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GIFT: Welcome to our Special Occasion! [teaching S.O. speaking using a banquet approach]

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The communication format generally known as Special Occasion Speaking touches virtually all of us at some time. However teaching this unit on “the public speaking of our lives” poses special challenges due to the diversity of goals and contexts within this big, miscellaneous category of speeches. This G.I.F.T.S. activity takes a concrete, yet hypothetical approach to enacting the special occasion context within the classroom.

Procedure:

1. Prior to the class workshop session, students read the relevant chapters.
2. In class, the instructor reviews key concepts and uses selected, available video clips to illustrate Special Occasion Speeches in action (e.g. award show acceptances, etc.)
3. The instructor then distributes a handout in the form of a banquet program for a hypothetical Public Speaking class reunion listing various S.O. tasks—such as Introductions, Award Presentations, Toasts, Eulogies, etc. (See samples)
4. Depending on the class size, small teams are formed and charged with the task of cooperatively creating a designated speech to be delivered as part of the “banquet.” For smaller classes, some speech types can be combined and/or eliminated. Students work independently for the next 45-60 minutes to research, create & practice their speeches.
5. As an option, the instructor can supply newspaper clippings of wedding announcements, feature articles, obituaries, etc., to help jump-start the students’ speech content.
6. This activity can be adjusted to class sessions of varying length but ideally, it should remain an in-class workshop rather than a homework assignment.

Typical results:

During the last 30 minutes of the class session, the banquet program is conducted using imagination and whatever props are at hand for the toasts and/or the award-giving. At the end of the “program,” the individual speakers receive oral feedback and sometimes get an opportunity to “take 2” and deliver the speech again. (Although all team members work on the creation of the speech, usually only 1-2 people per team actually deliver it.)

More often than not, the collaborative workshop atmosphere leads to reduced communication apprehension and encourages a more instinctively eloquent use of language. Although every student will not get to work on every type of S.O. speech, every student does get hands-on experience with the basic tasks of creating a S.O. speech and with explicit adaptation to a communication context.

YOU & your teammate(s) have about 45 minutes to create the assigned **Special Occasion** speech. You should also take your break sometime during this period.

For the content for most of these speeches, you should use data from the clippings (*) provided. However, some teams will need to rely on using your imaginations to make up hypothetical details when necessary. The point is to practice the creation & delivery of special occasion-type speeches.

After the special occasion speeches are created, they will be delivered according to the sequence in the banquet program: [each team will get a grade for the overall quality of the strategies+ creation + the delivery + the postmortem]

Welcome
to our
Special
Occasion

*The Third Annual
Public Speaking Class
Reunion Banquet*

*We hope you will join us in
Remembering and
Celebrating our
experiences in a
course that
changed our lives.*

TODAY'S PROGRAM:

- » **Welcome Speech** delivered by _____
- » **In Memoriam in commemoration of our members who have passed away this year** delivered by _____
- » **Presentation of Distinguished Alumnus Award** delivered by _____
- » **Acceptance of the D. A. Award** delivered by _____
- » **Announcement of Today's Guest of Honor/Lifetime Achievement** delivered by _____
- » **TOAST in honor of our most recently married couple** delivered by _____
- » **TOAST in honor of a newly engaged couple** delivered by _____
- » **Closing Comments (A.D.S)** delivered by _____