

# Barnard Speaking Fellows--Coaching Guidelines

Coaching is pointing out what is/isn't working and offering specific action-based advice. Your coaching should always offer **1) a specific suggestion for improvement, 2) a brief comment about why you are offering this suggestion.** In a typical one-on-one session, a Speaking Fellow and student go through 5+ rounds of coaching.

## Coaching Methods & Exercises:

When students take your advice, ALWAYS notice they've done so, and explain to them how it improved their speech or presentation.

Below are three physical elements you will discuss most often: EYE CONTACT, GESTURES, & MOVEMENT. Here are a couple of ways to get a speaker to improve:

### \* Eye Contact

- **SUSTAINED EYE CONTACT:** have the speaker look at one person and then move her eyes directly to the next person without looking up, down, or at the back wall
  - useful when students have trouble focusing
- **EXTENDED EYE CONTACT:** Have the speaker deliver the entire speech directly to one person (preferably you). Stand up at the front of the room with her and force her to look directly into your eyes the whole time
  - useful when students are uncomfortable with making eye contact
- **NO EYE CONTACT:** Have the student (or someone else) deliver a piece of the speech directly to the back wall, or while looking at the floor, and then deliver the exact same portion of the speech while making direct eye contact with the audience
  - direct demonstration of how eye contact is beneficial/important

### \* Gestures

- **BASIC GESTURES:** The first time you coach a student on gestures it is important not to prescribe a particular type of gesture but rather let her figure what is natural. Just point out that she doesn't have to (and in fact shouldn't) just keep her hands at her sides
  - direct example of how gestures are natural when speaking
- **EXAGGERATED GESTURES:** If the student is having trouble with gestures (or they are all below her waist) then have her completely exaggerate all the gestures - do everything 200% bigger! After this activity, have her tone them down
  - useful when students are uncomfortable gesturing
- **MEANINGFUL GESTURES:** Suggest a few points in the presentation where the student's content lends to a particular kind of gesture (for instance if she is looking at two contrary points she can use her hands to distinguish between each side of the argument - "on the one hand...but on the other hand")
  - emphasizes communication through body language
- **OPEN GESTURES:** Many people have what's called a "home base" - this means all their gestures are around their midsection (crossing arms, clasping hands, fidgeting etc). If this appears to be a problem for the speaker you are coaching, point it out to her and recommend she bring all her gestures up.
  - opens the speaker up to the audience and can make speaker appear less nervous

## \* Movement

- **GROUNDING:** If the student is moving too much (i.e. pacing) then ask her to plant her feet and deliver the speech from one spot
  - helps student to look and feel less nervous/fidgety
- **PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT:** Have the student use sustained eye contact to move her through the delivery space. She speaks to person 'A' and then when looking to the other side of the room to make eye contact with person 'B', she physically moves toward that person (This is more advanced coaching and should be used when the student has already mastered sustained eye contact and gestures)
  - helps student command the room by including more people in the presentation, helps student connect with the audience
- **OWNING YOUR SPACE:** Ask the speaker to make full use of the space, however she feels. Explain the difference between moving across the space to engage the audience, and pacing; emphasize that movement should either punctuate the speech, or help her engage her audience.
  - helps student become energized, gain confidence

## Coaching for Structure

If a student is rambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have her memorize her beginning and ending "clinchers," so she knows the trajectory of the speech</li> <li>- If appropriate, bring her back to the outline and set a time limit for the speech</li> </ul>
If a student seems bored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ask her questions that get at why she is interested in the topic</li> <li>- encourage her to make it personal and relevant to her interests</li> <li>- have her start with a story if appropriate</li> </ul>
If a student doesn't have enough to say	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ask more questions to get her speaking off the cuff. then capture that language and have her incorporate it into the speech</li> </ul>
If a student is saying too much	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ask her to define the main argument and the three most important points.</li> <li>- have student clearly define her topic sentences</li> <li>- give her clear time constraints and break up the presentation by section so she can see how long each part of the presentation lasts</li> </ul>
If the argument is unclear or not fully formed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have student sit back down and spend some</li> </ul>



	<p>more time working with the outline - remind her to have a main argument with three supporting points</p> <p>- ask her to present again after the next student has gone (or if she is the last to present give her 1-2 minutes and then stand back up)</p>
If the presentation/argument is hard to follow	<p>-remind her that repetition is key in a presentation because you only have one chance to make your points heard.</p> <p>- ask her to summarize the argument in one to two sentences and to put that shortened "thesis" statement into their presentation both at the beginning and in the conclusion.</p> <p>- have student use gestures to clarify and facilitate the points made (ex: if she has three main points, have her count each point on her fingers)</p> <p>- Repetition, repetition, repetition!</p>
If the speech lacks structure or organization	<p>- make her stick to the outline</p> <p>- remind her of the intro, body, conclusion format.</p> <p>- ask her to include verbal "signposts" so she alerts the audience of where she is going (i.e. "my main point is..." , "there are three reasons I believe this to be true: they are x, y, &amp; z" , "in sum" , "the crux of my argument is..." , next I am going to talk about x" , "this is important because..." etc)</p>

## Some Language for Delivery

When you did (*this good thing*), (*this good thing happened*).

When you made more sustained eye contact, you became/your delivery was more....

- Credible
- Believable
- Slows you down
- Comfortable
- More genuine
- Grounded
- helps with pacing
- More natural
- makes you more confident
- audience is engaged

When your gestures improved you became/your delivery was more....

- Animated
- Enlivened
- More inclusive
- More natural
- Impassioned
- Tone change
- illustrates your point
- audience follows along

When you improved your movement, you became/your delivery was more....

- Personal
- Commanding
- Energized
- Relaxed
- Authoritative

When you paced the presentation better, you became/your delivery was more...

- Composed
  - Gravity
  - Powerful
  - Poised
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