



Supplemental Materials

for

Development of Oral Communication Skills by Undergraduates that Convey Evolutionary Concepts to the Public

Lacy M. Cleveland^{1*} and Robert J. Reinsvold²

¹*MAST Institute, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639,*

²*School of Biological Sciences, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639*

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*Corresponding author. Mailing address: MAST Institute, University of Northern Colorado, Campus Box 123, 501 20th Street, Greeley, CO 80639. Phone: 970-351-1511. E-mail: lacy.cleveland@unco.edu.
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Communicating Science with Non-scientists

For this assignment we want you to practice your skills of oral communication and apply your content knowledge in evolutionary principles to a broader audience. Your task is to initiate, conduct, and record a conversation between you and someone from the general public. This person can be relative, friend, or even someone you meet on the street. Preferably, select a person that is not trained in science, or at least not in biology so you can truly develop your own ability to share what you know and listen to their perspectives.

To start the conversation, we want you to use one of the statements below as opener and ask if they agree or disagree with the statement. It doesn't really matter which stance they take on the statement since it is only intended to get things going.

As you listen to their ideas, consider the following elements in your own contribution to the discussion: Claim, Evidence, Reasoning, and Argument (CERA). The claim is your statement. Evidences are the examples or data that you may be able to provide supporting your claim. Reasoning occurs when the speaker connects claim and evidence to the overall understanding of the concept, i.e. what does the concept mean? The argument is how you pull all the elements into an overall give-and-take conversation.

After listening to their initial responses to the opening statements, try to ask more follow-up questions so you truly understand their points of view. Be both a good listener and a good contributor in the conversation. We do want to see if you can articulate your own understanding of the concepts and add to the conversation, yet we don't want the conversation to be one-sided. Are you listening to your friend? Can you back your own claims with evidence? Or you revealing your reasoning by connecting your claims and evidence to the concepts? Can you communicate your argument thoroughly and yet sensibly? And, can you understand the reasoning from the perspective of your friend? The main point is not to "*win the argument*"; it is to share ideas and understand each other. Rather than a competition, see if you can approach this conversation as a collaboration for mutual understanding.

Record your conversation. To keep the conversation open and candid, please do not identify by name yourself or your fellow converser in the recording. We would like at least 3 minutes of recorded conversation. When you are done, send your recording to me at professor@university.edu as an attachment with the "Oral Com Project" in the subject line. This is due by XX/XX/20XX @ 11:59 PM. You will be graded on whether you complete and submit the recording and not on what you or your converser actually say. So don't be worried, just enjoy.

General statements about evolution to use as conversation started (some are common misconceptions):

- Evolution is “just” a theory.
- Evolution results in progress; organisms are always getting better through evolution.
- Evolution only occurs slowly and gradually.
- Humans are not currently evolving.
- Evolution is not science because it is not observable or testable.
- Gaps in the fossil record disprove evolution.
- Natural selection is about survival of the very fittest individuals in a population.
- Natural selection acts for the good of the species.