AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Remember that the members of the audience are supposed to be the beneficiaries of your communication.

- Don't make too many assumptions about your audience. But you do have to make some.
- Figure out the basics.

Who are these people?
- demographics (age, ethnicity, gender mix, etc.).
- predispositions (hopes, fears, positives/negatives, level of interest).
- knowledge of/experience with subject/me.

In what kind of setting will they receive this information?
- large lecture hall or small seminar room or classroom.
- lighting and sound issues.
- time of day.

- Take into account the "me, here, now."

  - Picture yourself as a member of the audience and ask "How does this message affect me, here, now?"
  - Me, here, now translates into what you as a sender have to offer your audience/receivers—what they will be able to understand, accept, support, consider important—because it matters to them.

- Establish cognitive / behavioral objectives for your audience:

  - What do I want my audience to know?
  - What do I want my audience to do

OPENINGS, AND CLOSINGS

- OPENINGS. Stay away from the predictable (Good morning. . . ., Today, I'm here to talk about . . .). Instead:

  - Begin with a provocative question, anecdote, or current event—and how it relates to the content.

- Ask the audience a question
- Set up a problem—and promise that they'll have all the tools for a solution by the end of the class.

- CLOSINGS. Many speakers simply talk until the end of the time or beyond it—and say, "I see we're out of time." Instead:

  - Plan a rhythm for your speaking—plan to end with content 5 minutes early, so you can summarize, raise questions.
  - Set aside a time for questions—and structure that time.

PREPARATION

You probably can’t cover everything you want to in a talk or speech.

- Decide what is essential, what is important, and what is helpful (what would be nice).

  - Cover the first; try to cover the second; forget about the third.
  - Release a little control over the material and rely on the textbook or a list of supplementary readings for the nonessentials.

- Set objectives.

  - What do you want to have accomplished at the end of the speech?
  - What do you want the audience to know at the end of the speech?

- Plan a speech to cover less than the allotted period.

  - It takes some time to get going.
  - Questions always take up more time than you expect.

- Divide the speech/talk into discrete segments and follow the standard speech structure.

  - Divide it both in terms of time and in terms of material.
  - Try for roughly equal blocks, each one on a topic.
- Unlike in a piece of writing, you should tell them what you’ll say, say it, and tell them what you’ve said.

- **Speak from notes or an outline, rather than a complete text.**
  - It's too tempting to simply read, rather than lecture, from a complete text.
  - Reading also creates a barrier between speaker and audience.
  - Writing up an entire speech is very time consuming.
  - A written speech often becomes a fossil that never gets updated.

### DELIVERY

- **Be conversational; speak naturally; be yourself (or your best self).**
  - That self may be formal, "laid back," understated, or hyper.
  - Use those traits; don't fight against them.
  - **Talk** about the material; don't **lecture** about it.
  - (Talking is easier if you don't read verbatim.)

- **Vary your pacing and voice.**
  - Gauge audience reaction, and
  - Repeat critical points immediately if you sense the necessity.
  - Use your voice to underline and italicize the important points.
  - Pause before new points.
  - Use transitional statements to move to the next idea.

- **Use gestures to emphasize points.**
  - Consider gestures to be a mirror of your voice.
  - Adjust your gestures to the size of the room.

- **Look at the audience.**
  - Try to cover all parts of the room by dividing it into four quadrants.
  - If direct eye contact makes you forget your place, try looking just over a student's head, or between two students (They won't see the difference).

- **Use language to create pictures.**
  - Use metaphors, analogies, and similes.

- **Observe the techniques of others.**
  - Try out in your own talks techniques you admire in others.
  - Like any skill, delivery is not innate, but must be learned.

### CREDIBILITY & COMMITMENT

Although speaking isn't theater, we do know that audience find concepts, knowledge, skills, and ideas most accessible and credible from someone they consider . . . well, not dull.

- **Think about antecedent image**—perception is often stronger than reality.

**Credibility is enhanced by:**

- Your own sense of comfort and confidence presenting material.
- Your enthusiasm and interest in teaching.
- Your research and own ideas.

**Commitment is enhanced by:**

- Relating your own experience, ideas, and feelings.
- Taking the first person approach, not separating yourself from your subject.
- Relating your "passion" for your subject.

**Delivery is tied to both commitment and credibility:**

An old UCLA study of effective presentations analyzed 3 elements (verbal, vocal, visual). Here's what it found was important in establishing credibility/believability:

- **Verbal (words you say):** 7%.
- **Vocal (how you sound when you say them):** 38%.
- **Visual (how you look when you say them):** 55%.

**Your energy and intensity will move your audience—and help you (them) reach your objectives.**

### BUILDING INTERACTION

- Learning takes place best in an active, not a passive environment.
• Interaction is a continuous way to
  • Assess the *me, here, now*.
  • Determine whether or not your content is understood.
  • Share the responsibility of learning more equitably and appropriately.

• How to build interaction?
  • Have questions prepared—begin with relatively easy, accessible ones.
  • Work to get everyone involved, even in large groups.

☛ Ask the audience to consider issues with the person sitting next to them/jot down ideas, questions, concerns.
☛ Discuss as a larger group.

• Move yourself!
  • Don’t scurry back and forth, but don’t get locked into one position.

HANDLING QUESTIONS

• Explicitly request and encourage questions.
  • The audience will see that you have a genuine interest in what they’re thinking.

• Be aware of how your behavior and comments can set the tone for questioning.
  • A negative response (e.g., "We’ve already covered that") discourages further questions and may make the audience think you don’t really want questions.

• Make sure everyone hears the question.
  • Repeat it if necessary.
  • But don’t make a habit of simply repeating every question.
  • Ask the audience if they heard the question; then ask the person to repeat.

• Clarify questions.
  • Say, "Do you mean that . . . ," or "I’m sorry, I don’t understand the question," rather than "Your question isn’t clear."

• Answer questions as directly as possible.

• Address your answer to the whole audience.
  • Ask whether you have answered the question.

• Be diplomatic when people raise tangential, overly complicated questions, or persistently ask questions just to be asking.
  • Ask them to stop by after the presentation or to contact you.
  • If a someone is simply confused, say, "Let me go over this point a bit more slowly."

GETTING FEEDBACK

• Get regular feedback.
  • Ask the audience to spend the last five minutes of class writing down the most important thing they learned that day or one question they have as a result of the talk.
  • Or ask them to write down questions they still have.

• Use eye contact as a tool for continuous feedback.
  • If you notice people with questioning looks, stop what you’re doing and ask if you need to clarify.
  • If you get no response, go ahead and clarify.