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Assignment Name: Oral Presentation And Speech

Oral Presentation And Speech

The oral presentation means delivering an address to a public audience. It also refers to public speaking and/or speech-making. It is a brief discussion of a defined topic delivered to a public audience in order to impart knowledge or to stimulate discussion.

OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of a presentation is to provide information, persuade the **audience** to accept a point of view, or encourage them to take action. The purpose of an oral presentation may also be to present subject content in an organized, concise and effective manner to a live audience. When delivering an oral presentation, certain challenges require ingenious techniques to engage into an impromptu interaction with the audience members.

OPENING, BODY AND CONCLUSION

The first few sentences and last few sentences of an oral presentation are particularly important because they shape the first and last impressions you make on your audience. They are also particularly difficult since they correspond to moments of transition (starting and ending) during which your stage fright is likely to peak. Thus, they deserve special attention.

Opening:

The opening of an oral presentation is similar to the Introduction of a scientific paper, which provides the context, need, task, and object of the document, with three main differences:

The opening of a presentation can best state the presentation's main message, just before the preview. The main message is the one sentence you want your audience to remember, if they remember only one. It is your main conclusion, perhaps stated in slightly less technical detail than at the end of your presentation.

In other words, include the following five items in your opening: attention getter, need, task, main message, and preview.

Body:

To make your body's structure easy to remember, for both you as a speaker and your audience, think of it as a tree (or hierarchy) rather than a chain. Identify two, three, four, or a maximum of five statements you can make to support your main message: These are your main points. Next, think of two to five statements to support each main point: These are your subpoints. Together, these main points and subpoints represent about as much detail as your audience can absorb in a single oral presentation.

Closing:

After supporting your main message with evidence in the body, wrap up your oral presentation in three steps: a review, a conclusion, and a close. First, review the main points in your body to help the audience remember them and to prepare the audience for your conclusion. Next, conclude by restating your main message (in more detail now that the audience has heard the body) and complementing it with any other interpretations of your findings. Finally, close the presentation by indicating elegantly and unambiguously to your audience that these are your last words.

Steps In Preparing Oral Presentation

Preparing a presentation can be an overwhelming experience if you allow it to be one. The strategies and steps below are provided to help you break down what you might view as a large job into smaller, more manageable tasks.

Analyse your audience

The first step in preparing a presentation is to learn more about the audience to whom you'll be speaking. It's a good idea to obtain some information on the backgrounds, values, and interests of your audience so that you understand what the audience members might expect from your presentation.

Select a topic

Select a topic that is of interest to the audience and to you. It will be much easier to deliver a presentation that the audience finds relevant, and more enjoyable to research a topic that is of interest to you.

Define the objective of the presentation

Once you have selected a topic, write the objective of the presentation in a single concise statement. The objective needs to specify exactly what you want your audience to learn from your presentation.

Prepare the body of the presentation

After defining the objective of your presentation, determine how much information you can present in the amount of time allowed. Also, use your knowledge about the audience to prepare a presentation with the right level of detail. You don't want to plan a presentation that is too basic or too advanced. The body of the presentation is where you present your ideas. To present your ideas convincingly, you will need to illustrate and support them. Strategies to help you do this include the following:

- Present data and facts
- Read quotes from experts
- Relate personal experiences
- Provide vivid descriptions

Remember, as you plan the body of your presentation it's important to provide variety. Listeners quickly become bored by lots of facts or they may tire of hearing story after story.

Prepare the introduction and conclusion

Once you've prepared the body of the presentation, decide how you will begin and end the talk. Make sure the introduction captures the attention of your audience and the conclusion summarizes and reiterates your important points. In other words, "Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Then, tell them what you told them."

Strategies that you can use include the following:

- Make the introduction relevant to the listeners' goals, values, and needs
- Ask questions to stimulate thinking
- Share a personal experience
- Begin with a joke or humorous story
- Project a cartoon or colourful visual
- Make a stimulating or inspirational statement
- Give a unique demonstration

During the opening you want to clearly present your topic and the purpose of your presentation. Clearly articulating the topic and purpose will help the listeners focus on and easily follow your main ideas.

During the conclusion of your presentation, reinforce the main ideas you communicated. Remember that listeners won't remember your entire presentation, only the main ideas. By reinforcing and reviewing the main ideas, you help the audience remember them.

TYPES OF ORAL PRESENTATION

Manuscript

The manuscript method is a form of speech that involves speaking from text. With this method, a speaker will write out his speech word for word and practice how he will deliver the speech. To avoid sounding rehearsed, use eye contact, facial expressions and vocal variety to engage the audience. Use frequent glances at highlighted key points instead of reading the speech word for word.

Memorization

The memorization method involves fully memorizing a speech, from start to finish, before delivering it. This method of delivery allows a speaker to move around the stage or platform and maintain eye contact with the audience without relying on a script or notes.

Impromptu

The impromptu speech is on the spot, with little to no time to prepare for this type of speech. For this method, you may be asked to give a few remarks, or share your thoughts with the group. The main thing to remember with this type of speaking is to know your main point, limit your thoughts to two to three ideas, and wrap it up with a conclusion.

Extemporaneous

The extemporaneous method is ideal for most speaking situations. While it requires a great deal of preparation, it allows for great flexibility for the speaker, often delivering a much more engaging speech. For this method, a speaker will organize a speech with notes or an outline, and practice the delivery, but not word-for-word. The extemporaneous method of delivery

gives a speaker the flexibility to deliver a speech in a natural manner while maintaining eye contact and engaging an audience.

DELIVERY METHODS

Speaking from Memory

A distinct advantage of speaking from memory is your ability to speak to the audience without relying on notes or a script. This allows you the flexibility to move away from the podium and to maintain eye contact with the audience. However, speaking from memory has disadvantages, too. Presentations from memory often sound rehearsed and the possibility exists that you'll forget an important point, present information that's inaccurate, or completely lose your train of thought.

Speaking from Notes

Many people like to speak from notes. Typically these notes are either on cards or paper in outline form and contain key ideas and information. The benefit of delivering a presentation from notes is that you sound natural rather than rehearsed and you can still maintain relatively good eye contact with the audience. The down side is that you might not express your key ideas and thoughts as well as you may have liked had you planned your exact words in advance.

Speaking from Text

Speaking from text involves writing your speech out, word for word, then basically reading from the text. As with speaking from memory, an advantage of this method is that you plan, in advance, exactly what you're going to say and how you're going to say it. A disadvantage is that you might appear to the audience to be stiff or rehearsed. You will need to make frequent eye contact and speak with expression to maintain the audience's interest.

Using a Combination of Methods

You may find the best method to be a combination of all three. For instance, experts suggest you memorize the first and last ten minutes of your talk so that you can speak flawlessly and without notes. Notes may be suitable for segments of your presentation that you know very well, for example, relating a personal story. Finally, speaking from a text might be appropriate when you have quotes or other important points that you want to make sure you communicate accurately and completely.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE ORAL PRESENTATION

VOCAL CUES

A voice communicates a great deal more than words alone. A presenter's voice is a potentially powerful tool to make an oral delivery effective and impressive. The quality of a speaker's voice is determined by four characteristics: pitch, volume, rate, and tone. An effective speaking voice is well modulated, meaning the pitch, volume, rate, and tone are altered to give appropriate and interesting expression to the message.

Pitch

The term pitch is the degree of highness or lowness of a sound. Every voice has a normal pitch in terms of what is "normal" for the speaker. The standard for an effective communicator is a pitch that can be raised a few levels without sounding squeaky and lowered a few levels without sounding grumbly.

Volume

Listeners want to clearly hear a speaker without straining to do so and without being blasted out of their chairs. A presenter who speaks too loudly may be perceived as bombastic, aggressive, or insensitive to listeners. On the other hand, one who speaks too softly may convey the impression of being passive or insecure.

Rate

An average rate of speech is 140 words per minute. As with other vocal characteristics, the rate of speech should be varied during a presentation. For emphasis, a speaker may periodically slow down to less than 100 words per minute to voice a point in a deliberate manner. To elevate the level of energy or quickly convey a point of lesser importance, a speaker may occasionally accelerate the rate to more than 170 words per minute. A consistently slow rate of speech conveys fatigue or disinterest. Flailing speech can suggest that the speaker has difficulty formulating thoughts. Presenters who consistently speak at a rapid rate may be perceived to be nervous, impatient, or hurried.

Tone

The quality of tone is a combination of pitch, strength, and character. Character refers to the sense or meaning a particular tone conveys. For example, a tone of voice may be described as gentle, angry, sarcastic, childish, or serious. A faltering tone of voice is perceived as timid or indecisive, a harsh tone of voice as aggressive. A nasal tone lacks the depth that adds authority to a voice. A monotone or flat tone that lacks variations suggests a lack of interest or energy.

Speech

Patterns The term speech pattern refers to any vocal trait that is habitual. Although usually learned behaviour, speech patterns are sometimes a reflection of a psychological or emotional condition. A person who repeatedly voices the phrase like "you know" may have acquired the

habit from a peer group, or the pattern may signal that the person is nervous when speaking before a group. Like the characteristics of vocal quality (pitch, volume, rate, and tone), speech patterns can either contribute to or detract from a presenter's effectiveness.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE NONVERBAL PRESENTATION

There are certain ways through which a nonverbal message can be delivered.

Attire/ Appearance

How you look, what you wear affects the listeners. It's the first thing audience see and throughout the whole presentation. Some guidelines are consistent with the standard commonly accepted by professionals.

- Holdback from over dressing or under dressing.
- Wear few accessories.
- Hair should be styled.
- Avoid bold and bright colors, go for subtle colors.

Gestures

Any movement of arm, head, hands, shoulders is termed as gesture. It is symbolic in nature, the meaning of many gestures are commonly understood. Appropriate gestures give physical expression to the spoken words. Hand and arm gestures are used for various reasons;

- To Point: The index finger call attention, indicating either location or direction.
- To Reject: A sample phrase show the gesture would be " I can't believe the actions of our seniors". Here the hands go to side in act of rejection.
- To Describe: Gestures are often used to describe things, or to emphasize on a specific point.

Posture

Posture is the position in which someone holds their body while standing or sitting. Good posture is the characteristic that contributes to speaker's presence. E.g. When you stand and distribute your weight on both feet, you give the impression of complete control.

Movement

Taking few steps while presenting helps to hold attention. When speaker doesn't move, audience don't move their head or eyes or position while seated. Movement is of two types, head and body movement.

- Head movement:
 - Shaking head side to side signifies disagreement.
 - Cocking the head to the side signals that a person is thinking.
 - Nodding head up and down communicates affirmation.
- Body movement:
 - Body movement adds more than expressiveness to a presentation.
 - By moving alternately to right and left sides and forward towards the audience, a speaker can make better meaningful eye contact.

Facial Expressions

From facial expressions, audience derives a sense of how a presenter feels about a point and about them. A smile or a laugh suggests that your topic interests you. A glare convey a nonverbal expression that you are worried or angry.

Eye Contact

Eye contact with audience is necessary because it sends a signal that the speaker is connecting with them. Meaningful eye contact distinguish relational presenters from information-bound speakers.

