Oral Communication Resources

Presentational Speaking

Revising and Finalizing

Revise Your Presentation

Once you have decided what you will say and in what order, you then need to generate your speaking notes for your presentation. Use the following to help you review and revise.

- Refer to your focus statement. Does it still adequately reflect what you are saying in your presentation? Revise as needed.
- Make sure the main headings or clusters you've identified support your thesis/focus statement. These main headings are probably the main points in the body of your presentation.
- Place your remaining supporting materials in the presentation in appropriate relationship to the main clusters of ideas. You may find it useful to think in terms of sub-headings.
- Make an outline or draw a map of your presentation so you can see how each piece relates to each other piece.
- Be sure each piece of supporting material actually helps explain the main point or idea cluster it supports.
- Using this basic structure, fill it in with the specific evidence and support that you have developed.
- Create transitions to show the connections between points and supporting materials. Avoid using "next" and "and" as transitions--they don't help your audience see the connections among ideas.
- Review the ways in which you relate to your audience throughout your presentation. Is your approach appropriate for the audience? For example, are you confrontive enough? Too confrontational? Casual enough? Too casual? Are you talking down to your audience? If so, how can you project more respect for them?

The main questions you should be asking yourself are these:

- What approach will be most effective with this audience?
- Is that the approach you are taking?

Finalize your piece

- Write opening remarks, remembering to fulfill the functions of an introduction.
  - ✓ Gain attention.
  - ✓ Give the audience reason to listen to you by establishing the significance of the issue or topic and establishing why you are a credible source.
  - ✓ Clarify the focus for your talk (state your claim or thesis).

    ✓ Provide a transition into the body of your presentation.

• Write closing remarks, remembering to fulfill the functions of conclusions.
    ✓ Redirect audience attention to the main point of the talk.
    ✓ Provide a sense of closure.

• Review one last time to make sure the opening remarks fit with the body of your remarks, and that your closing remarks leave the audience thinking about the ideas you want them to ponder.

• **PRACTICE.** Talk through your presentation out loud. Time yourself. If too long, edit. If almost too long, identify sections you can delete at the last minute (in case you speak more slowly, or in case other speakers take up too much time leaving you with less time than you planned). If possible, tape yourself. Are you speaking too fast? With enough vocal expression? Clearly?

• Remember: you *know* your material. You are trying to let us know about it. You are communicating with us, not at us. We want to hear your information and ideas, our goal is not to sit in judgment of your speaking skill. Your goal is to engage us with the ideas, information, and arguments that should matter to us.

Your actual preparation probably will not be this orderly. Creativity seems to be a process of ordered chaos. Don't be discouraged if things don't come together immediately. Keep at it until your material begins to take shape.

You need not achieve perfection! Set your material aside, work on something else, and come back to it later. Give yourself permission to struggle, to rewrite and rewrite and rewrite. A good presentation will go through many different stages and many different rewrites.

REVISING&FINALIZING