

Communication C E N T E R

Steps to Practicing Your Delivery

When giving a presentation, the way you deliver your speech is a big part of effectively conveying your information to your audience. We know it can be scary to practice your speech out loud for the first time, so we want to share a few steps to practicing your delivery that can help you feel and appear more credible and confident. Practicing the following steps several days before your speech due date, will help you prepare for your presentation and be well on your way to sounding like a natural speaker!

Practice, practice, practice!

- **When presenting a speech in extemporaneous style (a natural, conversational style as opposed to a memorized speech), read through your outlined notes again and again to become familiar with your content.** Then practice speaking it out loud without looking at your notes, in your own words. This way, you become familiar with your material without having to rely on your notes. This frees you up from the fear of losing your place.
- **Practice giving your speech in front of a full-length mirror.**
 1. **Eye contact.** It helps to see the amount of eye contact you are giving. Are you looking down at your notes more than you are looking at the mirror? It tells your audience that you know what you are talking about. It communicates confidence.
 2. **Posture.** While practicing in front of a mirror, pay attention to your posture as well. Are you standing up straight? Are you swaying from side to side or popping a hip? Allow yourself to walk around a bit, in a slow, non-distracting style.
 3. **Hand gestures.** Practicing in front of a mirror also allows you to catch any nervous habits or distracting mannerisms. Are you touching your hair every 30 seconds? Are you sticking your hands in your pockets? Practice using your hands for natural gestures as you speak.
- **Practicing in front of a friend.** Have a roommate or a student speech consultant keep track of the following:
 - **Eye contact.** Are you making frequent eye contact?
 - **Verbal fillers** such as “um, uh, like”. Are you replacing pauses with fillers?
 - **Facial expressions.** Are you using appropriate facial expressions? Is your delivery engaging?
 - **Rate of speech.** Are you talking too fast or too slow? If talking in a slow, monotone voice, practice adding vocal inflection and energy as you speak. If talking too fast, practice slowing down.
- **Practice giving your speech while using any technology or visual aids you plan to include.**
 - **Flow.** Get a feel for using PowerPoint while talking. Know when you want to switch slides and practice incorporating them into your speech in a smooth manner. Are you looking at the audience or looking at the screen? Turn the computer monitor to face you, so that you do not have to turn around to see the screen behind you.

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- **Technical difficulties.** Using video clips? Make sure they are loaded beforehand so you do not run into unexpected problems that waste time. PowerPoint? Always have a backup! Save your slides to a thumb drive AND email them to yourself. Arrive to class early and save your slides to the desktop on the classroom computer.
- **Make an appointment at the Communication Center!** We can help you improve your delivery!
 - Have questions? Ask us! We know public speaking can be nerve racking, so we're here to help you become more comfortable with putting together a speech and delivering it.
 - Practice your speech with a consultant and receive helpful feedback. Take advantage of practicing with peer speech tutors who know what you are feeling and can share ways to improve.
 - Have yourself recorded so you can see and hear your presentation. This is the BEST way to improve your delivery skills. It gives you the opportunity to see your strengths and weaknesses.
 - We're here for you and we know just how you feel; sign up for an appointment online and allow us to share tips with you and collaboratively work to help you feel more comfortable!