Take Home Exam

For our take-home exam, we are to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of our speaker, who is not named, and give advice on how to make her speech better. The speaker’s speech is about how using cell phones could potentially be dangerous to your health. I will first talk about what she did correctly and how she can improve it even more.

I think the speaker does a few things very well, mainly that she uses hand motions and gestures well, she used her prop well, and she cites her sources without breaking the flow of the speech. Beginning with gestures, I believe she did a very good job of using her hands naturally and none of them seemed out of place or caused detriment when giving her speech. I believe these gestures complement her speech well, but she can make their use even better by switching up her gestures a little more or cutting down on them. There are multiple times during her speech where she uses the same gesture repeatedly which isn’t necessarily a bad thing as the gestures themselves are natural but her having to use the same one over and over might have to do with one of her negatives, which I will talk about when I get to her negatives, her notes. Her notes get in the way so making more types of gestures is impossible. If she uses the advice I give here I think her gesture usage would be even stronger.

The next thing I think she does well is the use of her props which is her cell phone and her earbuds. I think she uses her cell phone at the correct moments in her speech and only had it out in those few moments. I felt like her use of the earbuds was a little forced and I think she could have just mentioned them and not have shown them. She only makes a slight mistake with her props and that mistake is that she doesn’t put them completely out of sight once she is done with them. While they are small and under her podium, they are still visible, and I could see some people getting distracted by them while I personally wasn’t. My advice to her here would have been to make sure both her phone and earbuds were completely out of sight. I also would likely advise her to not use the earbuds as while they relevant to her speech, I do not think they were incorporated into her speech well and was something she decided last minute.

The last thing the speaker did well was the citing of her sources. Regardless of the contents and credibility of her sources, I believe most of her sources were cited well and matched well with the flow of her speech. Other than the first source I believe every source was credible and fit into the topic of her speech well. The first source I believe was mainly used for the impact of the quote, but I found myself asking myself “what does that mean” even after listening to the speech multiple times. My advice for this section is to not fully quote the first quote but quote the person to keep the impact. That would allow her to keep the impactful foreshadowing comment but not focus on it as much as the more important sources later on in the speech.

Moving on from what the speaker did well, there were some things the speaker could improve on. The things she could improve on are her eye contact and her notes. First, her eye contact with the audience is very poor. She is almost always looking down at her notes or down towards the floor. I do not remember there being long periods where she is not looking down or reading from her notes and it takes away from the engagement you feel from the audience. A quick fix for this problem, while not the best solution, is to pace with a purpose. Pacing to another point allows you to address different parts of the audience at different points while not looking too awkward as long as the movement serves some purpose. It also allows you to glance at your notes as you walk to your next point. This would look more natural than her constant looking down. While that might not be an option since this is a recorded speech; another option is limiting or taking away her notes. These two options may allow the speaker to better connect with the audience and allow her persuasive speech to be more impactful.

The second thing the speaker can do to improve her speech is to change how she uses her notes. Watching the speech, the first thing people see is her note cards, they are massive and limit her in so many ways. Firstly, she cannot use her gestures as effectively since her notes take up all of one of her hands and they aren’t small enough to gesture with anyways. Because her note cards are so big it also plays into the first problem we talked about above. She is constantly looking down to read her notes since they are distractingly big and draw the audience's attention away from herself and her attention away from the audience. Learning how to put important information on small note cards is a good skill to have because then you actually know your speech in and out. The speaker in this speech just looked like she was reading solely from her notes than speaking from what she knew from reading her sources. This causes the audience to ask, did she even read the studies and sources she quoted and committed them to memory, or was it all from her notes she wrote down and read from at every point of the speech?

While the speaker made some good and bad choices for their speech there is a lot I can from this speech. I think the main thing I can take from this speech is how the speaker cites her sources. She lists almost anything about the source she remembers or had written down while in my speeches I tend to keep my source introductions relatively short to not overload my audience. However, after hearing it done in an actual speech, I think it gives the audience more information on your sources than it overloads them. I also think

I could take from her prop usage. She uses her phone to demonstrate her points naturally while in my speech my prop usage was a little awkward. taking some of the cues she gives when using her props would allow me to demonstrate my props a little more naturally even if the props aren't as easy to demonstrate in such a manner. This speaker gave me two good examples of how to make my speech better and hopefully, I can introduce them in my next speech.