

# Example of a Poor Reflection

Critique # 3  
4/4/03

I chose to speak about Cabot Cheddar because it is the world's best cheddar. Well that fact and I think people who have never lived in Vermont why it is the best state. I'm a real trivia kind of girl and I love hearing stupid facts about different places. Cabot Cheddar is also where Daisy and Buster's dad works testing cheese in one of their labs. I conducted all of my research on the web at the Cabot Cheese website. Instead for writing an entire paper about what I was going to say I basically wrote most of my information down on note cards in some what or the order I intended to speak about it to you. But there were some organizational problems with who I wrote it the first time so I rewrote the note cards again for my presentation. I spent 3 days off and on carrying my completed note cards around with me taking them out when I had a free moment and reciting the speech in my head or out loud.

The speech I gave was ok, but it could have been better. It's something about standing up in front of people. Even people I feel comfortable with are not the people that I necessarily feel comfortable speaking in front of. The fact of the matter is whenever possible I will get out of speaking in public. While I was standing up in front of everyone my speech was on my mind and what I needed to improve on from the last one. I was saying to myself 'don't say um', don't sway', 'don't fiddle with your note cards'. I was very impressed with myself because when I lost my train of thought I feel like I just paused and to me that felt very weird but from what I read in my comments from the class it was good that I paused instead of using filler words. The video tape showed the long weird pause but I don't feel it was as weird as I was making it out to be

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at the time. The video tape and student comments confirmed all of this. Well except the part where I was talking to my self but thank god that wasn't on tape.

I really don't know how to fix my little problems that have presented themselves throughout my giving speech career. I have been taking speech classes from people who specialize in giving the right speech since I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and I know that doesn't say much for me as a speaker but I guess I just want to make the point at no matter how hard I work I feel like the same things that is do 'wrong' don't go away.

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# Example of a Poor to Average Reflection

AGRI 196  
April 2, 2003

## Persuasive Speech Reflection Paper

### a. The speech I prepared for:

The topic I talked about for my informational speech was the controversial laptop program set up in Maine last year. I chose this topic because I am from Maine, and I am a strong believer that technology should really be a part of education these days. My little brother was also one of the first kids to try out the laptops, so I had the inside scoop most of the time. I realized early on that there wasn't all that much published about the program because it was brand new. I used mostly newspapers, including my hometown's (The Boothbay Register) and I was lucky enough to find a quarterly report written for the state, which had just been finished in the beginning of March. I know my presentation would be nothing without <sup>lots</sup> of data, because people always can relate to numbers. When giving my speech I really just wanted the audience to come away from it with a better understand of at least one brand new way of thinking about education. Many people don't think instilling a laptop in the hands of a 7<sup>th</sup> grader is either economical or worth doing. I wanted to change both these conceptions. I knew they would be the two main arguments for not having the laptop program, so I addressed both, and I thought I would address both. I decided to talk too much about the actually bills involved or all of the numbers exactly because I did not want to go too much into detail and confuse my audience, but I did want to give them a general idea of the numbers, and what they could do to help a program like this in their state (vote). Everything I talked about was very basic, because I didn't feel that talking about more complex things would help in my goal but rather just confuse my audience and make them not want to listen. Again, I did not practice, as much as I should have because when I got up there I was really nervous, even

though I was very confident in what I was talking about. I practiced mostly to myself, never in front of people, and I only practiced it a total of 5 times or so. The feedback from the audience was basically all the same. They thought I did well, but sometimes they could not hear me and I used filler words way too much. This was the same as my other speech, but in general I thought I improved some. I had my speech all written this time, instead of just using notes, which I thought would decrease the "ums". It did not work.

***b. The speech I gave:***

I think that my speech went relatively well. I was surprised at the interest in the topic. I was originally scared to give my speech because I was afraid it may bore some people. This was certainly not the case at all. I was asked many questions from many different people. This really made me happy about the topic I chose. I think that when I practiced it I did a lot better because I did not practice in front of people, and so when I got up in front of everyone I got very nervous. I started using lots of filler words without even realizing I was doing it. I thought that if I could write the speech out it would eliminate this problem, but half way through I realized I was saying "um" a lot and I caught myself. Then I proceeded to kind of freak out for a minute or so until I got my composure back. During the speech I was really just wondering to myself if the people who were listening would really care about a program that was instilled in Maine, not Vermont, and also how I was pacing myself so that I wouldn't go over time. The videotape showed that next time I really need to practice more, and in front of people so I don't get nervous and use filler words. I also need to work on projecting my voice as well

as when I am using charts to keep them up a little longer so that people can get a chance to look at them.

*c. The speech I wish I had given:*

I wish that when I had given my speech that I had practiced more, because I was very nervous, mostly about what the audience would think about the topic. I wasn't sure is people would really appreciate the topic I chose, because I felt like tennis that it was a reflection of myself, and very personal to me even though it could relate to them in some ways. I felt less confident with what I was talking about this time because I didn't know as much about the program than I do about tennis but I think my main problem is that I just need to fight the fear of getting up in front of people and the only way I can do that is by doing it many times and practicing a lot before I do it. I would have definitely practiced in front of people if I could go back and change things. I wish I had the time to practice more, but with all my other work, I don't get around to actually developing a topic until the week before, and then I have to find the time to write it. I thought that my visuals were simple and showed what I needed them to, so I wouldn't change that.

Overall, I think I did well, and the only thing I would change is my use of filler words, and I would have held my graphs up, just a bit longer. Next time I will make sure to practice more, and hopefully be more confident about what I am speaking about, but with the same results, because I think I really fulfilled my purpose. The audience really understood and liked what I was talking about.

re-state yourself (dot)

Everything was included. Good length. Your reflection seemed dot better. But you still have to watch sentence structure and please re-read.

C

# Example of a Good/Excellent Reflection

March 27, 2003

Choice presentation:

The speech I prepared for:

To be perfectly honest with you, I planned on doing a speech on Title IX. I did all of the research and planned out my talk. After another student in the class gave that speech I began to have second thoughts about the topic. The more I practiced and modified the Title IX speech the more I knew it would be a mistake to stand up and give that presentation. At that point it was a week before the lab day that I could go and I was stumped for a topic. I began to ask my friends what experiences I've rambled on to them about that they liked listening to most. Some people said UVM rescue but I already bored the class with that aspect of my life during my previous presentation. The second topic that I talk about with my friends on a somewhat regular basis was my experiences in Europe.

Bear in mind I've talked for hours on end about my experiences in Europe. This was no small topic to tackle and condense down to a 10-minute presentation, especially in front of people that don't really know or that understand my quirky ways.

I narrowed it down to what I wanted to know before going backpacking for the summer. Even that topics amount of information was plentiful, but fortunately some topics were not quite as interesting as others. I wrote a general outline knowing that I was going to go off on tangents as soon as I saw people's interest in the audience begin to spark.

MIND-MAP?

I did no real research for my topic. After the 4 months of online searches and informal interviews with other backpackers I consider myself an expert in my own experiences. I did go to the official eurailing site in order to check the amount that the eurail pass currently costs. I also printed up a nifty chart of the countries and the euro symbol.

include URL

My objectives were simple, to make people want to travel, and give them some positive information on being sporadic while on vacation. I gave my audience the information I wish I had before beginning my summertime journey.

I think "spontaneous" is a better word

Honestly I knew the more I practiced a speech like this the more nervous I would be when I actually stood in front of my audience. This didn't inhibit me from running through my outline a few times (well a lot of times). Every time I read my outline aloud a completely different sequence of stories were blurted out and the speech took on a whole new twist. All of them were relevant to the main topics I chose to focus on, and none of them were overly boring.

Feedback...As I expected what amazed most people with everything I had to say. My experience sounds a lot cooler and strange then it actually was. I was normal in Europe and everyone thinks that my travels are crazy in the US. There were very few negative comments. A few people suggested that I not rock back and forth so much while I spoke, and to s-l-o-w down a bit (well a lot). Ever since my presentation classmates have been coming up to me to ask me for specific information about my experiences and to see some pictures which are plastered all over my dorm walls. Two girls even said that they were now

Pg #

planning a backpacking trip for next winter because of my good experience.

The speech I gave:

The last thing I wanted to do last Wednesday was to stand up in front of my peers and talk about myself. Quite honestly I had a rough week and giving a poor speech in front of my peers wasn't going to help my current situation in my mind. Of course, when you don't want to go, you get called on first. Thankfully I did bring my backpack to college with me so I had some kind of visual.

I was a bit nervous at the beginning and wanted to rely on my notes more than I did. I never want to forget anything. This speech forced me to be creative and fly by the seat of my pants, so to speak. I began to relax when so many members of the audience raised their hands when I asked who had backpacked, and I felt like everyone was putty in my hands the first time the audience laughed at my jokes.

A few things I noticed from watching the video was that my introduction was way too long. It took me almost three minutes to introduce my main points and define my speech. My transitions were smooth but I frequently skipped from discussing youth hostels to bringing up another topic and then back again. I felt like I had a very small vocabulary because the words that I used most frequently were 'awesome' and 'incredibly'. I rocked back and forth often while presenting and waved my hands a bunch of times.

All in all my speech went very well, the best one yet. It wasn't like the speech I practiced because the presentations I had in my mind changed every time I thought back to my trip. I realized that I speak far too fast for my own good when I really get excited



about a topic. Throughout the duration of my presentation I was thinking about how much I wanted to be done with the entire speech. Its sad to say because I'm happy that people now know a bit about my experiences but then again people now know about some of my experiences. I have a very guarded past and even letting something as meaningless as my summer backpacking trip opened myself up to my classmates in a way that I am not fully comfortable with.

The ten minutes went by quite quickly and I was in for the line of questions that follow every presentation. The questions and comments I received were very positive and quite uplifting. I read the peer written comments as soon as I got back to my dorm room and all of them showed very few negatives and a bunch of positives. The majority of the positives were based on my topic choice rather than the presentation but I feel it is a good thing when people can forget the presenter and focus on the presentation.

I watched the speech video with a friend when I got home and was somewhat satisfied with what I saw. I looked natural in front of the classroom and my voice inflection changed the more I described my experiences. There were a few instances when I became a bit tongue-tied but no student wrote about those times during their critiques. I hope the reasoning behind students not writing about my mistakes were because they didn't notice them.

The speech I wish I had given:

What would I have changed.... there's always an abundance of things that I would change about every presentation that I give. I would have not have said the words 'awesome' and 'incredible' as frequently as I did. I would have used a few more visuals

D#

and passed around the pictures I brought to show the class from my trip. There was no real reason behind not showing them to the class I simply felt more comfortable not showing everyone pictures of myself while intoxicated while I was talking.

I like giving speeches on the fly so to speak. Its much more challenging to give a speech that you make up while standing up in front of an audience rather then memorizing a speech after doing extensive research. I would like to have had a more concrete outline of what stories I was going to present and how long I'd spend on each topic within the presentation.

For my next speech I will use some facts and statistics. These always help to inform and sway people towards the topic you are trying to present. I really enjoyed giving a speech about something that I knew so well, but in doing that I didn't have the opportunity to learn anything new through researching a topic.

My ideal speech to the AGRI class would be the introduction to the CPR classes that I teach. I show a video clip of Mrs. Doubtfire and give a slue of facts and statistics that make people want to spend 4-9 hours with me learning life saving skills. Since I give that introduction frequently I feel it is more fun to pick topics that I don't usually focus on. I can't wait to do the group presentations!

You have a really good grasp on your positive and negative aspects. Good length, everything there. Like the tone it was written in, I think it is good to share your experiences it inspires people!

(A/A-)

# A+ Outside Speech ≡ Critique

The speech that I attended was titled "Tragedy and Survival on Everest". On Thursday, March 5, I sat in a 300 person capacity lecture hall, and along with over 400 people, listened to one of the world's best mountain climbers, Neil Beidleman, recount his experience of his climb up Mount Everest. My communication methods class is almost halfway over, and thus far I have learned a great deal of information about how to speak in public. However, what I learned at this lecture about speech giving and presentation, will probably be the most influential knowledge I obtain. Mr. Beidleman's speech was unrehearsed and non-prepared. *How do you know this?* He obviously did not practice using the equipment or have a back-up plan in case something went wrong. However, despite it all, Neil's speech was composed of one element which single-handedly transformed his presentation from being disastrous to stupendous. That one element was passion and tons of it. *yea!*

In the following pages, I will give both positive and negative criticism of the speech, and probably much more negative than positive. However, in the end, regardless of all the errors and blunders that occurred during what was supposed to be an hour speech, Mr. Beidleman's lecture successfully captured my undivided attention as well as my emotions. Mr. Beidleman climbs mountains and risks his life because he loves it; because he is passionate about it. It was because of this same passion why he was able to give a speech and overcome literally hundreds of errors and mistakes.

The speech was set to begin at 8:00 p.m., however did not get underway until 8:35 because people kept showing up. When 8:35 came around, a man got up to the podium while drinking beer out of a bottle, and began to introduce the speaker. He spoke for approximately 4 minutes describing how he is such good friends with Neil and told stories which portrayed Neil as being a mountain climber with continuously bad luck. This introduction was not very interesting and all throughout I could help

thinking if the guy was drunk while speaking. Not much pertinent information was given about the speaker, and although it did not make me not want to hear him, it didn't make me anymore excited.

*Where did this take place?*

When Neil got up to the podium, he too was drinking a beer, and acting like it was a soda. Besides starting half an hour late, this aspect really got me agitated. I didn't think that he was necessarily drunk, but I thought that if I and three hundred people were here to hear his speech, he could at least show the audience some respect, as well as the fifty or so children who were present. Anyway, he began by welcoming everyone and then saying the introduction to the speech. I knew precisely when his introduction began and ended because he read the entire introduction from two sheets of paper. His head popped up maybe two times throughout, and the podium blocked his body. One thing which he said in his introduction I thought was particularly funny and appropriate. He read a quote which says, "The mind is a wonderful thing. It never stops working until you speak in public". Both humorous and partially true, by saying this I thought he was protecting himself in case things did not go as well as he had planned.

*ha. I've heard this before.*

The subject of Neil's speech was Mount Everest, and he made it quite clear in the introduction that his point was to explain, as best he could, an event that occurred in May of 1996. An event in which eleven people perished in an attempt to summit the highest Mountain in the world. This disaster captured the world's attention and led to many books, movie's and shows being produced to shed light on the subject. Although the speech was presented in the CC Theater on the University of Vermont's campus, the audience was composed mainly of people in their 20's, 30's and 40's. The speech was presented by Adventurous Travel Bookstore, so many of the audience members were mountain climbers and outdoor lovers themselves. As well, because many of the audience members were interested on the subject Neil was talking about, many of them already had prior knowledge of the event. Myself, for instance, have read the best seller Into Thin Air, which was written by another climber who was on the trip with Neil Beidleman.

*me, too.*

I think Neil realized beforehand that only people who were very interested in the disaster would come see his speech. For this reason, I think Neil did speak to the level of his audience, accurately presuming that they knew some terminology about mountain climbing. Throughout his speech, he would

use words that people only would be able to understand and follow if they have read a prior book on the disaster. Names of places like Katmandu and Tibet were constantly thrown out, and it would have been very difficult to follow the speech if you had no prior knowledge.

When Neil's introduction was over, the lights went out, and a slide show presentation was planned to begin. However, the only way I can describe the next hour would be to have you imagine all of the worst possible things that can happen at a presentation combine them together, and this was it! In one word it was terrible! First the slides didn't work at all, then they were not in the right order, then they were not advancing correctly, and then a bulb went out on the projector. So a 40 minute interruption occurred so that they could replace the slides, and bulb. Then at 9:30, an hour and a half after the presentation was originally set to begin, it started again. However, not without more technical difficulties. Again the slides did not advance right and were not being shown in the right order. At first I thought that he really wasn't prepared considering that the slides were in the wrong order. However, what happened was that there were two slide projectors alternating. But one projector wasn't working correctly which was throwing everything out of order. Regardless, Mr. Beidleman did not take our class and never did test the machines before his speech. Finally, he gave up on the hand-held slide switcher, and had to say "next" every time he wanted a new slide. I think he said "next" 200 times that night. *2 hrs. no...*

Despite all of the technical problems however, the rest of the presentation was fabulous. Neil would simply look at each slide, and without notes comment upon it. The majority of the slides were pictures that he took during his trek up Mount Everest. With the help of the slides, he was able to give a very chilling account of the climb. Every so often, Neil would add in a story of someone else's to further describe the event. He gave great examples and told wonderful stories which were all very effective in his speech. Credibility was not a question when listening to Neil speak. I saw him on the mountain, and knew that he was one of the most accomplished mountain climbers in the world.

One aspect of the entire presentation which was very effective was Neil's tempo. Despite the delay in starting the speech, Neil never seemed to rush a sentence or slur a word. He spoke very slowly and calmly, and this calmness in his voice further added to the tranquillity of the speech. Neil was talking about a very sad and tragic event. He, more than anyone else in the room, knew how emotional the

*Good  
speech  
just in*

*2 points (← Keys)  
to effective speechmaking*

speech could get and how difficult it was to relive it through a slide show. Neil did not hide this fact, and rather allowed the audience to know his feelings. His slow-paced tempo enabled the audience to get a better feel for what it must have been like to be on the mountain, and the pace allowed for Neil to tell it at a speed which he felt comfortable and most effective. Also, after thinking about the entire speech, I think Neil was drinking before hand to calm his nerves and make him more relaxed to speak about the event. Although it did happen two years ago, Neil lost eleven of his close friends and hiking partners, and that is nothing that he will completely heal from.

A good portion of the speech took place with the lights out, slides on, and Neil talking at the podium. Body gesture therefore was not so important, and eye contact did not play a large role either. However, at the introduction and conclusion of the slide show, Neil was in full view of the audience and his posture and eye contact became more important. Neil gave the presentation wearing blue jeans, a tee shirt, and an orange Northface vest on. He was not formally dressed, but I think it was appropriate. Neil gave a speech about mountain climbing and an experience of his while doing it. He spoke about a topic that he loves and I think that he needed to be comfortable doing it.

When the speech was over and the lights came on, my entire body literally felt numb. I had read Into Thin Air, and I knew about all the people that died on Mount Everest. However, hearing Neil Beidleman speak made me feel as if I was learning about the entire event for the very first time. In a way, it actually was the first time. I heard Neil's account of what happened, and I heard it in his own words. Neil gave a great speech and I doubt if he has ever taken a public speaking class before. However, he did not need to. Neil's speech showed me that if one is passionate about something, they will be able to speak their hearts and give a presentation no matter how unprepared or unlucky they may be. Neil spoke about something that he truly loved; something that his is willing to die for. Neil was very candid with the audience and did not hesitate to say that he thought that he may have been a reason one of the climbers died that day. Furthermore, Neil said something which I thought was very courageous and profound. He said, "being away from your family for so long (while on the mountain), makes you realize climbing is a selfish thing". During the speech I was thinking that climbing up Everest is very selfish especially if you have a wife or child. Neil seemed to anticipate my question and he answered it honestly.

The conclusion of Neil's speech was as powerful as everything preceding it. Neil read directly from his journal which he kept while on Everest. He read as the final slide of Everest was displayed, and the entire audience was silent. The sincerity and candidness in his voice and words were heart-warming and with each word he continued to speak, I continued to feel more connected to the event. I am almost sure that if I had not had this speech critique to write I would not have gone and seen it on my own accord. However, hearing the presentation and listening to Neil Beidleman was an absolutely fabulous and educational experience.

David -  
Terrific rendition + critical  
analysis ... good writing

(A+)