**Audience Analysis Reading Material 2**

**How do you become an audience-centered speaker?**

1. **Step One**: Gather Information about Your Audience. Begin by gathering information about your audience. You can collect information informally just by asking them general questions. Or you can take a more formal approach and administer a survey to obtain more specific information.

2. **Step Two**: Analyze Information about Your Audience. Once you have identified information about your listeners, analyze it. Look for patterns to help you formulate what you will say and how you will say it. Categorize and evaluate audience information to determine your listeners’ psychological profile. Also consider the occasion at which you are speaking.

3. **Step Three**: Ethically Adapt to Your Audience. After you have gathered and analyzed information about your audience, use the information to adapt ethically to your listeners.

**Gather information**

**Identify what you want to Learn about your audience.**

Let your topic and the speaking occasion help you determine the kinds of questions you should pose. *You may want to confirm some of your hunches about demographic information or you may want to assess how much the audience knows about your topic, as well as their attitudes toward your ideas.*

**Develop clear questions**

Once you have an idea of what you would like to know, ask your potential audience straightforward questions about such demographic information as age, sex, occupation, and their membership in professional organizations. Figure 5.2 shows a sample questionnaire.

To *gather useful information about audience members’ attitudes, beliefs, and values, you can ask two types of questions.* **Open-ended questions** allow for unrestricted answers without limiting responses to specific choices or alternatives. Essay questions, for example, are open-ended. Use open-ended questions when you want detailed feedback from your audience. **Closed-ended questions** offer alternatives from which to choose. Multiple-choice, true/false, and agree/disagree questions are examples of closed-ended questions.

**Sample questions**

Demographic Audience-Analysis Questionnaire

1. Name (optional):

2. Sex: Male Female

3. Age

4. Years of schooling beyond high school:

5. Major in college:

6. Hometown:

7.Monthly income

8. Ethnic background:

9. Political affiliation:

10.Membership in professional organizations or social clubs:

**Open-Ended Questions**

1. What are your feelings about having high-school health clinics dispense birth-control pills?

2. What are your reactions to the current rate of teenage pregnancy?

3. What would you do if you discovered your daughter was receiving birth-control pills from her high-school health clinic?

**Closed-Ended Questions**

1. Are you in favor of school-based health clinics dispensing birth-control pills to high-school students?(Yes /No)

2. Birth-control pills should be given to high-school students who ask for them in school-based health clinics. (Circle the statement that best describes your feeling.)

Agree/ strongly Agree /Undecided /Disagree /Disagree strongly

3. *Check the statement that most closely reflects your feelings about school-based health clinics and birth-control pills.*

1) Students should receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics whenever they want them, without their parents’ knowledge.

2) Students should receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics whenever they want them, as long as they have their parents’ permission.

3) I am not certain whether students should receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics.

4) Students should not receive birth-control pills in school-based health clinics.

4. *Rank the following statements from most desirable (1) to least desirable (5)*.

1) Birth-control pills should be available to all high-school students in school-based health clinics, whenever students want them, and even if their parents are not aware that their daughters are taking the pills.

2)Birth-control pills should be available to all high-school students in school-based health clinics, but only if their parents have given their permission.

3) Birth-control pills should be available to high-school students without their parents’ knowledge, but not in school-based health clinics.

4) Birth-control pills should be available to high-school students, but not in school-based health clinics, and only with their parents’ permission.

5) Birth-control pills should not be available to high-school students.

**Analyze the information about the audience**

**How to analyze information about your audience.**

Audience analysis is the process of examining information about the listeners who will hear your speech. That analysis helps you adapt your message so your listeners will respond as you wish. Whether you realize it or not, you analyze audiences every day as you speak to others or join in group conversations. For example, most of us do not deliberately make offensive comments to family members or friends. Rather, we quickly analyze our audience and then adapt our messages to them. Public speaking involves the same sort of process. Precisely what do you look for when analyzing the information you have gathered about your audience? Ask yourself the following questions: 1. How are audience members similar to one another? 2. How are audience members different from one another? 3. Based on audience members’ similarities and differences, how can I establish common ground with them.

**Identify Similarities**

What ethnic and cultural characteristics do audience members have in common? Are they all from the same geographic region? Do they (or did they) come from the same major? Do they have similar levels of education? Answering these and other questions will help you develop your own ideas and better relate your message to your listeners.

**Identify Differences**

Besides noting similarities, you should note differences among your audience members. It is unlikely that audience members for the speeches you give in class will have similar backgrounds. The range of cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and regional backgrounds among students at most colleges and universities is rapidly expanding. You can also note the range of differences in age and gender, as well as the varying perspectives about your topic.

**Identify Common Ground**

When you know what your audience members have in common as well as how they differ, then you can seek to establish a common ground. **To establish common ground with your audience is to identify ways in which you and your listeners are alike**. Sometimes you may find that the only common ground is that both you and your listeners believe the issue you are addressing is a serious problem; you may have different views about the best solution. If, for example, you were addressing a group of people who were mostly against increasing taxes to pay teachers higher salaries, but you were in favor of a tax increase, you could establish common ground by noting that both you and your listeners value education and want high-quality teachers in classrooms.