

Self-Critique For Final Persuasive Speech

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I believe that after 3 months of learning about the theories behind public speaking I've become aware and improved both my speech delivery practices and my ability to critically listen and evaluate a speech. For my last speech, I believe that I prepared and delivered a successful speech leveraging the motivated sequence to persuade my audience to both strengthen their commitment to sleep and to take actions beneficial to their sleep. Nevertheless, I still think there was room for improvement in the delivery component of my speaking, particularly in the use of vocal cues.

With my persuasive speech I looked to strengthen the audience's commitment to the importance of sleep, while also inducing certain actions to improve their sleep. I used a motivated sequence approach scheme for the speech and I do think it was the right organizational structure for it. As a listener I felt engaged and motivated throughout the speech, and I believe the motivational steps were compelling. That said, I noticed a few things that were detrimental to my presentation and could have been better. When preparing the speech I was convinced that using well-known devastating accidents and attributing them to sleep would be an effective attention-grabbing rhetoric device. However, being a listener of my speech I do think that it was not the best choice. It was not directly related to my claim that improved sleep improves personal performance, but instead was a much more abstract idea that sleep deprivation can be detrimental in the big picture scheme.

I felt the support material and evidence that I made use of were sound and were properly presented to identify with the audience. On one side, sleep is something everyone can relate to, which helped my point, but I also complemented it by framing it in a very student-oriented perspective, which matched everyone in the audience (except the professor, but we're all students of life anyway). For example, GPA is something most students are greatly concerned about, and I think that mentioning the research study that linked better sleep to higher GPA was an effective persuasive device.

I believe that the actions I urged my audience to take were *simple*, in the sense that listeners could have executed these actions without much effort. For example, both downloading the app I suggested or setting a bedtime alarm were actions that could've easily been taken by any member of the audience. The simplicity is also related to the way I complemented each action with a visual aid which I believe also made them concrete and easy to remember for the listeners.

In my previous speech, I identified how distracting my side-to-side swaying was. This time, being aware of it, I tried to reduce it. While still not perfect, I believe I reduced this behavior of mine and showed a more stable stance throughout my delivery, being less distracting than in my previous speech. I had previously also identified that I made wide hand gestures that drew attention away from my message, especially when moving my notecard-holding hand. This time I was conscious about my gestures and I do think they were calmer and more balanced, seeming more natural while still highlighting important points.

Knowing that my speaking rate is relatively fast, I put an extra effort to make sure I slowed down. I wrote a big *SLOW* on the side of my notecards. When I was delivering my speech, it made me conscious of my rate and I remember trying to pace down to better emphasize critical parts of my speech as needed. That said, when watching my speech I felt I was talking way too fast, choking and even making mistakes on some words. For instance, I said “*Sleep is the third pillar of sleep*” when I should have said “*sleep is the third pillar of health*”, which confused me when I was listening, and I'm sure greatly confused my audience. I also noticed how I lost my train of thought and left the sentence hanging for a split second a couple times. These mistakes might be explained partly by the fact that I was in the last couple hours of an absolute fast (no food nor drinks for 24 hours) due to a religious holiday, which might have impacted my performance and delivery.

While many of the concepts and techniques learned in class seemed common sense at first, I believe that after learning about public speaking theory and techniques for three months I am better able to plan a speech using a more solid foundation on theory and a robust framework to achieve a more effective and successful delivery. This can be demonstrated by this speech, as I believe I effectively leveraged the motivated sequences and combined it with credible evidence, evoking the audience members' self-interests to strengthen their value of sleep and to induce them into taking sleep-improving actions. I look forward to apply the concepts, techniques and frameworks learned during this class to deliver effective speeches and presentations in my future endeavors.