

Chapter 10
Basic Delivery: Appearing Knowledgeable

from
Public Speaking: An Idea Focus
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General Education Objectives: This chapter helps you:

1. know the basic types of delivering a speech.
2. understand the physical aspects of delivery.
3. understand the vocal aspects of delivery.

Specific Testable Objectives: As a result of studying this chapter you should be able to:

1. explain how a focus on the purpose of your speech rather than on yourself as speaker impacts delivery.
2. distinguish between four types of delivery.
3. state suggestions for delivering a speech.
4. deliver a beginning-level speech.

Generally, beginning students of public speaking are most concerned about appearing nervous when they speak. You may share this concern. You may feel so anxious that you're sure that everyone will focus upon your nervousness. It might help you to know that there isn't a strong relationship between how afraid you feel and how apprehensive you appear to others.

We know that experience is an effective treatment for communication apprehension and is effective for a large majority of people (Chapter 2 discusses a more sophisticated technique to help the remaining; but, we believe, from the beginning, a positive experience will work for you). However, it is an obvious "catch 22." What does one do about the anxiety until she or he gains the experience?

The answer to that question is found in your mind. Remember that speaking is something you do everyday and you have been doing since an early age. When you have something important to share with friends, you probably have no trouble talking to them. Admittedly, when speaking in public, we are often not speaking with friends and occasionally may even feel that what we are expressing isn't profound.

However, if you can capture the same mental attitude you have when sharing ideas with friends; you will find the apprehension isn't a problem.

Focusing on the audience and on helping them to understand what you are saying will take your own attention away from yourself.

You should seek to change your thinking by focusing on the audience in defining your purpose. Think, "I want them to understand...." Instead of "I have to give a speech about...." Don't consider "speech" as a thing to be presented, but as a means to accomplish a purpose.

It may also help to know that professional speakers have a heightened activation when they rise to speak. They tend to view arousal as energy necessary to deal with the demands of speaking. The energy is needed to help them in communicating.

Another answer to the question of what do I do until I gain experience may come from the adage "be prepared." Although research hasn't established a statistical link between preparation and confidence, proper preparation certainly contributes to quality performance.

Indeed, we type delivery based upon the nature of the preparation. There are four types of delivery: impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript and memorized. In the section below, each type will be discussed in terms of its essence and when each is the appropriate type to be used.

Inset 10-1

Qualities of Ideal Delivery

- Appears spontaneous
- Is direct
- Has immediacy
- Is adaptive
- Does not call attention to itself

Impromptu

Technically, impromptu speaking occurs when the speaker has no opportunity to make preparation before speaking. It is "speaking with no preparation or a lifetime of preparation" because, in such situations, we draw from everything we know both about the subject and about speaking. If this course in public speaking is successful, it will prepare you for such situations. A clear indicator of the success of this course is the extent to which you are prepared to be successful in impromptu speaking situations in the future.

Still, impromptu speaking is appropriate only when you had no idea that you would be asked to or feel the need to speak.

It might seem, then, that impromptu speeches would be few in number. However, in the affairs of life, many occasions demand that someone speak out to prevent an injustice from being done. In a democracy, it is essential for these voices to be heard. Again, if this course of instruction is successful, you will often find yourself seeing that need and you will have the confidence to contribute

positively to helping your society, your community and/or your family. When you rise to these occasions, you will also be helping yourself.

Again, it may seem that impromptu speaking would, in general, not reflect a high quality of delivery. However, typically it does. Impromptu speaking is by its nature heart felt in its spontaneity. It is direct, i.e. it has immediacy. It is also adaptive. In short, it has the qualities that we look for in the most polished speeches: those qualities that make it seem natural.

Extemporaneous

Extemporaneous delivery is speaking from notes. Generally, the notes are arranged according to a pattern which helps both the speaker and the audience to follow systematically from one section to another; in short, in outlined form.

Since extemporaneous speaking permits the speaker the advantage of preparation while keeping much of that desirable element of spontaneity, it is generally the most favored form of delivery. It is the mode of delivery appropriate in most situations where preparation is possible.

It is the most efficient means of preparation also. Typically, in everyday business, social and family situations, time isn't directly allotted for preparing the many talks needed for success in these areas. Successful people find that they must do much of their speech preparation between tasks that are "deemed" more important.

Inset 10-2

Rules for Using Visual Aids/ and Audio Aids and AV aids

1. Always have a backup plan. Remember, what worked in rehearsal may not in the heat of the presentation.
2. Be prepared to continue with the presentation when minor problems occur.
3. Prepare the aid large enough so that it can be easily read from all distances in the viewing area.
4. Only have the aid visual to the audience when you are talking about it.
5. Have the aid to where it can be easily seen, without any obstructions, including your body.
6. Talk about the information presented by the aid while it is visible to the audience.
7. Remove the aid from view once you have discussed it.
8. Only talk about the information presented to the audience when it is visible to them.
9. Do not pass handout to the audience immediately before the presentation or during it. Distribute them well in advance or at the end of the presentation.

Inset 10-3

Typical Speech Preparation for a Business Woman

Wednesday of Week One:

10:15 a.m. Finalizes opportunity to make presentation

12:30 p.m. Asks colleagues about some initial ideas for the speech

2:23 p.m. Asks administrative assistant to locate some information she thinks may be helpful

Thursday of Week One

5:31 a.m. (While waiting for coffee to perk) Jots down some ideas she'd like to communicate to audience.

Other issues require her time for remainder of day

Friday of Week One

2:35 p.m. Assistant reminds her of speech by giving her the information she had requested.

Sunday of Week Two

12:30 p.m. Manages to ask family's reaction to some of her ideas for the speech before everyone became involved in other activities.

Monday of Week Two

7:25 a.m. While commuting to work, short through her memory for possible examples for speech.

12:45 p.m. After business luncheon, orders key ideas for speech on a legal pad.

4:30 p.m. Finds time to look over the information on hand and tab it according to the key ideas.

7:45 p.m. Two family members agree to linger after dinner to listen to her discuss the key ideas and information. One suggests a possible way to begin.

Tuesday of Week Two

Unable to find time to practice delivering presentation.

12:25 p.m. Briefly looks over notes while dishes are cleared.

12:35 p.m. Makes the presentation

Manuscript

A manuscript speech is when a person writes, edits and polishes a manuscript and then prepares it so as to make reading as unobtrusive as possible and then rehearses until the presentation has much the same characteristics of an impromptu speech. Manuscript speeches demand much

effort. Without the appropriate effort, the essential advantages of speech are lost and it would actually be more effective to print the message and distribute it for the audience to read.

Fortunately, the number of situations which demand a manuscript presentation is limited. Traditionally, the number one reason to justify a manuscript speech has been that the speech was of historical importance. Presidential addresses and graduations speeches often justify the effort. More recently, more manuscripts have been called for because of legal reasons, the fear of law suits. No doubt, wherever sufficient moneys are involved, there is justification for developing the manuscript.

Please remember that a speech is much more than the reading of an essay. Manuscript speaking requires much more effort that you should spend in this course; it is not a short cut. If you attempt it as a means of avoiding actually speaking with the audience, you will not gain from the experience. For this reason, teachers tend to restrict the use of notes.

Inset 10-4

True Story – Well, based on true events!

Several years ago, a young woman enrolled in my public speaking class. I knew the woman because her husband was a graduate student and debate assistant in the department. After class one day she told me that she had difficulty giving speeches. I tried to reassure her; she would do well.

“But I have to have an A in this course,” she said.

I could not figure why she needed an A. She was obviously an intelligent student. It could not be a grade problem. She saw the surprise in my face.

“Well, my husband made an A in your graduate class. I can’t let him best me!”

As it turned out, she was an excellent student. She made an A on all the tests.

After the lecture on delivery, she again stayed after class. She asked, “What do you think about writing out the manuscript and using a tape recorder to learn it. That’s how my husband prepares his students for forensics competition.”

“Well,” I said. “That’s for competition. The students are already skilled at extemporaneous speaking. The speeches they are practicing, they will give over and over again. It’s worth the effort. I wouldn’t want you to work that hard. If you have time, video your speech and watch it once, but keep it extemporaneous.”

I didn’t think about that conversation again until years later. She completed all her speeches earning an A on each and of course got an A in the course.

Her husband finished his degree and got a job as Director of Debate at a small college. He did well. After only a few years, I learned that he was a Dean at another college and then he was appointed President at that college.

A few years thereafter, I saw the couple. To my surprise, the wife drew me aside.

“I have a confession to make,” she said.

“Oh, really.”

“Yes. I don’t think I earned that A in your speech class. I didn’t do as you suggested. I wanted that A so badly that I wrote out all my speeches and practiced with a tape recorder until I got them memorized. It worked in the class, but when (name omitted) became President, I had to speak in public so often. I didn’t have time, just as you said I wouldn’t, to memorize any of them. Then, I really had to struggle to learn to do it right. I am grateful, however, that I had the knowledge of how it should be done. Without that I’d never have made it.”

Memorized

A memorized speech is when a person writes, edits and polishes a manuscript and then commits it to memory and practices presenting it until its delivery appears to have the same characteristics of a quality impromptu speech. It is an even more demanding process than for a manuscript speech!

Again, it is appropriate that few speaking situations demand this much effort. Two seem most apparent: The eulogy, or speech of tribute, most often associated with funerals where the respect for the person (or/and the living) demands a heartfelt delivery and acceptance speeches where supposedly the speaker “never seriously thought she/he would win,” but still knew better than not being fully prepared in case she or he did.

Inset 10-5

Delivery Suggestions

On the day of the speech, consider the speech as beginning when you enter the room.

Don't clown around before the speech unless you're doing a comedy act.

Sit erect but relaxed when it is your turn.

Walk directly to the position where you're going to speech and face the audience without saying a word.

Avoid being behind a podium.

Position your feet about shoulder width apart with your weight equally distributed, one foot slightly advanced of the other. Don't lock your knees.

Bend your arms at the elbow; this will encourage you to use your hands during the speech.

Don't rush to begin speaking. Find a friendly face and make eye contact with that person. Think your first line. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly. Take another breath and begin speaking to that one person.

During the speech, take a step or two, space permitting. Don't pace.

Keep your arms bent and gesture from that position.

Don't be concerned with the shaking of your notes.

Vary your eye contact. Look at the people in the corners from time to time.

Finish your speech while still standing in front of the audience, and then walk directly to your seat.

VOCAL DELIVERY

In each of these types of delivery, control of both the voice and the body is important. The voice can be very important. We will examine characteristics of the voice in terms of some adjustments that you might want to consider.

Volume

Volume is the force of the air which produces sound. We generally associate volume with loudness. We want to be able to hear a speaker comfortably and yet don't want the force to be too strong. Still, it is probably

better to err in terms of having volume too loud than too soft. The most important factor in the effectiveness of delivery is that the message be heard, and that depends in large part on the volume.

Frequency

Frequency is the speed at which sound waves vibrate. We typically associate frequency with pitch or tone of the voice. Obviously, some voices can be so high pitched as to be irritating and some can be so low as to make distinguishing of some sounds difficult. Still, probably the most important aspect about tone with most people is that there exists variety in tone. Certainly we want to monitor our pitch sufficiently to avoid monotone.

Rate

Rate is the number of words produced in any interval of time, typically measured in words per minute. Many beginning speakers believe that they speak too rapidly. However, rapid rate is probably not a problem as long as the words are clearly articulated.

Variation in rate is produced in two different ways. First, words may be said more quickly or may be drawn out by lengthening the sounds within the words. Certainly if the words are said so quickly as to distort the words, the audience may have difficulty understanding much of the speaker's message. The second way in which the rate may vary is through pauses. Most beginning speakers fear pauses, but experienced speakers use pauses to increase the dramatic effect of the speech, to introduce quotes, and to give the audience a moment to complete an idea. Experienced speakers use "unfilled pauses," They stop speaking without producing any sound for a moment or two at key points in the speech. At the same time, they are typically doing something with their face, head, hands, etc. to say to the audience, "Consider this if you will." In contrast to the unfilled pause, pauses that are filled with "uhs" tend to reduce the effectiveness of the speech.

Quality

Quality is how pleasant the voice is. Unlike the other three characteristics, quality is more difficult to measure because it is more subjective and varies from listener to listener. Still, in general, quality is improved by opening the mouth more to allow more of the fullness of the vibrations to escape. Most voice teachers encourage their students to work for a "pear-shaped" tone. By opening the mouth and speaking out, typically, the speaker is easier to understand as well and having a more pleasant sound.

Summary

In this chapter we have encouraged you to consider each speech as an opportunity to communicate something important to the audience, to keep the focus on the process and not on yourself. We presented four types of preparation for delivery and identified appropriate occasions for using each. We also present four qualities of the voice. If you will prepare your speeches to be presented extemporaneously, it will help to prepare you to give speeches in any situation that may arise in the future.