

Weekly EMP Newsletter

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CLAUDE AND BETTY LOU LAVAL
ENTREPRENEUR
MENTOR
PROGRAM

Persuasion Skills Put to the Test

By

Colton Cunningham

Thank you to Veteran Mentee, and Luncheon Hosts **Bencherlie Long** and **Manny Gonzalez** for providing a delicious Japanese teriyaki lunch from **Ginza Gourmet Teriyaki House**. This local restaurant is located at 5701 N First St, Fresno, CA 93710 AND is owned by Veteran Mentee **Ricky Rachmat's** aunt & uncle.

EMP Fall 2022 has focused on building entrepreneurial and leadership skills that can bring value to the mentees as they pursue their careers post-graduation. Persuasive public speaking is a learned skill and one essential to an entrepreneur. To speak well publicly requires sufficient practice in a variety of different speaking situations. The more practice, the greater the confidence and the better the outcome. This semester's final project was designed to allow the mentees to develop and deliver a persuasive speech. This and the next session (after Thanksgiving) are devoted to our final project. The mentees were given the opportunity to choose one of the following topics:

1. Sell the audience on a product or service
2. Sell an idea for a change that matters to you personally
3. Sell your 5-year professional plan.

Every mentee was given 10 minutes to make their persuasive presentation and another 10 minutes to receive constructive feedback from the audience. Before we began the presentations, **Dr. Koenig** spoke on the importance of constructive feedback and how this is an important skill regardless of our future career path. It is important to note that not all feedback is negative, and not all is positive. But it should always be constructive. He urged us to avoid generalities in the feedback and focus on specifics: what worked well (always start with the positive) and what might have been better. For example, telling someone that the structure of their presentation is strong but missing key information on a specific topic is a good way to help someone feel good about what they've done and give them the specific feedback needed to strengthen it. This goes for positive feedback, too. Instead of just saying, "great job," give a meaningful compliment that shows that you are closely listening and heard what was trying to be conveyed. Constructive feedback should be given in a productive respectful manner.



*"Receiving feedback is just as important as giving a speech."
-Dr. Neil Koenig*

For the presenter, the right feedback tells you which aspects of your presentation have room for improvement. Often times in a business setting, feedback is not given. It's important, when possible, to seek constructive feedback, and consider every type of feedback as an opportunity to better yourself and push yourself to give the best presentation possible.



Dirk Tharpe, first-semester Mentee and our first speaker is an English major at Fresno State and wants to be a professional writer and Professor one day. Dirk chose the topic of selling his five-year professional plan to his audience. He started his presentation by providing a long list of professional ambitions he has considered over the years. Dirk confidently and authentically persuaded his audience to believe in his five-year plan by sharing two stories he wrote. This was a persuasive strategy because it gave the audience measurable evidence of Dirk's capabilities and how they would contribute to his future success.

"If you aim and miss the shot, it means you just need another target"-Dirk Tharpe

Bencherlie Long, a veteran Mentee, began presenting his five-year plan by sharing with the audience his past five-year journey. He felt that by starting in the past, he would be able to illustrate his personal and professional growth and why he has made the decision to become a tax consultant. The format for Bencherlie's presentation was unique and persuasive. This approach convinced his audience by illustrating his growth mindset and commitment to continually learn. Bencherlie engaged the Mentees and appealed to their hearts throughout his speech with his sincerity and implementation of humor.



Marcus Beh, a first-semester Mentee and international student from Malaysia, shared the story about his father's life. The lessons imparted by Marcus's father have had a lasting impact on whom Marcus wants to become and how he plans to forge his personal and professional journey. The specific lessons are: always try to find a solution, be open-minded (there are opportunities everywhere), do not forget the power of networking, and learn from failure. Marcus feels that his father's challenges were opportunities for growth, not roadblocks. Marcus openly expressed that he is unsure of what direction his future might lead him. However, Marcus convincingly argued that he feels confident that he will prosper professionally and personally because of the power of his father's advice.

Kanaan Amoudi, a first-semester Mentee and international student from Lebanon, took the stage and inspired his audience to believe in his future by sharing his passions and current success. Kanaan came to Fresno State for its criminology program. He wishes to ultimately become part of the United Nations Police, whose mission is to enhance international peace and security. Kanaan wishes to combine this long-term goal with expanding his family business in event planning. His mother and aunts, located in four different countries, have established thriving event-planning businesses. Kanaan travels each weekend to work with his aunt's business in San Francisco. Kanaan persuaded the audience that he has a solid plan to achieve both goals.



Veteran Mentee **Briseyda Dominguez** encouraged her audience to start their own business. Briseyda enticed her audience by sharing aspects of her personal network marketing journey and how this was a great way to start your first business. She discussed how her involvement in two different businesses allowed her to grow personal and professional skills. One of the most significant advantages of a network marketing business, per Briseyda, is improving your communication skills. Briseyda also mentioned how she has grown her leadership skills as well as her confidence. Based on experience, Briseyda continued to convince her audience by dismantling a potential counterargument to her speech.





Elvira Gonzalez, a first-semester Mentee, set the mood of her presentation by using multimedia tools, including music and visuals that complemented her presentation on the "law of attraction" and the "power of positive thinking." Elvira addressed the complexities of how our internal thoughts can affect the external world around us. She also used audience participation for engagement. Elvira persuaded us to consider learning more about this topic.



First-semester Mentee, **Colton Cunningham**, set up his presentation by creating a hypothetical situation where each mentee (audience) was either a mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil engineering, or architectural design student. His persuasive presentation aimed at taking a position at Lawrence Engineering Group as a draftsman. Colton used audience involvement, authenticity, and humor. By the end of his presentation, Colton had his audience excited about the possibility of working at Lawrence Engineering.



Maria Dominguez, this semester's Lead Mentee, concluded our session by articulating the importance of the EMP program and how it will help her as she moves into her career. Maria began her speech by explaining how as a young child, she was exposed to entrepreneurship by her father. It wasn't until attending Fresno State and taking the introductory course on entrepreneurship did she realize how much she wanted to build upon her background. She committed herself to building an entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurship skills. Maria memorably concluded her presentation by thanking all mentees of the EMP program with a personal handwritten card of encouragement and presenting Claude, Mendy and Neil with a large framed photo of the Fall 2022 Cohort.

Our first set of Mentees, Dirk, Bencherlie, Marcus, Kanaan, Briseyda, Elvira, Colton, and Maria, did a great job persuading us on their individual topics. They were each eloquent, passionate, and inspiring. The audience also did a good job providing respective and constructive feedback that gave the speakers areas that would allow them to continue to grow and improve look forward to hearing from the remaining mentees during our next session.



Happy Thanksgiving from the Laval EMP Mentor Program

