It seems that every field has its own preference for how to best communicate. I am also in ESD.051 (Engineering, Innovation, and Design) this semester. The lecturer of the class is a young, design-obsessed, tech-entrepreneur named Blade Kotelly. He greatly admires Steve Jobs, and I would say he acts like him. However, you and him would not agree on all points of presentation style. For example, you have said that you want people to introduce each other when handing off from one person to another during a presentation. Blade, however, went on a 5 minute rant telling us how he absolutely despises this.

I think what it comes down to is that you teach general business presentation, while Blade focused on big, multimedia presentations to VCs. Blade did talk about his work experience today. He was hired as the first designer in a voice telephone system company with 50 employees. I forget exactly how he described it, but let’s just say he did not fit in well in the beginning. I think there is room for both approaches, depending on who your audience is. Personally, I think I will be closer to Blade’s approach. I want to act like an entrepreneur or product manager in a big company – with significant personal responsibility – not just sit in a cubical like a good intern. I think I was partially successful at doing this in my last job, and I am focusing on improving what I did not do (the more business/hierarchy side of things this class helped with), this summer. If this is not what the company is interested in, I know that that the position would not be a good fit for me, and that better jobs exist. I could always do something on my own as well.

I’ve also heard the presentation things many times before at MIT. I don’t know if it is my luck with what classes I pick, or if the curriculum requires too many communications classes. My advisor is the instructor for 6.UAT, so I think he covered a light version in the freshmen seminar 6.A53. I took MAS.110, a CI-H because I was interested in it, but because I failed the FEE, it didn’t count. I then had to take 21W.732, which was very helpful for my writing. This semester I was in your class, ESD.051, and 4.211, another CI-H. I was also in UPOP this year. Presentations were discussed in all of the classes. Many alumni talk about how MIT left them underprepared to communicate as managers. Perhaps it is just my background, but I think the pendulum has swung too far the other way.

But it is not like I did not learn anything in this class. I liked the small tips, like how to deal with a PR crisis, and the formal structure of writing a report. I wish there was more of this, however, as we talked about in class. I also got better at fitting an agenda in a presentation seamlessly.

I feel that the feedback on the presentations was the most helpful thing about the class. I think that many of the things that were commented on were either random occurrences (like standing in front of the TV screen – that has largely to do with the shape of the room) or trying to fix other things created other problems (because I was so focused on time limit, I rushed). I think my section on the group presentation went much better, since I was not watching the clock. I think I could do better with eye contact – I tend to visualize the “fourth wall” and ignore the audience – perhaps this is a habit left over from the theater days. However, I feel that I engage the audience well during questions and answers. I think this is something to keep in mind – but I do not want to focus on it so much that it distracts me from the presentation and makes the presentation net worse. I also feel that I can further streamline my presentations to focus even more on relevant information. I like to deliver a lot of information quickly in a presentation. I don’t think that Blanch likes this style.

You have talked about how I need to get better at communicating with hourly employees. I agree that my thoughts are often complex, or I try to include more information to justify my thoughts. In general, I like this strategy. However, it does not fit well in a soundbite. I would prefer to be in a situation where I would not need to directly work with people who would get confused at the extra information. However, I think that I can issue direct orders, if needed. For example, I did this in the final days of the group presentation. I prefer, however, to stay indirect and build consensus. If this is not what you meant, we should talk about it further.