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Math 198
Ted Talk Exercise
1/28/2019

**Exercise.** Watch a TED talk in groups of 3-4 and answer the following questions (to submit individually although 1-6 can be the same for your group):
  1. What was the topic/title of the talk?
  2. Give the URL of the talk
  3. List 5 effective rhetorical moves made by the speaker (if familiar w/ R.M.)
  4. Comment on the motion, facial expressions and body language of the speaker
  5. What was the least successful aspect of the talk?
  6. How was the talk organized? Create a simple outline of the talk that communicates its overall structure.
  7. List 5 aspects of the talk that you might try to emulate in your talks this semester.

*Answers.*

  1. *Strange Answers to the psychopath test*, by Jon Ronson (TED2012).

  2. `https://www.ted.com/talks/jon_ronson_strange_answers_to_the_psychopath_test?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare`

  3. Rhetorical moves

     (a) Speaker does reenactment of conversations vs. just reporting them to the audience, which makes the audience feel more engaged

     (b) The speaker uses a personal anecdote as a hook in the beginning to draw the audience in

     (c) Dual to the point above, the speaker finishes the talk by giving the audience a question that makes them think about how *they* would act in the particular situation posed.

     (d) The speaker keeps language colloquial and chatty, to make it easier for the audience to relate themselves to the situations being presented.

     (e) Additionally, the speaker poses many rhetorical questions to the audience members, conceivably for similar reasons.

     (f) Speech is very metered and evenly-paced.

  4. Motion, facial expressions, and other body language

     (a) Uses hand motions to indicate sizes of objects. In fact, the speark really uses hand motions extensively to mirror anything he's saying that can be physically expressed. E.g., he would raise his hands when talking about something "high", and lower them when talking about something "low". Also uses hands to mirror the cadence of his speech sometimes.

     (b) The speaker uses animations in the background (and sound effects) to reinforce what he's saying

     (c) Speaker would smile and/or give some facial expression cue for any points that were intended to be comical.

  5. Flaws

(a) It was kind of hard to see what the takeaway was supposed to be until the end. Even then, we weren't really sure what he was trying to accomplish — comedy made it difficult to discern what was supposed to be taken seriously.

(b) The speaker's talk was very narrative-heavy, and it was sometimes hard to discern how each piece fit into the broader overarching structure of the talk. Some metaphorical mileposts along the way would have been very helpful in trying to figure out what we should vs. shouldn't be paying attention to.

(c) Without more overarching structure to tie it together, repeatedly switching between two or three story threads became confusing.

6. Loose outline of the structure

   (a) Introduction

      i. Stuff about the DSM and his own personal anecdote establishing a connection to the field of psychiatry

      ii. Introduces the question of whether or not these checklists are truly meaningful/effective at identifying whether people have mental illnesses

      iii. Transitions to an extended anecdote

   (b) Anecdote from Tony about Broadmoor

   (c) Viewpoints of experts

   (d) Chainsaw Al anecdote

   (e) More about Tony

   (f) Conclusion

      i. Big picture: gray areas and the humanity reflected in them

      ii. Closes by posing a question to the audience.

7. 5 aspects I might want to emulate

   (a) Speaker talks colloquially for almost the entire talk; makes the audience member feel like the material is accessible and relatable.

   (b) Speaker does a good job of creating a sense of narrative throughout the whole talk, even when discussing technical bits.

   (c) Speaker frames the closing remarks in such a way that listeners continue to think and/or wonder about the material, even once the talk is over.

   (d) Speaker replaces pacing (which is often distracting) with body language like hand movements (much less so). Similarly, instead of turning with his whole body to address different parts of the audience, the speaker looks around mainly with his head/neck, which is also less distracting.

   (e) The speakers' cadence was very level and consistent, which made the talk sound less "theatrical" than most TED talks I've seen, which made it easier to engage as an audience member (I didn't feel like a certain response was "expected" of me, which made it easier to figure out how I personally felt about the talk).

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