

## MODULE 1 INTRODUCTION TO PERSUASION

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### UNIT 1 FOUNDATIONS OF PERSUASION

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Dictionary defines “persuade” as causing another person or even oneself to believe, realise or agree with a point of view or to carry out an action. To persuade is to convince. The purpose of persuasive writing or presentation then is to convince one or more people to agree with our point of view or to take the action we want them to take.

Effective communication takes careful planning, selection of appropriate words that will engage our intended readers or listeners and a call to action whether it is to believe our point of view or do something we want our reader or listener to do. Every day we are bombarded with a broad range of persuasive communication. Advertising is one of the most obvious examples and is a multi-billion naira industry focused on enticing someone to act – to buy – to get involved – to sign up.

Advertising messages come in many forms: television, radio, direct mail sms, newspapers and magazines. In persuasive communication, the communicator of a message is usually called the **persuader**. Since persuasion often takes place in a

public speaking context, the communicator or persuader is also referred to as an orator or speaker. Similarly, the recipient of persuasion is referred to as the **persuadee**. In public speaking context, the persuadee may be called the listener or a member of the audience.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- define persuasion in public speaking;
- explain the concept of persuasion as a process of communication; and
- describe the approach to strategic persuasion.

## HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 What is Persuasion in Public Speaking?

According to Perloff (2003), persuasion can be defined as “...a symbolic process in which communicators tries to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue through the transmission of a message in an atmosphere of free choice.” In other words, in public speaking, persuasion is a method of getting someone to do, believe or accept something by means of the words you use. It involves reasoning with the listener, using sound arguments or a compelling entreaty to persuade.

In contrast, manipulation involves controlling or influencing a person or group of people through unfair or unscrupulous means. In the simplest terms, persuasion is to get what you want through the use of words. Persuasion always benefits both the persuader and the persuaded. Manipulation only benefits the manipulator; some think that persuasion is a bad thing. Actually, it can be positive, and in more ways that you would imagine. Persuasion is not the negative kind of manipulation that goes on in the world around us. Manipulation does not create lasting relationships. Many aspects of manipulation are a part of persuasion. Manipulation will always eventually fail. Persuasion will last. Manipulation is always bad.

Persuasion follows a specific pattern of processes, methods and tactics that will help you to help others. True persuasion is ethical, honest, true, and elicits the persuasion criteria that is hard-wired into our brains. By learning how to persuade others, you can experience a simple truth. The sooner you help everyone else get what they want, the sooner you will get what you want. To master persuasion will require continuous practice. The difference between persuasion and manipulation mostly lies within you. Your intent is what makes the difference.

Persuasion usually results in long lasting relationships. Persuasion is usually about gaining agreement and support. It is about creating a common ground where you and others can come together in purpose of thought. To become an effective persuader will require taking the time to learn how people make decisions. You will have to look at how you persuade and where you need to make changes and improvements. Where you need to review the techniques and how to review them to get the best results.

### 3.2 Relationship Based Persuasion

In their book, *The Art of Woo* G. Richard Shell and Mario Moussa describe a four step approach to strategic persuasion. They explain that persuasion means to win others over, not to defeat them. Thus, it is very important to be able to see the topic from different angles in order to anticipate the reaction of others to a proposal.

- Step 1:**      **Survey your situation.** This step includes an analysis of the situation of the persuader, his goals and the challenges he faces in his organisation.
- Step 2:**      **Confront the five barriers.** There are five obstacles that pose the greatest risks to a successful influence encounter: relationships, credibility, communication mismatches, belief systems, interest and needs.
- Step 3:**      **Make your pitch.** People need solid reason to justify a decision, yet at the same time many decisions are taken on the basis of intuition. This step also deals with presentation skills.
- Step 4:**      **Secure your commitments.** In order to safeguard the long-time success, it is vital to deal with politics at the individual and organisational level.

### 3.3 Persuasion as a Process of Communication

What is a process? A process is a series of actions or events. This means that communication has no fixed beginning or ending. As the participants express, interpret and reply to each other's messages, the process develops. When we say that persuasion is a process of communication, we imply that without communication, persuasion is impossible. It also means that persuasion is a dynamic, on-going process that includes the expression and interpretation of

messages. From the foregoing discussion, we can postulate that persuasion is a process of communication in which a communicator succeeds in voluntarily forming, sustaining or changing the attitudes or behaviour of one recipient or a group of recipients, in accordance with what the communicator intends by his or her message. It is important to also state that persuasion can be used to sustain or strengthen existing attitudes or behaviour, or to encourage recipients to form attitudes and behaviour. For example, advertisements for banking institutions which advertise new services or lower rates not only try to persuade people to become clients of the institution (change), but also try to persuade existing clients to stay with them (reinforcing).

### **3.4 Persuasive Communication: The Historical Context**

Communication as a field of academic study became established at universities in the western world during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, a systematic study of communication can be traced to classical Greeks (between the fourth and fifth centuries BC). Their focus was on the study of oratory – the creation and delivery of spoken messages.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

What do you understand by the term ‘Relationship based persuasion’?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Persuasion is a powerful force in daily life and has a major influence on society and a whole. Politics, legal decisions, mass media, news and advertising are all influenced by the power of persuasion, and influence us in turn. Sometimes we like to believe that we are immune to persuasion, that we have a natural ability to see through the sales pitch, comprehend the truth in a situation and come to conclusions all on our own. This might be true in some situations, but persuasion is not just an overzealous salesperson trying to sell you a car, or a television commercial enticing you to buy the latest and greatest product. Persuasion can be subtle, and how we respond to such influences can depend on a variety of factors. Interestingly, when we think of persuasion, negative examples are often the first to come to mind, but persuasion can also be used as a positive force. For example, public service campaigns that urge people to quit smoking are great examples of persuasion used to improve people’s lives.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, we have learnt that persuasion is symbolic; utilizing words, images, sounds, etc and involves a deliberate attempt to influence others. In other words, during persuasion, people are not coerced; they are instead free to choose. The methods of transmitting persuasive messages can occur in a variety of ways,

including verbally and nonverbally via television, radio, Internet or face-to-face communication

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. How would you define persuasion?
- ii. Mention any three approaches to strategic persuasion.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 2 THEORIES OF PERSUASION

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we defined persuasion and analysed persuasion as a process in communication. In this unit, you will be exposed to the various theories of persuasion that have shaped our understanding of the concept. Suffice it to say that the study of persuasion in modern society takes into account a changed set of social circumstances – we live in a society that is very different from Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome.

We live in what is called **mass society**. What makes mass society so different from earlier societies? Briefly, the following reasons: mass society is highly technological; it is highly bureaucratic (that is, it is run by the state) and it depends on the mass media for communication.

Persuasive messages are numerous in mass society – we are bombarded with different forms of persuasion wherever we go. Can you think of a single day in your life when mass communication has not influenced you? Even the carton from which you pour milk into your breakfast cup of tea or coffee carries an advertising slogan. The point we are making here is that most persuasion today takes place through the mass media rather than in public debate (as in the past).

However, to understand persuasion in a mass communication context, we must first look at some aspects of persuasion in the interpersonal context.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- state the different theories of persuasion;
- differentiate ways of studying persuasion;
- outline the theoretical principles of persuasion; and
- apply what you have learnt to everyday communication encounters.

## HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Persuasion in an interpersonal Setting: Broad Starting Points

In every act of persuasion, the persuader has to find ways to motivate the recipients so that they will voluntarily change their attitudes or behaviour. For example, you might want a group of colleagues to be more positive about affirmative action in the workplace (an attitudinal change), or you might want to persuade someone to stop smoking (a behavioural change) or to vote in the next election (also a behavioural change). How do you go about it?

- **Complement:** In order to motivate people, we must pay attention to both the verbal and nonverbal messages that we send. These messages must **complement** each other. A nonverbal message complements the verbal message when it conveys the same meaning. When you tell someone “I’m pleased to meet you” and accompany it with a warm smile, your tone of voice and facial expression (the nonverbal message) are complementing the verbal message (the spoken words).
- **Contradict:** On the other hand, the person about to make an oral presentation who says, “I’m not nervous”, despite his trembling hands and perspiring forehead (the nonverbal message) is **contradicting** the verbal message. The voice may also contradict the verbal message. A change in

pitch, for example, can tell us that someone is perhaps telling a lie or being sarcastic or merely teasing. Research has shown that when we are attempting to conceal the truth, our pitch tends to become higher and this contradicts the verbal message.

### 3.1.1 Verbal Messages

Before you study this section, let us sort out the information it contains so that you can see at a glance how the various subsections relate to each other.

The three aspects of verbal messages that the persuader has to consider are: **human emotions**, the need to **be rational**, and the need to **show credibility**.

- (1) **Human emotions:** Here, the persuader has to consider three points, namely: people's **needs**, **attitudes** and the desire for **consistency** in their lives.
- (2) **Be rational:** To present a rational argument, the persuader has to present the recipients with proof to support his or her argument. The types of proof discussed in this section are **evidence** and **reasoning**.
- (3) **Show credibility:** The three factors to consider here are the persuader's **expertise**, **trustworthiness** and **goodwill**.

#### 3.1.1.1 Consider Human Emotions

In this subsection (that is, subsection 3.1.1.1), we look at needs, attitudes and consistency.

**Needs:** Needs are the basic requirements of life. They can range from the physical need for food and shelter to our need for an overall sense of wellbeing based on some sort of success (for example, passing an examination). The ability to meet people's needs is one of the best motivators of change. The person who is looking at a new car or stove because he or she needs one immediately is more likely to buy one than the person who is just thinking how nice it would be to own the latest model. An understanding of your recipient's needs increases your chances of holding their attention and persuading them to do what you would like them to do. The classic theory that outlines basic human needs was developed by Abraham Maslow (1970). Maslow's theory, which is not difficult to understand, is the need for self-actualisation.

This is explained below:

- **Self-actualisation** is the need to develop our potential as human beings, to achieve our highest goals. Self-actualisation is the least concrete of all our needs. It includes excelling in the activities you perform, expressing your creativity, and generally feeling that you are growing as an individual. Messages that focus on being "the best that you can be" appeal to self-actualisation needs, and are often directed at writers, composers, artists,



innovators, and campaign leaders. However, whereas **all** people are motivated by physiological needs, relatively fewer are motivated by safety needs, and the number involved in the other motivations steadily decreases to the top, where considerably few respond to self-actualisation needs. To be an effective persuader, you must bear in mind that if your recipients have to spend most of their time and energy satisfying their physiological and safety needs, they will have little time left for higher needs. In other words, you have to consider your recipient's needs before you can persuade them.

How do we use Maslow's pyramid of needs in a real situation? To persuade your recipients, you need to do two things: (1) determine which of their needs are not fulfilled or which may stop being fulfilled in the near future; and (2) find the information or actions that will show them how to cope successfully with the problem. If you were trying to persuade an audience to join your medical aid scheme, for example, your appeal would be to the need for adequate health care. You would point out that the continued satisfaction of this need is threatened by the ever-increasing cost of medical care. You would then present convincing supporting material (proof) to persuade them that your particular medical aid scheme can look after the health care needs of their family. (We will discuss types of proof later on in this section.)

Please note that Maslow's pyramid of needs reflects his own society and culture. Therefore, ideas from other cultures do not always agree with the order in which Maslow has placed the needs. Also, as Burton and Dimpleby (1995) explain, Maslow's highest need is the product of a western, industrial, individualized culture where the highest value is placed on self-actualisation – being able to fulfil your personal, physical and emotional needs and desires, and ultimately achieve a sense of independence. But, then, some cultures place the highest value on qualities such as mutual cooperation or equal opportunity for all. In such cultures, repressing your personal needs and desires and focusing on the needs of other people and the community may take the highest place in the hierarchy.

**Consistency:** Research shows that people like their lives to be predictable – we do not like unexpected change. We therefore tend to pay attention to messages that are consistent with our existing attitudes and behaviour and avoid messages that contradict or challenge them. Research also shows that our attitudes and behaviour are either in a state of **consonance** (balance) or **dissonance** (imbalance). We will feel dissonance if we are presented with information that is inconsistent with our current attitudes or behaviour. We need to be consistent otherwise we experience psychological tension (discomfort). As a result, when we feel an inconsistency, we seek ways to reduce psychological tension by changing our behaviour until we are in a state of balance; the greater the dissonance, the greater the motivation to change something in order to feel

psychologically comfortable again. For example, if you have not made provision for retirement (a source of dissonance which the mass media constantly remind us about) you would probably be easily motivated (persuaded) to buy a retirement policy in order to reach a state of consonance (peace of mind).

### 3.1.1.2 Be Rational

We said earlier that the persuader has to offer proof to support an argument or point of view. The two components of proof are evidence and reasoning.

- **Evidence:** Evidence, in its broadest sense, includes everything that is used to determine or demonstrate the [truth](#) of an assertion. Giving or procuring evidence is the process of using those things that are either (a) presumed to be true, or (b) were themselves proved through evidence, to demonstrate an assertion's truth. It is often said that evidence is the currency by which one fulfills the [burden of proof](#).
- **Reasoning:** Reasoning describes the process of thinking whereby a person arrives at a logical conclusion based on available evidence. A detective solves a crime, or a labour mediator settles a dispute by using reasoning to arrive at the logical or best conclusion (see Barker & Gaut, 1996). You often arrive at a conclusion in your everyday life by using reasoning. For example, if you come home and see that your spouse's car has a large dent in the front fender and that the electricity pole outside your house has been knocked sideways, you would probably reason (come to the conclusion) that your spouse ran into the pole. Persuasive communicators use our reasoning ability to convince us about the logic of an argument.

We now go on to the third aspect of verbal messages that the communicator has to consider – the need to show credibility.

### 3.1.1.3 Show Credibility

If you want to persuade somebody, that person must regard you as being a credible (that is, reliable) source of information. Credibility is important in all communication situations. It is crucial in persuasive speaking situations. The more credible you are perceived to be, the greater will be your success in winning their respect and confidence, and the more likely you are to promote new ideas or change their attitudes. Speakers who are perceived as ignorant, devious, or dishonest do not usually succeed in persuading others. The three characteristics of credibility that Aristotle identified are expertise, trustworthiness and goodwill

### 3.1.2 Non-Verbal Messages

Nonverbal messages are highly credible, perhaps because they often convey feelings and emotions. If you are feeling upset, your emotion is usually conveyed

by your facial expression. It is important to be aware of the nonverbal messages that we send because people generally believe the evidence of their eyes rather than their ears. In other words, if a nonverbal message contradicts a verbal message, people tend to believe the nonverbal message rather than the words that are spoken. Turn down the sound on your television set and watch an advertisement for a new product. Did the advertisement persuade you to consider buying the product in the absence of the verbal message?

Although we have already explained how nonverbal messages complement or contradict verbal messages in section 3.1., here is an explanation of the other terms that will help you understand what we explained better.

- **Accent:** A nonverbal message **accents** or reinforces the verbal message when it adds to its meaning. In the same way that **underlining** or **italicizing** written words emphasizes them. Saying “Come here **now**” conveys a more urgent message than “Come here now”. Pounding your hand on the table when saying “Listen to me”, conveys a more effective message than the words alone. While your gesture may be redundant, it adds emphasis to your statement and captures the recipient’s attention. Very often, reinforcing the message is not deliberate; it is done without conscious thought or intent on our part.
- **Substitute:** A nonverbal message may be a **substitute** for the verbal message. Gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal cues generate meaning without the use of words. When you wave your hand to someone instead of saying hello, or give someone a hug instead of saying thanks for helping me – your message is clear. Similarly, the expression on the face of a dejected person who comes home after a hard day at work is a substitute for the statement “I’ve had a rotten day”.
- **Regulate:** Nonverbal behaviour functions to **regulate** the flow of verbal interaction. Your eye contact, tone of voice, nodding of the head, slight hand movements, and other nonverbal behaviour tell your partner when to talk, to repeat a statement, to hurry up, or to finish the conversation. Good public speakers learn to adjust what they are saying and how they are saying it on the basis of such cues from the audience. The same applies to group communication. The chairperson at a meeting, for example, uses eye contact or hand gestures instead of words to indicate whose turn it is to speak.

### 3.2 Theories of Persuasion

A theory is simply a creative interpretation or explanation of a phenomenon. So, when we speak of different theories of persuasion it is no more than an attempt to explain **why** persuasion occurs in some instances, and **how** it happens. As you

will see, no theory can ever fully explain or account for a process of persuasion. These theories evolved over many centuries, from the earliest known ones in Greek era up to the present. The fact that elections are lost, that tribal and sectarian wars are still fought in Nigeria, proves that these theories offer no more than partial explanations of the phenomenon of persuasion.

Initially, a theory is devised to account for a particular situation. When it is applied to other situations, deficiencies may emerge; so the theory is adapted or a new one is put forward to try and overcome these deficiencies. In a subsequent persuasion situation, new deficiencies will come to light, triggering yet another process to overcome the latest weaknesses. Thus the process continues: new answers are looked for all the time. The theories discussed in this section are selected from a wide range of theories on the subject, which are constantly developing.

As we describe the various theories we shall try to demonstrate the progression in their development. That does not mean that any of the theories under discussion are invalid. Each applies to a **specific** situation, but not to **every** situation. A good persuader will recognise some of these situations and profitably use these existing explanations to persuade an audience as effectively as possible.

### 3.2.1 Attitude Change Theories

Attitude change theories are based on the assumption that our behaviour is determined by our attitude to certain ideas, people or products. If we feel strongly about environmental conservation, we will have a negative attitude towards environmental pollution. This will prompt certain kinds of behaviour: we will pick up the litter that others throw around, dispose of our own litter, teach our kids not to litter and campaign for anti-pollution legislation.

In a campaign to combat HIV/AIDS, the communicator's first step would be to change the target group's attitude before behaviour can change (although a change of attitude will not necessarily result in changed behaviour, as we shall see in due course).

To change someone's attitude, certain steps in the persuasion process have to be followed. Researchers have found that people will only change their attitudes if there is sufficient reinforcement and they have identified five steps on which persuasion depends:

- **Attention**

The people who are to be persuaded have to pay attention to the message; otherwise they will not be persuaded.

- **Understanding**

If the people to be persuaded do not understand the message, they will not be persuaded.

- **Acceptance**

If people reject the message to which they have been exposed and which they have understood, it will be impossible to persuade them.

- **Retention**

Once the message has been understood and accepted, the people who have been persuaded usually need to remember it for some time; they also need to remember it for future use.

- **Action**

The behavioural change that is effected must correspond with the persuader's appeal to change the attitude.

Although all the elements of the persuasion process were considered important, most researchers working in the Yale tradition concentrated on the third step, **acceptance**. They tried to establish which factors played the greatest role in the acceptance or rejection of messages.

Over a long period, the Yale programme came up with various answers like the credibility of the communicator, different channels for persuasion, and, especially, the presentation of messages. Nonetheless, it failed to explain **why** persuasion was either successful or abortive in certain circumstances. Another problem encountered by persuasion theorists focusing on attitude change was that they could not determine why attitude change did not necessarily result in altered behaviour. It seems that there are various factors, apart from attitude, which ultimately cause behaviour to change.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

What are the three aspects of verbal messages that the persuader has to consider when trying to persuade anyone?

### **3.2.2 Learning Theory**

Researchers who focus on learning theory regard persuasion simply as a specialised form of learning process. The basic assumption is that we learn to behave in a certain way and change our behaviour in accordance with circumstances. Most learning theories are rooted in the behaviourist tradition, which is characterized by experimental proof. The aim is to predict behaviour, and ultimately control it, by means of methods like conditioning.

### **Classical Conditioning and Skinnerian Behaviourism**

Classical conditioning dates back to Pavlov's famous study of dogs. The crux of the theory is that, given the right positive or negative association, behaviour can be established or learnt. The problem with classical conditioning is that it relies on irrational, unconscious forces in human beings: it robs them of their humanity by regarding them simply as beings that react to stimuli.

Skinnerian behaviourism follows this tradition, since it predicts that behavioural change happens simply in response to the person's environment (i.e. to external rather than internal factors). Here, too, people are considered as little more than robots which merely react to external stimuli.

### **Social learning theory**

**Social learning theory** is derived from the work of Albert Bandura (1977), which proposed that social learning occurred through four main stages of imitation:

- close contact
- imitation of superiors
- understanding of concepts
- role model behavior

Julian Rotter (1954) moved away from theories based on psychosis and behaviourism, and developed a learning theory. In *Social Learning and Clinical Psychology* (1954), Rotter suggests that the effect of behaviour has an impact on the motivation of people to engage in that specific behaviour. People wish to avoid negative consequences, while desiring positive results or effects. If one expects a positive outcome from a behaviour, or thinks there is a high probability of a positive outcome, then they will be more likely to engage in that behaviour. The behaviour is reinforced, with positive outcomes, leading a person to repeat the behaviour. This social learning theory suggests that behaviour is influenced by these environmental factors or stimuli, and not psychological factors alone.

Bandura (1977) expanded on Rotter's idea, as well as earlier work by Miller & Dollard (1941). This theory incorporates aspects of behavioural and cognitive learning. Behavioural learning assumes that people's environment (surroundings) cause people to behave in certain ways. Cognitive learning presumes that psychological factors are important for influencing how one behaves. Social learning suggests that a combination of environmental (social) and psychological factors influence behaviour. Social learning theory outlines three requirements for people to learn and model behaviour including attention, retention (remembering what one observed), reproduction (ability to reproduce the behaviour), and motivation (good reason) to want to adopt the behaviour.

### 3.2.3 Consistency Theory

This theory rests on the assumption that human beings do not like disequilibrium and continually strive to maintain equilibrium (balance) in their attitudes and behaviour. Consistency theory assumes that behaviour changes as a result of disequilibrium experienced by recipients. Consistency theory evolved systematically from Heider's (1958) simple **balance theory** into the more sophisticated **theory of cognitive dissonance**. Consistency theory postulates that when our inner systems (beliefs, attitudes, values, etc.) all support one another and when these are also supported by external evidence, then we have a comfortable state of affairs. The discomfort of cognitive dissonance occurs when things fall out of alignment, which leads us to try to achieve a maximum practical level of consistency in our world. Furthermore, we also have a very strong need to believe we are being consistent with social norms, especially when there is a conflict between behaviours that are consistent with inner systems and behaviours that are consistent with social norms, the potential threat of social exclusion often sways us towards the latter, even though it may cause significant inner dissonance.

Festinger (1957) opines that the ways we achieve consistency between conflicting items include:

- *Denial or ignoring*: 'I didn't see it happen.'
- *Rationalization and excuses*: 'It was going to fall anyway.'
- *Separation of items*: 'I don't use my car enough to make a difference.'
- *Transcendence*: 'Nobody is perfect.'
- *Changing item*: 'I'll be more careful next time.'
- *Persuasion*: 'I'm good, really, aren't I?'

#### Example

If you make a promise, you will feel bad if you do not keep it.

#### Using it

Highlight where people are acting inconsistently with beliefs, etc. that support your arguments. Show how what you want is consistent with the other person's inner systems and social norms.

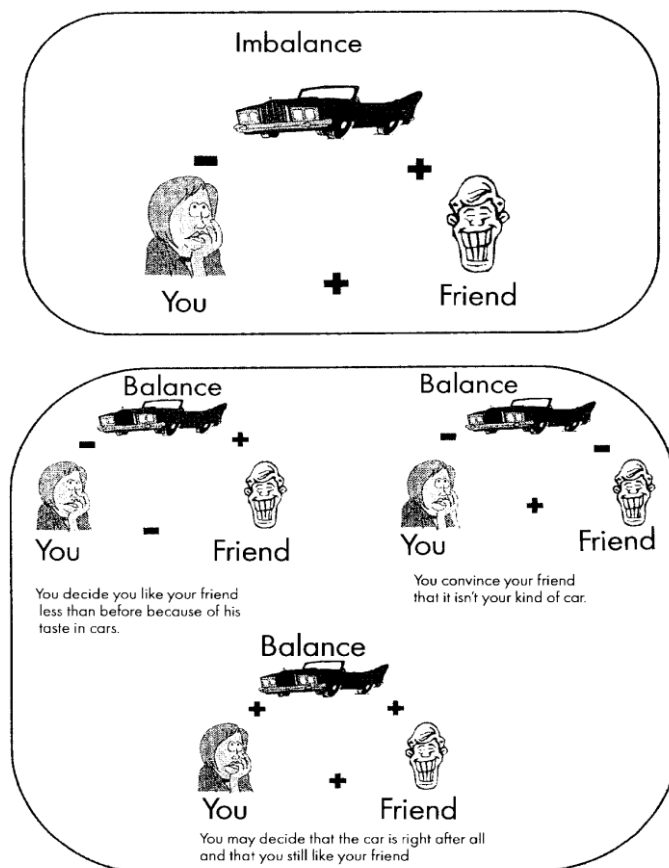
#### Defending

You will always be inconsistent in some areas. When changing to fit in with the inconsistencies that someone else is pointing out, think about the other, potentially more serious, inconsistencies that you will be opening up.

#### Balance Theory

This was one of the first consistency theories. It was originated by Fritz Heider (1958) and later expanded by Theodore Newcomb (1959). Newcomb applied the

theory to the most elementary form of human communication, namely when one person communicates with another on a single topic.



In such a very basic situation, disequilibrium may arise if, for instance, the two parties have very different opinions on a subject. Your (inconsiderate) friend may, for example, try and sell you a car. You do not like the car, so you feel uncomfortable (in terms of the theory, imbalance arises). There are only a few ways to restore the balance. First, you can try to convince yourself that the car is the right one after all. Or you may decide that if your friend likes such a car, he isn't as smart as you thought. A third way would be to persuade your friend that you do not like the car until he realizes that it isn't the right car for you.

The degree of discomfort will depend on how strongly you feel about the matter. A second-hand car is probably not such a serious issue. But if your friend tries to persuade you to vote for a political party whose ideas and policy you abhor, you will definitely revise your opinion of your friend because you will be disillusioned about her convictions.

It is good to know that those we respect and like share our values and ideas. It is also good to know that people whom we dislike differ from us on issues that matter to us.



A persuader who wants to reinforce existing attitudes in a target audience can do so by creating a balanced or comfortable situation for the recipients. Thus it is nice to know that your soccer hero drives the same kind of car as you do (you may have seen it in a television advert). Political rhetoric contains plenty of examples of political parties trying to establish rapport with their followers. In the 2011 general election in Nigeria, virtually all the opposition parties based their campaigns on criticism of the prevalent corruption as well as political crime and violence. In this way they linked up with their followers' existing fears in an attempt to reinforce the equilibrium of their target groups.

If persuaders want to change an audience's attitudes or beliefs, on the other hand, they will try to create imbalance by causing psychological discomfort. There are two ways of doing this:

If the communicator and the recipient like each other, any disagreement on an object or idea will cause the recipient to experience imbalance.

If the communicator and the recipient do not like each other but share an attitude towards an object or idea, the recipient will experience imbalance.

**Here are examples:**

- a. You need a new car and your employers provide a car allowance. You have no liking for a particular make of Korean car and did not really consider buying one. While going round the various car dealers' showrooms in search of a new car, you happen to walk into one which is selling that particular car. The salesperson is pleasant, creates a good impression and tries to persuade you of the good prices of new models and the luxury features that outclass those of other cars in the same price range. The factor that makes you reconsider your disinclination to buy this car is when the salesperson tells you that both of the medical doctors in your town have traded in their German cars for top of the range models of this make. The fact that the doctors are also driving these Korean cars causes imbalance and you start looking at the car afresh.
- b. Another example would be if a political party tries to expose a scandal in an opposition party. The imbalance this causes among the opposition party's supporters enables the other party to canvass these people for their cause.

The value of this theory is that it demonstrates that the human striving for psychological comfort is a major factor in the persuasion process. The application to the simple situation envisaged by Heider and Newcomb inevitably made researchers wonder about the implications for more complex situations. This led to research that took balance theory a bit further.

## **Congruency Theory**

This is a ‘theory of prejudice which proposes that the most important determinant of one person's attitude toward another is the similarity or “congruence” between the two people's belief systems. Where there is high similarity, mutual attraction is thought to ensue; dissimilarity is presumed to lead to rejection. The rationale for this idea is similar to that derived from social comparison theory: that the perception of similarity of opinion is assumed to provide consensual validation for one's own beliefs, and hence is socially attractive. The theory was proposed by Rokeach (1960). What lent controversy to the theory was Rokeach's hypothesis that belief similarity (or dissimilarity) was a more important factor in determining people's attitudes toward outgroups than the ingroup-outgroup category difference itself. That is, he suggested that members of ethnic minorities are discriminated against not because they belong to a particular group but because they are assumed to have different beliefs from the discriminators. In the final analysis, he proposed, an outgroup member who agreed with us would be preferred to an ingroup member who disagreed.

The following example illustrates this:

- If you have a strong religious conviction that all humans have a right to live and the political party which you fervently support were to decide in favour of abortion on demand, you will experience incongruence. Osgood and Tannenbaum's (1955) theory of congruence predicts that attitude change will be effected in one of the following two ways in order to restore congruence: (1) you may revise your view on abortion, or (2) you will be critical of your party's decision and loosen your ties with it.
- Clearly the principles are the same as those of balance theory; only the situations are more complex. Congruency theory is still a very simplistic approach to persuasion, in that it concentrates on only a few variables and does not take account of the complex interaction between varieties of factors in persuasion. Despite this objection, the theory made a valuable contribution by specifically identifying the role of congruence as a variable in the persuasion process.

## **Cognitive Dissonance Theory**

Both of the theories discussed here – equilibrium theory and congruence theory – allow for attitude and behavioural change. These changes may be regarded as qualitative, since they relate to degree of difference (ie they presuppose a before and after difference). But they do not take account of quantitative differences (ie we can modify our judgment a little, a lot or not at all).

Cognitive dissonance theory, which was originally evolved by Leon Festinger, tackles the problem of both qualitative and quantitative differences between people and ideas. Whereas earlier theories predicted changes in attitudes, judgments or evaluations, cognitive dissonance theory predicts that when two things do not follow logically, we experience psychological tension. We will then try to reduce this tension in some way.

Another feature of cognitive dissonance theory is that it considers this tension to be caused by dissonance within the person's psychological system, as opposed to balance and congruency theory which attribute it to logical inconsistencies. Our attitudes and opinions are shaped by how we feel about different ideas and how they relate to our past experience and distinctive individuality. The theory also allows for individual differences and how we feel at a given moment.

Festinger(1957), defines **dissonance** as the feeling one gets as a result of exposure to two pieces of knowledge about the world that do not accord. **Consonance**, on the other hand, is the term he uses to describe equilibrium between two elements which complement and accord with each other can vary from one instance to another – something for which balance theory and congruency theory do not allow (for example, I thoroughly like Communication as a subject and the fact that I am less keen on the compulsory paper on research methodology causes only mild feelings of dissonance or discomfort.

### **Belief-Hierarchy Theory**

Rokeach and Rothman's (1965) belief-hierarchy theory is relevant particularly to persuasion situations where people are so committed to a particular viewpoint that their self-concepts enter into it. It goes much further than the other consistency theories to accommodate the complex medley of human attitudes, beliefs and values.

Choosing between two brands of detergent does not ask much from a person, so it is relatively easy to persuade people to change to another brand. But when it comes to something like religious beliefs, there is much more at stake, in the sense that what people are and how they perceive themselves enter into it. Hence it is not so easy to persuade them that the religious beliefs that they grew up with and are personally involved with can change.

Some people support their political party so fervently that their self-images are directly committed to that position. These people can only be persuaded to question their position if the inconsistencies, incongruence or dissonance become so great that they will be prepared to question their self-concepts.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Think of a practical situation that you encounter regularly where elements of each of the following consistency theories are applicable. Describe each situation and try to explain it with reference to the specific theory.

- a. balance theory
- b. congruency theory
- c. cognitive theory
- d. belief-hierarchy theory.

### 3.2.4 Social Judgment-Involvement Theory

This theory hinges on two key concepts: anchor points and ego involvement. Both concepts represent internal points of reference that we all have. When we assess people, issues, opportunities, ideas, products and the like, we compare them with these internal points of reference in order to make a decision.

**Anchor points** refer to information on a specific issue which we have come across before and which thus forms part of our frame of reference. We compare the situation we are facing with our existing knowledge about it in order to arrive at a decision. Here is an example:

- Suppose you are a member of the governing body of a private secondary school. A child of a prominent public figure, who has been expelled from another school because of drug abuse, applies for admission to this school. The governing body proposes admitting the child. In deciding whether or not to support the proposal, you would consider several internal points of reference (anchor points). You followed the public debate about the child's expulsion in the press at the time. You might also have an opinion about the child's influential parents. In addition, there have been instances of drug abuse in your own family and you have strong views on juvenile drug abuse. A further consideration is the possible reaction of the children currently attending the school and their parents (based on your experience). Social judgment and involvement theory predicts that you will compare the proposal about the child's admission with all these anchor points before taking a decision. Hence your decision is made purely on the basis of your anchor points (existing knowledge). These anchor points function on a continuum, ranging from full acceptance (because of agreement) through neutrality to rejection (because of conflict with the anchor points). In the case of the proposal to admit the child to the school, you would support, oppose or be persuadable either way, depending on the extent to which the facts of the matter agree or conflict with your existing anchor points.

You would be able to support the proposal quite easily if it accorded fairly well with your established anchor points. You would not be able to support it,

however, if it is too remote from these anchor points (that is, if it conflicts with your existing views of the matter).

The second key concept in this theory is **ego-involvement**. This concept relates closely to those elements in consistency theories that refer to attitudes about which recipients feel strongly and which form part of their being. In particular, it links up with Rokeach's notion of self-concept. People may be very much involved with a particular group and may even go so far as to describe themselves in terms of a specific social orientation, by regarding themselves as feminists, liberals, environmental activists and the like. Sherif considers the degree to which people seek social affiliation with like-minded people as a critical factor in determining their ego-involvement with an issue. The degree of ego-involvement determines the extent of message distortion, which in its turn determines people's judgment in a specific situation. Highly involved people tend to look at things in terms of extremes (right or wrong) and are unable to compromise on an issue. Less involved people, on the other hand, are better able to exercise sound judgment because they are able to see all sides of the matter.

Advertising uses ego-involvement a lot to secure product loyalty. The men drinking beer with a famous brand name in an advertisement represent more than just a beverage: they represent a life style and social acceptance.

When people are heavily involved with an issue, to the extent that their self-concepts are associated with it, it is almost impossible to persuade them. Hence, persuasion is usually aimed at people with little or no ego-involvement with a particular issue.

### 3.2.5 Relationship-Based Persuasion Theory

Richard Shell and Mario Moussa (2007), present a four-step approach to strategic persuasion which they described as "Relationship Based Persuasion Theory". They explained that persuasion means to win others over, not to defeat them. Thus it is important to be able to see the topic from different angles in order to anticipate the reaction others have to a proposal.

- Step 1:**       **Survey your situation.** This step includes an analysis of the persuader's situation, goals, and challenges that he/she faces in his organisation.
- Step 2:**       **Confront the five barriers.** Five obstacles pose the greatest risks to a successful influence encounter: relationships, credibility, communication mismatches, belief systems, and interest and needs.
- Step 3:**       **Make your pitch.** People need a solid reason to justify a decision, yet at the same time many decisions are made on the basis of intuition. This step also deals with presentation skills.

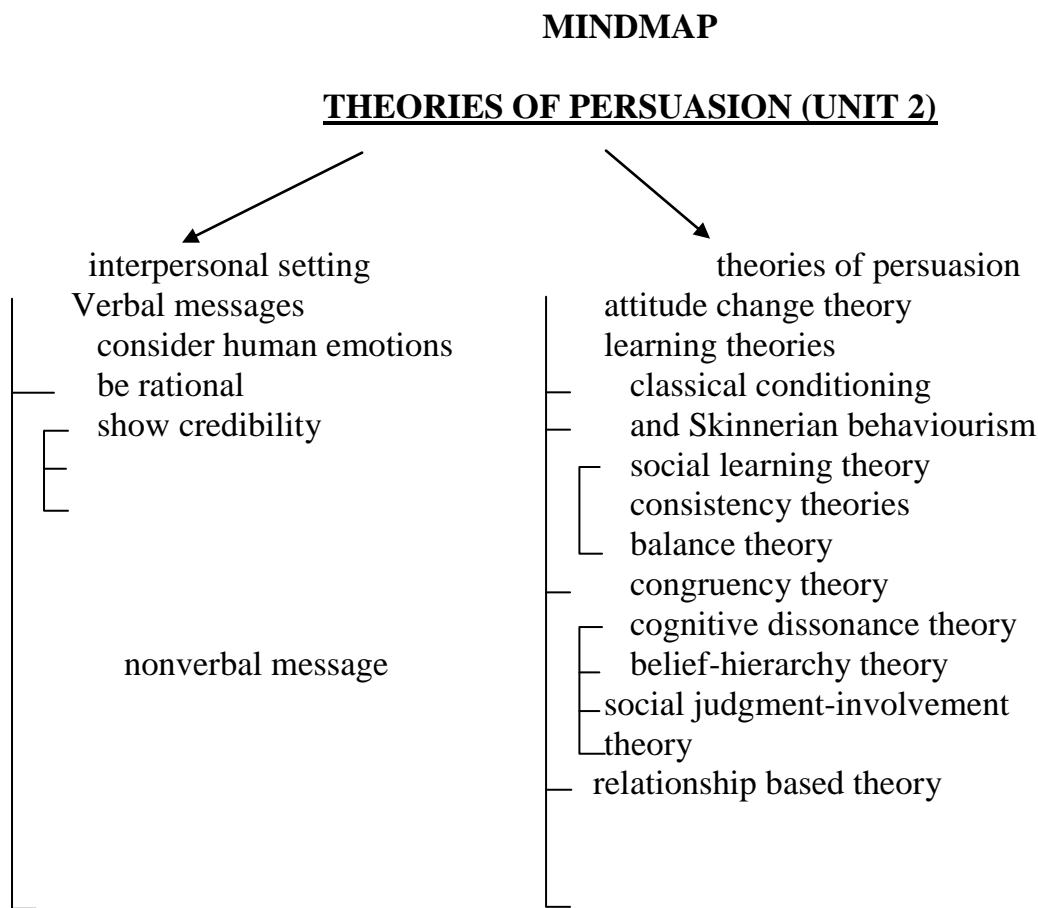
**Step 4: Secure your commitments.** In order to safeguard the longtime success of a persuasive decision, it is vital to deal with politics at both the individual and organisational level.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, you have been exposed to the different theories of persuasion. These theories form the bedrock of academic and philosophical postulations in the field of persuasion and their relevance have been carefully outlined in this unit.

**5.0 SUMMARY**

We have presented the summary in the form of a mind map, because we believe that a mind map often helps us to remember information?



**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i. Discuss briefly, any two persuasion theories you know. Clearly outline the differences and similarities between the theories.
- ii. What do you understand by the term “Classical Conditioning”?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 3 INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC SPEAKING

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you studied various theories about how we persuade other people. In this unit, you will get to understand the techniques of persuasion, and you will be exposed to the issues that create the fear that most people have of speaking in public. The reason we do this at the outset is that we would like to assure you that it is perfectly normal to feel uneasy – even terrified – of standing up in public and addressing a crowd of people! During the course of this module we will give you as much advice as we can to help you to overcome your fears and stand up in front of a crowd of people with confidence.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the theoretical foundation of public speaking;
- prepare to speak effectively in the public; and
- demonstrate effectively listening to public speeches.

### HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.



- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Oral Tradition

This section is a very brief overview of the oral tradition in Africa. Its purpose is to draw your attention to the fact that public speaking is not a modern invention. It has been a part of the culture of many African countries for hundreds of years. We concentrate on the praise-poem as an example of African oral literature because we assume that you have heard about praise-singers or have seen them in action, either in real life or on the television.

However, as you may be able to tell, the study of communication was based in the oral tradition. The oral tradition refers to the vocal transmission of information between people from generation to generation. History, law, tradition, culture—all were passed along by orally for centuries prior to the creation of the written word. Even after the written word was invented, the “oral tradition” remained intact due to the prevalence of illiteracy. Even today there are still traces of the power of the “oral tradition.” For example, some nursery rhymes, such as *Humpty Dumpty*, date back to 16th century England. Did you ever sing it as a child? Well, you may not know it refers to a cannon used in the English Civil War which fell from its perch atop a church wall when, in 1648, it was hit by enemy fire. It can be hard to believe, given that we live in a mass and computer mediated society, that at one time the spoken word was the primary medium of communication, even over the written word.

The oral tradition of public speaking is most closely tied to the study of rhetoric. **Rhetoric** is generally known as the art of using discourse to persuade people. Most often, rhetoric is used to persuade individuals to take up or reject a belief, assign meaning to a person, event or object, or even perform an action. Rhetoric is actually one of the oldest disciplines studied in the Western world; its origins date back to around 476 B.C.! Murphy’s (2001) work on rhetorical scholarship originally focused on both the creation of and analysis of public speaking since it has historically been the main vehicle of persuasion. Political assemblies and campaigns are still prototypical contexts of rhetorical, public speech. Ironically, rhetorical theory emerged from written classical texts from the ancient Western civilizations of Greece and Rome.

#### 3.2 Importance of Public Speaking

As you study this section, please relate the points we make about the importance of acquiring public speaking skills to your own personal, social and work

circumstances. Those of you who have not yet held a fulltime position could think about the following:

- After graduating from University, Phuma obtained a good position in a large company. He worked on a project to increase the efficiency of the salaries department. After six months, his supervisor asked him to prepare a presentation for all the senior personnel in the organisation. Phuma had to report on the progress he had made and his plans for implementing his recommendations.
- The scenario we have sketched is not an unusual situation for a university graduate to find him – or herself in. If you were in Phuma's position, would you feel confident about giving this presentation?

Please note the fact that, at the end of this section, we emphasise that successful public speaking involves more than just a good speaker.

### 3.3 The Public Speaking Process

For many people, Public Speaking can be so daunting that they will do almost anything to avoid it. Yet once we have a taste for it and discover the real rewards that can result from giving a good speech, many of us wonder what all the fuss was about. Given some encouragement and some good public speaking training almost anyone can develop the ability to deliver a good speech in public. There is no magic wand. We cannot transform you instantly into someone with no fear of the auditorium. What we can do however is demystify the public speaking process for you. We can give you enough insight and understanding about the dynamic between you and your audience that you will start to feel in control of the event rather than run by it. This is a turning point for most people. They get to the point where they feel they know what they are doing, at which point what they have previously experienced as anxiety they now start to feel exhilarated.

Confidence is a key factor to develop as a public speaker.

The following processes of public speaking can help you prepare your talks.

- They are **Assess, Analyse, Research, Organise, Deliver, and Discern**.
- **Assess your Speechmaking Situation.**
- Consider the occasion.
- How long will your talk last? Will you be the keynote speaker or one of many? Has your audience heard you before and what is their impression of you and your organisation? Is this talk one of many or a single presentation?
- **Find a topic.** Generally speaking; the topic of your talk is already apparent to you. You want to speak before a community group to change a policy. You have been asked to make a toast at your best friend's wedding. Your boss is retiring and you'd like to honour her. Or you are sharing your recommendations for improving a procedure to make your work more

efficient. It is recommended that your topic be worthwhile, appropriate, culturally sensitive and limited in scope.

- **Clarify your speaking goal.** What is the purpose of your speech? Have you been invited to share your expertise on a topic? Will you be celebrating a special occasion or presenting an award? Do you seek to motivate your audience to make a change? Or are you merely talking to entertain?
- **Develop your central idea.** Can you get your point across in thirty seconds or less? Audience members expect that you will be able to give them the bottom line and to make it accurate, brief, and clear.
- **Analyse your Audience.** Determine demographic, psychographic and situational characteristics of your audience. Just as a gardener must tend to the individual needs of each plant, a speaker must know his/her audience well. Learn all that you can about your audience in order to meet the needs of your speaking occasion.
- **Consider cultural considerations.** Ignoring cultural differences and expectations is considered rude and impolite.
- **Interact with your audience during your talk.** All speakers seek to converse with their audience members in order to reach them. As you are delivering your talk, consider adopting a heightened conversational tone.
- Get feedbacks following your talk

If you are enrolled in a public speaking course, you will receive expert feedback from your instructor who is trained to do just this. Much like a referee or judge sees a performance differently than do the fans, your instructor will be looking at elements of your presentation that many audience members may or may not notice.

Your audience members can give you some useful information as well, particularly about how well you adapted your talk to their particular needs.

### **Research your Topic**

- **Develop your expertise.** You want to be perceived by your audience as an expert in your subject. Experience, knowledge, and integrity are keys to developing your expertise.
- **Work with other experts to boost your credibility.** Even the most expert of us recognises that there are many perspectives and ways to look at a topic. Good speakers ensure that they are up-to-date and aware of what other experts are doing in their field.
- **Assess the credibility of resources.** As you know, there are many people who pretend to be experts on subjects for which they know little. In addition, some misrepresent the facts or fabricate evidence.
- **Work with reference librarians.** Reference librarians are experts in finding resources, particularly in accessing subscription databases and hard-to-find publications. They make research easy.

- **Find evidence to back up your claims.** Evidence gives credence to your arguments. When making a claim, you can expect your audience to be thinking, "What evidence do you have to support that assertion?"

### Organise and Write your Speech

- **Choosing a pattern of organization.** A well-organised speech typically includes three clear parts: a beginning, a middle and an end.
- **Starting your talk.** Be creative. In the introduction to your speech, gain your listeners' attention and then focus their attention on your central idea by making a clear statement of your thesis and a preview of your main ideas. The introduction is also a time to develop rapport with your audience and establish your credibility.
- **Ending your talk.** As you conclude the speech, provide a summary that recaps the main ideas of your speech. Then, end in a dramatic fashion to give your conclusion a sense of finality.
- **Developing visual aids.** Visual aids provide support for your talk. Visuals can organize the entire presentation, providing a visual roadmap for the audience, and/or illustrate a point that you are trying to make. In some cases, a picture is worth 1,000 words.
- **Using Power Point.** Many presenters enjoy using computer software to generate a slideshow presentation. If used well, this is a valuable addition to your talk. Used poorly, your audience will suffer from death by Power Point.

### Deliver your Presentation

- **Select a mode of delivery.** Will your talk be delivered extemporaneously, as a manuscript, memorized or without preparation?
- **Demonstrate dynamism.** How will you capture and maintain the attention and interest of your audience?
- **Manage your nervousness.** Nervousness is both natural and normal. Once you expect and accept it, you will then be able to control and manage this apprehension.
- **Interact with your audience.** How will you adapt your talk to your audience during the presentation? How will you handle questions and answers?
- **Use visual aids.** For some, seeing is believing. How will you show your audience your main points? Will you use a computer-generated presentation like Power Point?
- **Dress for success.** The key to a successful appearance is to dress in such a way that no one notices what you are wearing.

### Discern other Talks

- **Analyse other talks.** You will learn much by watching others' talks. Using your critical thinking skills to evaluate the efficacy of a talk is also valuable.

- **Give feedback to other speakers.** As you become more proficient at watching and evaluating talks, you will likely be asked to offer feedback to speakers. While some speakers may prefer vague platitudes, it is likely that your colleagues will solicit constructive criticism and descriptive feedback.
- **Learn from expert speakers.** Talk with expert speakers and learn from them! Watch great speakers and discover their secrets for planning, practicing and presenting excellent talks.
- **Work with public speaking support groups.** There are a number of organisations available to assist you in developing your public speaking skills.
- **Volunteer to speak.** There are countless opportunities for you to give talks in business, social, and personal contexts. Whether it is a retirement, a sports banquet, wedding, or toast at a special dinner, you can use your speaking skills to make the occasion more special.
- **Consider a career in public speaking.** Many celebrities find themselves being expected to speak to community and professional groups. Indeed, many people who have encountered a significantly unusual experience find themselves thrust into the public limelight for more than 15 minutes. Whether you are an author, athlete, actor, or activist, you might find yourself turning your fame into your career.

### 3.4 Differences between Public Speaking and Other Forms of Communication

It is important for you to understand the differences between oral and written presentations, and the differences between speeches and ordinary conversations. You are probably already aware of some of these differences through your own experiences of written and spoken communication. We include them here simply to draw your attention to them. See (section 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

- **Difference between Private and Public Speaking**  
Public speaking is to a general audience. Private speaking is to certain individuals.

- **Differences between Conversation and Public Speaking**  
Despite their similarities, public speaking and daily conversation are not identical. As the size of your audience grows, the manner in which you present the story will change. You will find yourself adapting to three major differences between conversation and public speaking. First of all, public speaking is more highly structured. It usually imposes strict time limitations on the speaker. In most cases, the situation does not allow listeners to interrupt with questions or commentary.

Therefore, public speaking is very much a one way communication. The speaker must accomplish her or his purpose in the speech itself. In preparing the speech, the speaker must anticipate questions that might arise in the minds of listeners and answer them. Consequently, public speaking demands much more detailed

planning and preparation than ordinary conversation. Secondly, public speaking requires more formal language. Slang, jargon, and bad grammar have little place in public speeches. Even though a principal is very angry about the vandalism in school, he does not say, “We should send those idiots who vandalize the school property to hell.” Listeners react negatively to slang, jargon, or poor grammar, so speakers must polish their language and choose words for the greatest effect. Lastly, public speaking requires a different method of delivery. When conversing informally, most people talk quietly, interject stock phrases such as “you know,” “it’s like,” and “really,” adopt a casual posture, and use what are called vocalised pauses.

Effective public speakers, however, adjust their voices to be heard clearly throughout the audience. They assume a more erect posture. They avoid distracting mannerisms and verbal habits. In conclusion, with study and practice, you will be able to master these differences and expand your conversational skills into speechmaking. Public speaking is when you speak it out loud to the world. Private speaking is when you keep it to a group or a person you know.

- **The Difference between Oral Communication and Public Speaking**

Public speaking is generally defined as speaking in front of a group, usually in an open setting. Oral communication is any form of speaking.

### **3.5 Ethics and Public Speaking**

Have you ever thought about the implications of giving people inaccurate information on which to base important decisions or of persuading people to do something that could have an influence on the rest of their lives, or of denying them the right to express a point of view that differs from yours? You hear people say things like: “You can’t believe what he says – he’s a car salesman”, or “she’s an estate agent – she’ll say anything to make a sale”, or “you can’t discuss anything with him – he won’t let you get a word in edgeways”. In fact, we consider such behaviour to be unethical. In the same way that there are guidelines for ethical behaviour in other areas of life, so are there guidelines for ethical behaviour in public speaking.

#### **3.5.1 Speaker Ethics**

Here, we have presented guidelines to evaluate the ethics of your behaviour as a public speaker. Make the questions relevant to you personally by putting yourself in the place of the listener in each case, and think about the possible consequences of a public speaker using unethical means to persuade you to make a decision that was not in your best interest.

Let us study these guidelines that can facilitate the ethics of your behaviour as a public speaker:

**Have I investigated the subject fully before expressing opinions about it?**

This question relates to giving and receiving inaccurate information or faulty advice. For example, think of a union official explaining a new contract to workers. If the official does not fully understand the contents of the new contract, and its benefits and limitations, the workers will not obtain the information and advice they need to make an informed choice that could influence their future in the organisation.

**3.5.2 Listener Ethics**

You will probably find that it is easier to make listener ethics personally relevant to you because most of us are more in the audience than doing the speaking. Approach your study of listener ethics by, once again, providing concrete examples from your everyday experiences.

Please note that the guidelines for listener ethics can be summarized into two broad categories:

- the obligation to give the speaker a fair hearing
- the obligation to evaluate the speaker's message ethically.

**3.6 Listening in the Public Speaking Context**

This section focuses specifically on listening in the public speaking context, rather than on listening in the interpersonal context. Nevertheless, the knowledge you already have will make it easier to understand this section of the unit. For example, you may find that you can pay less attention to some subsection because you have studied them before but take note that most of the information is presented in a different way because of the emphasis on the public speaking context.

During the course of each day, we are constantly called upon to listen in a variety of situations. We listen to the sounds of nature, to traffic noises, to music, to advertisements, to persuasive speeches from politicians, and to our family, friends and colleagues. In fact, studies show that we spend most of our communication time engaged in listening rather than in speaking. However, we do not always listen as efficiently as we should. Test this statement out. Have you ever been lost because you did not follow the directions someone gave you correctly? Have you missed an appointment because you got there at the wrong time? Have you ever given inappropriate feedback because you were not listening to what was being said? When was the last time you jumped to a wrong conclusion or felt that you were misunderstood? All these situations involve your ability to listen attentively.

“Critical” in this context does not mean finding fault for the sake of finding fault. It means that, to assess a message, you should listen to both the positive points in a message and to its limitations or shortcomings. Most advertisements, for

example, only stress the positive qualities of a product. In order to make an informed decision about whether or not to buy the product – whether it is the right product for you – you have to listen for what is not explicitly stated in the advertisement. In other words, you have to “listen” for the shortcomings yourself in order to evaluate the product. “Evaluate” is about judgment – how you rate or assess the quality of something. For example: is the knowledge conveyed by the speaker useful to you? Will you support the proposals recommended by the speaker? Why and how? The ability to listen critically is linked to how well you can evaluate your own and other people’s messages. Research has shown that learning to listen critically to other people’s speeches is one of the most effective ways of becoming more critical of your own oral presentations. This ability will go a long way towards helping you to speak in public with greater confidence.

### 3.6.1 Hearing and Listening

The reference to “deaf” ears brings us to the difference between hearing and listening. Make sure that you understand the following two points:

- While hearing is described as a passive process, listening is the active process of interpreting sounds, that is, converting sounds into meaning in the mind.
- While we listen or give meaning to both the verbal part of the message and to the nonverbal part of the message.

### 3.6.2 Types of Listening

There are many names for different types of listening. Here is a collection of types and the different names that get ascribed to them, along with a brief description of each.

Name	Description
<u>Active listening</u>	Listening in a way that demonstrates interest and encourages continued speaking.
<u>Appreciative listening</u>	Looking for ways to accept and appreciate the other person through what they say. Seeking opportunity to praise. Alternatively listening to something for pleasure, such as to music.
<u>Attentive listening</u>	Listening obviously and carefully, showing attention.
<u>Biased listening</u>	Listening through the filter of personal bias.
<u>Casual listening</u>	Listening without obviously showing attention. Actual attention may vary a lot.



<u>Comprehension listening</u>	Listening to understand. Seeking meaning (but little more).
<u>Content listening</u>	Listening to understand. Seeking meaning (but little more).
<u>Critical listening</u>	Listening in order to evaluate, criticize or otherwise pass judgment on what someone else says.
<u>Deep listening</u>	Seeking to understand the person, their personality and their real and unspoken meanings and motivators.
<u>Dialogic listening</u>	Finding meaning through conversational exchange, asking for clarity and testing understanding.
<u>Discriminative listening</u>	Listening for something specific but nothing else (eg. a baby crying).
<u>Empathetic listening</u>	Seeking to understand what the other person is feeling. Demonstrating this empathy.
<u>Evaluative listening</u>	Listening in order to evaluate, criticize or otherwise pass judgment on what someone else says.
<u>False listening</u>	Pretending to listen but actually spending more time thinking.
<u>Full listening</u>	Listening to understand; Seeking meaning.
<u>High-integrity listening</u>	Listening from a position of integrity and concern.
<u>Inactive listening</u>	Pretending to listen but actually spending more time thinking.
<u>Informative listening</u>	Listening to understand. Seeking meaning (but little more).
<u>Initial listening</u>	Listening at first then thinking about response and looking to interrupt.
<u>Judgmental listening</u>	Listening in order to evaluate, criticize or otherwise pass judgment on what someone else says.
<u>Partial listening</u>	Listening most of the time but also spending some time day-dreaming or thinking of a response.
<u>Reflective listening</u>	Listening, then reflecting back to the other person what they have said.
<u>Relationship listening</u>	Listening in order to support and develop a

	relationship with the other person.
<u>Sympathetic listening</u>	Listening with concern for the well-being of the other person.
<u>Therapeutic listening</u>	Seeking to understand what the other person is feeling. Demonstrating this empathy.
<u>Total listening</u>	Paying very close attention in active listening to what is said and the deeper meaning found through how it is said.
<u>Whole-person listening</u>	Seeking to understand the person, their personality and their real and unspoken meanings and motivators.

### 3.6.3 Causes of Inefficient Listening

Effective listening is arguably one of the most important skills to have nowadays. Personal relationships need effective listening skills to face complicated issues together. Business people and employees need effective listening skills to solve complex problems quickly and stay competitive. Students and professors need it to understand complex issues in their fields. Thus, it is beneficial if we can understand and eliminate listening barriers that blocks deep, harmonious and lasting relationships. For most people, we listen only to answer back or to have a reply, instead of listening to understand.

Effective listening, on the other hand, is not about the words hearing the words being delivered, and it certainly requires more than hearing the sounds transmitted.

Effective listening encourages us to understand what the other person talks about or feel. And we can do this by focusing on the other person, by thoughts and feelings and not only by words.

#### Barriers to Effective Listening

And to guide you on how to listen and communicate better, we have listed **five (5) barriers for effective listening** that you should consciously avoid or eliminate whenever you are engaged in a conversation with another person:

#### 1. Environmental Distractions

Environmental distractions are factors that divide the attention of an individual or group from the chosen object of attention onto the source of distraction. It is the lack of ability to pay attention, lack of interest in the object of attention, or the great intensity, novelty or attractiveness of something other than the object of attention. Distractions can come from both external sources, and internal sources.

External distractions can include electronic gadgets like personal computers or laptops, cellular phones, music players, television, portable gaming consoles and etc. Internal distractions can be absent-mindedness, lack of interest, lack of attention, etc.

These external and internal distractions are the common barriers for effective listening. They are basic, but most of us often forget that these basic issues can happen at home, in school, at work or in the community.

To eliminate this type of listening barriers, when conversing with people, put yourself in a good environmental position without external and internal distractions. Take time to stop and give your full attention to the person you are talking to. It will not only help you understand the other person better, but also create more meaningful and deeper relationship with them.

## **2. Pride**

Another type of listening barrier is our pride or ego. Most often, we let our pride or ego to take over the conversation. We think that we are already smart enough to even listen to other people. We think that we are better than other people and feel we have nothing more to learn from them. When we close ourselves and stop listening to other people, we are doomed because we stop learning. To eliminate this listening barrier, you have to be more open-minded to listen and learn from other people. You may learn more things if you open yourself and listen. But be mindful of selective listening. Remember that you do not have to agree with everyone, but it is helpful if you at least, listen to what they have to say.

## **3. Assumptions**

The human mind is mysterious and can process a lot of information, especially in between conversation, even while the other party is still talking. Which is why we have the tendency to interrupt since we assume that we already know what the other is telling us. Such behaviour is caused by another listening barrier called assumptions.

Assumptions are statements that are assumed to be true and from which a conclusion can be drawn. Quite often, when we make assumptions, we already create conclusion in our mind without even considering the thoughts and feelings of the other person. And as such, you create more gap and unresolved problems.

To resolve and eliminate this listening barrier, practice keeping an open-mind and listen before you make any assumptions. You may try putting yourself in the shoe of another so you can fully understand and feel the sentiments of the other person.

## **4. Close-Mindedness**

Another listening barrier to effective conversation is close-mindedness. Close-mindedness is intolerant of the beliefs and opinions of others; stubbornly unreceptive to new ideas. When we think that we have all the answers, and that

the things we know are always the right answers, then our mind will close for new ideas.

In order to eliminate this listening barrier, strive to always keep an open mind for effective listening. You will learn and build deeper relationship if you stop being close-minded.

## **5. Defensiveness**

This listening barrier refers to an attitude or position of defence. It is when we constantly protect ourselves from criticism, exposure of our shortcomings, or other real or perceived threats to our ego.

Defensiveness is a primal response to feeling attacked, threatened, misunderstood or disrespected. This will normally lead to series of never ending arguments, protests, denials and blames. To eliminate this listening barrier, remember not to view comments and criticisms as personal attack. Instead use them as a tool for personal assessment, improvement and growth.

Most of the barriers listed above give us the tendency to interfere with the speaker. Interfering with the speaker also means that we do not value what they are saying.

### **3.6.4 Becoming a Better Listener**

Any attempt to develop one's listening skills has to take into account the different types of listening and the external and internal barriers that can interfere with one's ability to listen efficiently. One way of dealing with some of these sources of interference is to concentrate on replacing poor listening habits and listening behaviours with effective skills and behaviours. Some of these listening behaviours are:

#### **1. Show Respect**

Respect that every human being are different. Other people's opinions and stories may be different from yours. Showing respect is essential for effective listening.

#### **2. Be Sensitive**

Sometimes, people just need someone who can listen to their problems and stories so preaching and acting like a problem expert in this situation can cause deeper problems. There will be moments you need to be a little more sensitive on what other people think and feel, especially if you want to resolve the problem or save the relationship.

#### **3. Pause**

Learn to leave at least a couple of seconds pause after the speaker talks before giving your reply. On the other hand, before starting a conversation set a rule or agreement that both sides will let the other person listen first before speaking or replying. This may feel awkward or weird at first but it's an effective way to

create a good conversing environment. It will be uneasy at first, but it will be much easier when it becomes a habit.

#### **4. Listen to Understand**

Most of us are listening because we want to have a good reply. This kind of attitude often gives us a problem when it comes to communication. Keep in mind that the most effective conversations are the ones where we've used our ears more than our mouth. Our main goal is to avoid those effective listening barriers listed above. We need to set aside our defences, open our minds for new ideas and start listening not just with our ears but with our hearts because sometimes the most important message having delivered is not in the words we just heard. We need to hear the words not being said.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have studied the human activity called "Public speaking", and found out that it is the process of speaking to a group of people in a structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain the listeners. We also observed that public speaking, as a form of communication, has some basic elements, often expressed as "*who* is saying *what* to *whom* using what *medium* with what *effects*?" The purpose of public speaking can range from simply transmitting information, to motivating people to act, to simply telling a story. Good orators should be able to change the emotions of their listeners, not just inform them. Public speaking can also be considered a discourse community. Interpersonal communication and public speaking have several components that embrace such things as motivational speaking, leadership/personal development, business, customer service, large group communication, and mass communication. Indeed, Public speaking can be a powerful tool to use for purposes such as motivation, influence, persuasion, informing, translation, or simply entertaining. A confident speaker is more likely to use this as excitement and create effective speech, thus increasing the overall impact.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

We have been able to show you, in this unit that fear of public speaking is often due to lack of training and little or no experience in speaking in public, and an inability to evaluate or judge one's performance. However, thorough preparation and practicing the delivery of the speech can help you to overcome your speech apprehension and give an oral presentation that is a success.

While experience helps to build confidence and improves the delivery of speeches, even the most accomplished public speakers have openly admitted that they feel a certain amount of nervousness before taking the floor. They also claim that a certain amount of "nerves" is actually a good thing because it keeps them "on their toes".

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Fill in the blank spaces below by writing down the component of the public speaking process you think is being dealt with in each case.

You are to attend an oral presentation where the manager of an office equipment company is demonstrating the advantages of a new photostat machine which, he hopes, your company's financial director will buy. The financial director has invited all the employees in the organisation to attend the presentation. The boardroom where the presentation takes place provides the (1) ..... of communication. The manager of the office equipment company is the (2) ..... and the employees of your organisation are the (3) ..... The purpose of the message is to (4) .....and (5) ..... the audience. The speaker uses both verbal and (6) ..... messages to achieve his purpose. Most people are paying attention because the speaker is demonstrating his (7) ..... skills by presenting the rather dull technical details in an interesting way. At one stage, the audience's attention is distracted by the ringing of a cell phone (8) ..... During question time, the financial director asks about the costs involved in servicing the machine (9) ..... The speaker's knowledge about the topic and the confident way in which he makes the presentation helps to build his (10) ..... with the audience. Two days after the talk, the financial manager does, in fact, buy the Photostat machine (11) .....

Questions 2 to 10 are multiple-choice questions. Please make sure that you do them because your examination paper consists largely of multiple-choice questions.

- ii. As you listen to a speech about safety precautions in your workplace, you relate the speaker's ideas to your recent experience of burning your hand in an exposed flame. You made the connection because of ...
- the purpose of the speech
  - your frame of reference
  - your attitude to the speaker.
  - the cultural context of the speech.
- iii. Patrick is listening to his new Communication lecturer introducing her talk on public relations. He thinks to himself, "This lecture is going to be really boring". What is the cause of Patrick's poor listening here?
- being too critical
  - jumping to conclusions
  - giving in to distractions
  - not listening comprehensively
- iv. In an oral presentation, when you try to influence the attitudes, beliefs or values of the audience, the purpose of your speech is mainly ...
- informative.
  - emotional.

- c. instructional.
  - d. persuasive.
- v. During speech about earthquakes, the speaker notices puzzled expressions on the faces of his listeners. In response, he says, "Let me explain that point again to make sure it's clear". The speaker is ...
  - a. building his credibility
  - b. adapting to the audience's frame of reference
  - c. adapting to feedback
  - d. taking the context into account.
- vi. While on a visit to Brazil, the President of Nigerian University Students' Union was invited to address a group of university students about campus unrest. When he suggested during his speech that all students should behave like those in Nigeria, the President was demonstrating...
  - a. a sensitivity to cultural diversity.
  - b. awareness of the audience's frame of reference.
  - c. a forceful personality.
  - d. an ethnocentric point of view.
- vii. In public speaking, ethical decisions should be made according to
  - a. a set of moral standards
  - b. the audience's frame of reference
  - c. the speaker's purpose
  - d. a code of legal rules.
- viii. How many of the following statements about the differences between public speaking and conversation are CORRECT?  
 (Here you need to start by picking out which statements you think are correct and writing down their numbers. Then count up how many statements are correct and ring the correct answer.
  - a. Because the listeners who attend your public lecture are interested in the topic, it is easier to hold their attention than when talking to someone in an ordinary conversation.
  - b. Public speaking is easier than ordinary conversation because the speaker only has to respond to nonverbal feedback from the audience.
  - c. Conversation is easier than public speaking because in a conversation the communicator can ignore the cultural context.
  - d. Public speaking usually requires more formal language than ordinary conversation.
    - 1. one
    - 2. two
    - 3. three
    - 4. four

Please read the following scenario carefully and then answer questions (9) and (10). (This is an example of a multiple-choice question where you have to **apply**

your knowledge to a real situation. By answering two questions on the same scenario, you also have to show that you understand or can explain why you chose your particular answer). Irene is the president of the electrical workers' union at her workplace. For several months, the committee has been asking the employer to grant a cost-of-living pay rise. The committee realises that the employer is not going to meet their request. Irene arranges a meeting at which she is going to ask the union members to go on strike. She also invites the employer to the meeting so that he can state his point of view.

- ix. What type of listening are the union members at the meeting **mainly** involved in?
- a. empathic listening
  - b. discriminative listening
  - c. critical listening
  - d. informative listening.
- x. Why did you choose the response you selected in question 9? Because the union members...
- a. want to understand and remember every detail discussed at the meeting.
  - b. want to evaluate what each speaker is saying.
  - c. have attended the meeting to give support to their leader.
  - d. have attended the meeting to prevent the employer from speaking.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 4 ANALYSING THE AUDIENCE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Types of Audience
    - 3.1.1 Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Audiences
    - 3.1.2 Adapting to your Audience
  - 3.2 In depth Audience Analysis – Your Key to Success
  - 3.3 The Setting
  - 3.4 Gathering the Information
  - 3.5 How to use the Information: Adapting to Your Audience
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The steps in the speechmaking process which you studied in unit 3 cannot be studied in isolation – they are all connected. What you learn in one unit is related to everything you will learn in the other units. Having said that, the only way to learn about public speaking, however, is to tackle it one step at a time. This means that we have to create some artificial divisions in the way we present the work. In this unit (and in the units that follow), we will sometimes have to refer to things that you have not yet learned about. For example, this unit deals with the audience. In order to explain why it is important to understand the audience, we have to refer, for example, to the topic of your speech, to ways of attracting your audience's attention, and to adapting your speech to the audience's needs and interests. But you will only study all this in later units. The main point, though, is that you should not start feeling depressed or anxious about the "gaps" in your knowledge. By the end of this module, you will in fact have learned everything you need to know. When you come to revise the module for the examination (and we suggest that you give yourself plenty of time for revision), you will find that everything fits into place – all the separate units forms a whole and you will understand how they are all linked to each other eventually.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- analyse the audience you will be speaking to in any given speech event;
- apply the theoretical principles you have learnt, to a speech you will prepare; and

- explain the methods for obtaining information as well as demonstrate the guidelines for adapting the speech to the audience.

## HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Types of Audience

In public speaking, audience is a group of listeners who listen to a talk or speech. Analysing your audience type is essential in any public speaking engagement. You need to investigate exactly who will listen to what you are going to say. That way, you will know what format, style, vocabulary, or level of information is expected.

You can determine the characteristics of your target audience through a demographic profile, or by investigating information or assumptions about your particular audience.

#### 3.1.1 Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Audiences

**Audiences vary in homogeneity**—the degree to which they have similar characteristics, values, attitudes, knowledge, and so on. Homogeneous audiences consist of individuals who are very much alike; heterogeneous audiences consist of widely different individuals.

Obviously, it is easier to address a homogeneous group than a heterogeneous group. If your listeners are alike, your arguments will be as effective for one as for another. The language appropriate for one will be appropriate for another, and so on, through all the elements of the public speaking transaction.

With a heterogeneous group, however, this does not apply. The argument that works with one subgroup will not necessarily work with another. The language that is appropriate for the educated members will not be appropriate for the uneducated. So when you address a heterogeneous audience, you will have to make some tough decisions.

**Homogeneity**—heterogeneity also relates to the four dimensions just considered. Thus, audience homogeneity-heterogeneity applies to their willingness to listen, their favourableness, their passivity, and their knowledge. For example, some audiences will be extremely similar (homogeneous) in their willingness to listen; others may contain members who differ widely in their willingness to listen.

### 3.1.2 Adapting to your Audience

**Adapting to the Heterogeneous Audience:** The most difficult audience to address is not the unwilling or the unfavourable or the unknowledgeable. It is the mixed audience: the audience consisting of some who care and some who do not, of some who know and some who do not. At times, addressing this type of audience will seem impossible.

It is not, so do not despair. Teachers face this type of audience every day, as do politicians and advertisers. Here are some general principles (rather than specific adaptation guidelines) for dealing with the heterogeneous audience. These should help you in this difficult but not impossible task.

- **The greater the heterogeneity of the audience, the more difficult will be your analysis and adaptation.** A heterogeneous audience will require a much more complex audience analysis and a much more careful plan of adaptation than a homogeneous audience. Consider, for example, a PTA audience composed of parents (differing widely in income, education, and cultural background) and teachers (differing widely in background, training, and age). Each of these groups will have different points of view, backgrounds, and expectations. As a speaker you will have to recognize these differences and take special care to appeal to all groups.
- **When the audience is too heterogeneous, it is sometimes helpful to subdivide it and appeal to each section separately.** A common example is the audience consisting of men and women. Say the topic is “Abortion on Demand”. To limit yourself to arguments that would appeal equally to men and women might seriously damage your case. Consider, therefore, concentrating first on arguments that women can relate to and then on those to which men can relate. You thus avoid using supporting materials that fall in between the groups and that are effective with neither.
- **Homogeneity does not equal attitudinal sameness.** The audience that is similar in age, sex, educational background, and so on, will probably also share similar attitudes and beliefs. However, this isn’t always true. Heterogeneity increases with the size of the group. As any group expands in size, its characteristics become more diverse—keep this in mind when you're analyzing your audiences.

### 3.2 In Depth Audience Analysis – Your Key to Success

An experienced speaker knows the importance of properly preparing his/her material far enough in advance so he/she may have sufficient time to rehearse and "fine-tune" the speech. Unfortunately, this is not enough to assure that your speech or presentation is well received. Your speech preparation must also include gathering information about your audience and their needs. A well prepared speech given to the wrong audience can have the same effect as a poorly prepared speech given to the correct audience. They both can fail terribly.

It is critical that your preparation efforts include some amount of audience analysis. The more you know and understand your audience and their needs, the better you can prepare your speech to assure that you meet their needs. Speech preparation should use what I like to call the 9 P's.

- Prior Proper Preparation
- Prevents Poor Performance of the
- Person Putting on the Presentation.

Nothing will relax you more than to know you have properly prepared. The stage fright or speech anxiety felt by many speakers is due to not knowing enough about the speaking environment or the audience. The more you know about your speaking environment and your audience, the more relaxed you will be when delivering your speech. Many speakers, however, often overlook the need to include any kind of audience analysis as part of their speech preparation. Proper audience analysis will assure that you give the right speech to the right audience. Most professional speakers send their clients a multi-page questionnaire in order to gather enough information about them and the speaking event to properly customize their speeches. Using the word "A-U-D-I-E-N-C-E" as an acronym, we have defined some general audience analysis categories that these surveys should include.

- **A nalysis** - Who are they? How many will be there?
- **U nderstanding** - What is their knowledge of the subject?
- **D emographics** - What is their age, sex, educational background?
- **I nterest** - Why are they there? Who asked them to be there?
- **E nvironment** - Where will I stand? Can they all see & hear me?
- **N eeds** - What are their needs? What are your needs as the speaker?
- **C ustomized** - What specific needs do you need to address?
- **E xpectations** - What do they expect to learn or hear from you?

Develop specific questions which fit into each of these eight categories and ask the client or audience to tell you what they want. Essentially, ask them what they need and give it to them.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Say whether the follows statements are true or false.

	True	False
i. Whatever the occasion, listeners will have fairly definite expectations about the kinds of speeches that are appropriate for the occasion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Knowing how the physical setting might influence your listeners' response to your message is an important factor in audience analysis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. The fact that you know in advance that the room in which you will be speaking is too hot or too cold is not your problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. If your speech is interesting, you do not have to keep within a strict time limit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. The larger the audience, the more visual aids you should use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi. As a general rule, the larger your audience, the more formal your presentation should be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii. Audience size is not important because it makes no difference whether the speech you have prepared is heard by 10 people or 100 people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

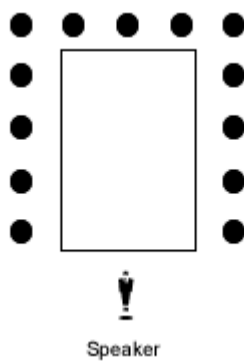
**3.3 The Setting****Audience Size and Room Layout**

Audience size will determine the nature of your presentation, especially in terms of your delivery style and subject matter. If the audience is large, you may need to consider a more animated presentation style, taking into account the size of the auditorium and the possibility of people getting sidetracked by conversations and other distractions. You may need to invigorate your presentation with larger exhibits, attention-grabbers, and a more forceful speaking tone. Since a large audience requires bigger rooms, you will need to use microphones, screen projectors, and larger chalkboards or whiteboards. If the audience is small, you

can use a more intimate, informal presentation style. This will make it easier for you to stay focused on each individual in the room.

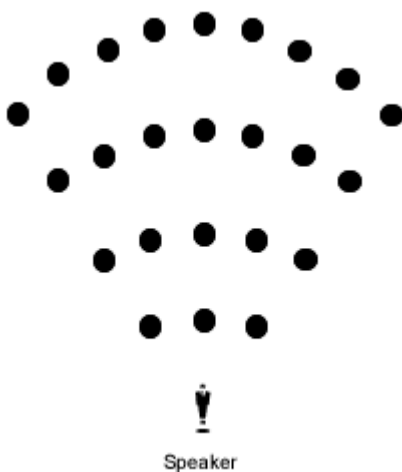
The type of room, the shape of your environment, the arrangement of the furniture, and the distance between you and your audience are all factors that will affect your presentation. Will the presentation be held in an office, a hotel, an auditorium, a park, or a classroom? Will the presentation have a formal seating arrangement? The following table illustrates five types of physical layouts for presentations: conference style, auditorium, classroom/laboratory, banquet, and circular. Each layout has advantages and disadvantages:

### Conference



Conference seating is most frequently used for small business meetings and presentations. Whether you are situated at a conference table or simply using a U-shaped pattern of seating, this style offers intimacy and up-close demonstrations. It is also ideal for using exhibits and handouts, and for facilitating question/answer sessions and debates. This layout allows the audience to view your presentation from an intimate perspective. It encourages participation and interaction between presenter and audience. It also allows the audience members to interact with each other. This layout is also ideal for work groups because it affords tabletop space for models, note taking, and computer devices.

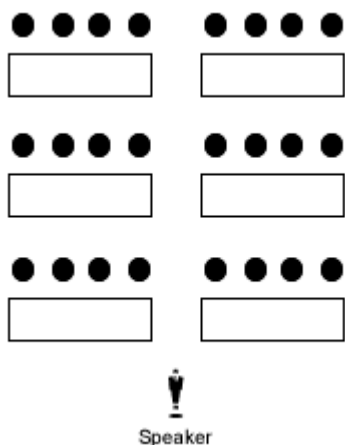
### Auditorium



Auditorium seating is for large groups (over 60 people and even 2,000 or more). This layout is advantageous for lectures and formal presentations. You will need to rely on projector-style presentations and slide shows (i.e., PowerPoint). Your demonstrations and exhibits will have to be large enough to be seen from afar and you will more likely require a microphone and sound system to be heard. This layout provides less intimacy and a greater possibility of distractions (i.e., side conversations) due to group size. It is not useful for interaction between audience

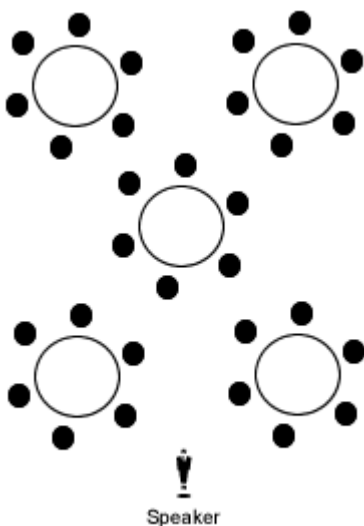
members either because of the unidirectional seating. Larger groups are also more difficult to manage.

Classroom/Laboratory



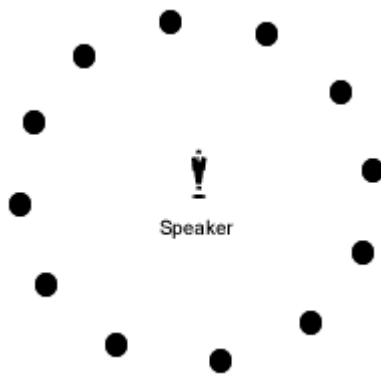
Classroom/laboratory seating is good for small and medium-sized groups (up to 60 people). In this layout, people can work individually or in small teams, utilizing the tabletop space in front of them. Technical presentations work very well in this environment because they allow both group and instructional dynamics. Each table can be equipped with educational materials: documents, models, computers, etc. Unlike conference style layouts, the speaker can work with individual teams separately. Thus, this layout provides both intimate and non-intimate features. It can be used for a formal lecture or an informal discussion among groups. It is also an ideal environment for facilitating team projects.

Banquet



The banquet layout is probably the least advantageous for the technical presenter. Banquets usually contain separate tables for the audience. Unlike the classroom/laboratory layout, tables are round and more likely to be used for eating and drinking, instead of for working. There is also the disadvantage of multi-directional seating: people are looking at each other and away from the speaker. This encourages talking and more distractions. People will have to re-position their chairs at the outset of your presentation and not everyone will be comfortable. Banquet presentations work better with an informal style. Because not everyone will be able to see you comfortably, you will have to rely more on an auditory, less visual presentation. Discussion will have to be very lively and filled with attention-grabbers, jokes, and asides that keep people focused.

## Circular



Circular style layouts are not common in the professional world. However they have some advantages for certain audiences, children in particular. Circular presentations require that the speaker move around from person-to-person in an animated, informal style. These presentations offer intimacy, group interaction, and permit dynamic demonstrations that require shifting around in the space and mobile exhibits that rotate. In the professional world, the circular layout is refreshing and will encourage a relaxed environment of informality and interpersonal exchange. Spatially, there is nowhere for the audience to hide because everyone is equidistant from the speaker. Participation should be easy to solicit in this situation.

### 3.4 Gathering the Information

Note that there are two ways of obtaining the information you need for your speech: (1) your existing knowledge of the group and the setting; (2) questioning the person who invited you to speak. All audiences share certain general characteristics that will help you to understand them better. Let's look at the sort of information you would obtain about an audience you do not know by asking the relevant questions:

- Why does the group exist? What goals does the group hope to fulfill? These two questions should help you to decide on a topic for speech and which aspect of your topic you should focus on. If your talk is about gardening and the audience is a group of house owners, you would assume that their goal is to make their gardens look attractive. You could focus your talk on what to plant for a colourful garden, or something similar. However, if they were a group of professional gardeners, their goal might be to learn about the biology of drought-resistant plants, for example, or a new form of pest control. In other words, the focus of your speech would depend entirely on the audience.
- What is the nature of the occasion at which I will be the speaker? The answer to this question should help you to decide how formal or informal your speech will be.
- Can you share any insights about the make-up of the audience? The answers should provide you with demographic information about your listeners.



- What expectations do you believe audience members will have about the presentation? This information should tell you something about what the group considers acceptable or unacceptable. A religious group, for instance, would probably consider it appropriate if you speak on a topic related to its beliefs or the beliefs of another religion, or perhaps a moral question or social issue. But a topic that focuses on changing their religious beliefs or promoting legal prostitution would not be appropriate.
- Are you aware of any attitudes held by audience members that could have a positive or negative influence on your presentation? By now, you understand why it is important to find out whether your audience will agree with your views or strongly oppose them. If you know the audience is likely to disagree with your views, you will have to find ways of dealing with this.

### 3.5 How to Use the Information: Adapting to your Audience

This section provides guidelines for ensuring that you do indeed prepare your speech for a specific audience. The guidelines are not difficult to understand – study them on your own. You should however note the information in the last paragraph of this section – that adapting your speech to the needs and interests of a specific audience requires a great deal of practice because it is one of the most important and difficult skills a public speaker has to learn.

#### Type of Audience and Occasion

##### Children

Technical presentations can be made to children of all ages (from three up) and in a variety of settings, including classrooms, school auditoriums, parks, community centres, Boy/Girl Scout meetings, and camps. Even television and the Internet are ideal places to educate and inspire young people. When presenting to children, age and education level are critical factors to consider. In the United States, each age and grade level corresponds to general curriculum requirements. By asking teachers or other leaders in advance, you can gather the necessary information about what they have previously learned and what they are currently learning, to ensure that the information in your presentation conforms to their education level and interests. Culture is also a major factor, as children from different geographical settings (i.e., urban and rural) will have varied experiences and come from different racial and ethnic communities. Listed below are various situations where you might be speaking to children.

Occasion	Types of Technical Presentations
Science Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote presentations</li> <li>• Project award presentations</li> <li>• Subject overview (e.g., robotics, aeronautics, aerospace).</li> </ul>

Curriculum & Unit Study Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject overview</li> <li>• Demonstration of a particular technology: hands-on (mechanical) or interactive (interpersonal)</li> <li>• Demonstration of how a particular technology is used in toys, games, or other products children use</li> </ul>
Career Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of your profession (e.g., “A Day in the Life of a Mechanical Engineer”)</li> <li>• Career track advice (counselling session)</li> </ul>
Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar on the advantages or hazards of a particular technology</li> <li>• How children can participate in a scientific cause</li> <li>• Mission statement for a non-profit organisation or corporation using scientific technologies in the community (e.g., energy, environmental preservation, etc.)</li> </ul>
Technical Scholarship Award Ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision of future (e.g. the future of mechanical engineering)</li> <li>• Keynote presentations</li> <li>• Mission statement for scholarship sponsor organisation</li> </ul>

### University Students

Both undergraduate and graduate students constitute typical audience for technical presentations. Settings range from classrooms to laboratories, banquets, auditoriums, parks, student rallies, and seminar halls. The audiences include students studying both technical and non-technical disciplines. University students generally fall into a narrower age category, usually between 18 and 30. However they can also include adults of all ages. Unlike with children, age, culture and geographic origin are not as relevant as is their field of study. If you are communicating to students of mathematics, engineering, chemistry, or physics, you may take the liberty to be more technical in your approach.

However, if you are communicating to students in the liberal arts, business, or any other area that is not directly technical, you will have to tailor your approach to their area of study. In addition, there are also wide ranges of student cultures at the university level - a culture often deeply affected by current events, popular trends, the media, and special interests (e.g., human rights, environmental concerns, etc.)

Occasion	Types of Technical Presentations
Student Project Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with students to award project grants for research or other endeavours</li> </ul>
Science Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote presentations</li> <li>• Project award presentations</li> <li>• Subject overview (e.g., robotics, aeronautics, aerospace)</li> </ul>

Seminars & Academic Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject overview</li> <li>• Demonstration of a particular technology: hands-on (mechanical) or interactive (interpersonal) exercises</li> <li>• Seminar or mini-course</li> </ul>
Career Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of your profession and skills needed for interviewing, job requirements, and career advancement</li> <li>• Career track advice (counselling session)</li> </ul>
Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar on the advantages or hazards of a particular technology</li> <li>• How students can organize around or participate in a particular scientific cause</li> <li>• Mission statement for a non-profit organisation or corporation using scientific technologies in community (e.g., energy, environmental preservation, etc.)</li> </ul>
Technical Scholarship Award Ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future-vision (e.g., the future of mechanical engineering)</li> <li>• Keynote presentations</li> <li>• Mission statement for scholarship sponsor organisation</li> </ul>

### Business and Professional

Business and professional groups will more likely be the audience you must communicate with most frequently. They involve a wide range of people: corporate executives and professionals from every field, including technology, finance, marketing, sales, product development, human resources, as well as non-work settings where people from a wide range of experiences may be present (such as at awards banquets). Settings range from small offices to conference rooms, hotels, auditoriums, laboratories, factories, universities, and corporate training facilities. With these audiences, you should point out the relevance of your subject matter to their professional field and industry, as well as a wide range of popular topics such as mass culture, trends, current events, economics, the media, and special interests.

Occasion	Types of Technical Presentations
Business Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote presentations</li> <li>• Speech on a particular subject topic relating to a professional field or industry</li> <li>• Honour an individual's achievements</li> </ul>
Seminars & Corporate Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject overview for a particular industry</li> <li>• Demonstration of a technology: hands-on (mechanical) or interactive (interpersonal) exercises</li> <li>• Seminar or mini-course</li> <li>• Technical sales training</li> </ul>
Corporate Policy & Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seminar on the advantages or hazards of a particular technology</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How businesses can organize around and participate in a particular scientific cause</li> <li>• Mission statement for your corporation and the role it plays, using scientific technologies in community (e.g. energy, environmental preservation, etc.)</li> </ul>
Sales Presentations & Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling your product or technological innovation to potential clients, retailers or distributors</li> <li>• Product demonstrations: applications, functionality, and markets</li> </ul>
Charitable Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote speeches</li> <li>• Corporate or organisational mission statement</li> <li>• Public awareness speech</li> </ul>

### Government and Institutions

Government and institutional audiences include federal and state organisations, governing bodies, and commissions, hospitals, schools, associations, universities, military, and other public and non-profit organisations. Settings range from small offices to conference rooms, hotels, auditoriums, laboratories, public halls, and government training facilities. With these audiences, you should aim to describe the relevance to their field (e.g., healthcare), organisational mission, and professional specialization (e.g., military), as well as a wide range of popular topics such as current events, economics, politics, and special interests. If you are testifying or advocating your cause before a government body, such as the National Assembly, expectations will be that you are an expert in your field. Your communications should take on a more authoritative, scientific tone. You should be prepared to back your ideas with data, case studies, and solid research.

Occasion	Types of Technical Presentations
Government Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testifying on behalf of your company or organisation</li> <li>• Testifying to advocate your product or technology</li> <li>• Testifying as an expert witness in a court of law</li> </ul>
Presentations to Lobby Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocating your product or technology to a special interest group</li> <li>• Soliciting funding and support</li> </ul>
Sales Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling your product or technological innovation to potential clients such as hospitals, schools, associations, and public organisations</li> <li>• Product demonstrations: applications, functionality, and markets</li> </ul>
Seminars & Training Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject overview for a particular industry</li> <li>• Demonstration of a technology: hands-on (mechanical) or interactive (interpersonal) exercises</li> <li>• Teach a seminar or mini-course</li> <li>• Technical sales training</li> </ul>

Solicitation for Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future-vision (e.g., the future of mechanical engineering)</li> <li>• Mission statement for your organisation and purpose of funding or grant</li> </ul>
Charitable Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote speeches</li> <li>• Corporate or organisational mission statement</li> <li>• Public awareness speech</li> </ul>

**Community Groups and the General Public**

Community groups and general public audiences include civic organisations, neighbourhood groups, public advocacy groups, and public seminars. Settings range from civic centres to hotels, auditoriums, public halls, and churches. With these audiences, you should refer to their regional geographic interests, as well as a wide range of topics, such as current events, the media, popular culture, and your awareness of their particular concerns and interests in your subject matter.

Occasion	Types of Technical Presentations
Municipal and Public Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testifying on behalf of your company or organisation and its role in the community</li> <li>• Testifying to advocate your product or technology and its role in the community</li> </ul>
Community Seminars & Training Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subject overview for a particular industry</li> <li>• Demonstration of a technology: hands-on (mechanical) or interactive (interpersonal) exercises</li> <li>• Seminar or mini-course</li> <li>• Subject overview for a particular community group, and information exchange</li> </ul>
Charitable Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keynote speeches</li> <li>• Corporate or organisational mission statement</li> <li>• Public awareness speech</li> </ul>

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

The occasion and place in which you deliver your presentation may be one that enhances or interferes with the effectiveness of your presentation. It is very important to determine ahead of time the audience and what the facilities are like before you speak. It is also important to familiarize yourself with the occasion. This way, you can properly plan your delivery or make adjustments, if necessary

**5.0 SUMMARY**

For most public speakers, audience analysis is the most important step in planning a target presentation. In this unit, we have emphasized the fact that for a speaker's final product to be fully successful, the speech must be aimed toward the intended audience--its knowledge, its opinions, its needs, and its wants. We then discussed

how to determine the knowledge, opinions, needs, and wants of your target audience.

Endeavour to look at any speaking engagement as an opportunity to practice your speaking skills.

### ANSWER TO SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. True  | 5. False |
| 2. True  | 6. True  |
| 3. False | 7. False |
| 4. False |          |

### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. How would you use your information to adapt to your audience in an end of year speech you intend to give to your colleagues?
- ii. What is an audience-centred speech? (one sentence)
- iii. Write down two topics you think your fellow students would be interested in and which they would find relevant.
- iv. When planning your speech, in which two areas is the information obtained from a psychographic analysis particularly useful?
- v. The Vice Chancellor of the university has to explain to students why there is going to be a 15 percent increase in fees this year. What sort of attitude can the Vice Chancellor expect his audience to have?
- vi. You are preparing a speech on the topic of sport to deliver to two different audiences. One audience consists primarily of young people (below the age of 25). The second audience is composed of elderly people. Which aspect of sport would you focus on for each audience?

Questions 7-12 are multiple-choice questions. Please make sure that you do them because your examination paper contains a large number of multiple-choice questions. You should study the guidelines for answering multiple-choice questions. Write down the number of the most correct answer to each question on a separate piece of paper. This way, when you revise for the examination, you will have to think, about the correct answer again. We provide the correct answers to the multiple-choice questions, but only discuss the answers in cases where the options are “difficult”.

- vii. Your primary purpose in delivering a speech is to ...
  - (a) gain a desired response from the audience.
  - (b) gain experience as a speaker.
  - (c) try out new ideas on the audience.
  - (d) display your knowledge of the topic.
- viii. Which of the following is a demographic characteristic of an audience?
  - (a) knowledge?
  - (b) size

- (c) age
  - (d) attitude.
- ix. Which of the following is a psychographic characteristic of an audience?
- (a) cultural background
  - (b) attitude towards the topic
  - (c) group membership
  - (d) gender.
- x. If you were giving a speech to an audience on the subject of compulsory retirement, the most important factor to consider in audience analysis would be the .....of the audience.
- (a) income bracket
  - (b) group membership
  - (c) gender
  - (d) age.
- xi. If you were giving a speech to an audience on how computers work, the most important factor to consider in audience analysis would be the .....of the audience.
- (a) occupation
  - (b) knowledge
  - (c) gender
  - (d) age.
- xii. The .....will usually indicate how long a speech should be.
- (a) audience size
  - (b) occasion
  - (c) physical setting
  - (d) topic.
- xiii. The group membership of an audience can provide useful information about its.....
- (a) interests
  - (b) gender
  - (c) ethnicity
  - (d) age.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 5 SELECTING A TOPIC AND PURPOSE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Choosing a Topic
  - 3.2 Determining the General Purpose
  - 3.3 Determining the Specific Purpose
  - 3.4 Phrasing the Central Idea
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

For many people, the thought of giving a speech in front of a group can be terrifying. Even if you are comfortable with public speaking, it can be difficult at times to determine what to speak about. In this unit, we shall expose you to some important tips that will help you select a speech topic that will impress your audience every time.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end this unit, you should be able to:

- generate an appropriate topic for a speech you have to give;
- explain the general and specific purposes of this speech; and
- describe the central idea of your speech and the main points you will be talking about in any given speech event.

### HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

- a. Read this unit as diligently as possible.
- b. Find meaning of unfamiliar words in the unit using your dictionary.
- c. As you read, put major points down in a piece of paper or jotter.
- d. Do not go to the next section until you have fully understood the section you are reading now.
- e. Do all the Self-Assessment exercises in the unit as honestly as you can. In some areas where it is not feasible to provide answers to Self-Assessment exercises, go to the relevant sections of the unit to derive the answers.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Choosing a Topic

The most important point in this section is that, whether you choose a topic from subjects you know a lot about, or from subjects that you would like to know more



about, your choice will be guided by your analysis of the audience, the occasion, and the setting. For the purposes of this study unit, let's assume that your listeners are your fellow students. They have come to hear your first speech (the occasion) in a lecture hall in your university or college (the setting). By the end of this study unit, you should be able to see a clear connection between the material you studied in unit 4 and this unit (unit 5). Now, study the following steps to choosing a topic:

Steps to choosing a topic

- a. **Think about your audience.** Who are you speaking to? What do they care about? The first thing you should always do is put yourself in your audience's shoes and consider what they would like to hear and why.
- b. **Connect.** If you have an idea for a topic, look for a way to relate it to your audience. Does not just talk about a topic in general - try to help your audience understand and care about it.
- c. **Consider your own knowledge and background.** What do you care about? The easiest speeches to deliver are ones on a topic that you know inside and out. Your own passion and knowledge about a subject will come through in your presentation with very little effort.
- d. **Look for timely topics.** Pick up a newspaper or check the headlines on the Internet. Sometimes an interesting story can spark your creativity. Plus, it gives you a great way to open your speech.
- e. **Consider what actions you would like your audience to take when you finish speaking.** How should they feel after hearing you? What would you like them to do? Instead of just speaking about a topic, think instead about trying to persuade your audience to take a certain action or change a belief or behaviour.  
(<http://www.wikihow.com/Select-a-Topic-for-a-Speech>)

### 3.2 Determining the General Purpose

- **What is the Purpose of a speech?**

Before one begins to think about delivering a speech, one must determine why he or she is giving the speech. Speeches serve a variety of purposes. The immediate audience helps determine the purposes of a speech. People assemble for a speech because they expect to hear or learn something they did not already know. A speaker must satisfy these expectations. Establishing one's purpose in giving a speech demands explicit attention. It is not enough to believe that the speech is expected or that speaking is somehow a routine act. Such assumptions will quickly be discerned by an audience; and if the audience suspects that the speaker is there unwillingly or unenthusiastically, such an audience will be far less receptive. If a speaker does not have a clear reason to give the speech, then the speech should not be given.

- **The Central Purpose of a Speech**

There is really only one purpose of a speech: a speaker must wish to engage his or her audience with a central idea or proposition. The act of engagement is crucial. A speech is a dynamic relationship between a speaker and the audience. A speaker who views an audience as nothing more than the passive receptacles of his or her insights will lose that audience. It is important to remind ourselves that every speech has objectives, and these objectives include: conveying information or insight, persuading the audience and motivating the listeners.

- **Determining the General Purpose of your Speech**

Most speeches have one of the following general purposes: to inform, to persuade, to entertain, and to pay tribute.

Some speeches may have other purposes such as: to introduce, to present, to accept, to inspire, to eulogize. Before you begin to plan and prepare your speech, decide its purpose.

- **To Inform**

In an informative speech, you are concerned about giving new information to your listeners. You want your audience to understand and remember new information.

- **To Persuade**

In a persuasive speech, you want your listeners to change their opinions, attitude or actions.

- **To Entertain**

An entertaining speech is light, fun and enjoyable.

- **To Introduce**

A speech of introduction is designed for one speaker to introduce another to the audience.

- **To Present**

A speech of presentation is formally designed to formally present an award or honour to another person in front of an audience.

- **To Accept**

A speech of acceptance is made by a person who has received an award or honour in front of an audience.

- **To Pay Tribute**

A speech of tribute praises or celebrates a person, group, institution or event. It generally conveys love, gratitude, respect or admiration.

- **To Inspire**

The inspirational speech is given to move listeners to a higher level of feeling or activity. You want your listeners to feel uplifted or encouraged.

- **To Eulogise**

The eulogy is a speech made in honour of someone who has died.

### 3.3 Determining the Specific Purpose

Formulating a specific purpose is the most important early step in developing a successful speech. Once you have chosen a topic and a general purpose, you narrow your choices to determine the specific purpose of your speech. The specific purpose should focus on ONE aspect of a topic.

The specific purpose limits the topic to one that can be covered adequately in a speech that has a predetermined, reasonable time limit.

A specific purpose statement is a single phrase that states precisely what a speaker hopes to accomplish in his or her speech.

Begin the specific purpose statement with an infinitive. What is an infinitive?

An infinitive is a verb with the word “to” in front of it. Examples of infinitives that might be used to start a specific purpose statement are: *to explain, to tell, to show, to demonstrate, to persuade, to entertain, to prove, to convince, to inform, to inspire, to introduce, to present, to accept, to pay tribute*. Next, include a reference to your audience. For example, *to explain to my audience, to persuade my listeners*.

Always remember to limit the specific purpose statement to one major idea, and make your statement as precise as possible. Make sure you can achieve your purpose in the time allotted for your speech.

Finally, keep your statement simple. Don’t be too technical, and always bear these requirements for writing a good specific purpose in mind when writing your speech:

- it should contain one main idea
- it should be a complete sentence
- it should be clear and concise
- it should be worded as a statement, not as a question
- it should be worded in terms of the audience response you want at the end of the speech.

### 3.4 Paraphrasing the Central Idea

Paraphrasing is the process of restating information in different words. When we paraphrase, we maintain the original meaning, but we say it in our own words.

Paraphrasing is an active learning strategy which helps us place information into long-term memory as we move from an understanding level to an active comprehension level. Good paraphrasing skills are necessary to create effective speeches, prepare for tests, answer essay test questions, and avoid plagiarism when researching reports. Paraphrasing includes:

- Replacing difficult vocabulary words or phrases with words the student understands
- Rewriting lengthy or complex sentences into simpler sentences, or combining simple sentences into more interesting, complex sentences
- Explaining concepts and abstract ideas from sentences or passages using more clear and concise wording
- Translating ideas and information into students' own words

Problems with underlying language-processing skills make paraphrasing especially difficult for students with language-based learning disabilities. Weaknesses, particularly at the semantic (word), syntactic (sentence), and discourse (paragraph) levels, minimize the ability to “play” with words.

Limited vocabulary and ability to construct complex sentences make it difficult for students to come up with a “different way of saying things” in their own words.

### **Tips for Successful Paraphrasing**

- 1. Understand the context of what you are paraphrasing:** Read the whole sentence or several sentences of the speech to have at least a general understanding of the context in which words are being used. Make sure that the synonyms you use in your paraphrased version do not change the meaning of the passage.
- 2. Use “semantic” paraphrasing:** Use a thesaurus and/or your own knowledge to replace words in the passage with accurate synonyms. Be sure to check the part of speech of the word you are replacing. How a synonym is used can change the meaning of the word or sentence.
- 3. Use “syntactic” paraphrasing:** In addition to replacing key words, change the structure of the original sentences by either inverting the order of sentence parts, breaking them into shorter sentences, or combining simple sentences into compound and complex sentences.
- 4. Rewrite the paraphrased version:** Combine the various changes noted above and rewrite the passage in your own words.

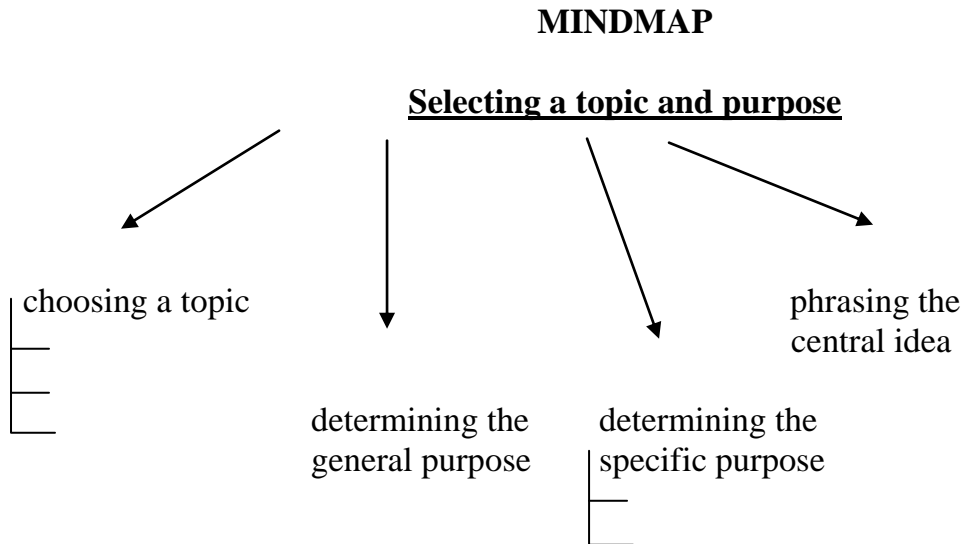
The most important thing for you to learn in this section is how to arrive at the main points for your speech. Once again, it is only by practising that you will learn this technique

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has exposed you to the necessary techniques of selecting a topic and purpose for your speech. It is very important for you to attempt the exercises and assignments, as they will help to improve your speech writing skills tremendously.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

We shall use the mindmap to summarise what you have learnt in this unit.



#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Write down the general purpose of the following speech situations/topics:
  - (a) A lecture on public speaking
  - (b) An advertisement for a soft drink
  - (c) A music programme on the radio
  - (d) A request to donate blood to the Red Cross
  - (e) A plea for drunk driving to carry stricter penalties
  - (f) A wedding toast.
  
- ii. Select one of the topics you wrote down in 1. Above, and then answer the following questions:
  - (a) What is the subject of your speech?
  - (b) Is your general purpose to inform/instruct? If so, what information do you have to provide, or what action, technique, procedure or process do you have to explain?

- (c) Is your general purpose to persuade? If so, what attitudes, beliefs, values or behaviour do you want to reinforce or change?
- (d) Is your general purpose to entertain? If so, do you have any personal talents (such as a sense of humour) that you could effectively use in your presentation?
- (e) Is your general purpose a combination of two or three of the purposes listed above? If so, arrange them in order of importance.

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