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BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING

Brand-Building Pedagogy: Professional Self-Branding for Career Advancement in Kinesiology

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ABSTRACT

Teaching a student how to get a job is just as important as teaching them how to do that job. This article identifies practical resources geared towards building self-awareness regarding students' personal brands, including identifying strengths, as well as areas for improvement for career advancement. A personal brand includes skills and experiences on a resume, a professional photograph, a professional philosophy, communication abilities, and behavior/personality attributes. Sample projects from two different universities—(a) "Brand Me" and (b) "Brand You"—are provided to exhibit how personal branding can be exemplified in pedagogical forms that are advantageous for both learners and educators. The outlined projects can be implemented in various related academic fields of study (i.e., physical education, health promotion, coaching education). This work addresses pedagogical goals and instructional outcomes of communication strategies, self-marketing skills, critical thinking and reflection, and technological implementation for sport management and kinesiology students. Such goals are accomplished through the examination of representative self-marketing tools (e.g., infographic resumes, virtual presentations, branded websites) and signifying the application of such tools, including addressing nuisances pertaining to how such methods can be integrated into sport management and kinesiology pedagogy.

Introduction

This article addresses technology integrated pedagogical approaches used to enhance college students in their personal branding development in sport-based curriculum. This article identifies principle aspects associated with providing students with practical resources geared toward building self-awareness regarding their personal brands, including identifying strengths and areas for improvement. A personal brand includes skills and experiences on a resume, professional photograph, voice recording, and behavior/personality attributes. While illustrating skills, experiences, and other attributes to prospective employers and other desired publics, students can develop materials to not only learn more about themselves personally but also through producing tangible products that can be beneficial for communicating the students' personal brands.

This work addresses pedagogical goals and instructional outcomes of communication strategies, self-marketing skills, critical thinking and reflection, and technological implementation for sport management and kinesiology students. Such goals are accomplished through the examination of representative self-marketing tools (e.g., infographic resumes, virtual presentations, branded websites) and signifying the application of such tools, including addressing nuisances pertaining to how such methods can be integrated into sport management and kinesiology pedagogy. Additionally, although the outlined projects are associated with sport management and kinesiology curriculum, the concepts offered in this work can be implemented in various related academic fields of study (i.e., physical education, health promotion, coaching education).

Emerging technology in sport management education

Educators often engage in instruction that is conducive to nurturing student learning and promoting professional development initiatives. Using innovative technological resources and pedagogical strategies in course curriculum, learners benefit from effective teaching strategies that can enhance professional preparation. Pedersen and Thibault (2014) recognized the significance of technological innovation by ascertaining its significance in the role of sport-based educators. Additional scholars (e.g., Fetchko, Roy, & Clow, 2013; Parkhouse & Turner, 2012; Ross, Hoff, & Kroll, 2014) have also echoed the importance of reflection by educators and students regarding applicable skills and proficiencies associated with employment in sport. Moreover, educators should embrace and promote proper educational groundwork through learning and using innovative instruction (Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016a, 2016b). Such goals may be achieved through the integration of web 2.0 tools, such as social media networking and other technological resources (i.e., podcasts, wikis, web development, infographic development).

Sport management and kinesiology educators are to be conscientious of the importance of providing learners with an appropriate knowledge and skill-base for being equipped to embark into the workplace. Accordingly, a comprehensive base of knowledge incorporates aspects such as being aware of trends and developments impacting the sport industry, as well as related technological innovations and job-seeking proficiencies impacting contemporary job markets. Correspondingly, sport management educators may effectively promote the incorporation of technology while preparing students to enter the workforce. As entrance into working in the sport industry dictates the capability to distinguish one's self from their referent others, distinction may be achieved in assorted ways, incorporating actions such as expanding one's professional network (Fetchko et al., 2013; Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016a, 2016b; Parkhouse & Turner, 2012). Such efforts can demonstrate the value for implementing assignments that accentuate such characteristics. The assignments covered in this article will address job-related skills in audio, visual and written communication.

The Chronicle of Higher Education identified that infographics are tools that allow students to "visually convey trends and progressions" on resumes (Salter, 2014, p. 2). Figures 1, 2, and 3 express visualizations that demonstrate the difference between text-based content and infographic-based content.

Infographics utilize an amalgamation of visuals and words that are able to quickly relate complex qualitative and/or quantitative data for observers (Toth, 2013). Infographic resumes serve various purposes, as they are able to highlight personal skills, training, experiences, and other personal qualities, while also demonstrating a person's creative abilities. While

providing a level of distinctiveness, these tools can serve as a platform for making traditional print resumes more memorable in a reviewer's mind (Morgan, 2014). Infographics are useful as they "are willingly shared because they are self-contained pieces of communication and do not require much time for audiences to comprehend them" (Toth, 2013, p. 450).

A resume serves as a remote (not-live) representation of an individual's abilities and experiences. Such text-based documents are able to "come to life" when transformed into infographic resumes. Infographic resumes are richer perceptually than solely text-based artifacts, as the provided images are able to demonstrate a visual depth that can aid in
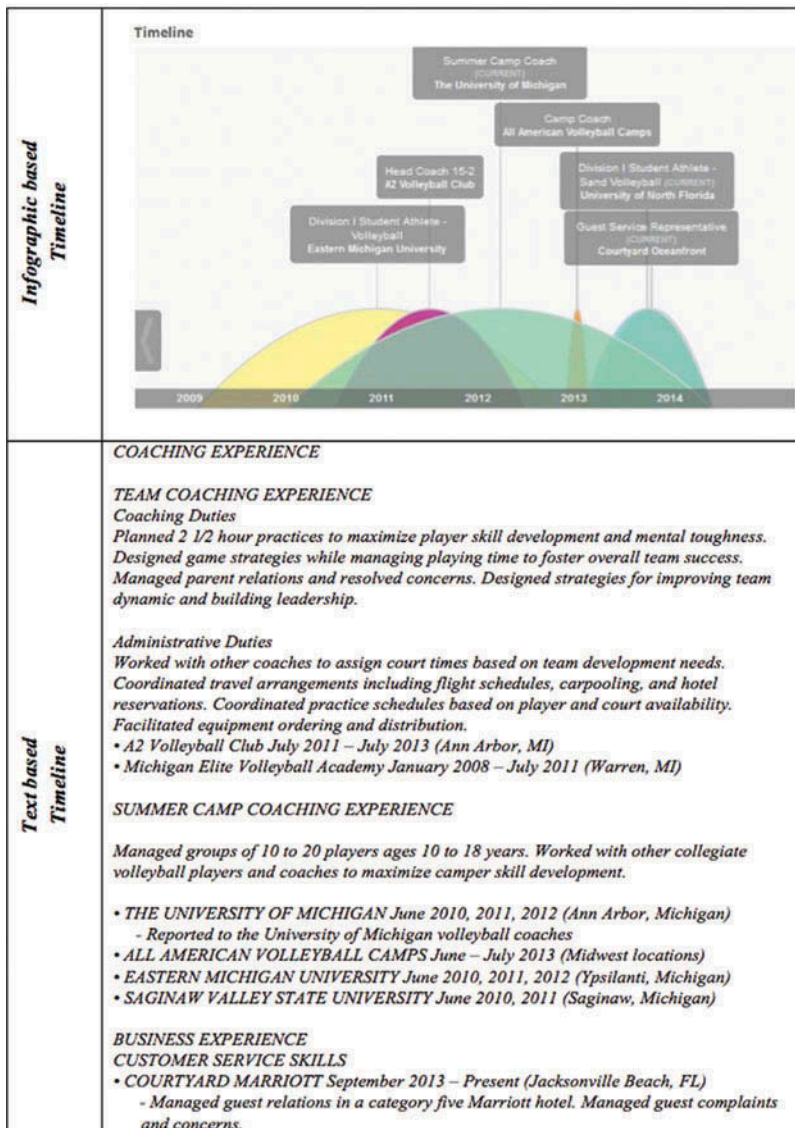

Figure 1. Sample comparison of resume information, including work experience timeline and in both textual and infographic formats.
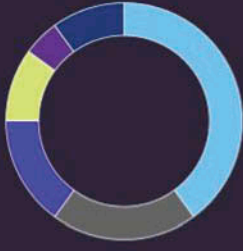
Figure 2. Sample comparison of job duties presented through both textual and infographic formats.

recall by viewers (Goolkasian & Foos, 2002). While resumes tend to follow a predictable and generic format, the ability to convey charting elements provides an engaging presentation for transmitting information in a more engaging form, rather than merely presenting text-based content (Tal & Wasnik, 2014). This is the essence of the ability of

Figure 3. Sample comparison sample work products presented as both textual and infographic formats.

infographic resumes to empower applicants to reveal greater innovation, while further distinguishing themselves from other names on a list or faces in a crowd (Morgan, 2014).

The use of infographics has flourished in the digital age, as their application is readily implemented in popular print materials, websites, new services, and social networking services including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest (Toth, 2013). A further testament to the proliferation of infographics is seen in the growth of website references to infographics. Toth (2013) noted that when conducting a Google search for the term "infographics," he generated more than 17 million hits. Lee and Cavanaugh (2016a) conducted a search yielding a return of over 71.5 million results in 2015, and the authors of this article yielded 98.7 million hits when searching the term at the time of this writing.

Lee and Cavanaugh (2016a, 2016b) described the integration of resumes and personal infographics as valuable personal branding resources that are able to communicate career preparatory visualizations into curricular efforts through engaging website programs such as tools such as Kinzaa.com, Piktochart.com, Re.vu, and Vizualize.me. These programs are easily accessible on computers and free to users.

Sample assignments

To demonstrate the value of "self-branding" instruction, two sample projects—(a) "Brand Me" and (b) "Brand You"—are provided to exhibit how personal branding can be exemplified in pedagogical forms that are advantageous for both learners and educators. The following sections detail projects that have been utilized at two separate universities catering to sport management and kinesiology students.

Brand Me: Infographic resume

The "Brand Me" project serves as a capstone project that is incorporated into the graduate level *Sport Marketing and Promotions* course at a university in the Southeast United States. In recent years, this particular course has provided students a great opportunity to learn valuable self-marketing skills resulting in developing a quality final product in the form of infographic resumes—a visually appealing, informative, and versatile implementation that can be useful for job pursuits. The "Brand Me" project provides a medium where students are able to apply infographics through the development of engaging infographic resumes while comparing and contrasting the advantages of such artifacts in comparison to the traditional resume. In its role as a capstone project for the *Sport Marketing and Promotions* course, this project is able to reinforce course content, while providing a means for student reflection and self-analysis pertaining to numerous themes with which they were presented during the semester. Specifically, the concept of branding was a principle theme of this course, and this focus extended to application and analysis of people brands.

Discussions of personal brands were implemented in activities during the semester, and these exposures allowed students to address how individuals can develop their own personal brand while examining both the positive and negative ramifications of self-branding. Correspondingly, students were repeatedly reminded of the importance of taking part in actions that allow them to positively "stand out" from referent others, all the while being mindful of identifying measures for further boosting their own personal credentials. As such, students were routinely encouraged to acquire further professional knowledge and abilities,

while enhancing their communication skills. Opportunities were afforded to students for learning more about themselves and others connected to these discussions throughout the semester. In turn, constructing individual infographic resumes built off of these practices. Consequently, principles related to comprehension and effective communication delivery practices as well as mechanisms aimed at generating greater recall of applicants' background experiences are valuable pedagogical implementations (Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016a, 2016b). Furthermore, such implementations can also serve as a viable component of an individual's visual identity or self-branding (Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016a, 2016b).

The conceptions of what makes individuals positively stand out were further reinforced in the student reflection forum of the "Brand Me" assignment. Students were given the opportunity to share their infographic resumes with their classmates. Accordingly, students were able to further benefit as they could learn from receiving constructive feedback resulting from collaborative learning activities, which provided added points of value. Such interactions also provided an education atmosphere where students could identify individual strengths or suggest improvements that might be able to benefit the students as they seek to further bolster their infographic resumes in the future.

As a further point of learning, students were able to take part in a course follow-up discussion board activity that served as a means of incorporating critical thinking and reflection opportunities. By taking part in this discussion activity, students detailed the approaches that they used to successfully utilize and further elaborated on the "message" they were seeking to convey. The students engaged their critical thinking skills when they provided in-depth analysis of the communication goals of their infographic. Some of the true value in the project comes from the interaction of sharing their experiences with the instructor and their peers. Critical thinking and reflection were exhibited in this assignment, as learners appraised central course components. Most importantly, such activities allowed students the opportunity to reflect and provide feedback to their peers by comparing traditional resumes (which were also made available for comparison and contrast) with their infographic resumes.

In reviewing typical feedback provided through these activities, numerous themes have emerged based on developing and the subsequent reflection of the infographic resume. Such themes include identifying the aesthetic benefits of the final product (the infographic resume), the capacity for adding additional detail (i.e., added content beyond what can appear in a traditional one- or two-page resume), and the prospects of "stand out" through non-traditional channels. Additional consideration was given to the final product, as learners routinely viewed infographic resumes as tools that are educational, functional, and engaging, as well as through the acknowledgment benefits of conveying infographic resumes to prospective employers.

Brand You: Professional philosophy

A second project integrating personal branding is the "Brand You" assignment in *Sport Management and Marketing*. This course is taught at a university in the Southern United States, where it is a required course for the Master's of Science in Kinesiology and the Master's of Education in Sport and Exercise Leadership degrees. This class is heavily comprised of coaches and athletic department personnel. The purpose of the project was for students to learn unique ways to develop their personal brand and communicate their

philosophy online using a visual and audio presentation platform. The project challenged the students to use the presentation to apply for a job or for recruiting athletes at the college level. "Vision, Mission, Values, and Measures" was the philosophy framework selected to help communicate brand-related topics to their audience. The vision section drives their personal philosophy. For example, a vision statement might say "to be recognized as an effective athletic director that promotes both academic and athletic excellence at the collegiate level by providing supportive services to enhance the performance of coaches, student-athletes, and administrative athletic staff." The mission explains how the student would plan to provide the services to the coaches, student-athletes, and administrative athletic staff. The values section elaborates on the core values the student has for performing their job. The measures would list specific ways they will measure their performance to ensure they are meeting their overall job-related goals. For example, one measurable outcome could be the grade point average of all teams.

For the "Brand You" assignment, students are instructed to develop their *Vision, Mission, Values, and Measures* using the guidelines outlined in the "1,000-word writing assignment" rubric (see Figure 3). As the professional philosophy statement is a common component of job application materials for careers in kinesiology, it is important that students have an opportunity to develop, get feedback, and improve their professional philosophy statements. The writing assignment is used to assist the student in organizing and developing the material for their professional philosophy presentation. The student then converts the information in a virtual presentation using Prezi (available at prezi.com; see Figure 4), a free presentation website. The student then records the audio presentation using Screencastomatic (available at screencastomatic.com). All of the produced materials then are displayed on a free blog service provided by Weebly (available at weebly.com). In addition, a sample grading rubric of the writing assignment portion of the professional philosophy statement is provided in Figure 5 to provide a description of how the students will be evaluated. An updated and complete grading rubric for both course assignments can be accessed by corresponding with the authors using the emails provided.

Students should master their brand communication skills prior to entering the job market, as technology is enhancing the application process (Elmore, 2010). Employers are able to develop a more selective approach to the hiring process. A professional philosophy can help illustrate the experiences outlined in the resume. It can transform the bullet-

Figure 4. Sample work from a "Brand You" audio/visual philosophy presentation submitted by a student.

Criteria	Levels of Achievement		
	Novice	**Competent**	**Proficient**
Why do you teach? (200+ words) Probing Questions: Why are you drawn to the rewards and challenges of teaching? What is it that you can accomplish in teaching that you find particularly valuable and worthwhile? When you teach, for example, you can mentor students and contribute to their intellectual growth, gain new perspectives on topics that occupy your research, and re-examine the key ideas and assumptions that shape the production of knowledge in your field. **V**MVM Presentation Requirements: A) Vision Statement- One Sentence B) Vision Slogan- Slogan with explanation C) Vision Bullet Points- 3 bullet points describing the vision further.	**0 to 2 points** Words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content lacks clarity.	**4 to 6 points** Response is less than 200 words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates minimal critical thinking skills. The response lacks clarity or the answer does not provide a complete thought or statement.	**8 to 10 points** Response is over 200 words and minimal grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates critical thinking skills and the response is concise/ accurate.
What do you teach? (300+ words) Probing Questions: What are the specific subjects and courses you are prepared to teach? What are your objectives for student learning? Why are these objectives important? Do your objectives differ depending on the type of course or the background of students you are teaching? If so, how? What should students gain from taking your courses? Examples include an understanding of foundational concepts in the field, sophistication as critical thinkers, or the ability to write concise and well-supported arguments. V**M**VM Presentation Requirements: A) Mission Statement B) Graph/Picture: Picture should conceptualize your mission C) Mission Summary: 1-2 sentences about your mission. D) Values Summary: 1-3 sentences about your values.	**0 to 2 points** Words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content lacks clarity.	**4 to 6 points** Response is less than 200 words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates minimal critical thinking skills. The response lacks clarity or the answer does not provide a complete thought or statement.	**8 to 10 points** Response is over 300 words and minimal grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates critical thinking skills and the response is concise/ accurate.
How do you measure your effectiveness? (300+ words) Probing Questions: How do you know whether you are meeting your objectives? How can you tell if your students are learning? How do you use student evaluations to develop new strategies for engaging student participation or to meet other objectives? Has your teaching been observed by a faculty member or other evaluator? If so, how did you use the feedback provided to improve your teaching skills? Have you had a class or teaching presentation videotaped? If so, what did you learn from this experience? VMV**M** Presentation Requirements: A) Measure: 4-5 objective measures of each item described in the vision, mission and value statements. Contact Information: Name/email/phone/social media	**0 to 2 points** Words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content lacks clarity.	**4 to 6 points** Response is less than 200 words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates minimal critical thinking skills. The response lacks clarity or the answer does not provide a complete thought or statement.	**8 to 10 points** Response is over 300 words and minimal grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates critical thinking skills and the response is concise/ accurate.
How do you plan to demonstrate your faith in your future profession? (200+ words) Probing Questions: How does your faith shape your moral and ethical standards? How does your work ethic relate to your faith? Explain how your relationship with Christ shapes the way you interact with others in your profession? What does it mean to be a Christian Coach/teacher/doctor/whatever your future profession may be?	**0 to 2 points** Words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content lacks clarity.	**4 to 6 points** Response is less than 200 words or multiple grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates minimal critical thinking skills. The response lacks clarity or the answer does not provide a complete thought or statement.	**8 to 10 points** Response is over 200 words and minimal grammar errors are present. The content demonstrates critical thinking skills and the response is concise/ accurate.
5 Articles Use 5 scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles.	**0 to 2 points** Citations are incorrect or lacking in the amount.	**4 to 6 points** Less than 5 articles are cited properly.	**8 to 10 points** The presentation used 5 or more articles cited in the text and at the end of the paper.

Figure 5. Sample rubric used for Brand You presentation.

pointed job titles and position-related skills into real life experiences that employers can connect with on a more personal level. The audio/visual presentation bridges the gap from words on paper to an actual person, with a real voice telling their professional development journey, potentially positioning themselves as the top candidate. The audio/visual presentation is a three-minute voiceover presentation utilizing screen capture software and presentation tools.

This project is accompanied by three in-class opportunities to provide peer-to-peer feedback in a small group setting. The first in-class meeting objective is to identify and discuss their vision and mission. The second meeting focuses on values and measures. The first two meetings are designed to help foster understanding of the assignment requirements while applying critical thinking skills and collaborative insight in project development. In the third meeting, students play their 3—5 minute audio/visual presentation for the class to see and hear. Following the presentations, students write down specific anonymous feedback that is collected by the professor to give to each student at the end of class.

The presenting student has an opportunity to verbally reflect on ways they could improve their presentation. The students in the course also provide additional verbal feedback on ways to generally improve the presentation. The purpose of the third meeting is to provide an opportunity for the student to self-evaluate their own work and determine if the materials could be improved based on peer feedback. At the fourth meeting, the final project is turned in for a grade (See Appendix A).

The three in-class meeting sessions preparation approach was designed to optimize the professional communication between graduate students, and foster mutually beneficial professional relationships. In these sessions, students are able to interactively engage, while discussing implications of creating a specific presentation for each company they are applying with. The practice of tailoring the philosophy presentation to include the organization's logo was also discussed to further enhance and specify their efforts of branding themselves. Furthermore, the in-class discussion of materials provided the most in-depth collaboration opportunities between peer groups. The peer-to-peer feedback fosters communication skills and critical thinking strategies that are valuable for use in career settings.

Discussion

Beyond gaining the requisite skills and the appropriate practical experience, prospective employees are to also be mindful of effective ways for communication their skills, experiences, and aptitudes in a visible and compelling manner. Projects such as "Brand Me" and "Brand You" allow students and teachers to benefit from engaging in and the ability to demonstrate higher-level communication skills. The evolution of these projects has also paid dividends by affording students a greater platform skill development and professional experience acquisition. The skills gleaned can further be beneficial as students apply new practical knowledge to their professional development, professional networking enhancement, and career progression.

By detailing effective practices involving instruction that promotes self-branding, this article details two different course assignments provided at separate academic institutions by delivering insightful introspection regarding the connection between self-awareness

and self-promotion. Such mindfulness can result in greater opportunities for students to present themselves in a positive light while strengthening themselves as they progress in their professional futures. The most fruitful component of each assignment is the peer evaluation and self-reflection process. Learning and collaborating within a peer group offers an opportunity for feedback in a more informal setting, thus, optimizing the creative process needed to excel in a career in kinesiology. As the career choice of a kinesiology graduate may range from a coach, sport manager, physical education teacher, or exercise physiologist, these branding projects allow for flexibility in professional choice, while providing for individual professional growth and development.

In addition, students may find these materials to be helpful in landing a job that is more closely aligned with their personal philosophy and more likely to lead to a more appropriate employment match. Employers benefit from these materials by learning more about their prospective candidates prior to the interview. Students benefit from being able to illustrate their job skills, experience, and professional philosophy prior to the interview. Educators should also explain how the materials might guide the students away from specific jobs. For example, the hiring administrator may find information on the philosophy statement that would discourage the employer from hiring. The alternative approach to this would be to consider if the additional material is increasing job offers or decreasing the occurrence. Students should also be mindful to follow employer requirements when applying for jobs. Students may opt to post a link to the additional materials on the resume rather than providing the additional materials upfront if the job application requirement does not allow extra materials.

Conclusion

Material offered in this article proposes that personal branding is a significant process that should be integrated into kinesiology curriculum. Information detailing sample projects aimed at providing evidence of students' self-marketing skills and supporting personal reflection is detailed. Engaging and innovative personal branding artifacts (e.g., infographic resumes, websites, Prezis) can serve as beneficial tools for individuals pursuing employment. Such tools can present a form of visualization that is able to transcend the traditional resume (Lee & Cavanaugh, 2016a, 2016b).

As the reach of social networking will undoubtedly continue to proliferate, the value of such media can have a great impact on how individuals are able to communicate messages that they seek to convey. By designing a philosophy audio/visual presentation, students can tell the "story" using their voice and professional experiences to illustrate their brand.

This article included information detailing sound pedagogical efforts aimed at benefiting students as they build and enhance their personal brands in an educational yet powerful manner. Students' ability to implement sound technological practices augments the education and practical value of such assignments. The visually appealing and informative artifacts allow students the ability to distinguish themselves from others. Appropriately, it is incumbent that educators equip students to meet such needs by providing them with the wherewithal to aid them in such differentiation. Future research should investigate the uses and preferences of employers with digital technology resources as proposed in this article. As the information in Morgan's (2014) book was applied to create this project, research is still being developed to determine the effectiveness of these practices in the field.

Traditional graduate programs may not initially include new technology integration or professional development as important skills to teach within a graduate curriculum. However, the professional marketplace requires skills such as these to secure and keep employment. Educational experiences such as these should mimic what is expected in the professional marketplace and should continue to change in accordance with technology. For example, introducing opportunities to mock interview over live internet-based video feed would be a valuable experience very similar to how employers are using technology to enhance their employee selection process. In addition, Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) (2016) standards for promoting student communication skills are able to be addressed while addressing institutional or programmatic learning outcomes and identified course learning objectives. The application of such assignments adheres to the COSMA (2016) standard communication competencies related to sport-based communication forms that can be conveyed to others. The technology skills required for successful completion of this assignment may transfer to other valuable skills in the job setting. For example, displaying reports and data using the same type of technology may provide an opportunity to "stand-out" with engaging material.

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Appendix A: Brand You 4 Meeting Schedule

Meeting 1: Professor spends about 3—5 minutes going over the directions and students talk about their project.

Activity 1 15 minutes: Get in groups of 2 to share your philosophy. Spend 3—5 minutes each talking about the content in your project. Provide feedback to each other about ways to improve clarity.

Activity 2 15 minutes: Repeat Activity 1 with another partner.

Activity 3 15 minutes: Find another partner and present the changes you need to make to your presentation. Listen to the feedback and make note of the changes that need to be made. Ask any questions that arise from this peer-activity.

Meeting 2: Students will meet with the same people from Meeting 1. However, in this meeting, they will show their rough draft presentation.

Activity 1 15 minutes: Get in groups of 2 to share your philosophy. Spend 3—5 minutes each watching the digital presentation. Students should also talk about the improvements from Meeting 1 and any additional changes that need to be made.

Activity 2 15 minutes: Repeat Activity 1 with the second partner from Meeting 1.

Activity 3 15 minutes: Find someone you have not met with and present your material.

Meeting 3: Students play their 3—5 minute audio/visual presentation for the class to see and hear. Following the presentations, students write down specific anonymous feedback that is collected by the professor to give to each student at the end of class. The student presenting also has about 2 minutes to give verbal feedback to themselves in front of the group on things they see that need to improve. The time frame for this project depends on the number of people in the class.

Meeting 4: Students turn in the presentation for a grade.