CHAPTER 11 - Speaking To Inform

Learning Objectives

- Identify the four types of informative speeches.
- Organize and outline an informative speech.
- Distinguish between repetition and redundancy in a speech.
- Differentiate between transitions and signposts.

Outline

I. Goals and Types of Informative Speeches

   A. Goals of Informative Speaking

      1. Informative speakers structure their speeches to introduce new and different topics.
      2. Informative speakers mostly structure their speeches to extend the understanding and knowledge of audiences by communicating additional information on subjects previously known by audience members.

   B. Types of Informative Speeches

      3. Briefings and reports present recently available information to an audience that already has a general understanding of the topic.
      4. Lectures provide new or additional information about a particular subject; audience members are usually referred to as students.
      5. Demonstrations are a short how-to speech explaining a particular activity or use a specific object.
      6. Training presentations teach listeners to understand a concept or to complete a task with an acceptable degree of accuracy. Training usually involves adult learners who are required to attend and learn from the demonstration.

II. Organizing and Outlining an Informative Speech

   A. Organizing the Informative Speech

      7. The introduction should compel the audience to listen with an attention-getter and provide a preview of what is to come. The preview usually includes the thesis statement and an overview of the main points.
      8. The body of the informative speech should contain no more than three main points, organized in a way that helps the audience make sense of the message. Once the main points and organizational pattern are set, identify what evidence supports which main point and place these subpoints in the correct location.
9. The conclusion includes a brief summary of the main points. No new information should be given to the audience in the conclusion. An effective conclusion gives the audience a jolt and leaves them thinking about the speaker's message.

B. Outlining the Informative Speech
A detailed outline is mandatory and should include the following sections: title, specific purpose statement, thesis statement, introduction, body, conclusion, and references.

III. Six Strategies for Increasing Informational Effectiveness

A. Keep It Simple
The fewer points the speech presents, the more likely the audience will learn them. Too many numbers or statistics bore the audience. All definitions should be relatively brief and easy to understand.

B. Keep It Concrete
Avoid abstract explanations. The more abstract the issues and the more theoretical the explanations, the less likely the audience will comprehend the message. Use an everyday example to explain difficult concepts.

C. Be Repetitive and Redundant
Repetition refers to explaining something exactly the same way over and over again. Redundancy involves explaining something more than once, but in a slightly different way each time. Without repetition and redundancy, the audience may fail to understand or simply miss key issues and explanations. Both strategies are especially important when speaking to audiences who communicate in English as their second or third language.

D. Elicit Active Responses
Stimulating the audience to do something in an open and public way increases understanding and retention. Dramatic nonverbal gestures are effective in encouraging audience response. Active audience response may be more natural for some co-cultures, such as African Americans, and less likely to occur in more collectivistic co-cultures, such as Asian and Native Americans.

E. Use Familiar and Relevant Examples
The speaker can help the audience understand an unfamiliar idea by providing the audience with familiar and relevant examples that more simply illustrate the point. This strategy works well with audiences made up of individuals from diverse co-cultures. The challenge for the speaker is to find examples that are familiar and meaningful to other co-cultural audience members.

F. Use Transitions and Signposts
Transitions are statements or phrases that link prior issues or points with the next ones. Signposts are simple words or phrases that signal organization. Both alert the audience to change or movement from one part of the speech to another. Transitions and signposts help the audience visualize the speech outline and follow the presentation with little or no effort. Both strategies are effective with audiences of all co-cultures.