

Strategies for Handling Hostile Audiences

1. Introduce Humor to Defuse the Hostility
2. Call for a Fair Hearing
3. Emphasize Common Ground
4. Refute Negative Attitudes Toward the Speaker
5. Acknowledge Past Mistakes
6. Express Understanding and Respect for the Audience's Position
7. Reassure the Audience
8. Refute the Audience's Negative Attitudes About the Topic
9. Moderate Your Persuasive Goal
10. Neutralize Hostile Questions

Strategies for Handling Apathetic Audiences

1. Show How Audience Members are Affected
2. Show How Real People are Affected
3. Establish Common Ground
4. Adopt a New Approach
5. Share a Startling Statistic or a Compelling Story
6. Invite Audience Participation

For more on hostile and apathetic audiences:

Benoit, W. L. & Benoit, P. J. (2008). *Persuasive messages: The process of influence.* _ Malden, MA: Blackwell.

1. Make it Relevant to Your Audience

1. Tell your audience early why they should care about your topic.
2. Show how your ideas directly impact your audience.
3. Use arguments and evidence that appeal to your audience.

2. Make it Clear

1. Organize your ideas and use previews and transitions to make your organization clear to your audience.
2. Avoid jargon and define technical terms.
3. Speak up!

3. Make it Interesting

1. Use relevant stories to make your point.
2. Spice it up with some humor.
3. Use vivid language (metaphors, alliteration, description)

4. Make it Credible

1. Establish common ground.
2. Describe your past actions.
3. Display competence in the way you speak and your appearance.

We work---therefore we meet.

1. Meetings should matter.
2. Prepare.
 - a. Distribute an agenda.
 - b. Insuring that all the stakeholders are at the table.
 - c. Making the logistical arrangements.
3. Keep the meeting on time.
4. While there is a place for small talk, keep the meeting on topic.
5. Encourage discussions and feedback from all parties.
6. Monitor participation to insure that all have an opportunity to contribute.
7. Get an action plan for next steps and make it clear who is responsible for each step.
8. Create minutes for the meeting (as appropriate).
9. Periodically review the process for standing groups to assess how well the group is functioning.

Impromptu Speaking Exercise:

An impromptu presentation occurs when you are asked to speak with very little time for preparation. These can occur in meetings where you are “asked to say a few words” or when you are drafted to present an award or do a welcome at the last minute. There are many presentation opportunities where you will be expected to “speak on your feet” about graduate issues.

For this exercise, you arrive a few minutes early to a meeting with the Deans of the various colleges and are asked by your immediate supervisor to talk for a few minutes at the start of the meeting about a topic of importance to the Graduate School. You will receive your particular topic a couple of minutes prior to giving your impromptu talk (about the time you would have to prepare your talk) and will be asked to prepare some quick notes and speak for 2-3 minutes on this topic.

Graduate School Impromptu Topics:

The Most Important Topic in the Graduate School

International Graduate Students

NRC

PhD Completion

Graduate Student Stipends

Graduate Student Health Insurance

Graduate Education and the Public Good

Professional Master’s Degrees

New Graduate Degree Programs

Diversity Goals and Graduate Programs

Quality and Graduate Programs

Trends in Graduate Education

Financing Graduate Education

Responsible Conduct of Research

Role and Responsibilities of the Graduate School

Tips for Impromptu Speaking

1. No sweat!
2. Brief notes.
3. Main idea.
4. Subpoints with an organizational pattern.
5. Support.
6. Introduction.
7. Conclusion.

Example 1: Should we increase our graduate recruiting budget? /Budget meeting

Main idea: Improving the quality of graduate students by increasing our recruiting of the best students improves all aspects of the university.

Subpoints: Causes/Effects

- I. Graduate recruiting leads to better quality students coming to our institution
 - A. Departments who spend more on recruiting students through campus visits and personal contacts are recruiting students with higher profiles.
 - B. Centralized graduate recruiting has increased the applications and has allowed departments to be more selective.
- II. Better quality graduate students are an asset to our university
 - A. Quality graduate students help us to recruit quality faculty members. (examples)
 - B. Quality graduate students help us to achieve our economic development mission. (human resource development)

Intro: Reference to budget and the need to insure that there is a return on investment but this is an area where programs across the campus benefit both in terms of helping to recruit quality faculty and also build strong departments to attract students

Example 2: Distance education and graduate education/Deans

Tips for Extemporaneous Speaking

1. Main idea.
2. Subpoints with an organizational pattern.
3. Support.
4. Transitions.
5. Introduction.
6. Conclusion.
7. Outline.
8. Key word notes.
9. PRACTICE.

Part 1: Indicate your level of mastery with each of the presentational skills below by placing an X at the appropriate point on the scale.

1. Being composed
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
2. Using PowerPoint, handouts, or other visual aids
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
3. Having a smooth delivery
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
4. Handling a hostile audience
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
5. Conveying enthusiasm
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
6. Handling an apathetic audience
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
7. Organizing my ideas
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
8. Being able to be heard
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
9. Getting off to a good start with an interesting introduction
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
10. Ending with an effective conclusion
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
11. Eye contact
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
12. Responding to questions
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
13. Movement
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
14. Using gestures
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
15. Making persuasive arguments
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement
16. Establishing credibility
Mastered _____ Needs Improvement

Self Assessment of Presentation Skills

17. Staying on topic

Mastered _____ Needs Improvement

18. Impromptu speaking

Mastered _____ Needs Improvement

19. Adapting the message to the audience

Mastered _____ Needs Improvement

20. Making a clear presentation

Mastered _____ Needs Improvement

Part 2: Answer the following questions about your presentational experiences.

1. What types of presentation experiences do you engage in most in your role in the Graduate School?
2. How frequently? (e.g., several times a day, once a week)
3. What types of presentation experiences do you enjoy the most and the least? Why?

Based on this self-assessment, identify two of your most important strengths in presentation situations:

1:

2:

Identify two areas for improvement:

1:

2:

What is your goal for this technical workshop?

Tips for Manuscript Speaking

1. Prepare the speech using the same guidelines as for any other speech regarding structure.
2. Make reference to someone in the audience or local issues/events.
3. Use heavy-weight paper.
4. Print in a larger than normal font.
5. Do not continue a sentence from one page to another.
6. Leave wide margins on all sides.
7. Number the pages.
8. Maintain eye contact—especially during the introduction and the conclusion.
9. Be enthusiastic in your delivery.
10. Rehearse.

Tips for Memorized Speaking

1. Prepare the speech using the same guidelines as for any other speech.
2. Make reference to someone in the audience or local issues/events.
3. Be dynamic in your delivery—avoid a monotone delivery.
4. Memorize a section of the speech at a time.
5. Create an acronym to help you remember your key concepts.
6. Create visual images to help you recall what you want to say. The more vivid these are, the more likely you are to remember them.
7. Create a mental index—the first couple of words to a section of your speech that helps you to remember this section.
8. Rehearse out loud.