grabbing and holding interest and key word placement for robo-readers.

Resume

Thank You

Discuss the best strategy for post-interview emails of gratitude. Immediately after the interview may not be the most ideal time to send the thank you note. Why?

Week 7: Self and Peer Evaluations | Mock Performance Reviews

Career advancement and continuing education are always the employee's responsibility. The documentation process of the performance evaluation serves as a method of (legally) formalizing the conversations supervisors and employees have over career trajectory.

Self-Appraisal

Students will pretend that they've been hired and are now on the job for roughly a year. In fact, the market research assignment was their first "major" on-the-job task. Write a self-appraisal to document job performance during the teamwork portion of the market research assignment. Describe overall responsibilities, individual goals, the results and how they were achieved, the teamwork and collaboration, and any areas for development. Once students finish writing their own self-review, they should email it to their team member so that person may complete the peer-appraisal (manager) section.

Peer-Appraisal

Managers will often solicit feedback from peers who work with their direct report(s) to formulate a more rounded assessment of job performance. Individuals writing peer reviews should assess if the employee should remain an individual contributor or advance into management. Specific performance review language should be used to differentiate between the two different career tracks (teamwork and collaboration vs leadership and strategic vision).

Purpose of Performance Reviews

The performance appraisal (also commonly referred to as performance evaluation, performance review, or focal review) serves many purposes. Most importantly, it provides a formal opportunity for the supervisor and the employee to meet and communicate. During the meeting, the supervisor will provide feedback on how well the employee is performing based on the goals and anticipated results listed on the individual's performance plan (or fiscal initiatives) from the previous year's performance appraisal and document goals for next fiscal year.

A performance evaluation can also accomplish the following:

1. Recognize and document the employee's strengths, contributions, or achievements as well as document any poor performance issues that may lead to corrective action
2. Reinforce positive performance
3. Identify areas where performance improvement is needed
4. Identify career and individual development needs
5. Facilitate employee accountability for their performance
6. Give the employee an opportunity to comment on his or her job performance
7. Help the employee assume accountability for the job and her or his performance
8. Establish customer-focused service as it relates to the mission of the agency and to the public
9. For certain jobs, provide the basis for determining pay increases, promotion, or title adjustments

Performance evaluation readily aligns with, and can be used in conjunction with, other aspects of human resource management:

1. Training and career development
2. Recruitment and hiring
3. Workforce planning
4. Compensation
5. Reward and recognition
6. Improvement planning
7. Discipline
8. Succession planning

Performance evaluation is an important human resource tool that supervisors and employees often overlook or avoid because it requires direct, honest communication based on specific, observable results. If approached from that framework, it can help employees optimize success in their jobs and contribute to the success of the organization.

Week 8: Proposal | Elevator Pitch

The Best Ideas Are Shared on the Run

"I wish I knew how to be more persuasive in an unpopular pitch."
— Former student now employed in Silicon Valley

An elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive speech used to spark interest in a new or improved product, service, technology, idea concept, etc. – or in yourself as in the case of an interview close. A good elevator pitch should last no longer than a short elevator ride of 20 to 30 seconds, hence the name. Pitches should be attention-grabbing, hold interest, memorable, and succinct. They also need to explain what makes you – or your organization, product, or idea – exceptionally unique.

Defining a clear a purpose is key in being persuasive. Define and visualize the desired outcome. Then consider all options and angles. Pitches must be persuasive and free of logical fallacies. Even though the pitch is short, it should be persuasive enough to spark the listener's interest for the short duration.

Practice, practice, and practice comes next. The best way to get comfortable with an elevator speech is to practice it until the pace and pitch become natural. With enough practice, students will become comfortable varying the pitch in any conversation. Always pitch to family and friends for initial feedback or record it for self-viewing. Both will help with the reiteration process.

The written proposal is an offer or suggestion for something (possibly work or change). The purpose is to persuade readers to improve or alter existing conditions, add to a service, authorize work, or support a plan for solving a problem or doing a job. Many types of proposals exist. Some are long. Some are short. And, the contents (or sections) are often determined by the purpose of the proposal and the leverage needed to persuade the reader.

Students will have the opportunity to practice persuasive writing and its verbal equivalent in the form of an elevator pitch.

Unique Value Proposition

Purpose Statement

Students will propose a need for change. They should ask themselves: What problem bothers me? What needs improvement? What am I truly passionate about? The response may be perfect topic for this assignment.

Next, students will write a formal written proposal. The background, problem and/or purpose statement, recommendation, and conclusion sections are a must. However, depending upon the topic, a phased timeline; forecast; risk, cost, or SWOT analysis; and/or marketing plan may also be needed.

Written Proposal

Elevator Pitch

Finally, students will be given precisely 90 seconds to pitch their ideas. Relationship building, establishing interest, and the you-attitude is very important here.

Week 10: Analytical Report | Business Plan | Formal Presentation

Analytical reports offer both information and analysis, but they also include recommendations. Offering recommendations is the hallmark difference between informational and analytical styles of reporting.

Change

Change management is the process of identifying and implementing change within an organization. Acceptance and helping people adapt to the change is critical and students must practice writing persuasively and free of logical fallacies. The analytical (or change management) report is an opportunity for students to take their written proposal to the next level and now write a formal report of implementation. For students who wish to start their own business someday, writing a business plan will be more beneficial, especially if students are encouraged to enter the Silicon Valley Innovation Challenge (www.sjsu.edu/svic) and test their concept with industry judges.

Innovation

Students should select a topic they are very passionate about as this is a capstone level project requiring much in-depth research and analysis and multiple assignment phases. Attendance should be mandatory during presentation weeks, and students in the audience should complete anonymous feedback slips that candidly provide detailed constructive feedback to help fellow students improve. (Maple Press can produce feedback packets from your original for a small fee to students.) Interjecting "seeded" interruptions (projector not working, PPT slides won't play, phone rings, etc.) will also help prepare students for the unexpected in their careers. Very few professionals present to staff or executives with zero interruptions.

Are You Engaging Your Audience?

Sample Student Feedback Slip

1. Gaining and maintaining interest. Select the most truthful statement to help the speaker improve:

☐ I did NOT lose interest during the presentation and actively listened the entire time.

☐ I slipped in and out of focus during the presentation be-cause _____ _____

☐ I completely lost interest about _____ sec/min into the presentation because _____
_____

2. Describe main idea (or focus) of the presentation.
_____
_____

3. What is the call-to-action? _____
_____

4. What is the take-home message?
_____
_____

5. Are you convinced to take action? Yes/No. If not, what else is required for you to make a decision? _____
_____

6. Did the speaker make any nervous movements, expressions, sounds, etc. that distracted you? Yes/No. Please explain.

_____
_____

7. Did the speaker speak too fast, too slow, or just right for you?

8. Did you fully comprehend the contents of the presentation? Explain. What prevented you from fully understanding? (Too technical? Speaker had an accent? etc.)

_____
_____

9. Possible areas for improvement:

_____
_____

10. Any additional feedback or comments of encouragement:
_____

Company Perk Announcement

Compose a series of four **microblogs** to be posted on the company's internal feed (similar to Twitter but private). The first microblog will announce the perk while the other three provide additional details (awareness, education, action). Each microblog is limited to 200 characters including spaces and punctuation. Make up any necessary details.

Week 11: Routine or Positive Messages

Use professional tone. Assume the audience will comply. Be specific.

The key strategy for students to understand with routine or positive messages is that the request must be front-loaded. The vast majority of students provide excessive explanation and end on the request as they would with the thesis statement of an essay. However, busy executives and business professionals lack the time and patience to entertain details without first understanding the bottom line. Below are some common routine requests that make interesting student assignments.

1 A **draft letter of recommendation** will be used throughout the student's career. Writing an effective recommendation letter from scratch is difficult, so students should always supply a draft for the writer (professor, supervisor, etc.) to use. The draft should highlight key attributes writer to tout/confirm.

2 Similar to the draft recommendation letter, the accompanying **email request for a letter of recommendation** is equally important. With the progression of LinkedIn as the premier professional social media outlet, being able to effectively ask for a recommendation or endorsement is becoming a must have skill.

3 **News or press releases** are more applicable to marketing, entrepreneurship, or communication studies majors. However, all students will benefit from learning to write in the classic AP inverted pyramid style.

4 Students will continually ask for information or action during their career. A **claims adjustment request** is a suitable assignment for students to practice front-loading their requests while providing specific reasons and exerting professional influence.

Bovee/Thill also provide interesting cases in the back of each chapter. The following textbook case can be assigned to help students with their blogging skills.

Background: You are writing a book about the advantages and potential pitfalls of using online collaboration systems for virtual team projects. You would like to include several dozen real-life examples from people in a variety of industries. Fortunately, you publish a highly respected blog on the subject, with several thousand regular readers.

Your task: Write a post for your blog that asks readers to submit brief descriptions of their experiences using collaboration tools for team projects. Ask them to email stories of how well a specific system or approach worked for them. Explain that they will receive an autographed copy of the book as thanks and that they will need to sign a release form if their stories are used. In addition, emphasize that you would like to use real names—of people, companies, and software—but you can keep the anecdotes anonymous if readers require. To stay on schedule, you need to have these stories by a specific deadline.

Crisis Communication

The YouTube headquarter shooting incident on April 5, 2018 is a grim reminder that timely and accurate communication during a crisis is vital. Writing a full-blown crisis communication plan will be exceedingly challenging for students at this infancy stage of their careers. However, analyzing the purpose, scope, intended audience, key messages per segment, delivery channels, and time matrix is a good starting point. Students should learn that planning is often the bulk of the effort compared to execution.

Week 12: Negative News Messages

Select the direct or indirect approach. Choose positive words. Use a buffer.

Students often remark that they need more practice delivering bad news. No one likes to be the bearer of bad news because the job is not easy by any means. Nevertheless, bad news messages must be delivered and delivered well. Below are written assignment and business simulation suggestions to help students practice this most vital on-the-job skill.

1 Learning the best approach for writing a **recommendation letter refusal** is a good skill for students to practice. Any student pursuing upward mobility into management must learn to craft neutrally positioned recommendation refusals that will prevent any possible legal action. With the increasing footprint of LinkedIn, refusing recommendations through digital channels is quickly becoming a must-have skill as well.

2 **Rejecting suggestions or proposals** in person or over email is exceedingly common in business. Bovee/Thill provide roughly twenty cases in the back of chapter 9 to help students practice rejecting suggestions using a neutral buffer and positive close.

3 Making **negative company announcements** such as rejecting job applications, the termination of a beloved employee perk, change of vendors, or layoff notices are highly applicable in business. Students should practice written forms and face-to-face forms through business simulations.

4 Writing a **claims adjustment refusal** is a suitable assignment for students to practice using different buffers and justifications for the refusal. Saying "no" is never easy but practice helps.

5 Preparing for a **negative performance review** is an ideal business simulation exercise. Learning to write a negative performance review is a must-have for all students seeking management positions. To protect both the manager and company from legal action, negative performance reviews must be written objectively and highlight only performance issues.

6 Writing a **negative online product review** is becoming a steadfast profession for some social media junkies. For the rest of us, venting isn't the true objective. We often hope that our constructive criticism will bring about product enhancements, bug fixes, or improvements. This exercise can be coupled with teaching students to write more effective SOTE reviews too.

Demograhpics. Psychographics. Motivation.

What are the factors involved in driving people to act and satisfy their needs? Basic physiological requirements. Safety and security. Affiliation and belonging. Power and control. Achievement. Adventure and distraction. Knowledge, exploration, and understanding. Aesthetic appreciation. Self-actualization. Of the Maslow human motivation factors, which aligns most with the intended target audience?

Week 13: Persuasive Messages

Balance of logical and emotional appeal. What's in it for me (WIIFM)?

Understanding the desires and motivation factors of a target audience is extremely important with persuasive messages as is defining the central purpose or end-goal. Other factors such as credibility and the balance of logical and emotional appeal together help shape a stronger persuasive message.

1 The classic **sales pitch** can be updated to include more marketing and social media emphasis. Ask students to imagine a product, service, or technology that they wish to invent. Use Stanford University's design thinking process to describe the product, its key features and benefits, the customer problem it addresses, any alternative usage, and applicable competition. Students should prepare a sales (or elevator) pitch to angel seed investors and draft an accompanying written proposal.

2 Many potential customers rely upon "real" customer reviews before making a final purchasing decision. Students often review our RateMyProfessor.com reviews before joining a section or read Yelp reviews to find the most economical and delicious eateries around campus. For this exercise, ask students to write a positive **online product promotion** piece to plug their favorite productivity app to entice others to buy or use. Follow up with an elevator pitch or "small talk" business simulation.

3 A report is included as a possible capstone project in week 10. **Change management, analytical, or justification reports** often rely heavily on persuasion (balance of logical and emotional appeal) to convince readers. A persuasive writing element can easily be integrated into these lengthier writing assignments.

4 Bovee/Thill include several **case exercises** to help students analyze strengths and weaknesses of persuasive emails, letters, or blog posts. Analyzing someone else's writing is sometimes helpful for students to identify logic gaps in their own.
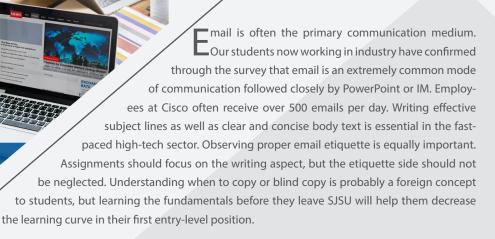
5 Asking is an important skill for business majors to master. Often, the act of asking for something becomes daunting, but with practice, asking becomes second nature. The case Bovee/Thill includes in the back of chapter 10 helps students practice an ordinary **persuasive business ask**. Below is an example.

BACKGROUND: The coffee shop across the street from your tiny apartment is your haven away from home—great beverages, healthy snacks, free wireless, and an atmosphere that is convivial but not so lively that you can't focus on your homework. It lacks only one thing: some way to print out your homework. The school library offers printing services but you live three miles from campus, and it's a long walk or an inconvenient bus ride.

YOUR TASK: Write a letter to the owner of the coffee shop, encouraging her to set up a printing service to complement the free wireless access. Propose that the service run at break-even prices, just enough to pay for paper, ink cartridges, and the cost of the printer itself. The benefit to the shop would be enticing patrons to spend more time—and therefore more of their coffee and tea money—in the shop. You might also mention that you had to take the bus to campus to print this letter, so you bought your afternoon latté somewhere else.

Week 14: Messages for Digital Channels

The Yahoo! Style Guide: The Ultimate Sourcebook for Writing, Editing, and Creating Content for the Digital World by Chris Barr (ISBN-13 978-0312542764) is a must read for anyone writing digital media content. *Social Media Marketing All-in-One For Dummies* by Jan Zimmerman and Deborah Ng (ISBN-13 978-1119330394) is another must read title that integrates more recent social media trends and step-by-step how tos.

Email and Blogs

Email is often the primary communication medium. Our students now working in industry have confirmed through the survey that email is an extremely common mode of communication followed closely by PowerPoint or IM. Employees at Cisco often receive over 500 emails per day. Writing effective subject lines as well as clear and concise body text is essential in the fast-paced high-tech sector. Observing proper email etiquette is equally important. Assignments should focus on the writing aspect, but the etiquette side should not be neglected. Understanding when to copy or blind copy is probably a foreign concept to students, but learning the fundamentals before they leave SJSU will help them decrease the learning curve in their first entry-level position.

Text and IM

Texting and instant messaging (IM) are also heavily used forms of communication. Carefully selecting power words and writing concisely are important skills to master as is general text and IM etiquette. Such techniques also carry over to microblogging (tweeting) and other forms of concise, timely communication.

Social Media Marketing

Bovee/Thill includes relevant cases in chapter 7 to helps students write messages for electronic media, but so many interesting real-life examples can be turned into assignments.

1 **Social media** can be a great way to socialize during high school and college years, but employers are increasingly checking up on the online activities of potential hires to avoid bringing in employees who may reflect poorly on the company. As a precursory assignment to the resume writing and mock interviews, ask pairs of students to review each other's public presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Snapchat, Instagram, blogs, and any other website that an employer might check during the interview and recruiting process. Identify any photos, videos, messages or other material that could raise a red flag when an employer is evaluating a job candidate. Write an email message that lists any risky material.

2 The proliferation of **mobile devices** requires marketing managers to be more cognizant of accessibility issues and the size limitations of smartphone screens. Ask students to find a press release or executive biography from a company of interest and reformat and/or revise the content in a way that would be more effective on smartphone screens. Students may use Pages or any other writing app.

3 Credit card debt can be a crippling financial burden with myriad side effects, from higher insurance rates to more expensive loans to difficulty getting a job or a promotion. Unfortunately,

credit debt is also frighteningly easy to fall into, particularly for young people trying to get started in life with limited cash flow. Ask students to write a three- to five-paragraph **blog** post that warns college students about the dangers of credit card debt. An attention-grabbing title (and subtitle) are a must. All credible sources found during research should of course be cited.

4 Twitter updates or internal company **microblogs** are a great way to alert people to helpful articles, videos, and other online resources. The case below from Bovee/Thill is quite relevant each fall as the Southeast prepares for hurricane season.

BACKGROUND: JetBlue is known for its innovations in customer service and customer communication, including its pioneering use of Twitter. Nearly two million JetBlue fans and customers follow the company on Twitter to get updates on flight status during weather disruptions, facility upgrades, and other news.

YOUR TASK: Write a message of no more than 120 characters that announces the potential cancellation of all flights into and out of Miami International Airport during the week of October 15 due to hurricane Michael.

Salary Negotiation

Knowing one's worth and preparation are key to salary negotiation. The SJSU Career Center surveys alumni for salary information, and Glassdoor.com also provides rough estimates to help students formulate a working baseline. Students should always reject the first offer and know that it is against the law in California for employers to ask interviewees for salary history.

WEEK 15: LinkedIn Profile

Students often make the mistake of equating LinkedIn as their online resume. LinkedIn should be positioned to students as their free personal marketing website. Each profile should exude brand and value add.

1 **Take a professional headshot.** Put away those high school prom pictures and cliché selfies! A professional headshot taken with a gray, blue, or white background (or a blurred landscape) is recommended.

Gather all pieces. Students should gather all the necessary pieces in a Word document before creating a live LinkedIn profile. The document containing LinkedIn profile content should be saved like a resume with version numbers. **2**

3 **Turn notifications OFF.** Nothing is more annoying than receiving multiple automated emails from LinkedIn as someone edits his/her profile. Advise students to turn notifications off as a courtesy to their networks.

Obtain endorsements and recommendations. Students should aim to achieve 100% profile strength. Practice writing routine and persuasive messages by seeking endorsements and recommendations from their network connections. **4**

Week 9 & 17: Midterm and Final Exam

Assign all chapters in *Excellence in Business Communication* (Bovee/ Thill, 12e) including the appendices and administer short answer quizzes every week to encourage students to read the material before class.

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