



Seven Core Competencies of Oral Communication

1. Consideration of Purpose

Begin by thinking about your purpose. What do you need to accomplish in this speaking assignment? Will you be arguing for a particular position on an issue? Will you be teaching your classmates something they need to know? Will you be reflecting on a personal experience? This is your starting point.

2. Strategic Audience Adaptation

Now think about what your audience needs to hear, and what will make them more likely to pay attention to what you have to say on your topic. Connecting with your audience requires careful thought about how you can show them that your content intersects with their lives in some way.

3. Quality Content Development

As with any written work, your speaking assignment can only be as good as its content. Do you need to conduct research in order to find useful information? Look at the assignment requirements to get a sense of what kind of content you will need to include, and allow enough time to find high-quality materials.

4. Logical Organization

It will not matter how good your content is if it is poorly organized. Whenever you are presenting your ideas, you need to organize them in a way that will be easy for your audience to follow. Also, transitions will show the audience your movement from one point to the next.

5. Clear Language Choice

Although you may not normally give a lot of thought to your word selection when talking informally with your friends, you should think carefully about it in order to be most effective. Consider what words will help your audience understand you, keeping in mind possible connotations and implications.

6. Effective Delivery

Once the content of your presentation has been developed, it needs to be conveyed clearly and effectively. Good poise, eye contact, facial expressions, vocal inflection, enunciation, and gestures all contribute to the overall quality of delivery. When possible, practice and seek feedback on your delivery.

7. Competent Use of Presentational Materials

Depending on your speaking situation, charts, graphs, objects, videos, audio clips, and other materials can enhance your audience's comprehension and retention of the content. When considering the use of presentational technology (e.g., PowerPoint), be sure you know how to use it correctly and effectively.