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Trustee Education and
Board Development visit
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Effective Public Speaking for Boards of Education

Module 13

Participate in this seminar to learn more about effective communications and public speaking. Module 13 workshop and resource materials include these important topics:

- The importance of public speaking to the work of the school board and school board members;
- Ideas for managing public speaking anxiety and feelings;
- Thinking clearly in preparing presentations; and,
- Presenting effectively to an audience.

STEWARDSHIP

RELATIONSHIP

LEADERSHIP

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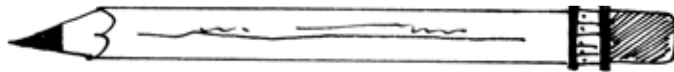
Importance of Public Speaking

Public speaking is an art form nearly as old as humanity itself. Effective public speaking is influence. Influence is leadership!! Leadership is the primary function of a school board member in new and emerging roles and expectations.

Trusteeship is different than it was a few decades ago. Clearly, many of the functions of policy making and administering the school division remain the same as does the legislation that outlines the duties of school board members. However, recent changes in the definition of schooling, as presented by School^{PLUS} implementation, and growing demands of the school division publics necessitate changes in the way school division leadership is provided. Greater participation in the affairs of the school division is required and desired to make sure that students are more successful in their studies and in life. Greater demands for information about the affairs of the school division and student success require more and better communication and dialogue. Greater change in the number of factors that impact on education and learning require greater knowledge and open debate in a public environment. Greater board member public speaking skills are required for the accomplishment of personal and school division goals and to pursue personal responsibility.

Successful school divisions and school board members are able to present their message clearly, concisely, and effectively. Board members with strong public speaking skills are perceived as highly confident, competent and convincing. They tend to be more persuasive speakers; more effective and focused communicators; speakers who inspire trust in their listeners and give presentations that are shorter, more efficient and more exciting to small and large groups, in formal and informal settings.

Notes

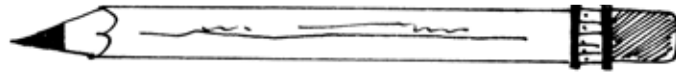


Communications involves both speaking and listening, and also checking for understanding. This is not easy. Thus, effective leaders always stand up and speak -- in good times and bad -- to address concerns and issues, to inform, to exhort, to cheer, to heal or to inspire. They persuade people when they appeal to them as human beings--with emotions, desires and thoughts like all other human beings, not when they view them as faceless “employees,” “parents”, or “public.” Public speaking, more than any other media, humanizes the message; it puts a face on the organization.

An efficient, thorough board member may be able to cite facts or details or lists, but that’s not how persuasion works. People want a chance to consider and question the proposal in the flesh. Documents merely set up a meeting and record what the meeting decided. Anyone serious about an idea welcomes the chance to present it himself—in person. People persuade people. It’s a human enterprise.

Effective public speakers do so with a clear head, clear thought and clear speech. The way they feel, prepare and present determines how effective they are in communicating their ideas to their publics and in prompting them to take desired action. Face-to-face communication is still the most powerful and effective, and public speaking is one form of face-to-face communication.

Notes



Fear of Public Speaking

School board members cannot avoid speaking in public. They exercise their responsibilities as members of the school board through discussion and dialogue with fellow members of the board, school division employees, parents, ratepayers, members of other organizations, interest groups, the media and ratepayers. They present school division policies and decisions developed after study, debate and presentation of their ideas. An effective board member knows that a successful speaker achieves the goals of expression, listener satisfaction and desired rewards. However, in doing so, the public speaker must have a clear head, uncluttered by thoughts and feelings that interfere with the preparation and presentation of the speech or conversation.

Everyone is afraid of giving a presentation. Even the most experienced and proficient public speakers have a certain anxiety about making a presentation. Research has shown that North Americans are more afraid of public speaking than they are of snakes, heights, or death itself.

When you are invited to speak publicly, do you suffer from stage fright, nervousness, dry mouth, or fear of making a fool of yourself? Do you have butterflies in the stomach, sweaty palms, shaking knees?

Researchers have identified five common concerns that contribute to the fear and anxiety associated with public speaking. These include the speaker's previous public speaking experiences, fear of being in the spotlight, fear of being judged, amount of preparation for the speech, and amount of experience (or lack, thereof) in delivering a speech to a particular audience or on a specific topic. They include physical fear of the audience; fear of being ridiculed; fear of making a fool of yourself; fear that what you have to say is not important; and fear that you will bore the audience. This is further amplified by an emerging "culture of fear" surrounding public speaking which suggests that we are supposed to be afraid. Yet it's clear that effective interpersonal communication – and that mostly means speaking – correlates highly with personal and professional success.

Effective speakers have learned to manage their fear rather than allowing the fear to have an adverse effect on their performance. They realize that 90% of nervousness doesn't even show. The audience usually can't see the butterflies, or shaky hands, or sweaty palms. A little nervousness is positive – like the performance anxiety of an athlete or an artist before an important event – because it means you want to do well and it will drive you to perform better. The problem occurs when we start thinking about these symptoms rather than focusing on the audience and our topic. By human nature, most people are focused on themselves not on you. Focus on them and two things will happen: 1) they will like you more, and 2) much of the nervousness that you feel will go away.

The key to breaking down the fear barrier is to identify your fear of public speaking and understand its sources. Rather than giving in to your fear and refusing to give a public speech, you must learn ways to work through your fear and become more confident in your ability as a speaker. A person who is confident in front of a group gives off an air of competence, whereas a person who fumbles might leave a negative impression. Success in public speaking depends on two factors: confidence and competence, both of which tend to improve with practice.

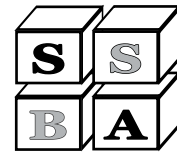
How do you acquire them? Becoming a good speaker requires an ongoing mediation between our personal and public selves. The mediation involves two inter-related processes. You must recognize and manage the internal (personal) component – feelings – that can get in the way or help, and you must construct and deliver the external (public) component – a message – that can miss an audience or reach it. Start by building your self-confidence.

Managing Public Speaking Anxiety

Public speaking anxiety can be managed in several ways:

1. Analyze the situation or event at which the speech is to be delivered.
2. Identify the source of your irrational beliefs.
3. Identify the consequences of your irrational beliefs.
4. Recognize how your fear affects you and focus on personal and professional benefits.
5. Look for chances to practice.
6. Prepare, Prepare, Prepare.
7. Think Positively – avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy.
8. Visualize giving a successful presentation.
9. Don't expect perfection.
10. Practice, practice, practice.
11. Get a good night's sleep.
12. Give yourself a pep talk.
13. People want you to succeed-the audience is there to see you succeed not to fail.
14. Concentrate on your message – not the medium.

Building Board Knowledge



- 1. Make a list of the specific speaking situations that cause you to become nervous.*
- 2. Make a timeline of your speaking experiences. Describe and rate your level of nervousness (on a scale of 1 to 10) during each of the experiences, and evaluate each of your performances (your perception of success/failure).*
- 3. Analyze your timeline to determine your patterns of speech anxiety. Identify specific things in each situation that may have increased or decreased your level of speech anxiety.*
- 4. If you have never given a public speech, make a list of things that might make you nervous in this situation. Identify strategies or steps you could adopt to overcome this fear.*

Preparing for Public Speaking

Preparing for a presentation or a talk requires clear thinking. As a presenter, you need to think about a variety of factors that will achieve your purpose. Several questions should come to mind and should be answered to provide direction on the road to presentation success.

Planning

Before effective public speakers write their speech they ask themselves:

- What am I going to talk about?
- What do I want to say?
- What evidence can I present to support my talking points?
- Who is my audience and what do I know about it?
- How will I organize and present my material?
- What do I want them to remember after I have finished?

The answers help them develop the presentation plan which guides their writing and presentation.

Purpose

A public speaker must identify the purpose of the presentation by focusing on the topic and the audience. Speaking goals may influence the type of evidence used—an informative speech uses evidence to amplify the points being made; a persuasive speech uses evidence as proof. A presentation to ratepayers is different than a courtroom presentation or a eulogy.

Topic

The topic should be limited to one key point with supporting points that help the listener understand what is being said. If the audience will remember only one thing, what would be the most important thing for them to remember? The mind can only focus on one thing at a time. As additional points are added, each previous point becomes diluted. The greater the number of points, the less focus on each individual point.

Evidence

Evidence is the supporting material to be used to prove a point. Doing research and applying standards of critical thinking to evaluate evidence are important responsibilities of a public speaker. The type of evidence depends on the speaker's experience and expertise on the topic, the nature of the audience, the occasion of the talk, the talking goal and the genre of discourse. Internal proofs come from the resources of the speaker; they include the credibility of the speaker, the speaker's feelings, and the speaker's logical inferences. External proofs – outside the experience of the speaker – include various forms of evidence such as expert testimony, examples, quantitative evidence and audio/visual aids.

Audience

The audience will determine the extent and type of evidence to use. Audience scepticism about the ideas or the speaker will necessitate more evidence and probably external evidence. Factors which determine the nature of the audience include characteristics based on social groupings, ideology, values and beliefs. Their perception of the speaker's credibility, competence, confidence, character and good will also needs to be considered in preparing the speech.

Organization

Select the idea – problem or concern – that will be talked about and look at finding some possible solutions. Outline the three or four supporting points to be made. Determine audio-visual requirements. Focus on the nature of the audience and how to maintain their interest on the topic. Own your topic.

Conclusion

Conclude your talk by summing up your points clearly and concisely. Finish the speech before the audience finishes listening. Always leave them wanting more. Give your audience something to take away—what you want them to remember.

10 Tips for Fearless Public Speaking

1. Think the whole process through—it's a lot more than just talking about what you know.
2. Decide on both the information that should be in your speech and the tone of your remarks.
3. Choose the central theme (or thesis) of your speech—make it substantive, but keep it simple.
4. Draw up an outline of exactly what you want to say.
5. Rewrite the speech for the ear, not the eye—use conversational, straightforward language with short sentences and punchy phrases. Don't fill pauses with “umms” – the silence of a break or pause is preferable.
6. Edit using a speech writing style checklist. Be sure to include active voice, vivid language, personal pronouns, contractions, and familiar, shorter words with fewer syllables. Avoid clichés and jargon.
7. Add seasoning—use effective anecdotes; make a lasting impression; use appropriate humour.
8. Strive for cadence.
9. Practice, practice, practice.
10. Do a go-see—visit the presentation room; practice at the podium; check out the audiovisual system; get comfortable.

Presenting a Speech

Oral presentations, like written presentations, can enhance a board member's reputation within the school division. See them as opportunities to sell not only your ideas but also your competence: your value to the school division.

Nothing in an effective presentation can substitute for excellent content. However, the manner in which that content is presented—what you say, how you move, how you sound and how you project—can make a significant impact on your message. The way you present determines how your audience understands you, stays with you and remembers what you said...and that's the point, isn't it?

The Thirty Second Message

Communications are maximized in the crucial first thirty seconds of the presentation. In the first 30 seconds you win or lose the game of effective communication. It is the time you grab and hold audience attention. It is the time you persuade or convince your audience of the need for the presentation. It is the time to make your point and make it effectively. In the first 30 seconds, you tempt, tantalize, fascinate, allure, entice, attract and catch the audience's undivided attention for the remainder of the talk.

The first thirty seconds consists of six steps to assure that you spend your first 30 seconds wisely and efficiently.

1. **The Objective** – Have a clear-cut objective for the presentation.
2. **The Know** – Who is listening and what do they want?
3. **The Approach** – the single thought or sentence that will best lead your audience to the objective.
4. **The Hook** – The hook's entire purpose for existing is to get attention, to tap your audience's unmet needs.
5. **The Convince** – explain, reinforce and prove the point you are to make. It is called the subject.
6. **The Action** – ask your audience to act, to meet their needs and to use the information to be presented. What do you want from your audience? This is the point where the 30-second message is closed. It is where you demand action or reaction.

Principles of Effective Speeches

Any effective speech must achieve three things:

1. Communicate your arguments and ideas;
2. Persuade your audience that they are true; and,
3. Be interesting and entertaining to keep the audience's attention.

Guidelines for Ethical Speech and Delivery

1. Understand the power of the lectern. Being in front of people gives you a certain amount of credibility.
2. Speak truthfully and be sure of your facts.
3. Be willing to rock the boat.
4. Stand for what you believe, but do not alarm your audience.
5. Do not lie.
6. Avoid excess and inappropriate emotional appeals.
7. Use credible and current sources.
8. Avoid ambiguity. Be concrete in your statements.
9. Do not be derogatory or critical of others.

Choose an Appropriate Style

How you sound when you speak is crucial to the success of your presentation. You may have effective content, excellent ideas, accurate supporting statistics. However, if the style you use in speaking is inappropriate to the occasion, to the audience (as individuals and as members of an organization), and to the purpose you are trying to achieve, your content will more than likely be ineffective. You want to sound respectful, confident, courteous, and sincere. A conversational style with short sentences, concrete language, speech that suggests to your audience that you are really talking to them is more effective. The tone and degree of formality will be dictated by your organizational role and your relationship to your audience.

Usually Better Practices	Usually Worse Practices
• Talk (jot key points to jog memory)	• Read
• Stand	• Sit
• Use visual aids such as outlines, pictures, PowerPoints and graphs	• Have no visual aids
• Move	• Stand still
• Vary tone of voice	• Speak in a monotone
• Speak loudly and clearly	• Mumble, face downward
• Make eye contact with audience members	• Stare at speaking notes
• Focus on main arguments	• Get lost in details
• Finish your talk within the time limit	• Run overtime
• Rehearse your speech	• Don't practice
• Summarize your main arguments at the introduction and conclusion	• Fail to provide a conclusion
• Notice your audience and understand the demographics	• Ignore audience behaviour and demographics
• Provide time for questions (if necessary)	• Race through and ignore audience feedback
• Emulate excellent speakers	• Emulate mentors regardless of speaking ability

Five Things to Do at Conclusion:

- Thank the audience;
- Make materials available;
- Make yourself available;
- Provide the audience with a method of reaching you; and,
- Get feedback and find out what the audience thought of your presentation, what they learned, what they were hoping to learn but didn't, and how you can improve.

Transformation into a silver-tongued orator may not be your goal, and it can't be guaranteed anyway, but you can learn to give a comfortable and credible speaking performance—no small feat. You may never speak effortlessly in public, but you'll enjoy knowing you can reach the other side if you need to. It is possible for public speaking to be fun and hugely satisfying. Once you've enjoyed a presentation, or even part of it, your self confidence will get a huge boost and you'll be off and running.

Public Speaking and School^{PLUS}

Public speaking is an essential skill for members of school boards that are working toward becoming School^{PLUS} school divisions. While the official spokesperson of a school board is the board chair, principles of adaptive leadership and openness of meetings suggest that the leadership can come from anyone during a meeting. This presents new challenges to the board chair and to board members in that the responsibility of leadership lies with the entire board and anyone could be called upon at any time to speak publicly to an issue. However, the official position of the board must rest with the chair or the chair-delegated individual. All members of the board should be skilled and polished public speakers. If they are not, training should be provided to enable them to speak in public with confidence and ability.

Aspects of School^{PLUS} that require public speaking skills include:

- Open, inclusive, participatory operation – involves divergent thinking and some degree of controversy. Board members’ ability to speak to the issues to make sure that they are understood or to respond to them for clarification becomes an important consideration and skill.
- School^{PLUS} interagency services and business partnerships require the development of new relationships and cooperative initiatives that involve presentations to new groups. The ability to communicate school division policy, practices and issues to provide understanding and to motivate cooperation and participation in them.
- Relationships with the educational community requires the ability to present school division goals and initiatives to this community to outline expectations of them, to motivate them in taking the direction and to solicit their support for the initiatives.
- Public speaking is often required as board members present the School^{PLUS} changes to be made in the school division to the various publics and to the larger community, especially in revealing the indicators of success and the levels of achievement of the school division students.
- The specifically-mentioned School^{PLUS} recommended outreach to the Aboriginal community requires unique public speaking skills in that board members need to have a degree of knowledge and understanding of the Aboriginal issues that impact on the success of Aboriginal children and to ability to speak to these issues in a meaningful way. Gaining the trust of the Aboriginal community is an essential part of making all students in the school division successful.

There is a need for all members of the board of education to be knowledgeable about school division policies, practices, principles, goals, and issues and to know what the official board position is on such matters.

Reflection

Three key ideas from this module are:

-
-
-

My questions:

-
-
-

	Ideas I want to learn more about:	Ideas for my board to consider:
To be an effective trustee:		
To be an effective board:		

My Personal Plan of Action

In order to strengthen the governance of our board of education, I make a commitment to:

State the Area You Want to Improve	I Commit Myself to the Following	When Will I Do This?	How Will I Know I Have Been Successful

Resources for Further Study

- Cook, Jeff Scott (1989). *The Elements of Speechwriting and Public Speaking*. Collier Macmillan
- Diresta, Diane (1998). *Knockout presentations: How to deliver your message with power, punch, and pizzazz*. NY: Chandler House Press
- Erlich, Henry (1992). *Writing Effective Speeches*. Paragon House/Athena Books
- Flesch, Rudolf (1960). *How to Write, Speak, and Think More Effectively*. 24th edition. Signet/ Penguin Books.
- Grice, George (2003). *Mastering Public Speaking*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Hoff, Ron (1988). *I Can See You Naked: A Fearless Guide to Making Great Presentations*. Andrews and McMeel.
- Klepper, Michael (1994). *I'd Rather Die Than Give a Speech*. Irwin.
- Martin, Antony M. (2004). *10 Simple Solutions To Shyness: How To Overcome Shyness, Social Anxiety & Fear Of Public Speaking*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Pfeiffer, William (2001). *Pocket Guide to Public Speaking*. Prentice Hall.
- Pike, Bob, & Arch, Dave (1997). *Dealing with difficult participants*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer
- Rafe, Stephen C. (1990). *How to Be Prepared to Think on Your Feet*. Harper Business
- Wilder, C., & Rotondo, J. (2002). *Point, click, & wow*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer
- Zarefsky, David (2004). *Public Speaking: Strategies for Success*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Zelazny, Gene (1999). *Say it again with presentations: How to design and deliver successful business presentations*. NY: McGraw Hill.

Helpful Websites:

<http://www.nsaspeaker.org>

<http://www.toastmasters.org/>

http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_public_speaking_2/

Evaluation Tools

Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PCRA)

Please indicate the degree to which each of the following statements apply to you by writing the number showing whether you:

1 – Strongly Agree; 2 – Agree; 3 – Undecided; 4 – Disagree

- 1. I dislike participating in group discussions.
- 2. Generally, I am comfortable while participating in group discussions.
- 3. I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions.
- 4. I like to get involved in group discussions.
- 5. Engaging in group discussion with new people makes me tense and nervous.
- 6. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
- 7. Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting.
- 8. Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings.
- 9. I am calm and relaxed when called upon to express opinions in meetings.
- 10. I am afraid to express myself at meetings.
- 11. Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable.
- 12. I am very relaxed when answering questions at a meeting.
- 13. While in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous.
- 14. I have no fear of speaking up in conversations.
- 15. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.
- 16. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations.
- 17. While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed.
- 18. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
- 19. I have no fear of giving a speech.
- 20. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
- 21. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
- 22. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
- 23. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
- 24. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

- From J. C. McCroskey, *Oral Communication Apprehension: A Summary of Recent Theory & Research*. Human Communications Research. 4:78-96.

To calculate your score for each of the four communication contexts measured by this instrument, add or subtract your scores for each item as described below. Begin your adding or subtracting with 18 points in each case.

Group Discussion (18 points) + (scores items 2, 4, & 6) – (scores items 1,3, & 5)

Meetings (18 points) + (scores for items 8, 9, & 12) – (scores for items 7, 10, & 11)

Interpersonal Communication (18 points) + (scores items 14, 16, &17) – (scores items 13, 15, & 18)

Public Speaking (18 points) + (scores items 19, 21, & 23) – (scores items 20, 22, & 24.

To determine your overall score on the PCRA, add the points you earned on all four of the contexts together.

Norms for the PCRA = 24

Range of Scores: 24-120

Average Score: 65 (plus or minus 15)

High Level of Apprehension: above 80

Low Level of Apprehension: below 50

Public Speaking Checklist

Preparation

- Title
- Introduction, Body and Conclusion
- Form, Structure and flow
- Full and partial notes – or without notes (improvised)
- Use of metaphor and illustrations
- Use of references
- Material appropriate to audience and context

Delivery

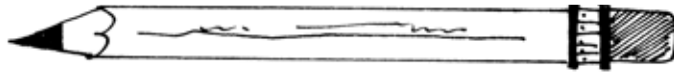
- Audience contact
- Modulation (variation of pitch, pace and power)
- Pausing
- Speed of delivery
- Volume
- Conversational quality
- Gestures and the ‘speaking body’
- Audience attention and rapport
- Absence of mannerisms
- Use of flip charts etc.
- Repetition for emphasis
- Letting go of ‘Stage Fright’
- Breathing
- Use of humour
- The 5 second grab (media use)
- Coping with interviewers
- Interviewing:
 - Direct, indirect, non directive questions
 - Minimal encouragers

Presentation Checklist

In planning my presentation, I will:	
	Determine and narrow my topic.
	Consider the intended audience for my presentation (demographics, location, etc.)
	Develop a timeline to allow for research, composition and creation of the presentation, building in time for technical glitches along the way.
	Make a content outline
	Evaluate available mediums and select the type of mediums to use, if any.
	Acquire the skills to use the appropriate technology.
	Check out the presentation room.
	Create a storyboard of ideas to link my content with the technology I will use.
	Evaluate the appropriateness of the selected technology for my topic, my audience, my presentation room and my skill set.
	Anticipate how I would carry forward my presentation – Plan B – without the use of selected technology should it fail, be unavailable or other factors.
In creating my presentation, I will:	
	Research the content.
	Compose the content.
	Review the content for its grammar, spelling, appropriate language and punctuation.
	Construct the presentation using appropriate technology.
	Review the presentation, asking three questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the message clear, interesting and informative for the audience? • Does some content of the presentation need to be deleted, edited or added? • Is your presentation visually pleasing in terms of colour, graphics, layout, etc.?
Prior to delivering my presentation, I will:	
	Arrange for the necessary equipment and facilities, as required.
	Arrange to load my presentation on the workstation that I will be using to present.
	Test my presentation on the workstation that I will use to present, so as to make any necessary adjustments.
	Make a back-up copy of my presentation.
	Prepare a simple evaluation form for the audience to complete.
	Organize all props and materials I need and have them in place.
	Practice delivering my presentation focusing on voice, emphasis and timing.
	Select appropriate clothing which suits the occasion – avoid wearing something brand new.
In delivering my presentation, I will:	
	Be there before the presentation to double-check my equipment operation, increase my comfort-level, and check lighting and sound levels.
	Prepare mentally for the presentation.

	Introduce my presentation confidently, ensuring to speak clearly and at a pace the audience can feel comfortable with.
	Make eye contact with the audience, or look over top of the audience and focus on something near the back of the room.
	Do not panic if equipment fails – use Plan B.
	In closing, thank the audience and ask for questions (if required).
	Ensure that the equipment is ready for the next presenter.
	Return the necessary equipment.
In evaluating my presentation, I will:	
	Identify the strengths of my presentation – content and method of delivery.
	Consider what the audience seemed to enjoy the most about my presentation.
	Determine whether the whole presentation achieved the desired effect, including time management.
	Identify weaker areas of the presentation that did not create the desired effect on the audience, and try to determine a cause.
	Evaluate what I learned in this interaction between myself as the presenter and the audience.
	Review my presentation evaluation forms to provide insight into improvements.
	Make note of what I have learned in this process, so that I can build on my strengths and avoid or improve on weaknesses from the presentation.

Notes



A large rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for taking notes. The word 'Notes' is written in the top left corner, and a pencil icon is positioned in the top right corner of the box.