



UNC
GREENSBORO

The University Speaking Center

Tips for Practicing Your Speech

Delivery is as much psychological as it is physical. You must become conscious of behaviors you wish to change, practice the changes until they feel comfortable, and then reinforce the changed behavior.

Practice Sections Independently

- When your speech is fully constructed, practice the first main point as a unit.
- When you feel confident with the first point, then practice the second point several times. Only then should you practice the first and second main points together. Continue with other main points.
- Then practice the introduction and conclusion as separate units.
- THEN practice just the transitions several times. This will reassure you that no matter what happens, you will be able to move to the next section by moving to your transition and next main point.
- THEN AND ONLY then you should attempt the speech from start to finish.

By practicing this way, no one element of the speech is dependent on the other. If you don't deliver the first main point exactly as you'd like, you begin again psychologically with the transition into the second main point.

Practice as You Intend to Deliver the Speech

- Practice your speech standing.
- Practice in your normal tone of voice, attempting vocal variety,

Hasling, J. (1976). *The audience, the message, the speaker* (pp. 169). New York: McGraw-Hill.

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conversational rate, and so on. If you whisper it, you will not get an accurate timing of the speech.

- You should always attempt to stand still, gesture, or move as planned.
- Always look up and practice eye contact, imagining an audience.

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Breathe

- Many vocal problems (voice shaking, lack of volume, speaking too quickly) come from the speaker not breathing deeply enough.
- Make sure you pause periodically and take a very deep breath.
- A deep breath will tend to relax you as well as give you enough air to deliver vocally.

When You Identify a Problem Area, Practice the Opposite

- If you find you are speaking too quickly, practice just one section of the speech VERY SLOWLY for a few moments. Then attempt to a conversational rate.
- If you find you don't gesture, try speaking for a few minutes moving your arms in random ways. You probably aren't gesturing because your nerves are causing you to get too tight.
- If you are gesturing out of nervousness, practice standing totally still for a few minutes.

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