

Persuasive Speaking

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Module Overview

Purpose Statement

Public speaking is one of the most feared but necessary communication skills. People need to be able to communicate their ideas not only in a communication classroom setting, but also in their daily lives. **This learning module will provide instruction in creating and presenting a persuasive speech. Specifically, different organizational patterns will be provided to the students. Students will go through guided activities that will give them the background and application of the organizational patterns.** Each activity will include a self-assessment. At the end of the unit, the students will need to prepare a persuasive speech using one of the organizational patterns. A tool for the overall assessment will be provided for the teacher.

Learning and Teaching Methodology

Public speaking is a timeless topic. While basic ideas stay the same, there may be additional resources with the use of Internet sites and new video and audiotapes. A variety of activities will be provided and will be selected based upon the following:

- Online, hybrid or traditional class settings
- Student driven or teacher-assigned
- Specific videotape availability
- Learning style
- Computer accessibility/speed

Module Objectives

To learn about and apply organizational patterns of persuasive speaking.

- Demonstrate how different audiences respond to different persuasive approaches
- Provide Internet resources for persuasive speaking and speeches

Notes for Instructors

1. The module can be used as a self-paced module, but the final product (persuasive speech) must be done either on videotape or in person. Some activities require Internet access, so if the module is being taught in a traditional setting, the activities can be assigned as homework or can be done in a computer classroom.
2. There are a variety of activities in the module. Many of the activities can be done as group work and then presented to the rest of the class. Activities may be selected based on computer accessibility and speed (audio and video files are more effective on faster computers), student learning styles, and time available.
3. The module will take at least two weeks to explain, discuss, and apply in a practice mode. The actual speech presentation will take two to four class periods, depending on the number of students per class.
4. If the budget is too small to purchase suggested videotapes, alternative ways of showing application will be presented within the module.
5. Videos of persuasive speeches may be added to this module at a later date.

Students

1. If the module is self-paced, the students may have some control over content based on their knowledge of public speaking, experience, and interest.
2. Students may work individually or in groups to learn how to apply organizational patterns.
3. Students will be given a critical thinking atmosphere in order to better understand persuasive speaking principles.
4. Students will decide which organizational pattern would be most effective for their particular audience.
5. Students will learn to critique persuasive speeches.

Main Topic

Background



We live in a world of persuasion. When we turn on the television, we are bombarded with commercials and infomercials trying to convince us that our lives would be better if we used a certain type of shampoo, drove a particular brand of car, or bought a RonCo product. When we answer our telephones, there is a good chance that the person on the other end isn't a friend or relative, but a salesperson trying to persuade us to switch phone or insurance companies.

We aren't always on the listening side of the persuasive message. Often, we are the ones doing the persuading. If you have ever had an interview for a job or scholarship, you are using persuasive techniques. If you want to convince your friends to attend a certain party, you must convince them with logical or emotional statements. We can't avoid using persuasion or being persuaded; it's a fact of life.

This module will provide information on persuasive speaking. Before starting this module, however, it is assumed that you have learned and are able to apply the following areas of public speaking:

- Audience analysis
- Basic topic selection
- Researching your topic
- Using supporting materials
- Organizational skills
(introduction, main ideas, conclusion)
- Creating and using visual aids

For a review of these topics, go to <http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm>.

To be an effective persuasive speaker, you must first examine your audience. You may not be able to persuade everyone in your audience to see your point of view. Beliefs and behaviors that people have held for a long period of time are difficult to change. Here are some guidelines adapted from Saskatchewan Education (1998) to remember when trying to be persuasive:

- People are more likely to change their behaviors or beliefs if a small change rather than a large change is requested. For example, if you want

people to donate to a charity, you might ask for donations of clothing or a small amount of money rather than ten percent of their annual income.

- People are more likely to consider changing their actions if the change will benefit them more than it will cost them. When we say “cost,” we don’t always mean money. A cost could be the use of a skill, time, or commitment to a project or organization.
- People are more likely to change their behavior or beliefs if the changes meet their needs. Review Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to determine the importance of different needs. (One site: <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html>)
- People are more likely to change their behavior or beliefs if the change is requested in small segments at a time. Move from small areas of agreement to larger areas that an audience may have more difficulty accepting.

If an audience does not have the same beliefs or behaviors that you have, Osborn and Osborn (2000) suggest six steps to entice them. These steps are called a co-active approach. You will see that Osborn and Osborn incorporate the four principles above when providing their six steps.

1. Establish good will with your audience. Emphasize what you have in common with the audience. You may have similar experiences, education, economic level, beliefs, or values.
2. Start with areas of agreement before discussing the areas of disagreement. For example, you will want to discuss the pollution problems, which most people will agree to, before asking them to ride the bus every day.
3. Emphasize explanation rather than argument at the beginning of the speech. If you are direct and immediately ask the audience members to change their beliefs, you won’t be very successful. But if you explain rather than demand, you will have a better chance of being heard.
4. Cite authorities and experts that your audience respects and accepts. If they know that people they respect feel a certain way, they will be more accepting to those ideas.
5. Set modest goals for change. Don’t push your audience too fast or too hard. Think about telephone solicitors; many aren’t successful because they ask for too much change in a short period of time.
6. Compare your beliefs or position with other beliefs or positions. If you provide a multisided presentation, your audience knows that you respect their beliefs even though you are trying to persuade them to see your point of view.

Keep this information about audiences in mind when you are trying to persuade them to change their beliefs or behaviors. In addition to these principles, two organizational patterns are used in persuasive speeches. The two organizational patterns that will be discussed in this module are Problem-Solution and Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

Definitions

1. What is a co-active approach?
2. What is the problem-solution organizational pattern?
3. What is the Monroe's Motivated Sequence organizational pattern?

Relevant Sources

1. Textbooks

O'Hair, D., & Stewart, R. (1999) Public Speaking: Challenges and Choices. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.

Osborn, M., & Osborn, S. (2000). Public Speaking (5th ed.) Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

2. Online Sources

Houghton Mifflin Company, Communication Resources.

<http://college.hmco.com/communication/resources/>

Huitt, W., Educational Psychology Interactive.

<http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/col/regsys/maslow.html>

Saskatchewan Education. (1998). Communication Studies 20: A Curriculum Guide for the Secondary Level. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education.

<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/comm20/mod6.html>.

Virtual Presentation Assistant, University of Kansas.

<http://www.ukans.edu/cwis/units/coms2/vpa/vpa.htm>

Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

<http://mauicc.hawaii.edu/staff/stjohn/publicspeakers/pdf/mspguide.pdf>.

3. Video or Audio Excerpts of Speeches

Great American Speeches, PBS.

<http://www.pbs.org/greatspeeches/timeline/index.html#1990>.

Great Speeches. <http://www.chicago-law.net/speeches/speech.html#1millen>.

O'Hair, D., & Stewart, R. (1999) *Public Speaking: Student Speeches for Study* Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.

Top 100 U.S. Speeches of the 20th Century.
<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/newtop100speeches.htm>

Relevance to Academia/Industry

Persuasive speaking has direct relevance to most careers. Whether an individual is a salesperson, a manager, or any other employee, there are times when persuasion is used to change beliefs, attitudes, or policies in the workplace. Studies have shown that communication skills are very important in the workplace, and being able to speak persuasively is indeed an asset. Outside the workplace, people use persuasion to get others to agree with their views.

Persuasive speaking is not just for those students whose majors are communication. Students in all fields will learn to present persuasive arguments, because it is a skill needed in almost all careers.

Subtopic 1

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Alan Monroe developed a five-step approach to persuasive speaking. It has become a standard and moves your audience not just to agree with your ideas, but also to do something about it. A detailed description and an outline of Monroe's Motivated Sequence can be found at

<http://mauicc.hawaii.edu/staff/stjohn/publicspeakers/pdf/mspguide.pdf> To better understand and apply the motivated sequence, you can do the following activities:

Activity 1. Read an outline of each step of the sequence at <http://mauicc.hawaii.edu/staff/stjohn/publicspeakers/pdf/mspsamplerak.pdf>

Activity 2. Work with five other classmates to develop ideas for the topic "Stopping air pollution." Each person should take one step of the Motivated Sequence, but work together so it flows together. Present it to the class at the next meeting.

Activity 3. Read Mary Fisher's speech about being a person with AIDS. It can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/greatspeeches/timeline/1990> Then answer the following questions:

1. How does she show a need?
2. What is her "call to action?"
3. What does she ask the audience to do?

Activity 4. Listen and critique the persuasive speech videotape that accompanies the Osborn and Osborn text. Take notes on each of the five steps in Monroe's Motivated Sequence.

Activity 5. (Mandatory) Select a topic, write an outline, and create a persuasive speech using Monroe’s Motivated Sequence. The speech should be 6-7 minutes.

Subtopic 2

Problem-Solution Organizational Pattern

Another organizational pattern that is used in persuasive speeches is the problem-solution pattern. This pattern isn’t as audience centered as Monroe’s Motivated Sequence, but it does provide basic ingredients needed to convince people to adopt your solution. More detail about the problem-solution organization pattern can be found at <http://sunny.crk.umn.edu/courses/comm/spch1101/pers--methods.htm> Scroll down to the second half of the page for the information. Once you have studied the information about problem-solution organizational patterns, select one or all of the activities to strengthen your knowledge.

Activity 1. Read the speech given by Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office to the Plenary of the UN Special Session on Children on May 9, 2002. It’s located at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/dgo/speeches/somavia/2002/ungass02.htm> Then answer the following questions:

1. What did the Director-General say to convince the audience that there is a child labor problem?
2. How many steps were given as part of the solution?

Activity 2. Listen to the speech by Catherine Berry. It is found on the tape “Public Speaking: Student Speeches for Study” by O’Hair and Stewart (1999).

- Does the speaker explain why groups of people do not do well on standardized tests?
- Are all terms clearly defined?
- What does the speaker need to do in order for you to paraphrase her speech to persuade someone else that the standardized tests are not valid?

Activity 3. (Mandatory) Select a topic, write an outline, and create a persuasive speech using the persuasive organizational pattern. The speech should be 6-7 minutes.

Overall Assessment

Instructors should use an assessment form to make sure students have been able to apply the selected organizational pattern. One such assessment can be found at http://college.hmco.com/communication/resources/shared/downloads/eval_persuasive.pdf