

The Speaking Center

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THE PODIUM

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Director's Corner: A Small but Significant Presence

Although communication is not a separate department at UMW, our faculty has represented UMW well at the most recent National Communication Association, in New Orleans, LA. Here are some of our activities:

- Professor Anand Rao presented on the digitizing project that he has been assisting the Speaking Center with. We elicited his expertise in digital technology to assist a Lead Consultant project of collecting both positive and negative examples of specific communication concepts such as “forecasting main points” or “establishing credibility” so that we could provide those links in the future, along with our consultation reports, for clearer understanding.
- Professor O'Donnell chaired various sessions related to debate.

- Debate Coach Adrienne Brovero won the Debate Coach of the Year Award!
- As the UMW Speaking Center Director, I co-presented a short course on communication centers. I also presented a paper on the relationship between communication centers and the issue of retention in higher education, which received the Top Paper Award from the Communication Centers Section.



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A Day in the Life of a Speaking Center Consultant

By Russell Michelson

A lot of people seem to think Speaking Center consultants are serious, overly ambitious, and “all work and no play.” But we really are students just like you. We have friends, we’re in your classes, and we try not to take ourselves too seriously.

To illustrate this, I interviewed every consultant, took their answers, and using complex algorithms, I merged their answers into one

aggregate consultant. The following day is what I concluded would be a typical day in the life of any and every Speaking Center consultant:

9:00 am – I awake to the sound of pencil moving across paper. I open my eyes and I realize I’m in Combs 101, the Speaking Center, and my fellow consultant is feverishly taking notes. After glancing at my

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As always, the National Communication Association sessions provided a smorgasbord of useful information. Among other things, I learned this year that if professors don't require visits to the communication center, students will rarely go, which is a pity because professors themselves tell me how much difference they can see between students who visit the center and those who don't. I also learned about how a professor teaching a Public Relations course used "Reflection Prompts" to promote more reflective learning in his class.

Just as a small group of communication scholars from UMW, a smaller institution with a significant role in liberal arts education, interacted in a significant way with the NCA community, myself and the small group of consultants at the UMW Speaking Center continue to interact with the UMW community in a significant way. For Spring 2012, we've planned workshops and activities to assist the UMW community in achieving its speaking intensive goals, so that we can help more students to achieve the goal of an excellent liberal arts education. We look forward to finishing off another significant year of assisting students at the UMW Speaking Center!

Esther Lee Yook, Ph.D.

UMW Speaking Center Director

The Speaking Center Welcomes Mary David Back to UMW!

By Tom Pacheco

It is always a celebration to have alums come back to UMW to share new experiences and reminisce about times at college. The Speaking Center was glad to have Mary David come back to speak about a very important issue.

In the fall, Mary David was a guest speaker as a part of the Speaking Center's Octoberfest. Octoberfest is the Speaking Center's month-long extravaganza of events including film screenings, speaking competitions and of course, alum speaking engagements. Mary David, who graduated UMW, double-majored in international affairs and

schedule I notice his eyes glued to the computer screen as he watches recorded speeches and writes down constructive feedback. I must have fallen asleep during one of our weekly all-night consulting sessions. I leave to go back to my room and prepare for the day.

12:00 pm – I meet some of my fellow consultants at Seacobeck for a power meal. We each sit down and proceed to give impromptu, one-minute speeches on our day so far, as the rest of the group takes notes on the speaker. We then critique each other's delivery styles before finishing up lunch.

2:00 pm – I go to class, but I can't pay attention to what the professor is saying because I'm too caught up on his habit of swaying back and forth as he speaks. I consider giving him the handout "Effects of Body Language" after class, but decided against it. After all, I'm not just a Speaking Center consultant, I'm a completely normal UMW student too.

3:00 pm – It's time for my intramural basketball game in Goolrick. I say hello to my teammates, who all happen to be fellow consultants. While we lose in terms of points, we win in the sense that we developed and perfected a series of one-word codes that enabled us to have efficient and infallible communication between our players. Such is the chemistry of the Speaking Center team.

5:00 pm – I finally go to the Speaking Center to work my shift. The other consultants are silently typing at their computers. Five consultations later, it's time for me to clock out, knowing I've made the world a slightly more communicative place.

8:00 pm – Before I go to sleep, I shut down the computers and turn off the plasma screens. I am so exhausted, I lie down and recite the basic organization of an informative speech. "Attention-getter, preview statement, thesis statement, transition statement..." I mutter to myself as I drift off to sleep on the Speaking Center couch.

communication. Mary would go off to compete in the Miss Baltimore competition, work at the state department, and attend law school at George Washington University. With her very limited free time, she fit in a speech for the Speaking Center on an issue that matters to her and on which she has done extensive research: human trafficking.

She started off with powerful rhetorical questions about sex trafficking while showing evocative images and videos of this crime and the world surrounding it. She said the images were taken in the United States, primarily of women. She would go on to explain how prevalent sex trafficking is in the United States, how psychologically damaging it is for victims, and how we can all help stop sex trafficking. Mary did not just rely on the emotional appeal of images, but she used data to support her arguments and was passionate about the topic, showcasing some of the key attributes the Speaking Center works to hone.

Although her speech was serious, the Speaking Center was happy to have such a prestigious alum come back to promote the Speaking Center as a resource for students. The Speaking Center cannot thank her enough for her talk. Mary's success is not just an example of the resources the Speaking Center has to offer, but the possibilities that UMW can provide to its students.



Feel Like Everyone is Judging You? They Are.

By Rachel McGuirk

Audiences develop very clear perceptions of speakers. They like or dislike speakers based upon the content of their presentations or reputations created through past speeches or action. We return to the same doctor, hairdresser, or accountant because of the favorable perceptions and positive relationships we have built with them over time.

Your audience likewise will develop a perception of you as a speaker. They will evaluate what they hear in your presentation, and they will form attitudes about your choice of topics and your manner of delivery. If your speeches are usually interesting and prepared well, the audience will anticipate those qualities even before you speak- they will be receptive unless you prove them wrong. At the same time, speakers who are poorly prepared, illogical, or use unethical methods will create negative expectations that will be hard to overcome.

A student once told me that he presented a speech demonstrating shoplifting. He wore a long trench coat with large inside pockets, and proceeded to tell the audience in great detail how to stuff various sizes of merchandise into the coat. He explained how to avoid detection by mechanical devices too. His audience stared at him in horror. After his conclusion he added, "Oh, this was only a joke; it was not true." But it was too late. He severely damaged his reputation. The negative image of him being a shoplifter influenced his listeners, and his reputation was never fully restored.

Positive audience attitudes will work in your favor. If you appear confident and relaxed in your delivery, the audience will relax and listen to you. The attitude the audience forms about you plays an important role in your ability to educate and influence them.

Be Persuasive

By Rachel Hirst

Two of the most important aspects to a persuasive speech are the audience and the topic. It is critical for a speaker who intends to persuade his or her audience to identify who the audience is and what problems, needs, or concerns they might have. The needs of a college student are much different than the needs of a group of individuals approaching retirement. Make yourself relatable to the audience so they are able to identify with you and trust that your speech is going to address their cares and concerns. Persuasive speeches need to be audience-centered. You might care tremendously about a topic, but whether or not the audience cares matters the most. Keep in mind that no matter who is sitting in your audience, their prime motivation to listen to you is whether they believe your presentation will somehow benefit them. They want to know, "What's in it for me?"

One way to address the direct needs of your audience is to pick a local issue. Investigate controversial issues on campus or in the local towns. If you feel as though you are striking out, try reading a local newspaper for additional ideas. Be creative, but pick something that you have an interest in. If you don't feel passionate about the topic, your audience won't either.

Nonverbal communication, as with any speech, is another essential skill for a persuasive speaker. Recognize that your audience is constantly processing what you are saying, both verbally and nonverbally. If your face is buried in your notes and every other word from your mouth is "um" or "uh", your audience will most likely perceive you as lacking confidence. Connect with your audience and gain their trust via eye contact and strong statements. Practice your speech in front of family and friends to ensure you are comfortable with the information before presentation day. Once you know your audience and pick your topic, it's time to find evidence. Do your research and include statistics, facts, and quotes from credible sources. This is a rational appeal, or "logos." Although combining examples and statistics can be a powerful tool, remember that too many statistics can be overwhelming. Find a

balance and translate your statistics for the audience. If used correctly, visual displays such as graphs or tables can be a clear and appropriate way of demonstrating your argument. The credibility of a speaker is critical to gain the audience's trust. Look like you know what you are talking about and establish credibility early. This is called "ethos." If you can find one, include a success story to show your audience that overcoming the issue being presented is feasible. Success stories and testimonies can attribute to emotional appeal, or "pathos." This is when a presenter evokes a "gut feeling" in the audience and asserts that the stated problem can be alleviated with change.

Conduct additional research that addresses your opponent's argument and represents their views accurately. People who initially disagree with your position on a topic will feel alienated if you do not adequately portray the support for their side. You want to connect with all of your audience members, even your opponents. Acknowledge that you have differing opinions but ultimately agree on basic goals and values. Clearly state that, although you disagree with your opponents, you understand where they are coming from. Be respectful of their views. Your audience will, in turn, respect you as a presenter.

Overall, your persuasive speech should follow the Monroe Motivated Sequence: grab the audience's attention, address the need or the problem, make your argument as to how to satisfy the problem, help the audience visualize what it would look like when the need or problem is satisfied, and implement a call to action. A call to action is your last point that the entire speech has built up to. Hopefully you have persuaded your audience to see the value in your argument, and now you need to give them some direction. When you ask them to take action, make it easy for them to do so. For example, prepare addressed and stamped envelopes for your audience members to mail or hand out a petition for them to sign. Leave them with something to think about when they leave the classroom that will make it impossible for them to ignore the problem at hand.

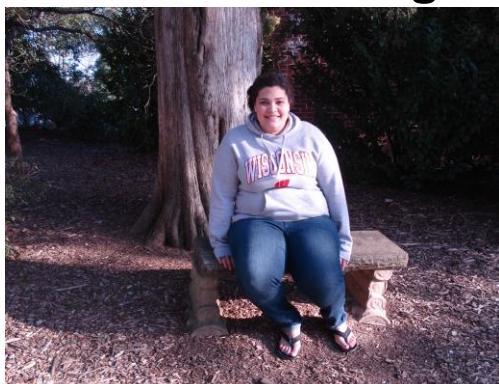
Meet the New Consultants!

Catie LeBouton



Catie is a freshman from Newport News, Virginia who is working on an English major at UMW. She enjoys reading, writing, and having movie nights with her friends. After having her own great experience at the Speaking Center, she decided to join the team and provide the same service for everyone else. This is her first semester as a consultant, and she's excited to meet and help so many new people.

Mariah Young



Mariah is a freshman from Chesapeake, VA. She is majoring in Political Science and English. She is on both the public and policy debate team and also writes for *The Bullet*. During her free time she enjoys listening to music and watching movies. She decided to join the Speaking Center to spread her love of public speaking.

The Speaking Center: By the Numbers

By Sam Waskowicz

For some reason, there are less weekend appointments...

124 people visited this site

364 Visits

124 Unique Visitors

1,752 Pageviews

4.81 Pages/Visit

00:10:26 Avg. Time on Site

23.90% Bounce Rate

28.57% % New Visits



The Power Behind Listening

By Abbie Yirrah

You mention listening and I instantly feel guilty. Why? I love to talk. It's not surprising that I am considering law school. You know what they say, lawyers love to talk and argue. If you are anything like me, it's hard to find the balance between when to talk and when to just shut up and listen. So when the topic of one of our Wednesday meetings happened to be the importance of listening, I made sure I did a lot of listening and very little talking.

In Ghana, where I come from, there is a saying that it takes a wise man to talk but an even wiser man to sit and listen. Usually people who talk too much are branded as know alls or show offs, but that might not necessarily be true. I talk because I am usually excited about whatever it is I have to say, and cannot wait for the person speaking to wrap up. If you are the same way, you may get away with it if it's a casual conversation with friends, family or other nonprofessionals. However, if you happen to exhibit this attitude during an interview, conference, debate or any talk considered to be professional, people might be immediately turned off and form the wrong impression about you. So now the question is: at what point do you listen and when do you jump in? Is it appropriate to ever interrupt a speaker? How do you become a good listener? And what makes a good listener. Well, keep reading!

The secret to becoming a good listener is to listen actively. This type of listening takes two to tango; the receiver and the speaker. This is where the listener makes a conscious effort to not only listening, but to understand the message the speaker is trying to convey. How do you do this? By paying careful attention to every word. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by things going on around you, or form objections you plan to raise when the speaker stops talking.

To enhance your listening skills, you will need to let your speaker know that you are listening to every word uttered by them. Imagine yourself having a conversation with your friends; you wonder if they are listening to you after all, and if they are, do they really understand what you are saying. You begin to wonder if it's worthwhile to continue speaking. This feeling emphasizes the importance of "acknowledgement," which can be as simple as nodding your head. By doing so, you aren't necessarily agreeing with the speaker. Your non-verbal communication signs should impact the speaker in a way that encourages them and urges them on to speak. Use nodding and non-verbal

clues to show that you are listening. Occasionally, it is advisable to ask a question or make a comment or two. Here are some more tips for listening:

1. Paying complete attention is equally important; your speaker should earn your undivided attention.
2. Refrain from side conversations.
3. Do not let environmental factors distract you.
4. Look directly at your speaker.
5. Avoid being trapped into thinking about how you will respond instead of truly listening.

Here are signs that show you are listening:

1. Occasional nods.
2. Smiling and facial expressions.
3. Your posture should be open and inviting
4. Provide feedback.

Our personal assumptions, judgments, and "selective hearing tendencies" can distort what we hear. Our role as listeners then is to understand what is being said. This may require that we reflect on what has been said and ask questions:

1. Reflect what has already been said by paraphrasing. "If I am correct", "what I am hearing is", "Sounds like you are saying". All these and many more are great ways to reflect.
2. Ask questions; "what do you mean by saying this", "can you provide some more examples to prove this...".

Frequent interruption of the speaker is a waste of time and creates tension. It frustrates the speaker and prevents full understanding of the material. You should always allow the speaker to finish, and respond appropriately. Make sure to present your objections in a respectful way, and avoid beating around the bush.

Old habits are hard to break and there is a lot of habit-breaking to do. Remember this article is not designed to encourage you to completely turn mute in class discussions or casual conversations. Expressing our thoughts, feelings and opinions is just one half of the effective communication process. The other half is our ability to listen and understand the message. Remember: "We were given two ears but only one mouth, because listening is twice as hard as talking." Author unknown.

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Word Search!

By Rob Belcourt



ANXIETY
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CONSULTATION
CONTACT
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