

Chapter 13

Exploring Public Speaking. 4th edition

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Speaking Course

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Overview

- Why Persuade?
- A Definition of Persuasion
- Why is Persuasion Hard?
- Traditional Views of Persuasion
- Constructing a Persuasive Speech

Why Persuade?

- Many are not comfortable with prospect of persuasion
 - Seen as manipulative, power-driven
 - It is part of everyday life, however.
- Information + Change = Persuasion

Defining and Understanding Persuasion

- Simple definition from Stephen A. Lucas, (2012),
 - “the process of creating, reinforcing, or changing people’s beliefs or actions”
- Best thought of as movement on a continuum of -3 to +3
 - Visualize and quantify where your audience “sits.”
 - Accept the fact that any movement toward +3 or to the right is a win.
 - Almost impossible to change an audience from -3 to +3 in one speech



Strongly Disagree

Neutral

Strongly Agree

Understanding Persuasion Process

- Three possible goals
 - Creating (0 to +2 or +3)
 - Reinforcing (+2 to +3)
 - Changing (- to a +)
- Target audience:
 - “the members of an audience the speaker most wants to persuade and who are likely to be receptive to persuasive messages”
 - Doesn't mean the rest of audience is ignored

Understanding Persuasion Process

- Attempt to get as much information as possible about audience knowledge and attitudes
- Is the speech a “think” or “do” speech? (convince or actuate/motivate?)
- Arguing for a negative is difficult; phrase proposition as “for” rather than “against”
- Phrase proposition (thesis) as clearly, reasonably, and specifically as possible

Understanding Persuasion Process

- ▣ Refined definition of persuasion (Perloff, 2003)
 - ▣ A symbolic process
 - ▣ in which communicators try to convince other people
 - ▣ to change their attitudes or behavior regarding an issue
 - ▣ through the transmission of a message,
 - ▣ in an atmosphere of free choice

Definition emphasizes

- Audience choice
- Mental dialogue as active component
- Attempt, not always successful
- Demands ethical approach of speaker

Why is Persuasion Hard?

- Change is stressful and undesirable
- Selective exposure to protect our current thinking
- Theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957)
 - people confronted with conflicting information or viewpoints reach a state of discomfort and want to relieve it
- Audience develops “reservations” or counter arguments when listening

Solutions to Difficulty of Persuasion

- Create a reasonable persuasive goal (proposition) that involves movement in increments
- Address reservations through proper refutation (two-tailed argument)
 - Acknowledge counter arguments
 - Do not insult audience
 - Provide evidence for counter arguments
- Stress benefits/rewards of change

Traditional Views of Persuasion (Aristotle)

□ Logos

- Logic, structure, arguments
- Evidence

□ Ethos –

- Aristotle proposed as actual characteristics of speaker that bolster argument
- Today seen as perception of audience about qualities (credentials, trustworthiness, etc.) of speaker

Traditional Views of Persuasion

□ Pathos

- Originally seen as pure emotional appeals or use of audience emotion to persuade
- Also includes appeal to important needs of audience (denial or achieving of needs creates emotions)
- Utilize Maslow, especially three middle needs
- Fear is viable emotion to use under some circumstances
- Positive emotion is generally better to use

Constructing a Persuasive Speech

- Formulate a good proposition
- Construct speech around type of proposition
- Continue to build with quality evidence

Four types of propositions (claims)

- Proposition of fact - attempt to establish the truth of a statement
- Proposition of definition – argues for specific meaning of something
- Proposition of value – one idea, policy, or action is better, more just, ethical, etc. than others
- Proposition of policy – “should,” specific action to be taken or change to be made

Propositions of fact examples

- Converting to solar energy can save homeowners money.
- John F. Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald working alone.
- Experiments using animals are essential to the development of many life-saving medical procedures.
- Climate change has been caused by human activity.
- Granting tuition tax credits to the parents of children who attend private schools will perpetuate educational inequity.
- Watching violence on television causes violent behavior in children.

Propositions of Value Examples

- Hybrid cars are the best form of automobile transportation available today.
- Homeschooling is more beneficial for children than traditional schooling.
- The War in Iraq was not justified. Capital punishment is morally wrong.
- Mascots that involve Native American names, characters, and symbols are demeaning.
- A vegan diet is the healthiest one for adults.

Propositions of Policy Examples

- Our state should require mandatory recertification of lawyers every ten years.
- The federal government should act to ensure clean water standards for all citizens.
- The state of Georgia should require drivers over the age of 75 to take a vision test and present a certificate of good health from a doctor before renewing their licenses.
- Wyeth Daniels should be the next governor of the state.
- Young people should monitor their blood pressure regularly to avoid health problems later in life.

Organizational structures

- For proposition of value
 - Define value
 - Support value by 2-4 arguments
 - Include refutation
- For propositions of fact
 - Topical with 2-4 discrete arguments
 - Put strongest argument last (climax)

Organizational structures

- Propositions of Policy
 - Problem Solution or Problem-Cause-Solution
- Useful structure is Monroe's Motivated Sequence
 - Attention
 - Need
 - Satisfaction
 - Visualization
 - Action

Building with Evidence

- Audience must find it credible
- Audience must perceive it as new (they haven't heard it before and dealt with it)
- Must be cited, in context, relevant and up-to-date
- Visual aids may help some aspects of your persuasion

Conclusion

- Embrace persuasion as part of life and relationships
- Choose a topic you are committed to in your life
- Phrase proposition carefully and reasonably
- Include ethos, logos, and pathos (“all the available means of persuasion”—Aristotle)
- Use new, cited, credible evidence