UMW Speaking Center Presents

Quick Tips and Tricks of Public Speaking: Delivery

Eye Contact

Follow the Rule of Three. Pick three people to focus on or three points of the classroom - middle, right and left. Use these people/locations as eye-contact landmarks. Be careful not to look at one person for more than 5 seconds.

Do the One-Minute Scan. Include everyone in your audience by scanning the people in the room about once every minute while you are talking. Typically, speakers have a tendency to focus more attention on the people directly in front of them, so be sure to “share the wealth” to those off to the right and left.

Learn the art of nose or forehead contact. For a smaller audience or 3 to 30 people, it is not necessary to look right into their eyes. Glance at either the center of their face (nose) or the upper region (forehead). You can establish contact this way without directly staring into someone’s eyes.

Using Notes During a Speech

- Type or print your speech with 3 to 7 words per line, enabling you to pause and/or look up at the end of lines.
- Add accent marks or underlining to words and phrases you want to emphasize.
- Use only the top ¾ of the page for your speaking notes so that your eyes won’t need to go down too far on the page.
- Break words that are hard to pronounce into syllables or spell them out as they are pronounced.
- When you practice, revise any sentence that trips you up.
- End each page of notes with a complete sentence to avoid having to turn a page mid-sentence.