

Lessons Learned: A Reflective Seminar

Introduction

The PBRL 3388 work term project will involve a series of reflective seminars presented to new public relations students preparing to go out on their first work term. For students completing their final work term in the fall semester, the seminars will take place in January after your work term ends. You will work in groups selected by the Co-op & WIL Centre to include a combination of different workplace environments and will provide the audience of students approaching their first work term with a reflective presentation of your experiences.

This project asks you to reflect on your personal growth as both a student and a public relations practitioner, using concrete examples to explain and support your thinking. This seminar will encourage you to look at your co-operative education experience as a whole and to consider what that experience has meant to you.

Format

Working in your group, you will communicate with each other via email no later than November to organize how you will develop your presentation. Each session should be approximately one hour, comprised of a 45-minute presentation, followed by 15 minutes of discussion where your audience can ask you questions. *Note: You should develop some probing questions to help initiate this discussion.*

We suggest each presenter provide a brief overview of their co-op experience, including their three work terms. Your group should also explore some of the following topics:

- Did you have a strategy for choosing your co-op positions? If so, what was it?
- What is your advice for students who are nervous about interviews?
- What kinds of mentorship, networking, and/or professional development training did your employers provide during your work terms?
- What is the importance of building a professional network prior to graduation? How did you go about building your own professional network during co-op?
- What expectations did your employers have about the level of skill and support you could provide the organization during your work terms? Did you feel prepared to meet those expectations?
- How did co-op education influence your personal and professional development?
- How did you balance your coursework and co-op requirements?
- What were the benefits of relocating for a work term (if applicable)?
- What differences did you observe in how public relations is practiced across various sectors (e.g., government, corporate, not-for-profit, start-up)? What should students pursuing a co-op in these sectors know beforehand?
- What kinds of knowledge, skillsets, and/or technical capabilities do you think will be essential for the emerging PR professional to possess in the next 3-5 years?

- What is one sample of the work you completed during your work terms that you are most proud of? (Share and discuss why. Ensure diversity in the samples of various group members.)
- How has your co-op experience enhanced your classroom experience and vice versa?
- What advice would you offer a first-time co-op student? What would you do differently?
- How did you navigate any uncertainties you may have felt during your work terms?
- After co-op, what is your analysis of the role(s) public relations can play in today's world?
- How has participating in co-op helped you work toward your future career goals?

Students are encouraged to use technology to deliver a professional presentation. Handouts may also be considered, but are not required. The Co-op & WIL Centre can print presentation materials for you as long as the materials are supplied in an accessible format at least one week (7 business days) before the presentation date.

Note: PBRL 3388 students who complete their work term out of sequence and/or finish their degree requirements on a work term may be assigned an alternative assignment by their faculty advisor consisting of a professional video version of this presentation on their own. Video presentations may be retained by the Co-op & WIL Centre and shared on our website or other platforms with future co-op students. The same deadlines and grading rubric will apply to both the individual video and group presentation options.

Assessment

Your co-op faculty advisor will attend your group presentation, along with co-op staff members and your audience of junior co-op students (or review your individual video presentation for out-of-sequence students or students ending the program on a work term). Your presentation will be assessed by the co-op faculty advisor on the following criteria:

- A strong reflective component (i.e., not just a commentary of job duties).
- An informed analysis of public relations as it is practiced in various workplace environments, including the adaptation required to adjust to different organizations.
- An error-free, organized, and rehearsed presentation and audience discussion delivered using professional technology and/or materials.

Each individual involved in the presentation may be asked to engage in critical assessment of their own preparation and participation as well as that of their group members. Your audience may also be asked to assess your presentation in terms of its relevance and usefulness.

Expectations of Group Members

As a member of your presentation group, you are expected to:

- Contribute fairly to the development of the presentation.
- Participate in planning meetings and presentation preparation.
- Complete assigned tasks and meet agreed-upon deadlines.
- Follow all assignment requirements and presentation guidelines.
- Communicate regularly and respond to group communications in a timely manner.

- Be reliable, respectful, and collaborative throughout the project.
- Participate in rehearsals and help create a polished final presentation.
- Be prepared, organized, and professional on presentation day.
- Actively contribute to audience engagement and the discussion period.

Timeline

WHEN	WHAT
October 2026	The Co-op & WIL Centre will assign groups and your presentation date/time.
November 2026	Communicate with your group members to assign presentation duties.
December 4, 2026	Develop a presentation outline to be submitted to the co-op faculty advisor for review.
Two weeks before your presentation date (Deadline to be announced once presentation dates are assigned)	Share the final draft of your presentation with the co-op faculty advisor for review and then implement required revisions.
First month following the end of your final work term (January 2027)	Deliver your presentation at the date/time previously communicated by the Co-op & WIL Centre.

Planning Notes

- Await confirmation from the Co-op & WIL Centre regarding who will be in your group.
- Await confirmation from the Co-op & WIL Centre about the date and time of your presentation.
- Review the work term project guidelines before you begin planning your presentation to ensure you will meet the requirements.
- Remember that your presentation is not intended to be an informal panel-style chat about your co-op experiences. You are required to deliver a professional presentation that addresses how a new co-op student can get the best educational experience possible out of the co-operative education program from those who have reflected on both the positive and challenging aspects of their own co-op journeys. Plan your presentation in the same way you might approach making a pitch to a potential client, considering overarching themes and presentation structure.
- Submit the ‘ready to deliver’ draft of your presentation to the co-op faculty advisor two weeks prior to your presentation date. The faculty advisor will review your presentation to ensure it meets the project requirements. Implement feedback received into the final version that you present for the group.
- Consider what presentation materials you may need, including providing handouts, uploading the presentation onto a USB, and creating name tags for group participants. Again, you may contact the Co-op & WIL Centre for assistance with photocopying or printing as long as you do so one week (7 business days) or more in advance of the presentation date.
- Elements of your presentation may be recorded or retained for assessment and promotional purposes.

Grading Rubric

Criteria	No Evidence	Needs Improvement	Meets Expectations
Content	Not demonstrated or no opportunity to observe	- Covers a limited range of relevant topics - Lacks sufficient examples and/or anecdotes to illustrate points - Describes co-op experiences without meaningful reflection or context - Repetitive content	- Covers a range of relevant topics from life-long learning to the relationship between classroom and workplace learning - Provides sufficient specific examples and effective use of anecdotes to illustrate points - Reflects on and contextualizes co-op experiences - Provides diverse perspectives, examples, and insights
Section Comments:			
Presentation structure	Not demonstrated or no opportunity to observe	- Lacks logical progression - Poorly organized content - Uneven distribution of presentation responsibilities - Disorganized, ineffective, or absent discussion period	- Clear and logical progression - Effective transitions - Effective use of all group members - Well-planned and effectively facilitated discussion period
Section Comments:			
Presentation Materials and Audience Engagement	Not demonstrated or no opportunity to observe	- Cluttered, difficult-to-read presentation materials - Contain typographical or grammatical errors - Ineffective use of discussion questions to engage the audience	- Clean, visually appealing, and easy-to-read presentation materials - Free of typographical or grammatical errors - Effective use of probing questions to stimulate discussion, as needed

		• Incomplete or ineffective responses to audience questions	• Engaging and well-rounded responses to audience questions
Section Comments:			
Delivery	• Not demonstrated or no opportunity to observe	• Limited audience engagement • Difficult to hear • Relies heavily on reading from slides and/or notes • Poor posture • Limited eye contact • Distracting mannerisms	• Effective audience engagement • Effective vocal projection and variety • Prepared, confident, and polished delivery (memorized or otherwise delivered in an engaging manner) • Professional posture (natural, confident) • Effective eye contact, facial expression, and natural gestures
Section Comments:			
Time management	• Not demonstrated or no opportunity to observe	• Ineffective use of allotted time (e.g., significantly under time or rushed due to poor time management) • Poor balance between presentation and discussion time	• Effective use of allotted time • Effective balance between presentation and discussion time
Section Comments:			
Final Comments:			