Helpful Hints on Public Speaking

CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS

Know Your Audience

1. What background and interests do they have?
2. How can you dress to gain credibility and be comfortable too?
3. What kind of image should you project to establish rapport?
4. How will you get them involved: With short meaningful activities or with questions? Break into small groups? What kind of questions might they ask? What if you don’t know the answer? Be sure to direct answers to the entire audience.

Plan Your Talk

1. What’s the purpose of your talk (to convince, entertain, inform, stimulate or a combination)?
2. What is your role (teacher, peer, lecturer, etc.)?
3. What format (lecture, discussion, activities, etc.) will best accomplish your purpose?
4. Have a planned introduction and conclusion. Give your audience an overall idea of your goals, etc. You may want to memorize the introduction and conclusion to calm your nerves.
5. Outline your speech and decide what format you’ll feel most comfortable with:
   a. notecards?
   b. memorized key points?
   c. impromptu (only if you know your subject very well)?
   d. extemporaneous (prepared before-hand and delivered impromptu)?
6. Illustrate main points with role plays, activities, questions and examples.
7. Consider transitions: How will you switch to another topic or another speaker so you can tie it together?
8. Use Visual Aids
   a. Make sure your visual aids are large enough to be seen, clear, simple and neat.
   b. How are you going to put them and take them down?
   c. How creative can you be? Consider transparencies, the chalkboard, charts, diagrams, graphs, models, sketches, slides, objects, handouts, etc.
   d. Show the visual aid only when you are talking about it; talk about it when you show it; and talk to the audience, not the visual aid.
9. Be flexible: Be mentally prepared for changes if necessary. What if someone doesn’t show up? What if your speech time is “cut in half”? What if you audience is bored, rowdy or confused?
PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS

Nonverbal Communication

1. Consider your **stance** and **movement**. Will you sit? Will you stand behind a podium? Walk around? Practice moving easily and fluidly around to keep people's attention.

2. Be **expressive** and use appropriate gestures. Maintain **eye contact** to keep your audience captive.

Verbal Communication

1. Vary your **pitch**, **tone** and **emphasis** to avoid sounding monotonous.

2. Speak **loud** enough, trying not to speak too rapidly.

3. Don’t use **offensive language**.

Practice

1. Use a **mirror**.

2. Ask for **feedback** from someone.

3. Stick to your **time limit**.