Peer Review of Presentations Using VoiceThread (VT)

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Context: In-class and out of class; Capstone Design
Keywords: peer review, presentations
Student Activity Time: 50 minutes in-class and 1-2 hours outside of class

Capstone teams presented design briefs and then individually, students peer reviewed other group's presentations.

Introducing the Reflection Activity

In a capstone course, students presented design briefings and provided each other with feedback on their design brief presentations. The purpose of this design briefing presentation was for students to communicate the technical content of their capstone and practice their verbal presentation skills. The purpose of the reflection activity with peer feedback on the presentations was for students to receive critique on both the technical content and the presentation style.

After the first month of working on their capstone projects, capstone teams presented design briefs about the status of their project. During the presentations, students in the audience completed a peer review based on a rubric provided by the educator. In this part of the peer review, students provided each other with quantitative feedback. The design briefing presentations were video recorded and uploaded into VoiceThread (VT) and embedded in the course learning management system (i.e. Blackboard). Audio recordings and verbal feedback were provided using VoiceThread (http://voicethread.com), a web-based cloud application used in education to promote engagement in digital content. Students can provide comments through audio or video format as well as comments with text and drawing tools. The comments can be left on documents, presentations or video recordings for direct access by all parties.

At the end of the design brief presentations, the educator asked students to reflect back on the presentations (posted to VT for them to review) and to provide more in depth feedback to a group whose presentation interested them. Each student had to select a presentation relevant to their discipline and provide feedback (i.e. a minimum of one strength and one weakness of the presentation and technical content). The intent was for students to provide feedback on both content and the quality of the presentation, but students had a tendency to focus more on presentation styles.

In terms of outcomes, this reflection activity provided students with a variety of opportunities. First, the design briefing presentations asked students to reflect on their project to date and communicate the status of the project—in this reflection students may better understand the project, learn more about the project, or realize

what they need to do in the future on the project. In the second part of the reflection activity, feedback was provided to design teams by classmates as an opportunity to critique and reflect on design decisions. In this reflection, students have the opportunity to evaluate the quality of their peers' work, which is an important skill to develop for their future work in industry or academia. If students listen to the feedback, they may reflect on opportunities to improve the project and future presentations.

Recreating the Reflection Activity

	Description
1	Initiate student groups working on their capstone project.
2	One month into the project, facilitate design brief presentations.
3	Ask students to assess their peers—quantitatively through a rubric on the course learning management system and qualitatively using VoiceThread.

In the words of the Educator: Tips and Inspiration

Provide additional reflection opportunities. Next time I implement this reflection activity, I will expand the activity to include reflection on the feedback the team received. In this reflection activity, I will ask them to think about how they will improve their projects (response and impact). This is an effort to close the loop—to be certain students reviewed the peer feedback and considered improvements to the technical content, future presentations, and possibly the project as a whole.

Highlight the use of VoiceThread. The use of this tool is the key component to success. The purpose of using VoiceThread for the project courses was to promote engagement and increase success by providing an alternative mode of communication in critiquing their peers' work.

What was the inspiration for the activity? The idea is from a colleague here at Poly— Dr. Adam Carberry. In previous semesters, my feedback was provided through rubrics and not as rich as I thought it could have been, mostly due to time constraints with the number of teams providing presentations. VoiceThread provides additional (and hopefully richer) feedback on their presentations from their peers as well as experience providing critique.