



Good Morning.

My name is Steve DiNenno and I am a gifted support teacher in the Norristown Area School District in Norristown, PA, just west of Philadelphia. Norristown High School has a student body of about 1,600 students in grades 9-12. They come from the borough of Norristown, the county seat of Montgomery County, and the two adjoining townships, East and West Norriton. Our student body is around 46% black, 26% Hispanic, 25% white. Students come from each of the district's three middle schools.

The gifted program at the Norristown Area High School consists of approximately 160 students in grades 9-12. Students in grades 9 and 10 receive services through a daily class while students in grades 11 and 12 can choose between the regular class or participation in our Independent Study program. This year, I am teaching the 10th and 11th grade classes as well as the Independent Study program. I have a colleague who teaches the 9th and 12th grade classes.

My talk today focuses on a project which I undertook with my Senior class last school year where we staged our own TED-style talk one evening in March. I am going to discuss the ways in which a talk of this type differs from a standard speech or presentation. But first, in the spirit of the TED program, I would like to begin with the story of how I came to be with you here today.

As a young child of the 70's, I didn't want to be a teacher, I wanted to be an architect. More specifically, I wanted to be...



Mike Brady and design a house that had stairs with no risers, a great den and office space and a colorful, if not entirely efficient, kitchen. When I entered High School in the 80's, this was still my ambition, so I studied Mechanical Engineering and drafting as well as Art.



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My goal in high school was to attend Penn State University. I wanted so bad to be a Nittany Lion that I didn't really apply anywhere else. Unfortunately, hard as I might, I was not accepted into the architecture program at Penn State and instead ended up on academic probation my first year. I soon found that Penn State wasn't for me and decided instead (after being told go to school or go to work) to attend a local art school. I did well in Art School to study interior design. But, because it was the a time when housing sales were on a sharp decline, I was not able to turn my efforts into a career.

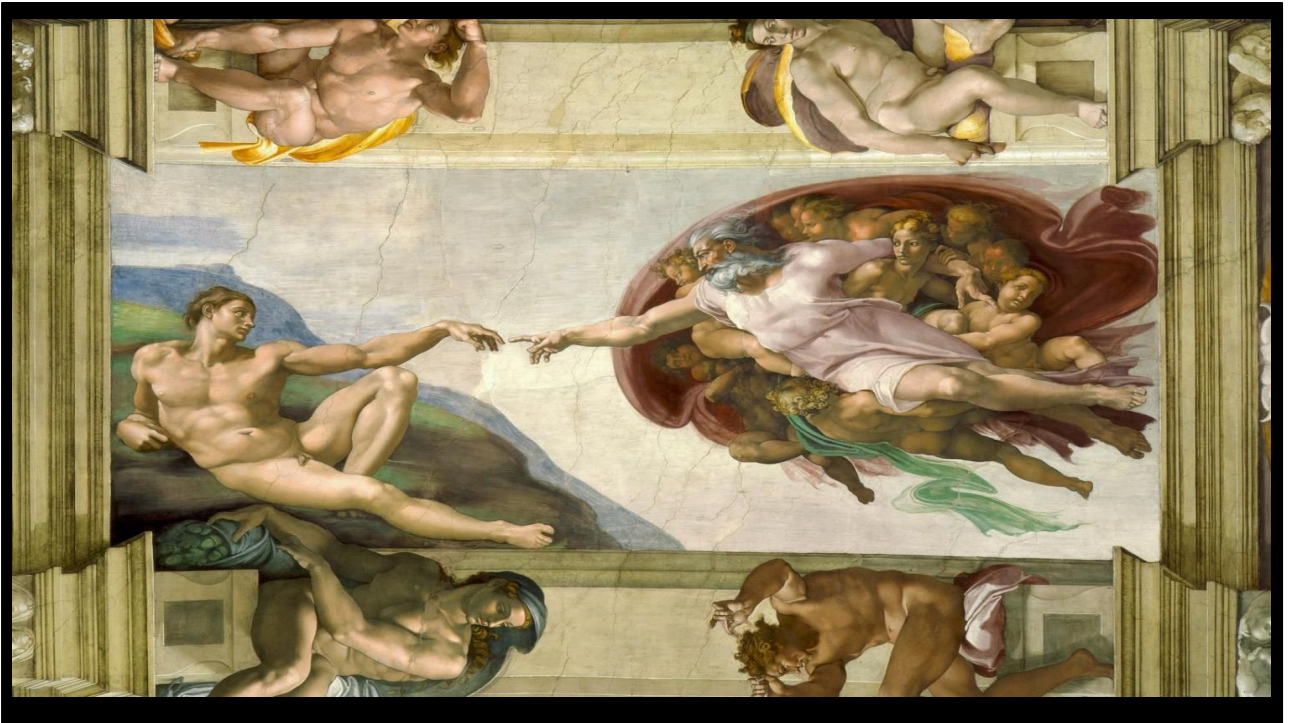


After art school, I bounced around from one meaningless job to another, waiting tables and doing office work. During that time, I always felt like I what I was doing wasn't really meaningful or fulfilling. My journey into the classroom began in 1992 when I met my wife, who was a teacher at Norristown High School.

For years, both before and after we were married, I gained first hand knowledge about what teaching actually was and what was truly involved in working with students. I felt, like many people do, that because I had been a student, I knew what teachers did (sound familiar, right?) As I learned more and was constantly fascinated with what she did every day, I began to see teaching as something more than just a job. It certainly held more importance in my eyes than data entry or bussing tables. It seemed like her work, and the work of the people I met through her, was more than I had imagined.

Having just finished school, however, I was not about to go back for another round, so I stuck that dream in the back of my mind in case I ever needed it again.





Fast Forward a few years later when my wife and I, along with a teacher friend and her 7th grade students, went on a 10 day trip to Italy. After visiting all the regular spots such as Florence, Venice, Milan, and Naples, we eventually traveled to Rome and for one day ended up in Vatican City.

After touring St. Paul's Cathedral, we entered the Vatican Museum, the 5th largest and 2nd oldest museum in the world, founded in 1540 with 43,000 square feet of museum space. We, along with a group of 5 students, were provided with a tour guide to tour the museum and learn about the artwork and its history. I was excited for this since I had studied a bit of art history in art school and knew a little something about the works we would see.

So there we were, standing in front of these magnificent pieces of art when our tour guide was called away and never returned. It didn't take long for the 7th graders we were chaperoning to start getting fidgety and asking questions. "What's that?" "Why are they naked?" "Who are these people?" are some of the questions that I remember hearing. We soon began walking the halls of this huge museum, all the while passing works of art by Michelangelo, Raphael, and Da Vinci. The kids were disinterested at best.



As we walked, searching desperately for the exits or another member of our group, the kids stopped at this painting, called "School of Athens" by Raphael. The kids continued asking questions and, because I had studied the painting in art school, my wife turned to me and said, "you're the art major, why don't you tell them about it." I tried my best to explain the perspective, the people and anything I knew about it. I was amazed that they were actually paying attention and wanting to hear more.

As we left the museum, my wife turned to me and said 5 words that changed my life forever: **YOU SHOULD BE A TEACHER!**

We came home and, since I was still not interested in going back to school, the thought stayed in my head for several more years. Then, in 1998, a series of events at my current job forced me to re-examine what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. The idea my wife had planted soon came to the front of my brain and, before I knew it, I was back in school working on my teaching degree.



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Since that time, I received my degree in Elementary Education from Cabrini University outside Philadelphia and my masters in Education Leadership from Villanova University. I have been teaching in the Norristown School District now for almost 20 years. After my first year at one of the middle schools, the gifted support teacher left and, without knowing anything about gifted students, I applied for the job. I have been working with these students ever since.

As with most school districts in this state and throughout the country, the curriculum for gifted instruction revolves around one word...





## ENRICHMENT

Every year gifted support teachers hear this word and are told to make it a part of their every day class, but





What does it really mean? How do I know when something is “enriched”?

To some, enrichment means “going above and beyond”, but that is as vague as the term itself. What I have always tried to do is give my students something that helps them better appreciate or understand the concepts and ideas they learn in their regular education classes. Enrichment is also a chance to practice skills and strategies learned in regular classes through a different lens.

Like most districts, however, Norristown does not have a standard Gifted Support curriculum. So what do I teach everyday? That is a challenge in itself because I don't want to intrude on content they are learning or recently learned in their regular classes, nor do I want to have them repeat the same activities without a different twist. Combine that with the fact that I sometimes teach three or four grades in a year and you see the dilemma.



In the beginning of my career, it was difficult to find challenging material, but thank god for technology! Where it was difficult to locate lesson ideas for gifted learners 20 years ago, now most of my best lesson plan ideas come from the Internet. Lessons can spring up from almost anywhere and I am constantly searching for new and different things to do with my kids.

Last year, I had an exceptionally talented group of seniors. They were connected to current events, loved sharing opinions, and could debate and discuss with the best of them. We spent a lot of class time discussing things that made me believe in the power of youth to change the world. It was an election year and the room would constantly break out into debates about policy, candidates, and ethics. I know I'm making it sound idealistic, but what I described wasn't that far off from the truth. I really wanted to give them the chance to have a voice, to speak their minds and let the world know their opinions on any number of topics.



As luck would have it, several years before, I had attended a workshop at Millersville University where I learned about the website known as TED.

TED, in case you haven't heard, is an organization designed to spread ideas. The ideas take the format of 18 minute talks which are given during conferences held around the world. All the conferences have a focus, one guiding idea that ties all the talks together. The images on this slide are all people who have spoken at TED talks related to education at one time or another. You may have seen some of them.

Education Expert Ken Robinson, Sal Khan of Khan Academy, Angela Duckworth, an education researcher who spoke about grit and endurance in students, and Rita Pierson, who gives my favorite talk about being a champion for your students.

When I returned from the seminar, I threw myself in the website and discovered that the talks, many of whom are transformed on the TED Education site into lessons, were different from other presentations I had seen and viewed. I wondered how students would do with this format but, like many ideas, I tucked it away and forgot about it.

The TED format of presenting is different from any other style of presenting in that the focus is on making a connection with your audience. A strong TED style speech bring the audience in and helps them to relate to the speaker and topic in a way unlike any

other. Here's a short TED video from TED CEO Chris Anderson on the secrets to a great TED Talk.





Back to last year and my seniors. I was looking for something to challenge and inspire them to tell their stories. The theme of the seniors gifted seminar class is “Learn and Live to Serve” the NAHS school motto. I was looking for ways to have my students give something back to their school community before they left to go off to college and life in general.

Our students, despite their reluctance to get up and present, do it quite often. We have them do some work on a topic and prepare a presentation to give in front of the class. And, no matter how hard we try to convince them to do something other than a powerpoint presentation or a poster, most times we end up with exactly that. I’m guilty of it myself. The powerpoints, prezis and slide presentations are great but, more often than not, students end up just simply reading from the slides and never really commit their ideas and opinions to memory. They spend so much time trying to fit a million words on a slide that they end up worrying about how the presentation looks, not how it sounds or whether or not it makes sense. Too often, if they have just copied statistics from a website, they won’t even bother to spell check or learn how to pronounce a higher level word. Through this process, students often view presentations as a tedious thing that doesn’t allow them to share anything about them as learners or young people.

One of the things we did early on in the room was to watch A LOT of TED talks. I encouraged the students to go on the site and browse. Find speakers who they felt matched their own personality, find topics they thought were interesting. They would then bring those talks back to the classroom and we would watch, discuss and

evaluate them. I wanted to give them the chance to become use to the format and presentation styles. Sometimes I would pick talks that I felt represented excellent examples of the skills I wanted them to learn.

One of the first ones we watched was a young man named Drew Dudley who gave a humorous and surprisingly touching talk on everyday leadership.



<b>Directions</b> View the T.E.D. Talk and complete the following grid. If you run out of space on the grid for any of your answers, feel free to continue writing on the back of this sheet.	Title of T.E.D. Talk: <b>1</b>		Name of Speaker: <b>2</b>	Date of T.E.D. Talk and Number of Views: <b>3</b>
	<b>4</b> What was the speaker's thesis (main point) of this speech?		<b>6</b> Ethos is a speaker's ability to build credibility, establish himself/herself as an expert, and/or convince the audience members that the speaker has their best interests at heart. How does this speaker build ethos? Feel free to also refer to the speaker's profile information from the ted.com webpage as you build your answer.	
<b>5</b> Circle any of the following adjectives that describe the speaker. <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>		<b>7</b> Pathos is an appeal to emotions (everything from humor to horror) in order to sway an audience, while logos is the use of data/evidence to prove one's case. Did this speaker rely more on pathos or logos in his/her presentation? What argument/point in this presentation did you find the most compelling? Why?		
<b>8</b> TED Talk presenters are known as effective public speakers. Describe two things this speaker does well in terms of engaging the audience. Be sure to include the minute second mark. (ex. 8:49) to denote the two specific moments you discuss here.		<b>9</b> Write two specific things you learned from this presentation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol>		
<b>10</b> If you could ask this speaker a question about his/her information or presentation, what would you ask?		<b>11</b> Give one piece of constructive criticism that would improve this presentation.		<b>12</b> What group of people would benefit the most from hearing this lecture?

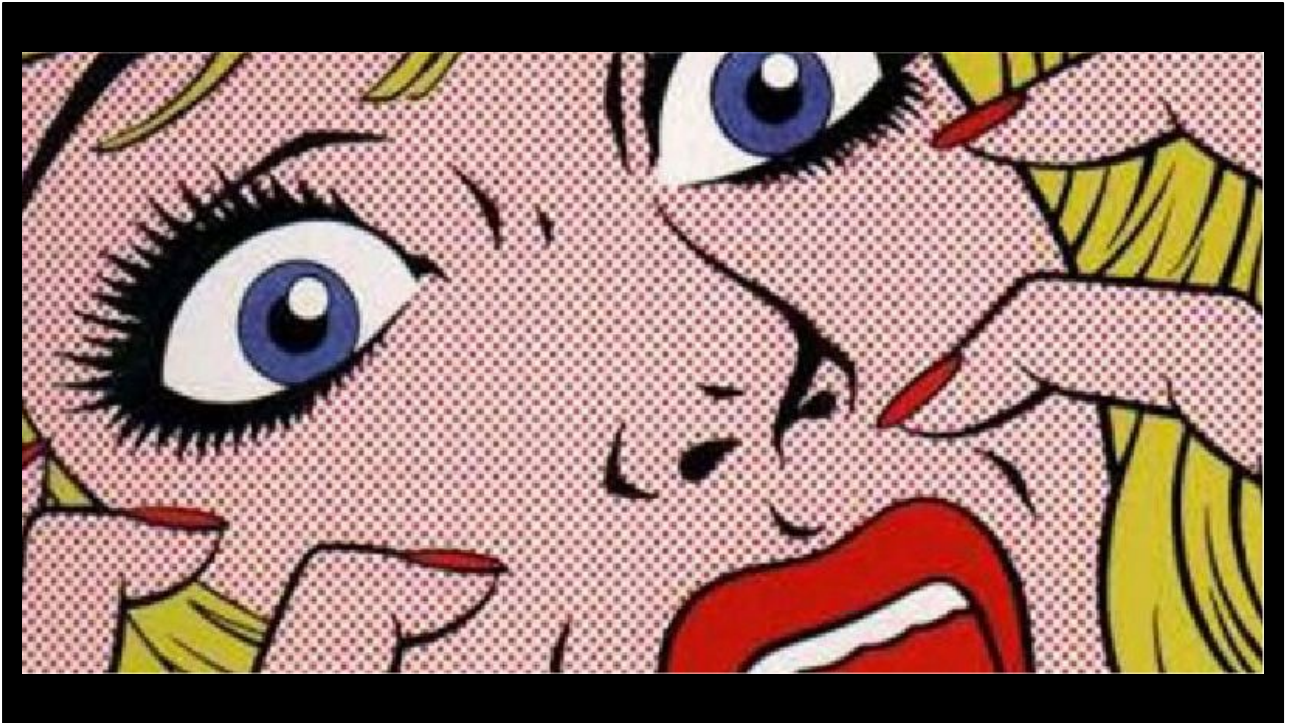
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When we looked at each video, we examined some basic elements of each talk and discussed how effective each talk was at conveying its message. The students were then asked to complete this worksheet to help them evaluate the talk. We discussed the pathos, the appeal to emotions, and ethos, the building of credibility of each speaker. The students were asked to provide criticism and compliments for each speaker and provide a summary of what they believed each talks main points to be.

After almost 15-20 talks over a two week period, the students were familiar with the format and ready to tackle a talk of their own. Once this began, I had a few students who dreaded this part of the project and the fear set in.





In the Official TED Guide to Public Speaking, Chris Anderson, CEO of TED, talks about the fear that almost all of us have with public speaking, also known as Glossophobia. We've all heard the surveys that state public speaking is the biggest fear most people have, even greater than death. Why would we think that our students would feel any different? TED CEO Chris Anderson states that, if we could utilize the fear we have for speaking in front of others, we can accomplish remarkable things.

The TED style presentation turns the standard presentation upside down and can provide students with a new and unique challenge. According to TED, public speaking is the key to unlocking empathy, sharing knowledge and insights and promoting a shared dream. Sharing our dreams, our fears, and our insights can help us connect with people in a way that benefits everyone.

Overcoming your fears can be a source of strength from which others can be inspired. Take a moment and watch some of the amazing talks on TED and you will see what I mean.

# PRESENTATION



# LITERACY

At the heart of the TED model is the idea of PRESENTATION LITERACY - the ability of everyone to tell their story and prepare for a talk in a way that doesn't take away the fear and anxiety, but uses it. Making a connection with your audience is like the hook in a good essay, it allows the audience in and helps them see things from your perspective. At the beginning of my presentation today, for example, I shared my story to provide you with a sense of who I am and why my message is one worth listening to. In this way, I can bring you into my world and share what I know with a new confidence that I am speaking to supporters.

Chris Anderson says in his manual: "Your goal is not to be Winston Churchill or Nelson Mandela. It's to be you. If you're a scientist, be a scientist; don't try to be an activist. If you're an artist, be an artist; don't try to be an academic. If you're just an ordinary person, don't try to fake some big intellectual style; just be you. You don't have to raise a crowd to its feet with a thunderous oration. Conversational sharing can work just as well. In fact, for most audiences, it's a lot better. If you know how to talk to a group of friends over dinner, then you know enough to speak publicly."

For our students, we provide them with everything they need to make a good presentation, right down to the number of slides and subject on which they should speak. What we sometimes take away from them is the chance to bring a bit of themselves to the table. To allow them the freedom to share who they are with us and, through a new sense of connection, find a new skill they might never of thought

they had.



Next, Anderson discusses the building of an idea which can create an amazing talk. He says, “Your number-one mission as a speaker is to take something that matters deeply to you and to rebuild it inside the minds of your listeners.”

An idea is anything that can change how people see the world. In the classroom, this might mean having students explore a larger concept through personal examination and reflection. No matter the subjects we teach, there are enduring understandings (to steal a phrase from Wiggins and McTighe) that we want all students to come away with: “Why do wars happen?”, “What is the purpose of language?”, “How have humans affected change on the planet?”

Students all approach these larger questions from different perspectives. What do these larger questions mean to them personally? How can they use what they learned in your class to help explain their understanding of these ideas?

One of the key things that students do when given the task of making a presentation is that they immediately open up the powerpoint or google slides and begin looking for pictures. The TED approach strongly promotes the idea of substance over show. A beautifully designed powerpoint is nothing without the information and research to back it up.



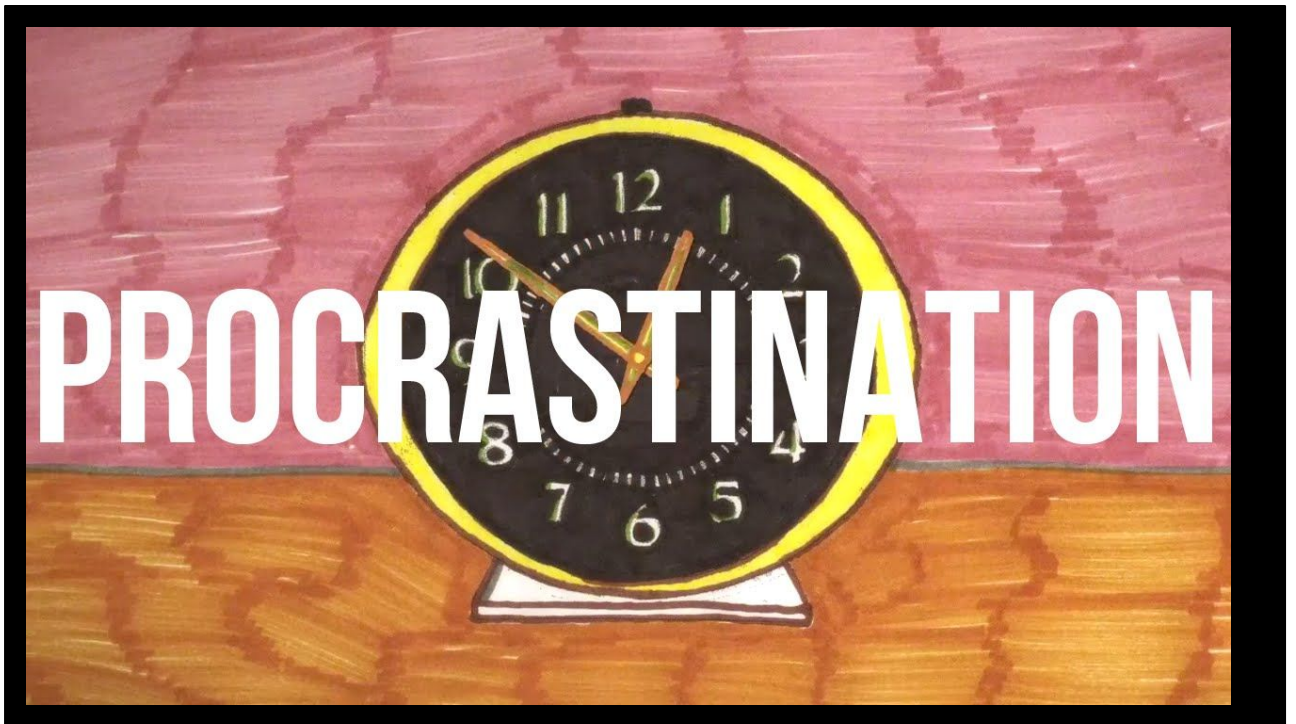


The next step in the process is believing that you have something important to say. Anderson says that the one thing you have that no one else has is your first-person experiences. Use these experiences to grab your audience, make a point, share a story, or promote an idea. Some of the best TED talks I have ever seen come not from PHDs or celebrities, but from everyday people who, through their own lives, bring something to the talk that resonates with their audience and forges a deep connection.

One of the best talks I ever heard on TED came from the mother of Dylan Klebold. Dylan Klebold was one of the two young men who initiated the massacre at Columbine High School in 1999.

The reason that this talk is so good is that Susan Klebold doesn't ask for compassion or forgiveness. In the talk she is using her experience to teach and to inform. She doesn't make excuses for what her son did, she simply says "this is my story, learn from it".





The biggest obstacle thing that many of us deal with when faced with a large task is procrastination. Putting off what you have to do for something you want to do is a vice that we share with our students. When I did my talk last year with my students and we stopped to reflect on the experience, the one single thing most of their reflections had in common was that they wished they had put in more time in the beginning. Those that had said that it made the experience that much easier for them.

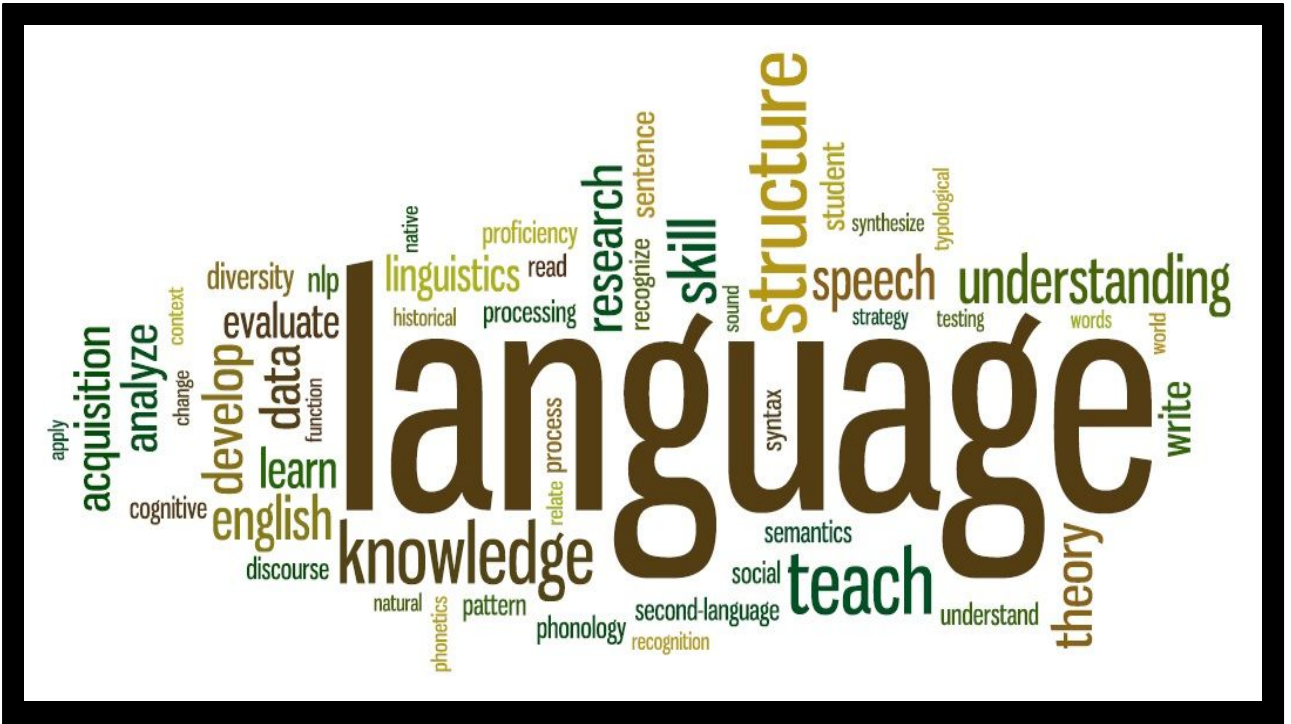
I know this is not a new revelation, but knowing that you have to do something like this can be a powerful motivator. Knowing that I had to give this talk today, I agreed to give it a week ago at our district's In-service during election day. Getting ready for two very important talks made sure I wasn't waiting until the last minute.

Some of my students, as they understood that they would control not only the presentation but the topic, said to me "Don't worry Mr. DiNenno, I got this." even when I didn't see anything on their paper. As a way to get across the idea that preparation was key, I asked a fellow teacher with a strong reputation as an academic to come and speak to the class. This teacher has given a talk at a local event a few months prior and we watched his talk as part of our opening activities. The students truly believed that he had spoken off the cuff and not prepared. I asked them to put together questions for him when he came to class. The first question asked was "how long did you prepare?" When he replied with "six weeks with repeated drafts and revisions" many of my students began to realize that they needed to step up their game a bit.

I also showed them a TED Talk from Blogger and Web guru Tim Urban on the art of Procrastination. It is a good example of how a presentation can entertain as well as inform.



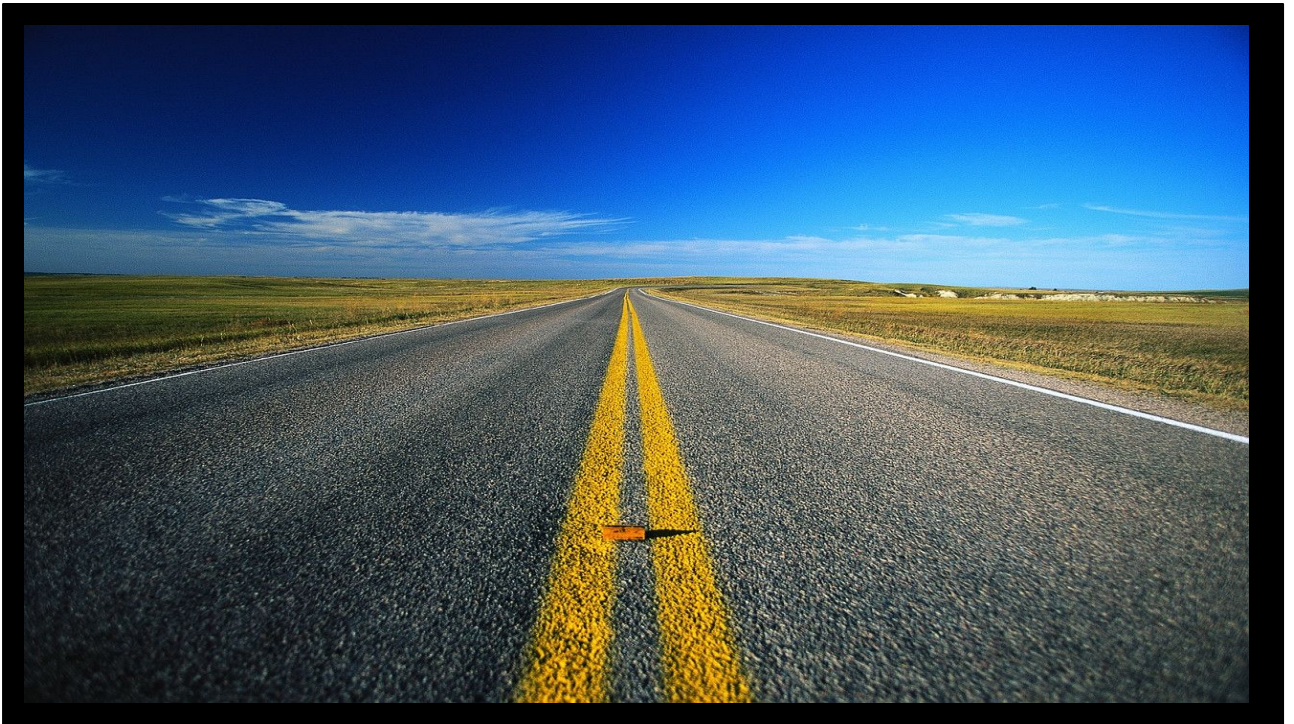




The next piece in the TED tool box for great speeches is Language. In a proper TED talk, what you say is just as, if not more, important than your images or what you wear. Most talks that have a visual component only use single images to convey the subject being discussed at the moment. Many TED talks don't even have a visual.

The use of language is an important point because, more often than not, our students work hard to choose just the right image and just the right background for their visual as if that is the entirety of their presentation. In a proper TED talk, the visual is the last piece of the puzzle. You need to form an image in your audience's mind of your story. Words can do that with much more clarity than any static image you can find on Google. One of the things that my students found challenging was that they couldn't simply put the bullet points of their speech on the screen. I allowed them to put up quotations as long as it connected to their speech and they could only use them in very specific places, like at the beginning as a hook or when they were changing topics. This presented a unique struggle for my more grade-conscious learners because they weren't entirely sure what I was grading if not for the bullets on the screen. But others took to it beautifully, as in this clip from last year's talk.

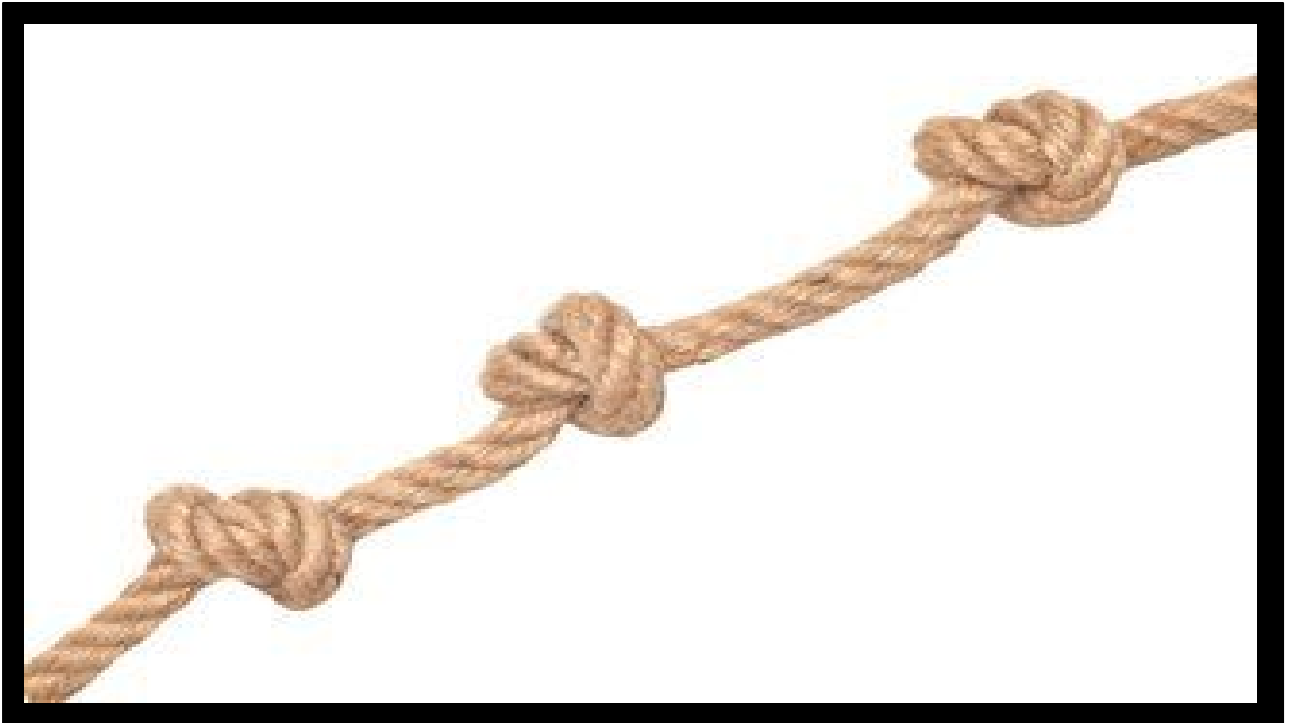




Finally, a TED talk is more than a speech, it is a journey. As the speaker, you are the tour guide, taking your audience to places they may have never been or never expected to go.

Students need to understand that they have a voice and that they should be heard. Providing them with the opportunity to explore their thoughts, share their insights and tell their stories can be a powerful vehicle. The process of putting a TED talk together is in itself a journey, both for you and your students. It allows you to provide your students with the freedom to express themselves in a new and unique way. So often they are bound by the constraints of our expectations that their message doesn't come through. They simply do what they think we want.

My seniors last year were reluctant to do this at first. For many of them, the fear they had of speaking in front of a crowd was almost too much. In the beginning I heard a lot of "I'm not doing that", "Do I have to?" and "Why are you making us do this?" As part of their journey we spent time looking at and learning from those who came before us. I also consistently told them that the talk they were going to give was about them sharing their viewpoint, taking a risk and sharing their voice. Many focused on the time limit, some were unsure about what to talk about, some simply thought they couldn't. In the end, however, many of them felt it was the most important and fulfilling thing they had done in class all year. We talked at the beginning of the year about giving back. I told them that, through this talk, they were giving us their gift of knowledge for years to come.



The steps of putting together their talk began with a look at the format of a TED talk. I explained to them that a TED talk has several parts, the most important of which is the throughline. Like a tether or rope, the through line provides the speaker, and through him or her, the audience, with a continuous overall arc that ties everything together.

The throughline is the connecting theme that ties together each element of your narrative. Your talk doesn't have to cover just one element, story or theme, but everything you discuss should connect in some way. When my students began to brainstorm their topics, I had them try to encapsulate their throughlines in 15 words or less. Some examples of solid throughlines are...:

The average person puts too much emphasis on the difficulties in their life, constructing a monster of excuses which holds them back.

Online videos can humanize the classroom and revolutionize education.

Vulnerability is something to be treasured, not hidden from.

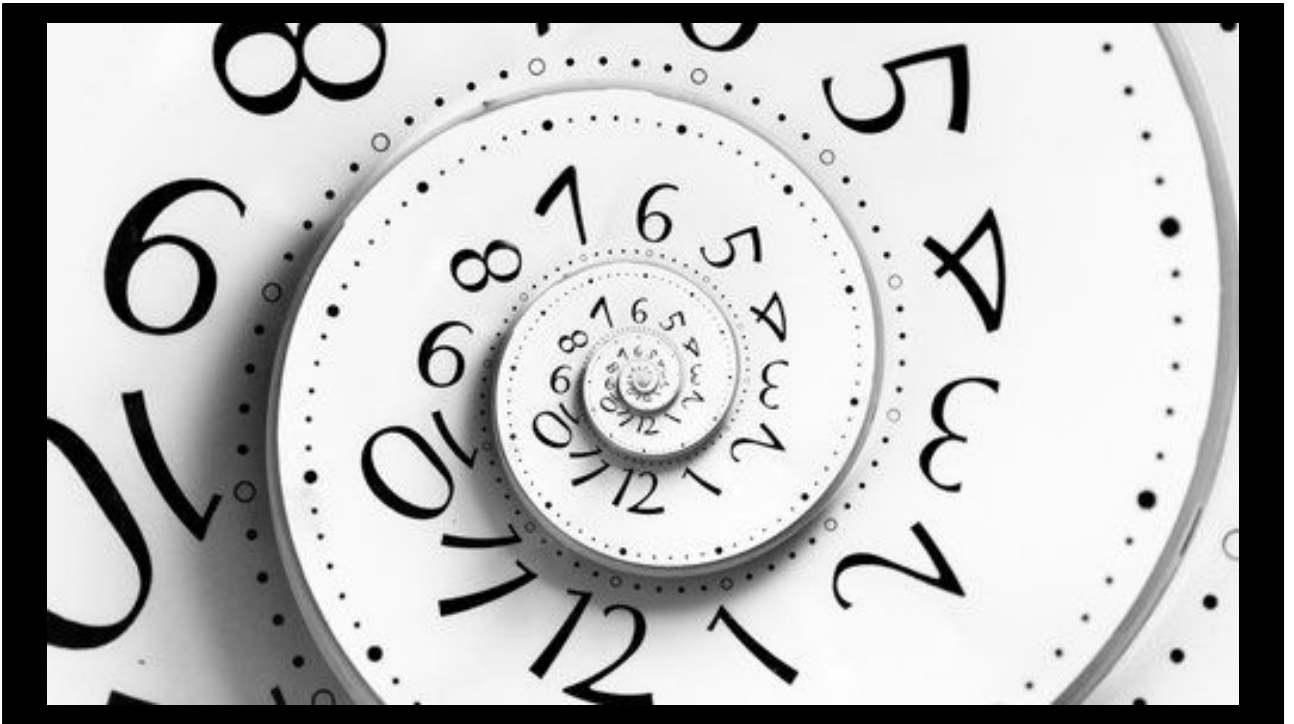
More choice actually makes us less happy.

For students, throughlines provide a structure, something to come back to and



anchor their research and ideas. It's not quite a thesis statement in that they are not trying to prove or disprove anything, rather they are trying to connect to a greater idea. The through line traces the path through your journey to the audience, pointing them in the right direction.

Some students, particularly those who feel comfortable with speaking in public, may tell you that they will just use bullet points or outline their talk and refer to it as they wing it. A few of my students who tried this found themselves struggling both at rehearsals and during the actual talk night to find the right words. They told me later that they thought their talks were not very clear and they struggled to connect their ideas. One young man assured me that he could just make it up as he went but, after a few rehearsals, came back to me with a talk all written out as he felt that the point of his talk was being missed each time he tried to make it up as he went.



One of the first things my students asked when we started this assignment was “how long do these speeches need to be?” According to the TED manual, most TED talks are around 15-18 minutes in length. TED states that 15-18 minutes seems to be short enough to hold people’s attention, especially on the internet while being long enough to be taken seriously. When I told them this, many of them turned several shades of green at the thought of speaking for almost half a class period.

I decided, however, that for the sake of scheduling and to allow all my students to present in one night, I would keep them to about 8-9 minutes. Even with that time, many of them thought they would never have enough to say in that amount of time. I stressed with them that they should not worry about the length of time for their talks, they should search for just what they want to say and write it out and talk about those points that are the most important to them. Some felt that they would need to cram their talks full of statistics, quotations and facts. Those students reached the 8 minute mark, but at the expense of the clarity of their thoughts and the truthfulness of their voice.

One of my students struggled right from the beginning with the time limit because she felt that she would never be able to come up with enough to say for that length of time. She had a few strong points to make about the world she was leaving and the world she was destined for, namely college. As we worked on what she would say and the points she wanted to make, we found that she actually needed to cut some of what she wanted to say in order to not go a full two minutes over the time. The beauty of a TED talk structure is it can, in my experience, free the students to find

their voice if we allow them the freedom and the time to explore precisely what they want to say.

Here's a bit of what that student came up with to share the lessons she learned with those just starting out in High School





The TED manual talks about preparing for your talk and the elements that you need. The first of which is the visual. My students were reluctant to go without visuals, although one of my students completed his entire talk with only one visual on the screen. The visuals they use in their talks should connect to the larger issues they are discussing. Many of my students had trouble with this because they wanted to simply put their speech up on the screen. As a compromise for some, I allowed them to use quotations which helped them express their talk's main points. In addition, we discussed how using diagrams, charts, and graphs could be beneficial if there was a need for it.

The visuals should also enhance, not take away from what you are trying to say. One student last year wanted to give his speech on a political issue and decided to use the statistics he had researched to help back up his ideas. While this may have seemed like a great idea, the gist of his talk was more about the ways in which politics is less about the numbers and more about tapping into the passions and beliefs of the public. His visuals did not support his ideas and actually became, for me at least, a bit of a distraction in the final presentation.





The second thing that my students asked me when I first presented this project to them was “Would we have to memorize their speeches” If you watch the talks on TED, almost all of them are memorized. This is where the preparation comes in. I thought about it and decided that I was not willing to sacrifice the chance for students to feel comfortable and share their stories if they also knew they had to memorize them. A few chose to try, like Dylan who you saw earlier, but many used notecards, complete written speeches and powerpoint notes to help them. This allowed them the chance to focus more on what they were saying rather than what they would do if they forgot something. This, however, prompted discussions about eye contact and not looking down as they spoke. What I discovered, however, was that during the rehearsal process, many of them managed to memorize a portion of the speech, giving them a confidence they greatly needed.

Along with memorization comes the idea that your voice needs to capture the audience. Some of the best talks we had last year came from students who were more interested in telling their story rather than what it might have sounded like. One of my students in particular struggled greatly with finding his speaking voice because he was so concerned about “getting it right” This was a student who, in class, had no trouble speaking his mind and letting us know what he was thinking. When it came time for him to give his speech, however, his over preparation constrained him and did not allow him to express his feelings on the topic, but rather lock himself into a quiet tone of voice not at all in keeping with the humor and relevance of his speech.



Finally, the last part of the process for us was rehearsal. I was not about to let my students go out there not having practiced their speeches at least a few times. As someone who spends his personal time involved in the performing arts (I work at a local theater in my area), I can tell you that rehearsal is the key to building character, confidence, and cohesion in a performance. It is no different in this instance. Public speaking is a performing art and through rehearsal we can become comfortable with the material, work out any problems and receive feedback.

Our last few days before the big event were spent in the school auditorium, the space where the actual talk would take place, allowing the students to become comfortable with hearing their voices through the sound system, standing under the stage lights, and working with the technology. The most important part of the time there was to give them feedback, not just from me but from each other. So they could learn and allow themselves the opportunity to develop their voices.



The overarching theme of our talk last year was “Finding Your Passion” The topic allowed students to explore areas that were personal to them. Many of the actual talks, however, have a much more specific focus. Many of the talks deal with women’s issues, education, environment, or innovations. The one thing they all have in common, however, is the idea of the personal narrative and connection. When planning their talks, I told my students not to think about how many people would be in the room, but rather plan their presentation as if they were speaking to just one person.

In the TED manual, author Elizabeth Gilbert says that you should “Choose a human being—an actual human being in your life—and prepare your talk as if you will be delivering it to that one person only. Choose someone whom you really like. This will bring a warmth of spirit and heart to your talk. Most of all, be sure you are actually speaking to one person, and not to a group. Just choose your one ideal listener, and then do your best to create a talk that would blow their mind, or move them, or fascinate them, or delight them.”

A few of the talks that were given during last year had students tackling very tough personal issues. One student talked about dealing with the struggle of his mother’s continued health problems after suffering a stroke a few years back, another talked about having to continue in High School after the death of his mother to cancer. The TED manual suggests that, instead of focusing your talk on the events, you should find the message you want to convey within these personal situations and stick to that. If your students, for example, want their talk to be about their struggle with their

identity, a personal battle with a disease, or a family crisis, it is important that they know that they only need to share what they are comfortable sharing.

One of my students decided he would focus his talk on his own struggles as a middle school student when the unthinkable happened, the loss of his mother to cancer. He decided to connect to our theme by teaching a lesson that you shouldn't let those things in your life that seem overwhelming rob you of your dreams or your passion. He began his talk with examples from history of people who had overcome great obstacles like George Washington Carver, but he ended his talk by sharing his own story. It was the type of personal connection students rarely make in the classroom, let alone in an auditorium with nearly 100 people in it.

Here's an excerpt from that talk...







When the evening was over, it was time to reflect on each student thought they had done. We spent a few days on this, both in writing and in group discussions. Many of the students who had been reluctant to speak or even terrified found that the experience left them feeling a strong sense of accomplishment. They had tackled a fear and, even if they never did it again (and a lot of them joked they probably wouldn't) they felt proud that they had done it. It also allowed them to see a bit of themselves and to learn about each other in new and exciting ways.

On the tables are worksheets for helping your students analyze the TED talks they may watch as part of the project as well as graphic organizers to help them put together their ideas. I have also provided you with the initial packet I gave them for the unit, outlining the expectations for the talk. It was a project I am excited to try again this year.

The entire project took roughly 5 weeks from introduction to reflection. Along the way, there were frustrations, successes, and triumphs. The project started out as a challenge for them, but it turned out to be a challenge for me as well. Helping my students break free of their comfort zones helped me to grow and learn as a teacher.

I would like to end this morning's presentation with my favorite TED Video, Rita Pierson, a 40 year educator, who gives the most uplifting talk from the perspective of an educator.

I hope you have the chance to do this with your students. You won't regret it. Thank

you.

