

CHAPTER 2

Before You Speak

As I discussed in *Well Spoken*, building a speech refers to all of the things that speakers must do prior to opening their mouths. Technology has not changed the need to carefully construct powerful communications. Building an effective speech requires five elements:

Audience: Understanding the Listeners

Content: Making the Message Valuable

Organization: Making the Speech Easy to Follow

Visual Aids: Enhancing the Words

Appearance: Dressing for the Occasion

Digital tools give us new ways to continue our classroom conversations about these elements and provide more opportunities for students to master the skills.

Building Digital Communication

In previous writing, I have used the word *speech* in a broader sense than is commonly understood. To most, the word connotes a major presentation in front of a large, live audience. I suggest that a speech includes important one-to-one talks: I spent hours mentally creating the words I said to my son as I dropped him off at college to begin his freshman year. A speech includes statements made in small-group discussions: I want students to think hard before they speak and to construct powerful comments. Now, I will broaden the definition even more: speech includes oral communication delivered digitally, too.

Audience

Students often give a speech without thinking about the intended audience. The teacher hands out a list of requirements for the oral presentation and most students dutifully check off the items without focusing on the details. As a result, the audience is bored much more often than we like to admit. By contrast, all well-built speeches are designed specifically for a particular group, which means that the speaker must do some work to understand the audience.

Consider Class P, for example, where the teacher assigns a traditional book report. She tells the students to prepare a three- to four-minute oral presentation. Because the teacher has read *Well Spoken*, she talks to the students about the intended audience: males and females in the same grade and with similar vocabulary levels; some like reading and some do not; all have and love cell phones, computers, and game systems; their interests include soccer, shopping, dance, skateboarding, and so on. The teacher explains that a good report makes the book interesting to all listeners. Although the book may have been written to appeal primarily to female readers, for example, the book *report* must engage males as well. The teacher makes clear that only by understanding the listeners will students be able to build a presentation suitable for them.

For teachers using technology to publish student work, the audience analysis can be more challenging. In Class V, for example, a teacher from the United States attends a session at the Global Education Conference, an annual online conference designed to build education-related connections around the globe. He decides to partner with a teacher in Mexico to share some of each country's great books. He asks his students to prepare a performance book report about *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The presentation will be Skyped to a class at the American School in Guadalajara. The teacher explains that Skype (www.skype.com) enables speakers in remote locations to make phone calls through their computers, using a Web cam and microphone. The teacher asks his students to analyze their Mexican classroom audience. What interests and customs might the students there have that are the same as ours? What might be different? He suggests that students do some research to find the answers to these questions, including sending e-mail messages to the Mexican teacher before the performance or reading articles about school, customs, and activities in Mexico.

Beyond the Classroom Walls

In Class V, the teacher seized one of the main advantages of digital tools: extending learning beyond the classroom walls. Using technology such as Skype gives students access to a wider audience. Although the audience may be large, it is not too diverse to be analyzed. A podcast about adding fractions could be of interest to anyone in cyberspace, for example, although we could assume that the viewers would likely be young. An online slideshow about Picasso might appeal to wider range of ages, but the likely viewers will probably share a similar interest in art. Every speech should be intended for a particular audience despite the unknown size and every audience will have some characteristics that we can research and use to target the message.

Thinking about the Medium

Digital tools demand audience analysis in another dimension as well: We must consider how the audience will be receiving the message. Will the teacher in Guadalajara be projecting the Skype presentation onto a large screen in the classroom? Will the students be looking at a thirteen-inch laptop screen? A twenty-inch monitor? Might viewers be viewing the lesson on an iTouch or smart phone? These become critical questions that will affect how we build the speech, as we shall see later in this chapter when we discuss visual aids.

The Skype project provides a change of pace from usual instruction, giving teachers the opportunity to increase student motivation and adopt contemporary references. Please remember, however, that those aims are secondary to the main goal: global and cultural awareness. Because the project involves audio and visual contact, effective oral communication is needed to achieve that main goal, so the teacher will want to emphasize the importance of analyzing the audience when building a speech.

Recently I had a chance to work with some students at a high school near my home. They were involved in the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which is designed to help students in the mid-level performance range prepare for and succeed in college. These high school seniors were about to be interviewed for a Daniels Fund scholarship, which offers a four-year grant for college. For many of the

applicants, the scholarship would be the difference between being able to afford college or not, and successfully analyzing the audience—in this case, a panel of judges from the Daniels Fund organization—would be critical to their success.

As I worked with the students to help them prepare for the interview, I showed them how I analyze *my* audience. My stories and my style are a bit different for this preparation session, for example, than they might be for another situation with another audience, so I make communication adjustments that will appeal to the students. I also helped students understand why and how to tailor a talk to an audience (see Video 2.1).



Video 2.1: Preparing high school seniors to find their audience for an interview

After I spoke to the AVID students as a group, we created individual practice interviews using a Flip camera. I recorded the mock interviews and showed them to the students. Then, we provided feedback as a group about the interviews (see Video 2.2). The feedback session gives everyone in the class a chance to learn and reinforce good speaking skills. They are learning how to clearly convey their message, create a good appearance, organize the content, and incorporate all the other elements of building an effective speech.



Video 2.2: Romelia listens to her peers critique her practice interview.

In Chapter 5, you will hear more from the students about the process and hear from their teacher. How well you teach students this aspect of building a speech can have more value than you might think.

Content

As I discussed in *Well Spoken*, the next step in building a speech is creating content for the message. Usually, the content requirements are assigned when the project is first announced. Teachers hand out a paper with a list of items that must be included. For example, the book report must contain the main characters, the plot line diagram, the setting, and so on; the Issues in Science project on stem cell research must reference how stem cells may affect us, the reasons to support and oppose stem cell use, and current laws that permit or restrict their use. These minimum requirements explain the purpose of the assignment, set the length of the talk, and establish the conventions needed for minimal success.

We need to teach students how to find important and interesting information that meets the requirements. Not all the events described in the textbook or on selected websites resonate with a particular audience, and certainly we need to reteach the lessons we use

for selecting engaging and relevant content. Ask the questions, “What will work for *this* audience? What will be engaging and important for them?” Answering those questions will give speakers content for a good speech and something worthwhile to present, no matter what the format. I realize that this is part of your writing instruction, too, so use speaking assignments as a way to reinforce your writing lessons about adding important details, supporting arguments with evidence, and so on. In a similar way, we can use multimedia-speaking assignments to reinforce writing instruction and make some of your lessons come alive.

For instance, one of the typical problems students have is addressing the prompt. When I began teaching, I was amazed at how often students got off track and never answered questions. Now I realize that these miscues are quite common, and not just for students. Examples of adults evading questions, providing misleading information, or misreading their audience are everywhere, particularly during campaign seasons.

We can use just about any presidential debate, such as this one from the 2008 presidential election, to analyze how politicians answer questions or prompts. In this example, it is hard to remember the question the voter asked initially; the candidates were asked how they were going to repay the two trillion dollars borrowed from the Social Security trust fund, and neither response truly addressed that question. The candidates’ motivation may be evasiveness rather than confusion—a lesson in itself about politics and why candidates may want to avoid direct answers—but our content lesson about *making sure the prompt is addressed* will be aided either way from this example. Put students to work finding examples to share with classmates; they will easily find examples of evasive politicians from any political party. And if you will allow students to broaden their search, the YouTube era has made it possible for us to find positive and negative examples from many walks of life . . . as well as tutorials on how to answer a prompt.

Students also need to be clear about the grammatical rules for presentations that incorporate digital tools. As I mentioned earlier, teachers and students usually think of speaking in its formal sense, a capital P, capital S “Public Speaking.” In those situations, we should follow strict language rules and grammar constructs. We need to

realize, however, that speaking also includes public speaking in a less formal sense, and we should allow language appropriate for the intended audience. Dialects, regional idioms, and cultural styles may not follow the rules of the King's English but may be suitable for some listeners and situations. Let students know that audience analysis may allow them to bend a few rules. Saying "Y'all may be textin' LOL when you watch this next clip" could be more effective than "You will certainly enjoy the following video clip," depending on the intended audience for the posted message.

Remember that content also involves what *not* to include. Teachers have discussions with students about sticking to the point in their writing; those discussions need to be repeated as students build content for the digital medium they are going to use. We also need to remind students to avoid verbal viruses, the phrases that for one reason or another become popular and infect our speech (Palmer 2011):

"I'm like, all upset because he like totally forgot to like pick me up and I had to walk like two miles to get home."

"Ya know, not everyone believes that. There are, ya know, two billion Muslims on the planet and they, ya know, have a different way of looking at that."

"I'd like to share, if you will, a couple of ideas. Many people act as if they have forgotten, if you will, these points, but they need to be reinforced, if you will."

We hear these fillers, or some other phrasing that has by now become the trend and replaced them, every day. Students usually are not aware of how often they interject such verbal viruses into their speech. We would be upset to find these phrases in their writing and would never allow their use. Let students know that verbal viruses, while common in front of their lockers, do not belong in digital media presentations.

Although discussions about content requirements will ensure a *good* presentation, they will not likely lead to an *exceptional* presentation. An exceptional project must have basic content, of course, including content well chosen. But in addition, two other elements—clarifiers and connectors—will make it clear that the speech is designed

with a particular audience in mind.

Clarifiers

Clarifiers are specific additions to speeches that ensure the audience completely understands the message. The expanded audiences that digital tools make possible give us another opportunity to teach students about clarifiers. In the Skype example earlier in this chapter, students were to explain the situation in the American South at the time of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to help the student audience in Guadalajara understand the novel. The students in Mexico might not have the background knowledge to appreciate the context of the American Civil War, including slavery and the attitudes about racial differences that linger in this country. The students in the U.S. will have to explain that during that time period, many American Southerners considered African Americans second-class citizens. Without that understanding, *To Kill a Mockingbird* makes no sense. Speakers must use the audience analysis to anticipate such issues. Successful speeches leave all listeners with the feeling that they completely understood what was said.

Connectors

A speech is more effective if it contains specific statements designed to connect the topic to the particular audience. No speech should be generic, designed to work for every group. All speakers should use the audience analysis to come up with a way to let the audience know the speech was built specifically for them. For example, the climax in *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place after a Halloween pageant, Scout still in her costume. If students briefly explain the similarity of Halloween to Día de los Muertos, the students in Guadalajara know that the conversation is personalized for them and they will be much more receptive to the message. Ask students to think about a conversation—how long would they continue talking to someone who never talks about them or their interests? Not very long, I'd guess. Because a good speech is just a conversation magnified, the same principle applies. Connectors make audiences feel as if you are talking *with* them, rather than talking *at* them.

Organization

Digital tools don't change everything. Good organization is essential, whether we are speaking to one person, the entire class, or the world. Refer to Chapter 5 in *Well Spoken* to remind students of the keys to effective organization (Palmer 2011). Digital tools do change some things, however.

Partial Attention

Have you ever participated in a Webinar? You were probably at home in front of the computer. Think of all the distractions that were available. Did you open another screen and listen (sort of) to the Webinar? Did you check e-mail, clean your desk, surf the Web, play with the cat, or do other things as you received the information from the Webinar? Most of us do. Presentations created for online viewing often run into this issue: partial attention. If we have students create podcasts and assign the class to listen to them at home, we have to realize that their attention may not be as focused as in the classroom. The physical presence of a speaker increases attention to the message. Without the speaker's physical presence, we tend to become distracted by other things that we can do while listening.

Opening Well

Anticipating distractions, we must redouble our efforts to create a grabber opening, include effective signposts, and finish with a powerful closing. From the start we must intrigue listeners and make them want to hear more. For example, "Hi, my name is Kevin and this is Kiyan and we are gonna tell you all about global warming" will probably shift viewers to partial attention immediately.

On the other hand, "The Pacific island of Tuvalu is gorgeous. Look at the pictures. Look quickly, though, because the island is disappearing. Climate change is causing water levels to rise and Tuvalu will be underwater soon. Want to see why?" definitely has an increased chance of sustained attention.

Signposts

We must also give extra effort to signposts. After a shockingly small amount of time, listener and viewer attention starts to drift. BBC News reported back in 2002 that “with literally millions of websites at our fingertips, the attention span of the average Web surfer is measured in seconds” (BBC News 2002). I can only imagine how much more multitasking goes on today during online viewing or searching. “Ever on the lookout for engaging content, most online viewers spend less than 60 seconds at an average site,” BBC News reported (2002).

Specific and engaging signposts are critical to reclaiming that attention. For example, “Now that we have discussed the causes of global warming, let’s take a look at the effects” might work well if the speaker were in front of the audience, but “Now that we have learned what you do to contribute to global warming, let’s discuss the ways it will destroy your life” would have more force and the inattentive listener would most likely perk up because of that language. Signposts give us opportunities within the speech to refocus the listener.

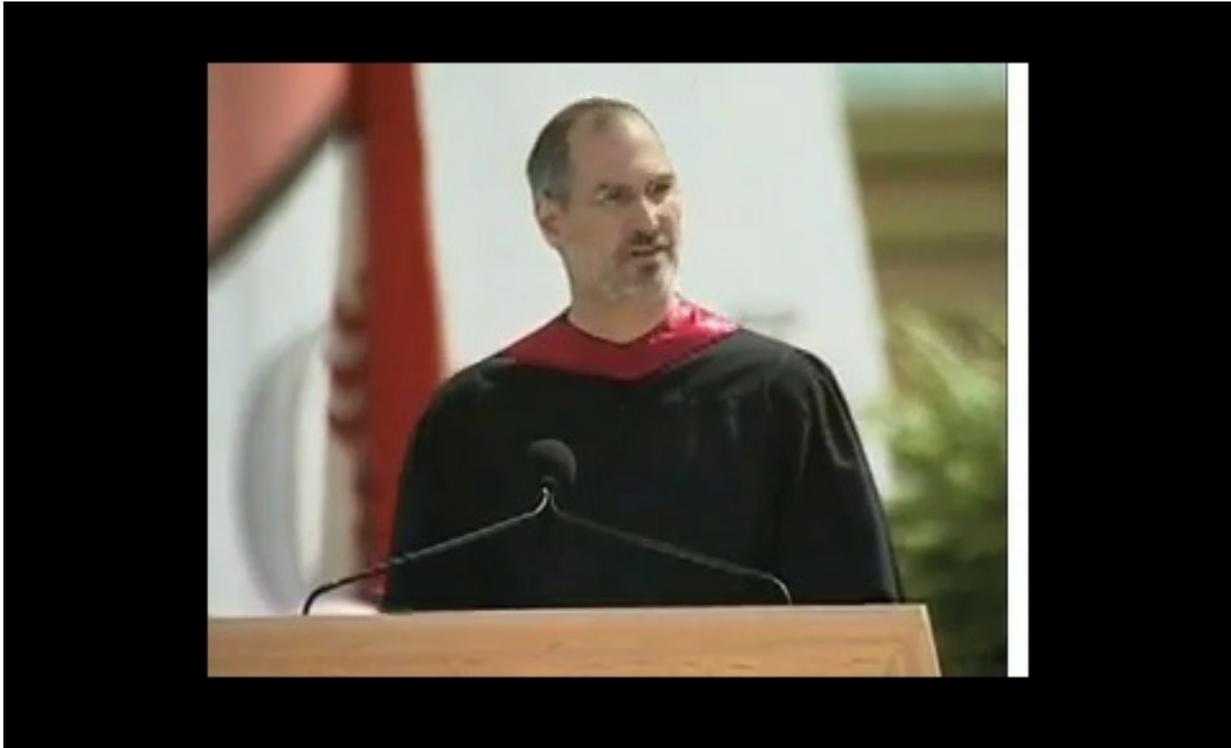
Signposts can help us reorient the listener. Research suggests that people are so bombarded with information on the Internet that they have trouble concentrating on the task at hand. In his book *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (2011), Nicholas Carr explains how online viewing tends to promote:

. . . cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning . . . Every time we shift our attention, the brain has to reorient itself, further taxing our mental resources. Many studies have shown that switching between just two tasks can add substantially to our cognitive load, impeding our thinking and increasing the likelihood that we’ll overlook or misinterpret important information. (116, 132)

For the purposes of our discussion about signposts, we need to make sure students are aware that when our attention drifts, we derail our train of thought. What were we talking about? Where are we again? Explicit verbal markers are needed to put us back on track.

Again, it is easy to find examples and searching for them is a good activity for students,

encouraging them to critique and discuss examples. I enjoy Steve Job’s 2005 commencement speech at Stanford University for a number of reasons, including how well he demonstrates signposts, and you may want students to listen to the entire talk for its meaning or its wonderful development of the content of his three stories (see Video 2.3).



Video 2.3: Steve Jobs’s 2005 commencement speech, Stanford University

Typically, students resist adding such specific and frequent signposts, and it can be a struggle to persuade them. Discuss with your students how well they pay attention in class. Then ask them how well they stay focused when online. They will begin to understand the problem. It’s the rare person who can pay full attention in the online environment, yet signposts improve the odds of sustained attention and can be effective at reorienting the listener/viewer.

Finishing Well

“And that’s my speech.” “And that’s how you solve a polynomial equation.” “All in all, it was a good book.” Typical endings for student speeches, right? They’re cursory, nonspecific, and boring, which is why we need to specifically teach students how to craft more effective endings (Palmer 2011, 42–43). Here are a few ideas to strengthen

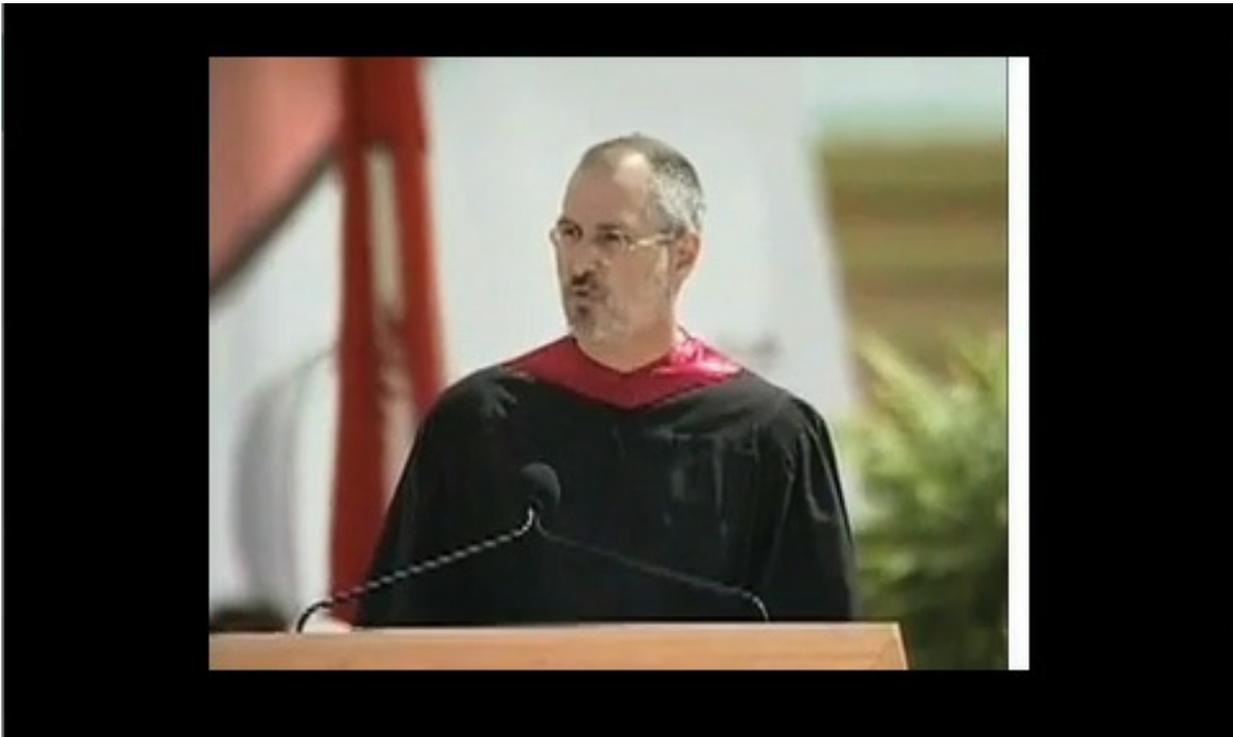
the finish:

- Leave the listeners with one memorable thought, one unforgettable concept (listen to Audio 2.4 for an example).



Audio 2.1: Leave listeners with a memorable thought

- End with a rhetorical question that ends the speech but causes the audience to continue thinking: “Here is the picture of Tuvalu again. Don’t you think we should do something to make sure future generations can see this? Don’t you think *you* should do something?”
- Finish with a call to action: “Get out your wallet. Reach into your pocket. Open up your purse. Take out one dollar and put the dollar in the donation box at the door. Help make a better holiday for the children of the hospice.”
- End with a personal anecdote. If it is on point, a good anecdote can guarantee that the audience will be on your side: “That is the basic idea of the Dream Act. But let’s get specific. Let me tell you about Armida. Brought here at age three. Wonderful, bright girl. Great student, top of her class”
- Offer a challenge. “Let’s make history. Let’s have our class set the standard of success.”
- End with a meaningful story. Again, listen to Steve Jobs (2005) (see Video 2.4).



Video 2.4: A memorable story

- Leave the audience with a humorous story—if the tale is on topic and if you can tell a funny story well.
- Use a relevant quotation by an authority widely recognized by your audience.

In an online environment, it might be advantageous to work with summative types of closings. Remember, the audience tends to drift in and out of attention. Some points may have been missed while the listener was texting a friend. A clear signpost that signals “Here comes the big finish,” followed by a powerful closing, can overcome that problem.

Under no circumstances should the presentation just stop.

Adding Meaningful Aids

I have renamed this part of building a speech, originally called “Visual Aids” (Palmer 2011). New tools require renaming.

I generally prefer that beginning speakers not use visual aids. I want the speaker to focus on creating a message rather than creating a visual, and I want the listeners to attend to

the speaker rather than a potentially distracting aid. That emphasis changes in a digital format. The speaker is not as commanding on a small screen as he is in person, and the expectations in the digital world demand visuals. Therefore, creating effective visuals is an important part of the speech-building process.

When the intent of the visual is to assist the listener's understanding, visual aids must be relevant, important, accessible, and simple. I noted that they must be accessible in two senses — mentally and visually (Palmer 2011). Digital presentations require more attention to visual accessibility. Earlier, I talked about how the audience will receive the message: The visual may be viewed on the ten-inch screen of a netbook or the very small screen of a smart phone or projected on a large interactive whiteboard. What works best in each case? The Microsoft PowerPoint slide with several bullet points may be accessible when projected on a large screen in class but may need to be broken into several pieces to be accessible on the small screen. Writing several steps of the equation-solving process on one screen may not work if the iTouch is the viewing platform. The sound system that amplified the music in the lecture hall is not available on the laptop, so we can't assume that the embedded video in the presentation will be as effective. Make adjustments to the visual aid to compensate for the way the message will be received.

Eye-Catching Visuals

We need to introduce a new purpose for visual aids as well. Visual aids are not just tools to assist understanding in twenty-first-century applications but are also *de rigueur* for adding stimulation and glitz. We don't enter a website expecting a video of a speaker standing in front of a classroom: We expect something to be added, something attention grabbing and flashy. Visual aids need to be *designed* rather than *decorated* for in-class presentations. I came to loathe bubble letters, stickers, and neon pink markers when I was in the classroom, and I have little respect for ClipArt on Microsoft PowerPoint slides. I soften my stance on this for digital presentations, however; color and liveliness and glitz can be useful to brighten up the thirteen-inch laptop screen and make the presentation more compelling. Pictures, including offbeat and tangential things, can intrigue viewers, though they may not be necessary to convey a point. The focus

should always be on the message, but visual aids can be used to keep viewers focused on the screen. After all, if viewers aren't focused on the screen, they aren't focused on the message.

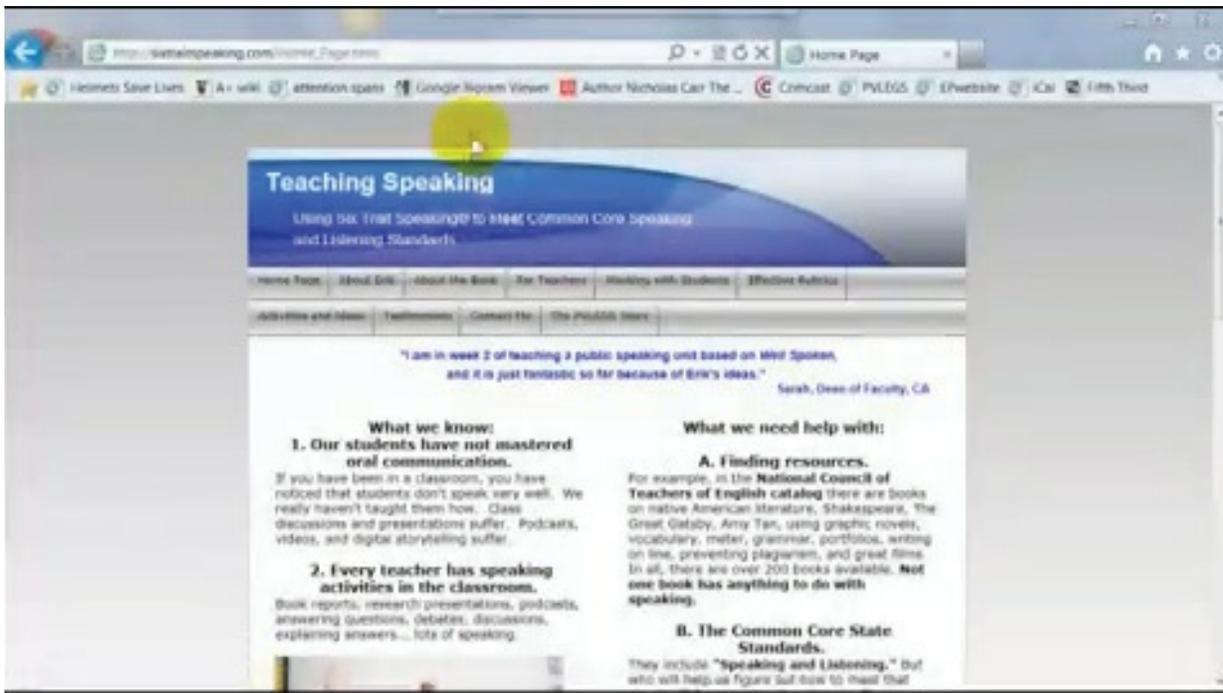
The Image Is the Message

Sometimes visuals become more than aids. One of the most significant features of the digital age is the increased emphasis on images. “If people aren't taught the language of sound and images, shouldn't they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read or write?” asks film director George Lucas (in Daly 2004). It's an interesting question that compels us as educators to notice how sound and images have become such important methods of communicating. Music and pictures convey ideas and manipulate emotions without words. In their efforts to build students' visual literacy skills, some teachers are creating assignments where images, rather than being used to enhance the verbal message, *are* the message. Those assignments, too, can become ways to improve speaking.

As an example, I saw a collection of photographs of children in Darfur at a small gallery in Hawaii. No words anywhere. No written captions, no picture titles, no one telling stories about how the pictures were taken or what the situation was. Just photos. Everyone who saw the pictures left the exhibit with the feeling that we must do something to help solve the problems in that part of Africa. Perhaps the pictures were not representative of all the children in Darfur and perhaps the photographer manipulated our emotions. These are issues of visual literacy, understanding how images can be selected and used for certain effects. I don't have the necessary knowledge to teach a course on visual literacy, yet I believe that giving students the option of “writing” an image essay or making a film can improve student writing, engage all students, and enable different students to shine. For our purpose, the use of images as the primary message delivery method provides a unique opportunity to reinforce speaking instruction. When the image *is* the message, how can speaking skills matter?

Verbal Aids

We can introduce a new term to our students: *verbal aids*. Instead of an image to enhance the words, what words can enhance the image? Think back to the Darfur exhibit. We could use Empressr to put those images into an online slideshow with narration. In this digital format, the images can reach audiences who cannot get to a museum showing. Empressr enables the slideshow creator to record voice to accompany the pictures. To learn more about Empressr, see Tutorial 2.1.



Tutorial 2.1: Creating a narrated slideshow with Empressr.com

Meaningful Narration

If the photographer decides to talk about the pictures he took of the children in Darfur, what would be effective? The words would need to be relevant, important, accessible, and simple.

- Relevant? A description of the flights the photographer took to get to Africa or a description of the camera lens and F-stop settings he used would detract from the purpose of the photos.
- Important? Telling us the names of the children pictured might be relevant, but would not be important to us getting the message.
- Accessible? The words must be orally accessible—loud enough to be heard—

and mentally accessible with vocabulary that the audience understands.

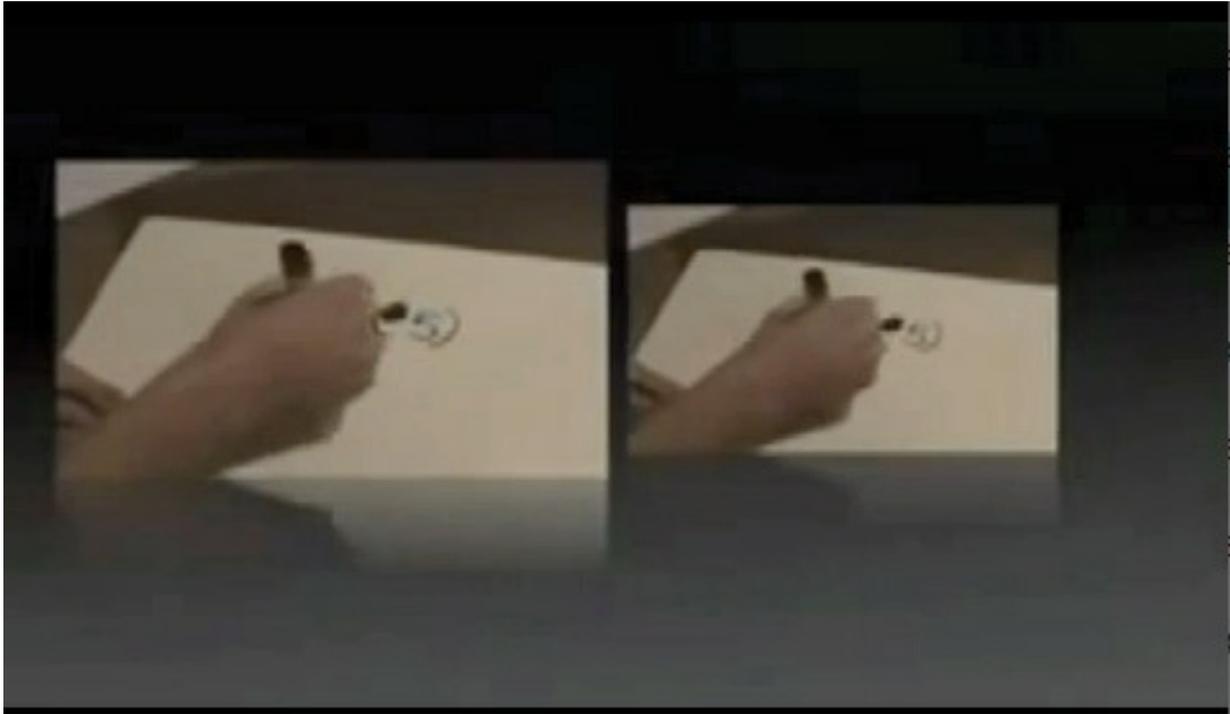
- Simple? A three-hour lecture on the situation in the Sudan would overpower the pictures.

If you give an assignment like this, with the main objective of increasing visual literacy, your students will gain additional public speaking experience and you can reinforce your earlier instruction of the correct use of aids.

Auditory Aids

Many digital tools and websites permit and encourage adding music. This should lead to another discussion with students. Is the music relevant? Students should not just add their favorite songs. If a background music track is added, it should be consistent with the message. Too often, teachers and students take a generic music track that comes with the software and loop it so that there is a nonstop accompaniment to the podcast. Don't make that mistake. Yes, an audio track can be added with Apple's Garage Band software and similar programs, but should it be?

Tim Bedley (www.timbedley.com) was kind enough to let me share a video he made, even though he expressed in an e-mail that he is "quite embarrassed by the quality." This video is a great example of early attempts at podcasting and the common mistakes many of us make (see Video 2.5). Tim shares a useful method of understanding integers, but as he now realizes, the soundtrack is so distracting that many viewers will probably miss the important lesson.



Video 2.5: A podcast with distracting audio

Was the opening music needed, or did you find yourself eager to get on with the instruction? Was the repetitive drum beat necessary? Did the soundtrack add something to the lesson or did it interfere with the message? Ask students to consider questions such as these to ensure that the music adds value to the overall communication. If students choose music with lyrics, make sure the lyrics match the overall message. If the song has no lyrics, instruct students to match the mood of the message. Transitional music should enhance the communication as well.

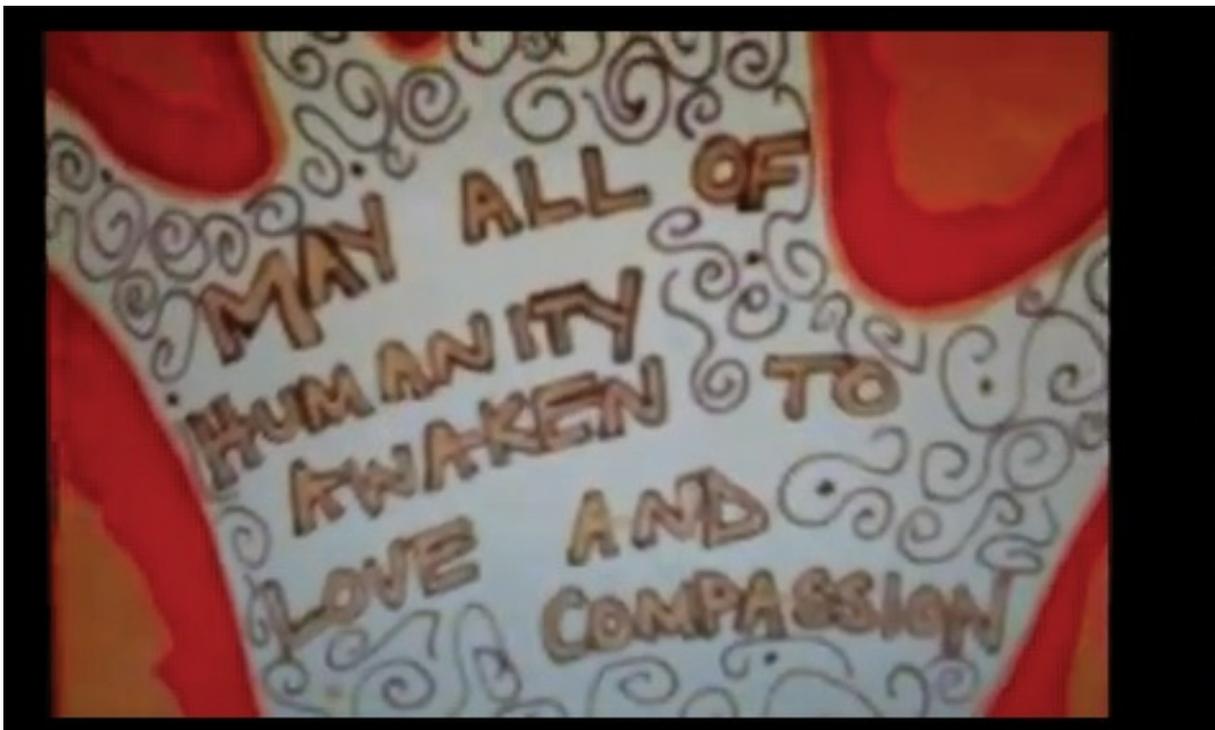
Other questions to ask are, “Is the music important?” “Does the music contribute anything to the podcast or video?” Often, teachers and students believe that all podcasts require a soundtrack. They don’t. If there is no important reason to add sound, don’t add it.

The music must allow the message to be accessible. The narration must be dominant, not drowned out. Sound levels may need adjusting and music may require ducking—lowering the volume of one audio track to enable emphasis on a different audio track. Realize, then, that students adding soundtracks might need to learn some additional technical skills.

Is the music simple? We want the listener to easily understand the lyrics or easily understand how the music enhances the communication. Generally the goal is not to focus on the music but on the spoken words. A complex soundtrack is not required.

Putting It All Together

For one assignment, students in a sophomore class wrote a “This I Believe” essay modeled after the popular National Public Radio’s *This I Believe* podcasts. One of the major goals was to help students understand the difference between opinions, such as “I like pizza,” and deeply held core values. Students recorded their words using the medium of their choice—GarageBand, a smart phone with recording app, Audacity, video camera, and so on. For some students, adding a podcast made the assignment come alive. Adrianna, not too enthused about the writing assignment, would have spent an hour or so word-processing something adequate. Given a chance to work with digital tools, however, she created something quite exceptional (see Video 2.6). It is an excellent example of what students can do when given an opportunity to use the tools they love.



Video 2.6: Adrianna’s “This I Believe” video podcast

I asked Adrianna to discuss her thinking as she decided how to best present her

message. Notice how she considered the spoken words, the length of sentences, the impact of various images. Although the assignment was to describe one's beliefs, Adrianna exceeded her teacher's expectations, using speaking and presentation skills to develop an exceptional demonstration of how to communicate effectively with an audience. This is the kind of thinking that we must model for all students (see Video 2.7).



Video 2.7: Adrianna discusses how she created her “This I Believe” video podcast

Appearance

One final thing to consider before a speaker opens his or her mouth to begin the speech: deciding what to wear. Like it or not, speakers will be judged on his or her appearance. The minute a speaker walks to the podium, or, in the digital age, the second someone clicks on a video, viewers will be making judgments. For this reason, all speakers must give thought to dressing appropriately.

For some assignments, the outfit for a presentation is dictated by the teacher — dress as a character from the novel, an attendee to the Constitutional Convention, the historical character from a research report, and so on. Beyond those situations, speakers must decide what is appropriate for the situation. When we discuss proper attire with our

students, we may tell them about situations we have been in—the interview, back to school night, the wedding toast—and we describe the thought process we go through in deciding what to wear. Digital tools make the conversation much more interesting.

In *Well Spoken*, I wrote about requiring my students to dress up for the big presentation we had about Supreme Court cases (Palmer 2011). They did dress up, but the audience was just the class of thirty peers, so perhaps students didn't take it too seriously. But what happens when digital tools expand the audience? This creates new questions for students. How do you want to look for the relatives who will get the link to the site where the speeches are posted? How do you want to appear on TeacherTube when students around the country might see you? What will help you impress the students in Guadalajara when we Skype them? These new situations create new chances to discuss this facet of building a speech.

In the digital world, more than personal appearance is on display. As we use Web cams for Webinars and Skype, we broadcast our surroundings. I'll bet you've noticed some odd or distracting things in the backgrounds of the videos in this chapter, such as the poster of Stephen King located behind Adrianna's shoulder during her interview. The setting is often overlooked, and as a result viewers get a glimpse of distracting and perhaps embarrassing things. Viewers will definitely look past the face and notice the background. What else is being seen or heard? Pets walking by can destroy attention; a messy shelf behind a speaker or an odd picture on the wall can affect the desired impression; the refrigerator may not be the best backdrop. We absolutely do judge a book by its cover and we judge a digital presentation in part by its background. Warn students to take care of the appearance of the set as well as of their own images.