

COMM 2200 Instructor Workshop (Aug. 25, 2011)

During the workshop the following three issues were discussed

Issue One: resolving conflict with a focus on language: Note- our current text does an excellent idea in the area of language (see below).

Ideas that instructors shared included the following:

- A discussion with students about what civil discourse is not.
- A discussion of the distinction between offensive and demeaning language.
- A discussion of what is appropriate communication within various contexts (streets vs. classroom, visiting a grandparent, etc.).
- A discussion of cultural differences and the impact of culture on language, non-verbal communication, etc.
- A discussion of our “Frames of Reference” which focuses on what we have in common rather than our differences.

Issue Two: resolving conflict by gaining an appreciation for peaceful group collaboration:

Ideas that instructors shared included the following:

- Incorporation of collaborative work throughout the semester.
- Incorporate a discussion of how to resolve conflicts that arise within a group.
- Include peer evaluations of other group members as one of the factors used to determine a student’s grade for the group assignment to encourage civil discourse and cooperation within the group.

Issue Three: resolving conflict and the importance of seeing the opposition’s point of view:

- Research suggests that speakers who are required to examine the arguments counter to their own position show a greater understanding and tolerance for other viewpoints. Therefore, we discussed ways to increase emphasis on understanding diverse and counter positions during the required unit on persuasion. (A bibliography is located at the end of this report.)
- Research also suggests that the acquisition of argumentation skills helps individuals learn to resolve issues based on reasoning rather than emotion. A persuasive speech based on sound logic and reasoned argument is required for all COMM 2200 students. Research for both the informative speech and persuasive speech is also required of all COMM 2200 students.

Ideas that instructors shared included the following:

- An assignment that requires students to examine both sides of an issue (Several of our instructors already use such an assignment and we were all encouraged to include such an assignment in during the course of the semester).
- The use of rebuttal speeches for the persuasive presentations.
- Continued focus on logical fallacies as part of the unit on persuasion.
- Include a discussion of how we acquire specific views on controversial topics.

Issue Three: materials already available in our current text that should be highlighted during the course of the semester. Note: All COMM 2200 students use the same textbook (*The Art of Public Speaking, 10th edition* by Stephen Lucas). The following chapters / units are required in all COMM 2200 classes.

Chapter 1 – The Communication Process

- Audience centered communication
- Cultural diversity and cultural differences

Chapter 2 – Ethics and Public Speaking

- Ethical speaking including a discussion of name-calling and other forms of abusive language
- The importance of free speech and expression
- The importance of promoting a free and open discussion of controversial topics

Chapter 3 - Listening

- Empathetic listening
- Listening for evidence and reason

Chapter 5 – Audience Analysis

- Egocentrism and stereotyping
- The importance of using inclusive language
- Developing sensitivity to issues of race, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds

Chapter 6 – Research

- The importance of using credible sources
- Biased and unbiased sources

Chapter 7 – Supporting Your Ideas

- The use of examples, statistics and testimony
- Citing sources and why such citations are important

Chapter 11 - The Use of Language

- Appropriate language for an audience-centered presentation
- The use of inclusive language (language that does not stereotype, demean or patronize people based on the basis of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other factors).

Chapter 15 - Speaking to Persuade

- Ethics and persuasion
- The psychology of persuasion
- Importance of using *credible* evidence to support your position
- Dealing with a hostile audience (one who disagrees with your position)

Chapter 16 - Methods of Persuasion

- Developing credibility
- Using evidence
- Reasoning
- The ethical use of emotional appeals
- Discussion of fallacies

Bibliography

- Gayle, Barbara Mae. "Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Transformations in a Civic Discourse Public Speaking Class: Speakers' and Listeners' Attitude Change." *Communication Education* 53.2 (2004): 174-84. Print.
- Infante, Dominic A. "Teaching Students to Understand and Control Verbal Aggression." *Communication Education* 44.Jan. (1995): 51-63. Print.
- Mullen, Annie, et al. "Wanted! One Good Roommate: Teaching Conflict Resolution in Small Group Communication" *National Communication Association*. NCA, 2009. Print.