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ABSTRACT

This paper presents steps for incorporating research into a community college public speaking class curriculum. It outlines, from an historical perspective, the different techniques and tools of research, including face-to-face contact, the printing press, modern machinery, and computers. It suggests discussing research surveys and taking students on a tour of the library and computer lab, before the formal speechmaking process begins, to show students how to use research in developing speeches. This particular model describes five types of speeches made during the semester, each employing more technologically advanced modes of research than the last: (1) self-reflection speech, requiring no research; (2) family member/friend speech, requiring interview research; (3) informative speech, requiring book and newspaper research; (4) persuasive speech, requiring both traditional and electronic encyclopedic research as well as electronic newspaper or journal research; and (5) informative speech, requiring an e-mail interview and Web-site research. A concluding assignment directs students to present orally their opinions on using new media for research. (AS)

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Researching for Public Speaking Classes: Requiring Various Media

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Kingsborough Community College

Presented via the Teaching In The Community Colleges Online Conference, 1998

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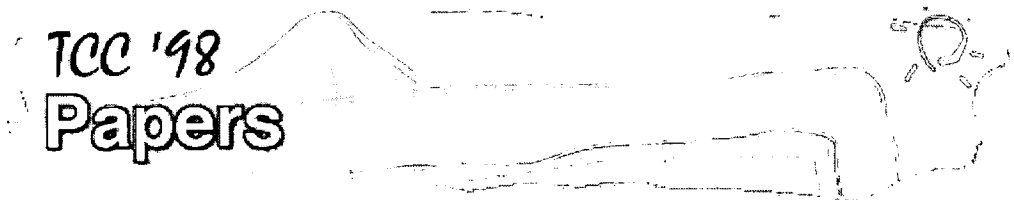

RESEARCHING FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSES : REQUIRING VARIOUS MEDIA

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1. PUBLIC SPEAKING - TODAY & YESTERDAY

If we consider the term of "public speaking" we could argue that it is an oxymoron. When we communicate, we do so through messages (verbal and nonverbal) relayed between senders and receivers. DeFleur & Kearney (1998) argue that a simultaneous transactions model of communication in which both people constantly respond to each other and simultaneously initiate messages and send responses is a much better description of communication than a linear model which presents communication as an orderly turn-taking process. Crucially, communication cannot be complete without the receiver. Given the need for a receiver, we can conclude that all speaking, one to one or one to a thousand, is in a sense "public." What might we justify as "private" speaking? Perhaps, thought.

>Historically, and traditionally, the term of "public speaking" arose from the Greeks who in 510BC created democratic institutions which declared that all citizens perform public service and hence, speak publicly (Microsoft Encarta 97, **Rhetoric**). No longer was our innate ability to speak to others (which developed 30-60,000 years ago) limited to use with family and friends. The social settings for speaking continued to change and formalize as the world became enterprising and industrial. Humans needed communication for work, small group meetings, large groups, seminars and now on-line conferences. As the world became more formal with greater divisions between home and work, we also formalized the notion of "public speaking." Therefore, in a sense, all speaking must be "public" but we refer to formal situations as those which demand a different presentation - that of public speaking.

Like speaking, education had a formal development that eventually grew to include a level of higher education which required training in speaking formally. During the periods of the Roman Empire and the Renaissance, rhetoric/public speaking was a mandated course in colleges and universities, usually one of seven liberal arts courses taught. Sadly, as noted by Hesse (1997), with the advent of writing, literacy has become "a way of life" with Speech no longer a college-wide requirement at many institutions in the United States. However, literacy has brought a tremendous change in **what** information we can gather and disseminate to make even richer speeches. As teachers of Public Speaking, it is our job to train students as to **how** to use our modern day tools of public speaking, that being research.

2. ROLE OF RESEARCH

The role of research in speechmaking has also had historical developments. A cursory look at Public Speaking books from the 1920s to today shows that research has become an integral part of creating speeches. Dale Carnegie's 1926 book entitled **Public Speaking and Influencing Men in Business** (note the sexist state of affairs!) which helped catapult public speaking into the public eye, recommends researching through two methods. First, research through reading is strongly advised "if time permits" in order to see "what others have thought, what others have said on the same subject. But don't read until you have first thought yourself dry. That is important-very." (Carnegie (1926:41). The second method is to

speak to a librarian and "ask her frankly for her help." In one brief paragraph he recommends using tools such as the **Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature**, special volume books, the World Almanac, encyclopedias and reference books - all to be explained by the librarian. Jumping forty-four years to 1970, we see a radical difference on the role of research for the speechmaker. In Kruger (1970) the speechmaker is now the researcher. Although the same reference materials are cited in Kruger as in Carnegie, the task of researching is placed on the speaker; there is no mention of the librarian. Detailed explanations regarding topic selection and sources for speech topics are provided. However, neither book has a chapter devoted to researching nor a listing of 'research' in the index.

As we enter the 1980s and 90s we find a plethora of books detailing research materials and methods. For example, standard Public Speaking textbooks such as Lucas (1992), Osborn & Osborn (1994), have chapters devoted to "Researching Your Topic" which include information on traditional reference materials such as books, government documents, and journals as well as newer sources such as videos and electronic data bases. At times, the sources of information seem endless. No longer is there a lack of information, but, instead a need to find it and use it.

Now, as we enter the new millennium we are faced with a new version of Carnegie's "if you have time" problem. As researchers, we are constrained with a limited amount of time to research an almost unlimited reference world. Furthermore, as speech professors, we are responsible for training speechmakers who, by today's standards, must be researchers. How do we instill both speaking and researching skills in our students effectively and efficiently within our semesters?

It will be the purpose of this paper to present the steps for incorporating eclectic modes of research in a community college Public Speaking class curriculum through two means. First, in section 3, is a discussion of integrating research through an historical understanding of research, a research survey and tours of library and computer facilities. These activities are conducted before the formal speechmaking process begins. Section 4 contains an outline of the 5 graded speeches and their respective research requirements. As the semester continues, students are required to use more modern forms of reference than the previous speech. In addition to elaborating on the research tools to be learned, administrative and time management issues will be discussed.

3. INTEGRATING RESEARCH

A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE DISCUSSION - Research can be integrated into the Public Speaking class curriculum through a discussion overviewing the history of the research process. Below is a description of the timeline that may be incorporated:

l. F2F (FACE TO FACE) - Perhaps one of the oldest forms of gathering information is through face to face contact. Have students reflect on how they gathered or gave information earlier that day through brief, oral questions (e.g., "When will you be home from school today?", "What do you want to do tonight?"). Students can learn the art of interviewing in both informal settings (family members, peers) as well as formal settings (employers, professors, experts in fields). Strict guidelines should be given to direct the students towards formal or informal interviewing. Begin with means for setting up an interview which can include telephoning, writing, emailing or f2f appointment making. Discuss the mode of dress for the interview; clothing can help to reflect the seriousness of the interview and degree of information gathered. Next, address issues of safety for interviewing. Where will they meet their interviewee? Can s/he come to the college or another "open" setting? What time is appropriate for an interview? Finally, be on time for the interview.

Perhaps most important to the interview is the formulation of questions. Students can draft and/or review

field questions in groups in roleplay situations. Have students ask a variety of question types such as "Yes/No" questions, "Why" questions and inquiries which begin with the word "Describe." As students evaluate the questions, have them place them in a logical order. Remind students to be mindful of issues of racist and/or sexist language when creating questions. Briefly discuss efficiency skills in interviewing which include allowing the person to dominate the conversation, summarizing the person's statements to confirm understanding and being an alert listener. Lastly, evaluate different forms of recording information: paper (leave plenty of space for writing), audiotape record, videotape record etc.

2. PRINTING PRESS - Although it seems trivial in 1998 to be speaking of an invention that took place literally in the Middle Ages, the printing press revolutionized human culture and researching. No longer was information disseminated through oral/aural means; printed ideas could be read and reread to a wider circulation of receivers at any time in the future. Through the written word, the world was able to share scientific findings, political views and literature for entertainment. Students should reflect on the notion of a "library" which did not exist until the printing press.

3. MODERN MACHINERY - Although research materials became abundant with the advent of the printing press, early researchers were faced with the problem of retaining information from library books through memory and handwritten notes. Scholars could not highlight in yellow pen, underline, or make margin notes. The art of outlining was as necessary as surfing the web is today. However, when the copy machine was introduced, research and information could be taken home and reevaluated at one's leisure. Students can reflect on their own use of copy machines and think about the arduous process of notetaking everything they read which was once employed by everyone for everything read. While the copymachine made materials accessible at home, the fax machine was the first machine that helped bring make materials accessible from all over the world. This modern machine made interlibrary loans of journal articles particularly easy. Ask your students how many times they have gone to a library other than their college's (or a local, public library) to get a book, journal etc. The chances are good that this is not their usual routine in researching. Next, ask them if they would consider reading an article that was faxed to them. Generally, students respond favorably to research materials that are sent to them without leaving the library's walls. Through the fax machine, our research sources became international, bounteous, and convenient.

4. COMPUTERS - SOFTWARE AND THE WEB - Undoubtably, no research tool has changed our mode of research as the computer. No longer do people need to go to libraries for basic information when we can retrieve information from online encyclopedias, dictionaries, websites etc. Specialty software can be purchased for use at home or work and used for areas ranging from architecture to zoo animals. Moreover, the Web gives us access to international information which is updated faster than we can find it.

To sum, students in public speaking courses review the role of research in speechmaking, the need to access information and the historical development of information gathering. From here we turn to ways in which students can research to satisfy their speechmaking needs.

B. 1ST RESEARCH SURVEY - Now that students have an appreciation of how researching has gotten easier, it is important to assess what materials and means they have used and what they need to explore. Formulate and distribute a check-list of research materials and have students compare what they have used. Have the students speak impromptuly about what research items/methods worked best/worst for them. This exercise allows students to practice public speaking while learning about research opportunities.

C. LIBRARY TOUR - Essential to college level research is having knowledge of how the college library works. Devote one class hour to a traditional "tour" of the library. Most libraries conduct tours which show the students where the books, encyclopedias, journals, newspapers, pamphlets, videos, reference materials

and computer terminals are located. Tours can also provide information about library policies, interlibrary loans, faxing methods and specialty books for speech topics. In addition to the traditional workings of the library, students should be shown how the college's electronic card catalogue operates - if one is in place. Since the computer is usually the first stop on the road to research, students need to know how to find materials quickly and how to troubleshoot problems with computerized catalogues. For example, what key words should be used so as to produce a listing which is not too narrow or broad?

D. COMPUTER TOUR - A second hour should be devoted to researching through the college's computer lab. Three things should be explored in the lab. First, if the college has several computer labs, students need to know which labs they may use; some may have open hours and others may be for classes only. Students should determine the lab hours, which labs have internet access and whether they need a disk with local access network (LAN) in order to enter the college or university computing facilities. Second, students should be familiarized with email services and given an email account - if possible. Third, student use of the internet should be explained including available webbrowsers, useful websites, limits of web hours (if applicable) and printing from websites. If the college has its own website, have the student visit the website. Many colleges now offer virtual tours of their campus and libraries which are particularly enjoyable and educational. Handouts outlining the rudiments of web browsing may be handy for students who have limited use with the Web.

Like any class that utilizes machinery and coordination with others, this class can have above average problems due to technical difficulties and human error. It is advisable to schedule all tours before the semester begins and to reconfirm a week before the visit. Put the tours on the class syllabus and remind the students as the day approaches; students will sometimes "forget" when classes meet in a different room. If you bring the class to the computer lab, you should expect some chaos before you achieve your lesson goals. Arrange for as many lab assistants as you can and ask the experienced students to help their peers.

E. HOMEWORK ON RESEARCH - Oral homeworks in the form of website, video and book reviews should be given as a means for integrating research in speechmaking. Video reviews are excellent ways for students to practice speaking extemporaneously and gain knowledge of videos that may be useful for research. Give students a handout which describes and lists the requirements of the homework. Define what types of videos they may review (e.g., historical, self-help etc.), length of speech and due date. Website reviews are also very practical for research and speechmaking purposes; you and the students can use guidelines similar to that of the video review. Finally, students can do a book review by showing and explaining interesting features and information of a particular book. You can narrow the task by having the students review certain types of books such as 100 year old books (this homework works well during the "Printing Press - history" unit), autobiographies, best sellers, etc. Again, students should be given clear guidelines for this extemporaneous speech which includes time limits, questions to be addressed and for what topics the video would be useful.

4. SPEECHES AND REQUIREMENTS

At the onset of your Public Speaking course, inform the students that the primary purpose of the course is to advance skills in public speaking with a secondary goal of improving research skills. Through a series of required speeches, students will be able to become more sophisticated in their use of media for both speechmaking and research. Below is a listing of the 5 speeches required during the semester:

SPEECH #1 - SELF REFLECTION SPEECH

No Research

Impromptu Delivery - 2 minutes approximately

Students should begin speech making with an impromptu speech which entails no research. One effective exercise I've been using for years entails displaying colorful, interesting postcards on a table which students choose from. Instruct the students to choose a card that reveals something about themselves. Each student presents an impromptu speech describing the postcard and why they chose it. Conclude the lesson by noting the lack of research for this speech. Emphasize apprehension and styles of speechmaking in the postdiscussion.

SPEECH #2 - FAMILY MEMBER/FRIEND SPEECH

f2f Interview Research

Extemporaneous Delivery - 3 minutes approximately

For the second speech students should create and orally administer a questionnaire to a family member or friend. The questionnaire may be created as a large group, in small groups or pairs; it does not require any library references. Suggested topics for the questionnaire are: educational history, work history, a recent event, religious beliefs etc. Students are to give a one page written response paper describing their reactions to this type of research.

SPEECH #3 - INFORMATIVE SPEECH -

1 2 sources:

1 book

1 journal or newspaper - traditional

Extemporaneous Delivery - 5 minutes approximately

The third speech brings the students to the library for traditional research; one book and one newspaper or journal article should be used and cited in the speech. It is your choice whether you wish to assign topics or have the students choose. Students should submit a speaking outline with a list the references. This is the first of two informative speeches that are required.

SPEECH #4 - PERSUASIVE SPEECH

3 sources:

1 encyclopedia (traditional)

1 encyclopedia (electronic)

1 newspaper or journal article (electronic)

Extemporaneous Delivery - 6 minutes approximately

Speech 4 begins a greater demand on the newer media - electronic encyclopedias and newspapers/journals. Students are given the 3 sources as a minimum; many will choose to use books in addition to the required sources. In a later homework (see section 5, below) students can discuss which encyclopedia was more

helpful, enjoyable to use etc.

SPEECH #5 - INFORMATIVE SPEECH -

2-3 sources:

email (personal contact)

Web sites

Their choice

Extemporaneous Delivery - 6 minutes approximately

The final speech bring the students to the most modern of media - email and websites. Students must have an email conversation with an expert in the area in which they are researching. The contents of the email should be printed and attached to the speaking outline. Website research usually leads to several sites as they hyperlink from one to the other. Students are required to list at least 2 main sites that they were able to gather information from. The final required source is their choice; it is always interesting to see how many choose new media and how many choose traditional sources.

5. 2ND RESEARCH SURVEY

As a concluding assignment to the course and as a follow-up to the first survey, direct students to present orally their reactions to exploring newer media for research. Students usually enjoy sharing (orally) their positive reactions to using the computer, the Web, etc. Students will be able talk about media that they found to be particularly user friendly. As the instructor, you may want to ask the students to compare their ease at speaking before the group for this assignment to that of the 1st research survey. Again, students usually enjoy being reflective about the semester's accomplishments.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided a framework for creating a Public Speaking course based on traditional and new media research. Academic freedom and personal teaching styles will dictate how one will modify the curriculum proposed above. It is important to note, regardless of the final product, the use of media should be taught clearly and concisely before speeches are attempted by the students. Furthermore, build the requirements for media gradually and allow for comparisons between traditional and new sources. Finally, if you plan wisely and handle administrative issues you will be able to offer a Public Speaking class that prepares our students for both speaking and researching into the future.

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