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Sam Walch

Public Speaking Workbook

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Step 1

The Communication Process

Introduction to the Communication Process

In its most basic form, communicating involves a **sender** who takes his/her thoughts and **encodes** them into **verbal** and **nonverbal** messages that are sent to a **receiver**. The receiver then **decodes** the messages and attempts to understand what the sender meant to communicate. The communication process is completed when the receiver transmits verbal and nonverbal **feedback** to indicate his/her reception and understanding of the message.

This process takes place within a context, also known as a *rhetorical situation*, which includes all that affects the communication process such as the sender-receiver's culture, the sender-receiver's relationship, the circumstances surrounding the sender-receiver's interaction, and the physical environment of the interaction.

Because the basic communication process is the same in every situation, there are some similarities across all types of interactions. Just the same, each interaction remains distinct and therefore each rhetorical situation will be different.

For example, think about how you communicate with another person in the library and at a party. In both cases you are sending messages and reacting to feedback. But the rhetorical situation of the library means that you will be speaking in whispers, whereas at the party you will be speaking much louder and with more animated gestures. If you were to switch styles--whispering at the party and yelling at the library--then your communication style would be ineffective to say the least. In both situations you are engaging in the same communication process, but the rhetorical situations require you to act in different ways.

The Communication Process and Public Speaking

By focusing on the process of communication and the rhetorical situation, a speaker can maximize the effectiveness of messages. This means that an effective speaker doesn't "write" a speech in isolation and then simply stand up and deliver it. Instead, an effective speaker develops messages in relation to the situation, the audience, and the communication goals. Throughout the semester we will go into more detail about how to do this, but for now it is important to understand the following:

What the sender intends to communicate is not always what the receiver decodes.

The communication process can break down in any number of ways, and an effective speaker should not take the audience's understanding of messages for granted. An effective speaker makes sure to learn all that is possible about the audience and to adapt the message to that audience.

"Actions speak louder than words."

Non-verbal messages are usually believed more than verbal messages.

When there is a conflict between nonverbal and verbal messages, the audience tends to believe the nonverbal. An effective public speaker makes sure that the nonverbal messages compliment and strengthen the verbal messages.

More communication does **not** equal better communication.

What's the use of more communication if it is ineffective or bad communication? An effective public speaker focuses on the quality of communication, not the quantity.

Becoming an Effective Listener

Listening is a vital skill, not only for this class but for life in general. Becoming an effective communicator starts with becoming a better listener.

The main thing to remember is that hearing does not equal listening. Hearing is a *physiological* process that involves the reception of vibrations by the delicate structures within our ears. Listening is a *psychological* process that involves the interpretation of what we hear. Hearing is passive--it takes no effort on our part, while listening is active--it takes effort and a willingness to tune in.

One of the most important parts of public speaking is learning how to listen to or *read* your audience. This means being able to observe and to utilize the feedback from the audience. Being a good listener also helps in the development of your speech because it allows you to gain skills in analyzing messages and retaining information.

So how do you start improving your listening skills? The key is to actively focus on your listening behavior, and to start eliminating behaviors that lead to poor listening. These negative behaviors include:

- **Mentally jumping to conclusions before the other person has finished speaking.**

- **Focusing on *how* the person communicates rather than *what* is being communicated.**
- **Starting to think of a response before the other person has finished a thought.**

Being aware of such behaviors, and actively trying to eliminate them is a major step toward being a more effective communicator.

In Review

Becoming an effective public speaker starts with an understanding of the communication process and the listening process. Even though the process of communicating is similar in all interactions, each specific situation will require you to make several choices about how to get your message across.

STEP 2

Selecting an Appropriate Topic

Introduction

Finding a topic for your speeches can sometimes be a difficult process. A few of the most common roadblocks to choosing a topic are:

- **Trying to find a topic that will "blow the audience away."**
- **Trying to find a topic that your audience will like.**
- **Trying to find a topic that will make you look really cool.**

The problem here is that often a speaker worries more about conveying an "image" rather than conveying a message. In reality, such attempts at promoting an image usually backfire, so it is important to begin with the right focus.

Finding a "Good" Topic

If you are having difficulty finding a topic, it helps to realize that it's not the *topic* that makes a speech effective. There are no "bad" topics, but there are inappropriate or poorly developed topics. At this stage you should focus on choosing a topic:

- **that you have some knowledge about, or wish to gain knowledge about;**
- **that you care about; and**
- **that is appropriate for the audience and the setting.**

Appropriateness is especially important, because some topics simply don't work in a classroom setting. You should always strive to select topics that will not offend any members of the audience or promote harmful or illegal actions. In addition, avoid topics that the audience already knows well.

For example, the following topics have been so overdone that they will probably have little impact on your audience:

- **Home Brewing**
- **The Benefits of Exercise**
- **Legalization of Marijuana or Hemp**
- **Fraternities or Sororities**
- **Throwing a Successful Party**

In addition, it's a good idea to avoid topics where your audience might have extremely polarized opinions, like abortion or school prayer. The effectiveness of such speeches in a classroom setting is often minimal. For example, if your audience agrees with your viewpoint, then you are engaging in what's known as "preaching to the choir" -- redundantly persuading those who are already persuaded. Likewise audience members who disagree with you probably won't change their opinion based on a short speech, especially one that they are forced to sit through.

However, you should not avoid *all* controversial topics. Instead, you should consider the preexisting attitudes of your audience when attempting to create an effective message..

When in doubt, always check about the appropriateness of a topic with your instructor well in advance of your speaking day.

ATechnique for Choosing a Topic

Here's a technique for helping you choose a topic, called "Taking a Personal Inventory." By examining your existing knowledge and experiences, you can often find several potential topics. At this stage you shouldn't be too critical of your choices, but instead should be working on generating a number of possibilities. Let your mind roam.

Brainstorming Potential Topics

Now it's time to develop your potential topics to see what you can come up with. Any type of brainstorming exercise will work here. You may already have one that works well for you. The actual exercise you use is not as important as going through some process of generating ideas. Don't be concerned if nothing comes right away -- the idea is think creatively without censoring yourself or being overly critical.

For either of the two following exercises, review the answers from your personal inventory and select two or three items that you find interesting. Use your selections to complete one or both of the following exercises.

Brain Hurricane

Brain Hurricanes resemble the eye of a hurricane and boost creativity by breaking out of a linear structure. ([click here for an example](#))

How to Brain Hurricane:

1. On a clean sheet of paper, write down a phrase that describes the concept, for example, "Using the Internet" or "College Football."
2. Now start writing whatever ideas come to mind when you think about this concept. Try to write short phrases instead of paragraphs.
3. After each phrase is written, turn the page slightly so that your writing forms a spiral around the middle of the page.
4. Keep writing and turning the page for at least 10 minutes. Don't stop to think-- just keep writing without pausing. If you run out of space go to a new page.
5. Don't worry if your thought stray from the original concept. The purpose of this exercise is to let your mind freely associate terms, ideas, and concepts. You will analyze and evaluate the content later, so for now just generate ideas.

When you've finished, you should have a page of related ideas that represent potential topics. If not, examine your results an hour or so later and select the most interesting of your new ideas. Repeat the exercise with this new idea.

Brain Mapping

Adapted from *Would the Buddha wear a walkman?* , by J. Hooper & R. Teresi, (1990), Fireside Books, New York

Brain Mapping is based on the assumption that the brain does not work in a straightforward, linear fashion. Rather, it works in strings of associations, tangents, loops, and juxtapositions.

How to Brain Map

1. Find a quiet place, free of distractions, and allow yourself at least 30 minutes to complete the exercise.
2. Get a clean sheet of paper and several pens of different colors. (Felt tip markers or crayons are ideal.)
3. In the center of the page, draw a small picture of your topic. This can be either abstract or representational, and the purpose is to jump-start creative thinking.
4. To generate ideas about your topic, start writing key words and spokes radiating out from the central picture. Write only single words (NOT PHRASES), and keep the lines connected to the central picture.
5. Free-associate rapidly, and DO NOT censor any idea! Keep writing constantly, and try to fill the page as rapidly as possible. (Start another page if necessary.)
6. Draw pictures and use different colors whenever possible.
7. When you run out of ideas concerning your central picture, begin associating ideas from the key words you've generated.
8. After you've run out of words, look at the results and try to find patterns and associations between ideas. Draw arrows and use colors and pictures to connect related ideas.
9. Redraw your map, eliminating any extraneous ideas and grouping related ideas into some kind of organization. You should now have several important concepts related to your topic. You might also have a rudimentary structure for how to present these ideas.

As in the Brain Hurricane exercise, if your results don't provide a suitable topic, then walk away for a while. Return later and select one of your new ideas/concepts and repeat the exercise.

Reality Check

By now you should have generated a list of at least three possible topics, and you may have selected a suitable topic. Time to do a reality check by asking yourself the following questions:

Is this a gimmick topic?

Is this topic more cool/funny/outrageous than interesting? If so it's time to rethink this topic, because what seems like a clever idea now will be painful when the novelty wears off. Examples of this would be topics such as

"Why Scooby-Doo Should Run for President",

"Best Pick-up Lines to Use in a Bar",

"How to Make Chocolate Chip Cookies"

Is this a topic that the audience already knows well?

If so, is there any way that you can provide new information about this topic?

Is this topic something that you care about?

You'll spend a lot of time researching and working with this topic, so make sure it's something you won't get easily bored with.

Will you be able to get information on this topic?

If there is no way to research this topic, then it's time to go back and find one that has some information available.

In Review

While picking a topic can sometimes be difficult, it is certainly not impossible. It is not the topic that makes or breaks a speech--it's how that topic is developed and discussed.

Taking a personal inventory of things you already know and doing a little brainstorming can often provide you with several potential topics. But even when you have a potential topic, it's a good idea to do a reality check and make sure that the topic is appropriate for the audience.

Before moving on to the next step, you should have:

1. a topic that you are relatively confident in, and
2. various notes from brainstorming this topic.

Step 3

A Purpose for Communicating

Communication Goals

Many people think that good public speakers just "get up and talk." Actually, the most effective speakers only make it *appear* as if they are speaking off the tops of their heads. In reality, an effective speech is the result of clear goals and well planned effort.

Your first step is to focus on what you want to accomplish with this speech. There are four basic types of speech purposes:

1. To Inform
2. To Persuade
3. To Entertain
4. To Accomplish a Special Purpose

The general goal for an informative speaker is to act as an instructor for the audience. The purpose of informative speaking is to provide information without promoting a specific viewpoint or advocating specific actions from the audience.

A speaker whose goal is to persuade acts as an advocate for a specific position, and seeks specific types of attitude change and action from the audience. While all communication acts can be said to have some persuasive intent, the goal of a persuasive speech is focused on a specific agenda of action and attitude change.

A speech to entertain focuses on entertaining the audience. Although these speeches can also inform and persuade, the general goal of the speaker is entertainment.

There are a variety of speeches with special purposes such as speeches of introduction or speeches to eulogize. Speaking to eulogize or memorialize means that the speaker wishes to call attention to a certain person or past event and paint them in grand terms. A funeral eulogy or Memorial Day speech are good examples of such speeches.

The Specific Purpose

Since this is an assigned speech, your general purpose will most likely already be decided for you--either informative or persuasive. However, you will formulate your own specific

purpose. In other words, what exactly are you going to inform or persuade your audience about? You'll want to spend a little time thinking this through, because a clear goal makes it easier to develop an effective speech. In general, you'll want to ask yourself the following questions:

How much of this topic can I fit into the time period?

It would be impossible to tell your audience about the complete history of photography in a 10 minute speech, but you could tell them about three of the most important inventions in the history of photography. If your topic is too broad, narrow it down into something you can reasonably cover in the time allotted.

What about my topic will be the most interesting/useful for the audience?

Informing your audience about the refinement of motor oil will probably not be as interesting or useful as informing them how to avoid getting ripped off when getting an oil change. Likewise, a general audience might be more interested in learning how to take better pictures than learning about specific darkroom procedures.

When you can successfully answer these questions, then you should have a good idea of what your specific purpose will be for this speech. At this point you should be able to state this purpose in a single sentence. For example, the specific purpose of our "Important Advances in Photography" speech could be stated as,

"By the end of my speech, I want my audience to be more informed about important advances in photographic technology."

Now it's your turn. On the back of your worksheet from the previous step, or any piece of paper, construct your specific purpose by completing the following sentence:

By the end of my speech, I want the audience to be more informed about _____.

Reality Check

If you can't state your specific purpose in one sentence, then you need to go back and reconsider your topic. Chances are that you need to spend some time narrowing the scope of your topic.

In Review

An effective speech does not just happen--it is the result of hard work and planning. One of the most important part of that planning is having a clear idea of your communication goals. If a speaker doesn't have a clear sense of his/her general and specific purpose , then the audience won't either.

Before moving on to the next step, you should have:

1. a topic and materials from brainstorming
2. a general purpose for the speech, and
3. a specific purpose

STEP 4

Researching Your Topic

Introduction

Now that you have a topic, it's time to gather information. You may already know a great deal about the topic, but there's always room to learn more. Like anything in life, the more you know, the more choices you have when it comes to using this knowledge.

Planning Your Research

In public speaking, it's important to gather various types of information: you will have more options when it comes to the development of the actual speech. If you have chosen a topic that you are interested in or care about, then this process will be much more enjoyable. But before you start, there are a few things to do ahead of time.

Start a file where you can keep all your materials in one place.

You will need to cite **all** sources of information in your speech, so it will save you a lot of misery later if you have all your research in the same place. The night before your speech is not the time to be frantically searching for important information that you have misplaced.

Make sure that you record ALL sources of information.

Any information that did not come from your own personal experience counts as an outside source, and not adequately citing such sources counts as plagiarism. You need to know the author, the title of the publication, and the date of publication. If your information comes from a personal interview, make sure to record their name, title or position, and organizational affiliation.



Plan a strategy for gathering materials.

Don't expect to pop into the library for ten minutes and find all your materials. Plan ahead for the most efficient way to get the information you need, which

includes searching the Internet , using the card catalog, searching periodicals, and talking to a research librarian.

Guidelines for Gathering Material

Start at home

Take a look around your residence hall, apartment, or house. Chances are you will find a lot of information in books, magazines, and newspapers that are lying around.

Use the most valuable resource - people .

The great thing about a large university is that there is an expert in residence on almost any subject. Find your expert and set up an interview. Searching through a campus directory might provide a number of additional contacts.

Learn how to do computer searching .

The Internet can be a powerful tool, but only if you know how to use it. If you need to brush up on your search skills, check out the Help Section for links to some excellent online tutorials.

Question the credibility of information .

Just because something is written down does not mean that it is true. Always consider the source of your information, *especially if it comes from the Internet* . Try to get confirmation from another source if the information seems suspicious. Also remember that credibility is determined by the audience, so find sources that will be credible for them (see Step 5).

In Review

You should always know more about your topic than you would ever need, but this does not mean you have to spend your entire life in the library. By planning ahead you can gather the material you need quickly and efficiently.

It is also important that you keep records on where you get your information, and cite the sources in your speech. You also need to be concerned with the credibility of your evidence, and the potential effects of your evidence on the audience.

Before moving on to the next step, you should have

1. a topic ,general purpose , and specific purpose
2. a surplus of research material about your topic

STEP 5

Audience Analysis

Introduction

A key rule for effective public speaking is that *audiences are egocentric*. What do we mean by egocentric? Just that audiences care most about things that directly affect them. Think about the last lecture you sat through. Chances are that you perked up and paid the greatest attention when the lecturer talked about quizzes, assignments, or anything else that was directly related to your grade.

An effective public speaker understands the nature of audiences and adapts speeches to audiences. In order to do this, you must learn everything you can about your particular audience. Then make sure to keep the audience in mind in every decision you make in the speech development process. When you plan your speech this way, you engage in "Audience-Centered" public speaking, which is vital for success.

When centering on the audience, you start by finding common traits that enable you to identify with them. Since audiences are concerned with things that they believe will directly affect them, it's your job to find as many different ways that your topic relates to your particular audience. The more ways you can find to connect with the audience, the more reasons they have to listen to you. Whenever possible, you will want to obtain the following information about the audience and the location where you will be speaking.

Demographic Traits

Have you ever filled out a warranty card for a new purchase, or filled out an advertiser's survey? If so, then you're familiar with *demographic information* or general information that helps guide you when making basic decisions about how to approach an audience. For example, if an advertiser discovers that the audience for a particular television show is 14-16 year olds, then trying to sell life insurance during this program would be a waste of time and money.

Reality Check

While demographic information can be useful, there is also a danger of falling into stereotypes. Demographic information is good when no other information is available, but you should not rely on it completely.

Demographic Factors:

Age

An audience in their 20's will have different interests and motivations than one in their 70's.

Education level

Is your audience filled with people holding advanced degrees, or are they mainly high school graduates?

Occupation

What does your audience do for a living? Do they all share similar jobs or work for the same company? Can you somehow connect your topic to their jobs?

Gender

While gender differences may be diminishing, it is important to know the gender balance of the audience. For example, it would be a good bet that a speech that uses only examples from sports would be less effective for an all female audience.

Marital status

Is your audience mainly married or single? These groups will have different values and motivations. How about children? Some issues, like safety, become much more important to audience members who are parents than an audience composed of single people.

Religion

Does a majority of the audience share certain types of religious beliefs? Knowing this ahead of time can avoid offending people based on their faith. For example, using quotations from the Bible might not be very effective for an audience composed of mainly of Buddhists or Muslims. In addition, don't make the mistake of assuming that just because your audience is American that it will be a Christian audience.

Racial/cultural/ethnic background

Stereotyping can lead to problems such as patronizing the audience, but it is helpful to know if the audience shares any racial, cultural, or ethnic similarities. For example, is your audience rural, suburban, or urban? You always want to be sensitive and respectful, unlike Ross Perot who once repeatedly addressed an African-American audience as "you people."

Group membership

Are there any specific groups that your audience might belong to? For example, if a majority of the audience belongs to the National Rifle Association, then you will want to take special care when discussing a controversial issue such as gun control.

Hobbies/Interests

Does your audience share any hobbies or interests? If so this gives you a way to find common ground. For example, if the audience is composed of people who all share a passion for computers, then using examples from the computer industry will strike a common chord in the audience.



Situational Traits

Situational data is much more specific to the actual speech, and it is vital that you gather this data as well as demographic data.

Size

The larger the audience, the more formal your speaking style should be. A larger audience also means that you may have to work with a microphone and that you may need some way of making your visual aids large enough to be seen.

Physical setting

- *Seating and visibility*

How physically close are you to the audience will affect how close you can get to them psychologically. In addition, the way they are seated is also important. Are their chairs on the floor while you will be speaking from an elevated stage? Or is the audience on the same level as you? Are there any obstructions that will keep them from seeing you or your visual aids?

- *Temperature*

The temperature of the room will also have a major effect on the audience. If the room is too warm, then the audience will have an increased tendency to be lethargic and sleepy. If the room is too cold they will be constantly shivering and shifting in their seats. In either case you should not plan on a long speech in either situation, or add a lot of attention getting devices to keep the audience tuned in.

- *Distractions*

Is there anything that might distract the audience from your speech, such as construction noises, a window where people will be passing by, or interesting wall decorations? you will want to know about these ahead of time and compensate for them.

- *Formal or informal setting*

Will this be a formal lecture hall or a banquet hall? Will you be standing up at a meeting? The formality of the setting will have a definite effect on the expectations of the audience and also on how you should approach your speech.

Disposition toward topic

- *Interest*

Is the audience naturally interested in your topic, or will you have to find ways to make it interesting to them? If they normally would not find the topic interesting, then you will have to put some work into adjusting the topic to their interests.

- *Knowledge*

How much does the audience know about this topic? If they know next to nothing about it, you have to worry about going over their heads. If they know a lot about it, then you will have to worry about not boring them.

- *Attitude*

What preconceived attitudes and opinions will they have about your topic? Will they treat it with skepticism, or will they be extremely polarized on the topic? In either case you will have to carefully present your messages.

Disposition toward speaker

- *Credibility*

If they do not know you, what kind of credibility will you have with this audience? How seriously will they take you?

- *Reputation*

If the audience knows you, what is your reputation? If your reputation is at odds with your subject, then you will need to take steps to assure that you are taken seriously. For example, if the audience knows that you are a chain smoker, then a speech persuading them to quit smoking would not be effective.

- *Expectation*

What does the audience expect of you on this occasion? For example, if giving a eulogy at a funeral, the audience expects a certain level of formality and respect. Violating the audience's expectations are a quick way to gain their displeasure.

Disposition toward occasion

Why is the audience attending this particular occasion? Was their attendance voluntary, or were they required to attend? An audience whose attendance was mandatory could be slightly resentful, so you need to convince them that this speech will be worth their attention.

Gathering Audience Data

Here are some strategies for gathering audience data.

Interview someone who is a member of the group you are addressing

- Prepare ahead of time
- Be on time and respect the interviewee's time
- Find out from them additional sources, if needed

Questionnaires

- Distribute at meetings
- Follow up with personal interviews

Encyclopedia of Associations

- Available in most libraries
- Good for gathering initial information to prepare for interviews

Go to a meeting

- Extremely valuable when speaking to an organization
- Contact them ahead of time

Reality Check

While it is a good idea to interview someone who may be a member of the audience, you should always be aware that s/he may be uninformed. Always double check to make sure information is accurate, and try to talk to several people who are members of the audience. *Also realize that if you attend a meeting, it might not have the same audience or situation as your speech!* Talk to several organization members and find out how the meeting you attend relates to the meeting you where you will be speaking.

In Review

An effective public speaker is an "audience-centered" speaker, because audiences are egocentric. That is, they will pay more attention to things that they believe will directly affect them. By gathering and analyzing both demographic and situational data, a speaker will be better able to find common ground with the audience and appeal to its interests.

Before moving on to Step 6, you should have:

1. atopic and specific purpose
2. a surplus of research
3. demographic and situational data about the audience

STEP 6

Formulating a Residual Message

Introduction

Try to remember the most important conversation of your life.

Chances are that you can only recall a few words and phrases. Few of us are blessed with complete recall, and we only remember a small part of what we see and hear.

The truth is that despite all your hard work, the audience will probably forget most of your speech shortly after you finish. So, you should plan ahead to make sure that they at least remember the most important points. One way of doing this is by formulating a residual message BEFORE you begin writing your speech.

The Residual Message

A residual message is simply a specific statement of what you want your audience to remember long after you finish speaking. The key word here is "residual," or the mental residue that will deposit itself in your audiences' brains. For example, let's say that you have given the speech on the history of photography. The next semester you see a former classmate from your speech class. What would you like him/her to remember about your topic?

In addition, if you don't have a clear idea of EXACTLY what you want to tell the audience, then your speech will lack a tight, cohesive structure. In other words, you will lose the audience early, because they will have no idea what you speaking about.

The Rule of Threes

Now is the time for a secret of public speaking. (Actually it is a secret to any form of communication.) It's called the Rule of Three's:

People are naturally inclined to understand things in terms of three parts

If you don't believe this, then think of all the ways we classify information and you will see a multitude of things broken down into three parts. For example, consider just a few of the ways we divide things into threes:

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

Beginning,

Middle

End

Morning

Afternoon

Night

Top

Middle

Bottom

Reading

Writing

Arithmetic

Past

Present

Future

Republican

Democrat

Independent

Introduction

Body

Conclusion

Or how about these familiar phrases:

"It's as easy as 1,2,3 . . ."

"I'll give you to the count of three . . ."

"Win, Place, or Show . . ."

The point is that your speech will have more impact on the audience if you can divide your topic into three main points.

Reality Check

This does not mean that you absolutely **MUST** divide your topic into three main points. But since it is natural for your audience to understand things in terms of three, you will make it easier for them to digest your message if it is broken into three parts.

Formulating a Residual Message

So, now that you know about the Rule of Threes, let's put it to work.

The first step in formulating your residual message is to break your topic down into the three most important parts. If you can't find a clear way to break down this topic, then it's time to go back and rethink your topic and specific purpose . Write down your topic and the three parts on your worksheet.

For now, it's important to keep to the *exact* wording on the worksheet, because it forces you to be specific about your communication goals. Using our photography example, here's what a residual message might look like:

By the end of my speech, I want my audience to understand that the three most important advances in photographic technology were camera obscura, daguerreotype, and digital imaging.

An important part of this sentence is the word **that** . Using this exact wording makes you state specifics instead of fuzzy generalizations, and it is vital that you keep this wording for your own residual message.

So, now that you have your three main points, and you understand what a residual message is, it is time to put it into action. Using your worksheet, complete the residual message for your topic and main points. Don't be afraid to go back and do additional research if you can't break down your topic into at least three parts.

In Review

Since your audience won't remember most of what you said during your speech, it is important to focus on providing them a way to remember your major points. By formulating a clear residual message, you begin with a solid idea of exactly what you think are the most important parts of your speech. It also helps to break down your topic into three parts, because a three part structure helps your audience remember your message.

At this point you should have

1. a topic ,specific purpose , a surplus of information about the topic
2. demographic and situational data about the audience
3. a residual message for your speech

STEP 7

Developing Your Main Points

Introduction to Developing Your Main Points

Notice that we have used the term "develop" rather than "write" speeches. You should avoid writing a speech word for word and then memorizing it. Instead you will want to develop a cohesive and organized set of ideas that naturally flow together.

Hopefully you will find that following the next couple of steps will help you to develop a speech that sounds more natural and is easier to deliver than a manuscript speech.

With your residual message, you now have a framework on which to build your speech. When you divided your topic into three parts, you formulated the main points of your speech. Each of these main points is in essence *an argument*. By "argument" we don't mean you and your roommate fighting over who ate the last Pop-Tart. Instead we're defining argument as **a statement that is supported with credible evidence**. Your main points will act as the statements, and now you need to support those statements with credible evidence.

Credible Evidence

Who decides the credibility (or believability) of your evidence? In the long run, it will be the audience. It is important to find out everything you can about them ahead of time, so that you can accurately judge what types of evidence will appeal to a particular audience. You may have a source or quotation that clearly supports your argument, but if the audience doesn't buy it, then your argument is sunk.

Breaking down Main Points into Sub-points

You can think of each one of your main points as a separate mini-speech. The trick is to develop each of these main points like you have developed your speech structure so far. This means taking a little time to think about what you want to accomplish with each point and how you need to approach this information in relation to the audience.

You may want to spend a little time brainstorming each point to generate different ideas. After getting a clear idea of the purpose of each point, you will repeat the process of breaking down your main points into three (more or less) "sub-points."

To see how this works, let's return to our example speech on photography and break down one of the main points -- digital imagery.

Since a point is a type of argument, we should first decide what we are trying to "prove" or illustrate to the audience. In this case we are attempting to show the audience why digital imagery is one of the most important advances in photographic technology.

Chances are that few people in the audience will be experts on photography or digital imagery. Let's assume that most of them have used a photocopier, and that most have surfed the Internet and have seen web pages with digital pictures. Remembering that audiences are egocentric, we should also consider how this technology will ultimately affect them. Why not include some information about the new digital cameras that they might soon be using for family snapshots?

Taking all this information, we could break down this main point as

Point #3 - Digital Imagery

sub-point #1 - An explanation of how it works

sub-point #2 - Used in photocopiers and web pages

sub-point #3 - Soon you will probably own a digital camera for family snapshots

Now take each of the sub-points and repeat the process to form another level of "sub points." For example:

Point #3 - Digital Imagery

sub-point #1 - An explanation of how it works

sub point a - breaks down an image into a series of numbers

sub point b - each number represents a dot on a grid

sub point c - these numbers can be stored and manipulated on any computer

□

Keep breaking your points down until you have created enough support for your arguments -- meaning that your audience fully understands your messages. Make sure to provide examples from your research, and to quote all sources.

In Review

Each of your main points acts as a type of argument, and you need to support each argument by developing each main point. Developing the body of your speech is simply a matter of breaking each main point down into smaller pieces of information, called sub-points. Organizing and dividing the information this way provides the audience with a clear framework by which to understand your ideas.

Before moving on to the next step, you should have:

1. a topic ,specific purpose , and residual message
2. developed all your main points into sub-points and sub-sub points (if needed)

STEP 8

Structuring Your Speech

Introduction

Which of the following make more sense to you?

lunch, breakfast, dinner

dinner, breakfast, lunch

breakfast, lunch, dinner

Most likely you found the third group to be the most logical, because it followed some sort of structure (in this case a chronological order). Although the first two groups are not impossible to understand, you can naturally realize and comprehend the pattern of the third group much quicker. More importantly, you don't have to spend any time pondering why these elements are grouped the way they are; the chronological structure makes logical sense.

Human beings need some sort of organization to understand things. In public speaking if you don't organize your messages into some sort of cohesive structure, then the audience will attempt to do it for you. The time they spend trying to find some way to mentally organize your message is time spent not really listening to your speech. You do not want to distract your audiences from listening to your ideas.

So it is in your best interest to provide the audience with a structure ahead of time. Structures make your speech much easier to remember, because a clear structure means that the messages will logically flow together. And more importantly, a well structured speech is likely to have greater impact on the audience than a poorly structured speech.

In general there are seven basic types of structures, and your speech should naturally fall into one of these structures. If your topic lends itself to several structures, your job is to pick the one that makes the most sense for the audience.



The Seven Types of Speech Structures

1. Space

Space structuring involves the parts of something and how they fit to form the whole.

Example: *A bicycle has three main parts - wheels, frame, and gears.*

2. Classification

Classification structuring sets up categories.

Example: *There are three types of restaurants in State College - fast food, fine dining, and ethnic.*

3. Comparison

Comparison structuring highlights the similarities between items/concepts.

Example: *Public speaking and conversation are alike in three ways - transmission of messages, audiences, and purposes.*

4. Contrast

Contrast structuring highlights differences between items/concepts.

Example: *Mountain bikes and racing bikes are different in three ways - weight, tires, and frame construction.*

5. Cause-Effect

Cause and effect structuring establishes a relationship between two events, where one is shown to cause the other.

Example: *Not wearing a bike helmet can lead to brain damage.*

6. Problem-Solution

Problem-Solution structures are usually used for persuasive speeches, and offer plausible solutions to stated problems.

Example: *Landfill waste can be effectively reduced through mandatory recycling programs.*

7. Time

Time structuring shows a series of events or steps in a process.

Example: *There are three steps in developing an speech - gathering the materials, audience analysis, and structuring.*

Adding a Structure to Your Speech

Go back to your basic outline from the last section and consider how the main points fit together-- which of these structures makes the most sense for your topic and residual message? Which structure would make it easiest for the audience to remember your speech?

Now is a good time to print out the Speech Structuring Worksheet if you haven't already.

Using the worksheet, find a structure and begin applying it. Even better, try a couple of structures and select the best one. Look at each sub-point and find a structure that makes sense here -- it may or may not be the same one you used for your main points. Keep going until you've found structures for your main points and all your sub-points. □

□ In Review

Structuring your speech is a way of organizing the information for maximum impact on the audience. Since audiences will normally attempt to find some sort of organizational pattern in your speech, it's a good idea to provide a clear structure for them, and thus allow them a better chance to focus on your residual message.

Remember, the less time the audience has to spend figuring out how your speech fits together, the more time to can spend actually listening to your message.

By now you should have:

1. atopic ,research , and main points developed into sub points
2. your main points and sub points structured in an logical way

STEP 9

Connectives, Introductions, and Conclusions

Introduction

By this point you have the basic body of your speech, and now it's time smooth it out with *connectives* - verbal techniques for making your ideas flow together in a logical way. In addition, you need to plan two of the most important parts of your speech -- the *introduction* and *conclusion*.

All three of these elements are very important to effective speaking. Without connectives, your speech becomes choppy, difficult to follow, and has a significantly lower impact on the audience. The introduction and conclusion are your first and last impressions on the audience. If either are done poorly then your audience is left with a lower opinion of your credibility. Although these three elements are often a second thought, an effective speaker gives them his/her full attention!

Connect the Points

A *connective* is simply a technique of using words and phrases to tie ideas together. The advantages of connectives are that they make your speech flow smoothly, help the audience jump from one point to the next, and give your overall presentation a natural, cohesive feel.

It also helps to remember that this is the first time your audience will hear your speech. Don't assume that they will automatically understand how your ideas fit together. You need to verbally "take them by the hand" and lead them from idea to idea. You also need to give them a framework for the speech, so they can see how all your ideas fit together as a unit.

Types of Connectives

There are many different types of connectives, and which ones you use depends on where they are placed in the speech. The first type we will examine, *Signposts*, work best any place where you will be introducing new ideas to the audience.

Signposts

- Act as verbal "You are here" markers
- Constantly remind the audience of the speech structure

Types of signposts

Internal Previews - Placed at the beginning of a main point, they let the audience know how this section of your speech is organized. For example, "I'd like to start out by saying it is important to change the oil in your car every 3,000 miles, because it can save you both time and money."

Internal Reviews - Placed at the end of a main point, they remind the audience what the last section of the speech covered. For example, "I think you'll agree that regular oil changes can lead to major savings in both time and money."



Transitions

Transitions act as a type of bridge between two ideas. They make it possible for the audience to move from one point to the next and to understand how these points are related. Sometimes single words or short phrases can act as transitions, for example:

and

in comparison

more importantly

another
therefore

but

in contrast

on the other hand
likewise

in addition to

or

of further interest

Or they can be longer phrases, such as:

"Now that we've examined the development of daguerreotype and the influence it had on photography, let's turn to the most recent development in photographic technology -- digital imagery."

If you think that the above example looks like an internal review combined with an internal preview, you are right. Signposts can be combined like this to act as transitions. The key thing to remember is that you need to make a smooth transition any time you will be moving from one major idea to another.

So, your job is to return to the body of your speech and provide connectives for all your points. Play around with different ways of getting from each point to the next point until you begin finding ways which sound natural and smooth.

Overviews and Reviews

The next step is to add an **overview** and a **review** to your speech. You have probably heard the advice that you should "tell people what you're going to say, say it, and then tell them what you said." Actually this is good advice, because your audience will remember a lot more of your speech if you tell it to them three times. The body of your speech is the "say it" part of this equation, and now it's time to add the other two parts.

The **overview** tells the audience what you are going to say and comes either at the end of your introduction or after the introduction and before your first major point. The overview informs the audience about the structure of the speech, the main points, and gives them a quick "road-map" of the information. In simplest terms, your overview should tell the audience your three (more or less) main points in order. For example,

"Today I'd like to tell you a little bit about the history of photography. Specifically I'd like to explore three of the most important developments in photographic technology -- camera obscura, daguerreotype, and digital imagery."

□

The **review** is simply a restatement of the overview, and it is placed first in the conclusion or between the final main point and the conclusion. The review is the final chance to

drive home your main points, and by this time your audience may need to be reminded about your first two points. A sample review could be:

"Hopefully you've learned a little about the fascinating history of photography, and can appreciate how camera obscura, daguerreotype, and digital imagery have had a major impact on the way we take pictures."

Return to the body of your speech to add an overview and review. Don't worry if this sounds a little stiff right now -- it's better to be a little formal at this point than to ignore these two vital elements.

Introductions

You may be wondering why we have ignored introductions and conclusions up to this point. It's not because the introduction and conclusion are not important -- in fact they are two of the most important parts of the speech. The reason we have waited until now is that you need to have a complete idea of what you will be saying before you can introduce or conclude it.

The introduction of your speech is your "first impression" for the audience, and a poor introduction can signal problems for the rest of the speech. Therefore it is vital that your introduction gives the audience the best possible impression of you as a speaker. In general, an effective introduction should:

Get the attention and interest of the audience

However, just getting their attention is not enough! You have to make them want to listen to your speech. Standing in front of the audience and screaming obscenities would probably get their attention, but would they really want to listen to your speech?

Reveal the topic of your speech

By then end of the introduction, there should be no doubt in the audience's mind as to *exactly* what your speech is about.

Establish credibility and goodwill

Basically, reassure the audience that you are sincere and are not trying to deceive them. If goodwill is not quickly established, your audience can easily ignore your message or become very suspicious. On the other hand, audiences will forgive a lot of mistakes by a speaker that they like, or at least that they feel likes them.

Establishes WHY the audience should listen to you .

This is the audience's first impression of you, so it is important to make a *good* impression. If you don't give the audience a compelling reason why they should listen, then it's doubtful that you will keep their attention for very long.

Tips for Developing an Effective Introduction

Keep it brief

If it is too long, you will begin to lose the audience's attention. You should leave the development of major points to the body of the speech. A good rule of thumb is that your intro should not be more than 10-15% of the total speech.

Use visual language

Use vivid adverbs and adjectives to appeal to all five senses. Try to "paint the air" with visual imagery.

Use an effective attention getting device

Stories - keep them short and dramatic

Shocking statistics - make sure that they are both shocking *and* easily understandable

Quotations - keep them brief and to the point

Relate everything to the audience

Rollovers - a story that is begun in the introduction and finished in the conclusion.

Conclusions

Just as an introduction is the first impression, your conclusion is the last impression on the audience. An effective conclusion will:

Signal the end of the speech

This perks the audience back up and prepares them that you will be finishing.

Reinforce the residual message

This is your last chance to state your thesis to the audience.

Provide a sense of closure

Your audience should be left with a feeling of completeness, and all loose ends should be tied up.

Tips for Effective Conclusions

Don't give new information in the conclusion.

The conclusion is not the place to bring up new information -- do that in the body of the speech. If you bring up new points and ideas in the conclusion, then the audience will not have a sense of closure.

Only review points, do not add to them.

Again, develop all your points in the body of the speech. The only new information might include where to get additional information.

Refer to your introduction.

Reminding them of your introduction adds a sense of completion and is a very natural way to provide closure.

End with a bang, not a whimper.

End strong, or your audience will be left with a less than optimal final impression. Standing there and saying, "That's it" does not make a lasting impression on your audience.

In Review

Connectives, introductions, and conclusions play a vital part in effective speaking. Connectives link your ideas together and without them your speech can get choppy and disjointed. The introduction provides the audience with their first impression of you as a speaker, and it's important to start off strong. Finally, the conclusion is your last chance to make a good impression, and to provide the audience with a sense of closure.

Time spent working on these elements will pay off in big ways.

Before moving on, you should have

1. fully developed your main points , and structured all the information into a logical form
2. added connectives between all points
3. added an overview and a review of your main points
4. developed an introduction
5. developed a conclusion

STEP 10

Using Visual Aids

Introduction - Why Use Visual Aids?

While effective speaking does not require visual aids, a few well placed visuals can add a significant amount of clarity and impact. More importantly, they can also help your audience stay focused and have a greater retention of information.

But don't be fooled into thinking that flashy visuals can save an otherwise poorly structured and delivered speech. You have to start with a well developed speech before visual aids can have any major effect.

The Two Major Types of Visual Aids

There are two types of visual aids -- static and dynamic.

Static visual aids do not change during the presentation. Examples of static visual aids are:

- Posters
- Overheads
- Slides
- Non-animated computer graphics
- Blackboard drawings that are prepared ahead of time

Dynamic visual aids change in some way during the presentation. Some examples of dynamic visual aids are:

- Video
- Audio
- Animated computer graphics
- Drawings and overheads that are modified during the presentation
- Actual objects

Selecting Which Type of Visual Aid to Use

In general, dynamic visual aids will hold an audience's attention more, but are usually more time consuming to prepare. Dynamic visual aids also offer a greater chance for mechanical failure (e.g) jammed videocassettes.

Although static visual aids may not have quite the attention getting potential as dynamic ones, they can still be very effective. Static visual aids are also usually easier to prepare and use.

Your choice of visual aids should depend on the time you have available, the speaking environment, and the time you will have available to create and practice with them. Always remember that a simple visual aid that is used well is much more effective than a complex one used poorly. You should also consider that fact that you will have to transport them to class on your speaking day.

Rules of Thumb for Using Visual Aids

The following are some general guidelines to consider when choosing and creating visual aids:

Visuals should add to the presentation, not distract from it.

Make sure that your speech has enough substance to equal your visuals so that the audience focuses on your messages. If your audience only remembers your visual aids, then your speech has not been effective.

Your visual aids must be clearly visible and understandable by the entire audience.

A great visual aid is useless if the audience can't see it. Make sure that *every* member of the audience can see, read, and understand each visual. Always use *at least* 18 point type for all text.

Use a simple fonts

Lettering styles (fonts) that are overly ornamental may look cool, but are very difficult to read. For example, compare the following sentences:

How quickly can you read this?

How quickly can you read this?

The second sentence is much easier to read, and your audience can comprehend it instantly. The extra time it takes to read and understand the first sentence is time that your audience is not listening to you.

Avoid distributing objects to the audience while you are speaking.

A common temptation is to have the audience pass around items while you are speaking, or to distribute handouts at the beginning of your speech. Unfortunately this distracts the audience and significantly reduces the effectiveness of your speech.

Distribute handouts at the end of your speech, and don't use visuals that the audience can't see from their seats. Use overhead transparencies for photographs or small objects.

Practice with your visuals well ahead of time so that you can smoothly integrate them into your performance.

Nothing can ruin your credibility faster than fumbling around with your visual aids. Always practice with your visuals so you can use them with confidence.

Be prepared for disaster!

Overhead projector bulbs burn out unexpectedly, posters sometimes fall down, and videotapes sometimes jam in the machine. Always prepare an alternate plan for your presentation so that you do not have to depend on your visual aids to carry your speech.

Visual aids can only add to a good speech, they cannot rescue a poorly developed speech.

Do not put all your time and effort into your visuals at the risk of ignoring developing and practicing your speech.

Speak to your audience, not your visual aids.

Keep your eye contact on the audience, and avoid the temptation to constantly look at or read from your visuals.

Keep video and audio presentations short and to the point.

Do not make the audience wait for the important part -- start with the tape cued up to the right spot and make sure the tape is of the highest quality possible.

Try to have only one piece of information on a poster or overhead transparency.

Do not overload your visuals with too much information because they become messy and difficult to understand.

Statistical information is easier for your audience to understand when presented visually through charts and graphs.

Statistics will have a much greater impact if your audience can see the relationship between the numbers, instead of having to imagine how numbers relate.

In Review

While not 100% necessary to the success of your speech, visual aids can often be the difference between a good and a great speech. In choosing between static and dynamic visuals, you should consider the time available, physical location, and transportation requirements. Also remember that visuals can't save a poorly developed or delivered speech -- they can only add to a speech that is already well developed and practiced.

Before moving on to the final step, you should have

1. a fully developed speech
2. visual aids that enhance your speech

STEP 11

Practice and Delivery

Introduction - The Need to Follow Through

If you've followed along to this point, you should have a well structured and developed speech that is complemented by visual aids. Now comes the point where many students fail to follow through on the potential of their work. To put it bluntly, **without practice you are dooming yourself to a mediocre speech.**

Not only do you need to practice your speech, you also need to practice it out loud, standing up, and in front of an audience if possible. Simply going over the speech in your head doesn't give you an idea of what it is like to actually say the words.

It is also important to learn how to listen to your own voice. It is very hard to determine if you need to slow down, speak louder, or avoid saying "um" or "ah" if you never say your speech aloud.

In addition, you need to practice how you are going to stand and what your arms are doing while you are speaking. Always make sure that you eliminate any excess body movement that might distract the audience.

Don't forget to follow through with actual physical practice to be sure your efforts at creating a well developed speech are not fumbled during your presentation.

General Delivery Guidelines

Here are some basic guidelines for practicing and delivering your speech.

Know what you are going to say, not how you are going to say it.

Practice your speech out loud enough times so that your delivery comes across as conversational, smooth and confident. However, do not memorize the speech.

Know your speech well enough so that you will only need a minimal amount of words or phrases on your index card.

This will keep your eye contact off your notes and on your audience. Having your speech written out word for word on index cards is simply an invitation to read your speech to the audience.

Be aware of distracting elements and strive to correct them while speaking.

For example, if you have a habit of speaking too rapidly, then monitor yourself while speaking to make sure you maintain an understandable rate. You might put notes on your index cards like "slow down" or "pause."

DO NOT start speaking until you are fully situated in front of the audience, and have taken a deep breath!

Take a moment to collect your thoughts before starting -- this will give you a much better sense of control. Avoid the common temptation to start speaking on your way up to the podium and finish speaking while walking back to your seat.

Realize that NOTHING WILL TAKE THE PLACE OF PREPARATION .

Don't neglect the need for actual physical practice of your speech.

When practicing your speech, go through the entire speech before stopping to make corrections.

Many speeches fall apart at towards the end because the speaker failed to practice the speech in its entirety. Try to avoid constantly stopping and then starting from the beginning, because this might mean that you never get to practice the conclusion.

Prepare well enough in advance so that you can get a good night's sleep before your speaking date.

A speech is not a typed report, where you can pull an all-nighter and turn it in while looking and feeling terrible. Much like a sporting event, you need to be at your physical and mental best so that you can perform your best.

DO NOT PUT THIS ASSIGNMENT OFF TILL THE LAST MINUTE!

This will only increase the tension and make it very difficult to give an acceptable performance.

In Review

Your speaking day is the moment of truth when all your hard work comes to fruition. Don't blow it by failing to follow through with actual physical practice of your speech. Stand up. Say your speech out loud, and do it repeatedly until the words feel natural and you can eliminate any distracting gestures or movements.

Good luck!

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