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Journal Entry 4

As I was sitting in my PLC meeting last Friday the period before my students were due to present their commercials, I suddenly realized that I hadn't totally thought through how I was going to grade their presentations. I had created a feedback form for audience members in which they checked off the requirements they thought the presenting group fulfilled, wrote one compliment and one suggestion, and indicated if they thought the commercial was convincing. I had also decided that each group's third and final presentation would be filmed by an audience member so that their (hopefully) best performance would be documented and available for them to edit for extra credit. However, in thinking so much about what the students would be doing, I forgot to think about what I would be doing!

In the end, I asked whoever filmed the presentations to email them to me, and I decided that I would base most of each group's grade on their final presentation. I also joined one audience group and rotated to each presentation with them, which allowed me to see every group present and write down specific notes to refer back to when grading. I think I found a way to see as much of each group's three presentations as I could, but I'm wondering if with some more thought, I could have figured out a better way to monitor the entire presentation process. I know that many of my students like taking videos, so perhaps I could have asked one student to stay at each presentation station for all three performances and film each one. This way I could see each group's progression, and the groups could watch their own progression

the next day in class as part of a reflection exercise. I'm not sure if all that would be necessary, but maybe in the future it will be something that I try.

As I start to actually grade these presentations, I keep thinking about how helpful it would be to have a rubric. I told my students that their group needed to fulfill all the requirements on the list I gave them, but I never told them how I would be grading other aspects of their presentation, such as level of preparation, volume, persuasiveness, etc. If I didn't include those elements in the requirements, is it fair of me to grade them on them? For example, Angel's group was wholly unprepared for their presentation. They had a short script but hadn't practiced or read through their first draft at all. Their commercial was a mess and didn't really make sense. I will be taking off points for many of the requirements they were missing, but beyond that, I feel like I need to take off points for them not using their time wisely. They did their math well, but then in the two days they had to plan, they just goofed off. I think that that should affect their grade in addition to the points they lose for the missed requirements, but I never told the class that things like that would affect their grade. Also, while I at least have the requirements written out for them, I didn't assign any sort of point value to each requirement. Should I make them each worth the same amount of points?

As I'm writing and thinking about this, I realize I should have created a rubric for this project. I've seen all the ones you've made and heard about how helpful they are, so it's time that I bite the bullet and make one. I think I'm daunted by how much work it seems, but really it will just force me to think through and articulate my expectations, which is something that I should be doing anyway if I want to be an effective teacher. And it will make the grading process much easier on my end, since I won't have to feel as unsure about it all. None of what

I'm saying right now is groundbreaking, since you and others have been telling me this for a

while, but it took until this project for me to fully internalize it.