

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE
THE SPEAKING, ARGUING, AND WRITING PROGRAM
Evaluating Public Speaking: The Evaluator's Role



When evaluating a public speaker, it is important to see yourself as a partner in the process. Your thoughtful and candid feedback can help the speaker to refine their presentation and public speaking skills. Be mindful, and grateful, of the fact that the speaker has provided you with an opportunity to practice your evaluation skills.

Before the Speech:

Ask the speaker the goal and objective of the speech. What does she hope to accomplish? Be aware of the person's general goals and of specific areas in which the person would like help and feedback. Consider asking what they perceive to be their major speaking challenge.

Consider what you already know about the speaker in relation to her public speaking skills. Does she tend to speak too quickly or appear anxious? Be on the lookout for such behaviors and habits that you are aware of. If possible, try to remember the speaker's skill level, habits, mannerisms and progress to date.

As the Evaluator, you:

You nourish the self-esteem of the speaker. End your evaluation on a positive note; you strive to have the speaker leaving the stage feeling visible, recognized and motivated to improve further.

You demonstrate your commitment. You learn the speaker's goals and objectives.

You suit the evaluation to the speaker. Your evaluation is appropriate to the self-improvement goals for the speaker and the objectives of the speech.

You manifest attentiveness. You pay attention to the speaker and her speech; you “get” the speech. You are the speaker's best audience. You take notes as need requires.

You motivate the speaker. You recognize the speaker's strengths and areas of improvement.

You avoid criticizing or complaining. Always bear in mind the speaker's worth as a person.

You are a guide, not a sage; refrain from setting yourself up as an authority on speechcraft. Keep your language personal rather than declarative.

Feedback Areas

Provide feedback on several aspects of the presentation. Make one or two points on the following areas

- Organization and Flow
- Vocal Delivery
- Body Language
- Visual Aids (if applicable)
- Suggestions for Improvement

Your opinion should mention *the effect on you, what the speaker or leader did well, areas where the speaker or leader could improve, and specific recommendations for improvement.*