

Commonly Used Forms of Persuasive Speech Organization

Brief: Though persuasive speeches can be organized in a variety of ways, there are certain forms of organization that are especially effective in supporting the development of a reasoned argument.

Learning Objective: Identify and select a recognized persuasive speech organizational form.

Key Terms:

- **Monroe's Motivated Sequence:** A method of structuring a persuasive message that focuses on connecting to a psychological need in the audience and showing them how they can satisfy that need by supporting the plan or policy advocated in the speech.

How to Organize Your Persuasive Speech

While all types of organizational structure can theoretically be applied to a persuasive speech, there are some forms of organization that are especially effective in supporting the development of a reasoned argument.

Problem-Solution

The problem-solution organizational structure works well when you're addressing a proposition of policy, as it's designed to focus on defining a problem and proposing a solution.

The problem-solution organizational structure includes these three basic areas:

The Need: Convince the audience that there is a problem that must be addressed or a need for change. It is essential to get the audience to believe that a problem exists so they will implement a plan for a solution.

The Plan: Convince the audience that the problem deserves a meaningful solution. Tell them what actions need to be taken. Be sure to address any aspects of the solution that might make the audience less willing to act.

The Practicality: Show the audience how the plan can succeed. Address the implications, cite expert testimony, and reference the successful implementation of similar plans in other places.

Problem-Solution with Cause

A common variation on the problem-solution organization includes consideration of the causes of the problem. Discussing the causes of the problem directs attention to specific points that the solution must address.

The basic points of this organization are as follows:

The Problem: Describe the specifics of the problem as it exists, including its scope and impacts.

The Causes: Consider the direct relationship between the problem and its cause or causes. Think about the problem as an “effect,” and consider the causes that produced the effect.

The Solution: Use the causes as criteria to evaluate the solutions. If the speech says that the problem was caused by x, y and z, then the solution or new policy needs to address x, y, and z in order to solve the problem.

Comparative Advantages of Solutions

When the audience is already aware of and accepts that there is a problem, the speech can focus primarily on comparing the advantages of one solution over another, as follows:

Summarize the Problem Briefly: Do not focus on convincing the audience to believe that there is a problem that needs to be solved.

Compare Different Solutions: Compare one solution with others to select and propose the best solution to the audience.

Final Appeal: Ask the audience to accept and implement that solution as the policy.

Monroe’s Motivated Sequence

Another powerful method of structuring a persuasive message is known as Monroe’s Motivated Sequence, which focuses on connecting to a psychological need in the audience and showing them how they can satisfy that need by supporting the plan or policy advocated in the speech.

There are five steps to the sequence:

Attention: Get the audience’s attention using a dramatic story, example, statistic, or quotation.

Need: Show how the topic applies to the psychological needs of the audience members. Motivate audience members by convincing them that they each have a personal need to take action.

Satisfaction: Provide specific and viable solutions that community organizations or government can implement.

Visualization: Tell the audience what will happen if the solution is or is not implemented. Paint a picture for the audience of what they will experience when the need is satisfied through the speech's plan.

Action: Tell the audience members what specific action they can take to solve the problem and change existing policy.

From Concept to Action

When you're engaged in the process of developing your persuasive speech outline, after you've identified your proposition, chosen your line of reason, and selected your main and sub-points (evidence), it's time to select a form of organization. Which form do you think will help you to build the most persuasive argument? Choose your top two and create two draft outlines. Briefly, indicate how you will order your main and sub-points based on the two form of organization you've selected. When you've completed both, compare the results. Share them with classmates or friends. Which one do they think will make the compelling argument? Which one do you think will work best?

OER TEXT SOURCES:

"Types of Persuasive Speeches." Lumen Learning. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-communications/chapter/types-of-persuasive-speeches/>. Accessed 7 June 2019. [CC BY-SA 4.0]