Sales managers look for salespeople who have high self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992) and high self-monitoring (Deeter-Schmelz & Sojka, 2007; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1974). Yet teaching self-efficacy and self-monitoring remains unstudied in collegiate sales education. We help students achieve a higher level of self-efficacy and self-monitoring using an indirect, three-step approach that rely on video recording.

The first step is to involve students in a simple storytelling exercise because storytelling has been found to be an effective way to change people’s minds (Adamson, Pine, Tom Van, & Kroupa, 2006; Denning, 2006; Mckee & Fryer, 2003). We demonstrate a simple story arc comprised of the setting, the rising action, the climax, and the falling action to create a “Who I Am” story that students might use in a job interview. To illustrate the steps of the arc, we take examples from animated movies that students watched as children, which tends to put the undergraduates at ease. The students like the idea of the “Who I Am” story because it prepares them for a job interview but also because they are confident with the subject matter. After learning the structure, some students volunteer for coaching in class. These students only receive positive feedback to neutralize their own self-criticism, and to put the rest of the class at ease.

The second step is to practice using their smart phones to record themselves. They can then review their video recordings using the previously mentioned. We urge them to focus on one improvement at a time to insure success. Most students choose to work on their fluidity by seeking to eliminate interjections.
Two weeks later, we record the students for the second time. Students are again asked to review their performance using the checklist. Their grade for the exercise was based on the amount of improvement between the recordings.

Though students are never directly taught about self-efficacy or self-monitoring, they learn it by doing it in the storytelling exercise. However, this method for creating self-awareness has a further effect on their progress in the course. The students improve their performance on their major project, an interactive sales presentation that makes up the significant portion of their grade.

We stumbled upon this method when we first began teaching the introductory sales. Originally, we had focused mainly on evaluating the content of their major sales presentations and whether students made all of the salient points of the call. Because of our concern that we might miss points in the heat of the presentation, we began used video recording merely as a memory aid.

Reviews of the video recordings revealed what we had really been missing—the quality of student performance. The video recording provided us with the emotional distance and a new objectivity. We believed that if video recording helped us with grading, it would also benefit students if they could view the recordings. Thus they would be able to see themselves and see how they come off (self-monitoring). Second, they could use the recordings improve their abilities (self-efficacy).

We now video record the major presentations for the student’s benefit. Again they must evaluate their presentation of their major project using the checklist and prepare a synopsis of their deficiencies in the presentation, their growth in the process, and their goals for future presentations.

Emails from a handful of students long after the course was over indicate that they continue to use what they have gained from these video recordings. Most report a greater level of confidence and a greater appreciation for its effect on persuasiveness. Many of them have used their newfound skills to earn internships and secure corporate employment before graduation.

References


