

At the start of this semester I was, perhaps, a little naïve in the subject of communication. I have given many speeches before, but they were always scientific in nature. Fortunately for me, these situations allow a wider cushion in the area of audience targeting and communication ability in general. With this experience in mind, I believed that COMS 130 would be an easy class with very little learning to be had. Furthermore, I had very little anxiety surrounding public speaking because of the ease at which I could present well known information. Little did I know that Speaker-Audience communication would be a challenge as well as a valuable learning experience.

I first became aware of my ignorance while attempting to decide on the topic for the informative speech. I felt that I could easily assimilate the knowledge necessary to create and exemplary speech with very little effort. Ultimately I chose a subject that I knew only half as well as I should. My hubris showed while rehearsing the morning of the speech. I could only express what I wished to convey through many errors and revisions capturing precious time. As a result, my public speaking confidence took a turn for the worse which you may have noted during the first persuasive speech assignment.

As we learned more, I regained some of my confidence. I wish I had not missed so many lectures. Almost certainly they would have helped me further.

The second persuasive speech was considerably more put-together and practiced. As a result, my delivery was more fluid and natural.

One facet of this class that I understood from the beginning was the importance of speaking in general. For we are social animals to the core, and without the ability to

communicate we would be nothing. COMS 130 reinforced my understanding of the impact and rules governing the purveyance and preservation of the meaning behind the words. One especially powerful tool that will remain long after this class is the Transactional Communication model. For these things, I am grateful.

To be specific about the benefits I derived from this class, I would have to cite audience-centered communication. My past efforts in public speaking rarely accounted for, or even acknowledged the existence of, my audience. This class has given me the insight and knowledge to create more effective communication through audience understanding.

I do not, however, understand the importance of extemporaneous speaking which I feel was a major goal of the class. I find it difficult to understand that a spectrum exists on the formality scale for public speaking. One the one side, entirely informal speaking as with two people in a bar discussing the topic of the hour. With the other side exemplified by Churchill's public delivery: choreographed to the letter and pause. For me, only these two extremes are allowed. No amount of verbal fluency could measure up to the exactness of iteration after iteration of revision amounting to a purely memorized speech. I tried to imagine that extemporaneous speaking could provide a much more fluid and colorful communication, but even naturalized movement and presence can not account for perfectly timed delivery. In addition, these effects can be calculated and choreographed just as easily. Although this statement seems uncertain. I would posit that the most influential speeches in history, from presidents to lowly TED speakers, are all memorized to the minutia. Therefore, to emulate these individuals would warrant the most effective communication. Further contemplation is necessary

on this topic given that COMS 130 devoted so much time to it.

I will undoubtedly forget many of the concepts learned this semester. They will be replaced by the latest cat video. But unlike cute cat videos, I do not wish them to be replaced for I find them highly valuable. I plan on keeping my textbook and hopefully the material close for frequent future reference. Any concept that triumphs over cute cats will be beneficial.