



EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING



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ABOUT THE PRESENTER



Clyde Williams is an attorney-at-law who practises as a barrister, and is an associate tutor at the Norman Manley Law School, Mona Campus, Kingston, Jamaica. He is a graduate of the Norman Manley Law School and holds a Bachelor of Laws (The University of the West Indies (UWI), Cave Hill, Barbados) and a Bachelor of Arts (UWI, Mona, Jamaica). He has had tremendous success and experience in debating and public speaking as, debater, trainer and adjudicator. Some highlights are:

DEBATER /SPEAKER

Winner, Adlai E. Stevenson Public Speaking Competition – Princeton University, USA February 1996.

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- Lead speaker on winning team and voted best debater. Caribbean Collegiate Debate Competition, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, February 1993.
 - Runner up, World Public Speaking Competition, University College, Cork, Ireland December 1995- January 1996 from a field of over 250 competitors representing top universities and law schools from Europe, U.S.A, Canada, Australia, Asia and the Caribbean.

TRAINER

Trainer of debaters and public speakers since 1996.

- Trained two consecutive champion teams (UWI, Mona) and two consecutive champion debaters, Caribbean Collegiate Debate Competition – late 1990's.
- Trained the Anguillian team that won the 2007 Optimist International Zone Public Speaking Competition held in St. Kitts.

ADJUDICATOR

Adjudicated in tournaments in Jamaica, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and at Princeton University, U.S.A.



INTRODUCTION

This presentation is the first of two on debating. It is intended to be a hip pocket guide. The Concise Oxford 10th ed, revised 2002 defines debate as “*an argument, especially one involving many people.*” Argument is defined as “*a set of reasons given in support of something*”, argumentation as “*the action of reasoning systematically in support of something.*” One may tweak the Oxford definition on debate by inserting after “*argument,*” these words “*involving two or more persons*” and deleting “*especially one involving many people.*”



INTRODUCTION CONT'D

*Our working definition of a debate now becomes “**an argument involving two or more persons.**”* The advantage of this definition is that it recognises more fully that there are many informal debates that take place daily in the work place, the home, places of worship, school and in many other circumstances.

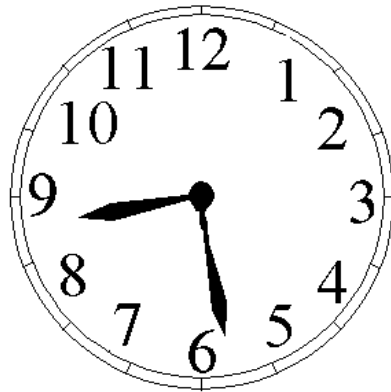
This presentation will focus on one of the fundamentals of effective debating – **public speaking**. Each debater is required to master this basic skill as it is the cornerstone of effective debating.

There are **3 essential ‘P’s** in public speaking: **Preparation, Presentation, and Practise.**

PREPARATION

Preparation, the first 'P'. Focus on:

- **Objective** – your desired outcome
- **Context** – all the relevant circumstances including audience and venue
- **Time**
- **Research**



PREPARATION CONT'D

- ✓ **Time.** Every sensible person values it. Even less sensible people get irritated when you waste their time. Use it wisely. Some general guidelines are:
 - Love your voice but do not fall in love with it
 - Much of what you say is likely to be forgotten by the end of the presentation.

TIME

PREPARATION CONT'D

- Focus on quality, not quantity
- Let economy be your hallmark
- Summarise not rush
- Watch the body language of the audience, do not ignore it; you do so at your peril
- Stand up, Speak up, Shut up, Sit down.



- ✓ **Research.** There is no shortcut.
 - Be exhaustive – research broadly then particularise as you fine tune your preparation
 - Diligence is the key
 - Do not be linear. Be holistic – explore all the possible issues

- ✓ **Preparation** is a very important **‘P’**. Focus at all times on:
 - **Your objective**
 - **Context**
 - **Time**
 - **Research**

PRESENTATION

✓ **Presentation**, the second 'P'.

Presentation ultimately comes down to two 'M's: **Matter** and **Manner**. Every good speech involves these two basic elements.

MATTER

There are two things to consider when one looks at matter.

- **Content**
- **Argument & Analysis**



MATTER CONT'D

✓ **Content.** Typically content may be divided into:

- **Constructive** – that is all materials used to advance the argument/position
- **Rebuttal** – the materials used to counter arguments offered by the other side.



MATTER CONT'D

Content must be concise, comprehensive, comprehensible and accurate – the 4 'C's.* Accuracy will not be forgotten. There is an obvious tension between being concise and comprehensive. This tension must be carefully managed. The amount of available time will no doubt help in this management.

*This is not an original formulation, see William M. Rose, *Pleadings Without Tears*, 4th ed (Blackstone Press Limited 1997)

✓ **Argument & Analysis.** Reasons must be offered to advance and establish one's case. Analysis involves drawing conclusions. There should be detailed examination of the facts and issues.

- Make connections between things, events, people
- Distinguish where necessary. Nuance arguments
- Provide reasons
- Use examples to buttress arguments
- Draw conclusions. If several may reasonably be drawn show why the one selected is more valid.

In short, **Matter** is all about **Content** and **Argument & Analysis.**

MANNER

✓ **Manner** may be conveniently broken down into:

➤ **Organization**

➤ **Style**

✓ **Organization.** Clearly, carefully map out arguments. Every good speech has an opening, body, and conclusion. State concisely in your opening what the speech is about, state what the components are. Deliver the main body with clarity. At the end extract and distil the most critical components.



MANNER CONT'D

✓ **Style.** There is no one effective style. However, there are critical components that should be focussed on no matter what your style is:

➤ **Decide between speaker notes or full text.**

Choose the one with which you are most comfortable. Debaters/public speakers who use speaker notes tend to be more effective than those who use full text. Persons who use full text tend to read rather than argue/present their points. Debating/public speaking is not the same as reading a speech. Argumentation is at its core.



MANNER CONT'D

➤ **Eye contact** is critical. Do not stare at individuals to the point of their discomfort; rather look at members in the audience as you 'sweep the floor'. Divide your audience into left, right, and centre. Give attention to all sections. Train yourself to do so. Give each section equal attention. Sweep the entire floor when you make a big point.



MANNER CONT'D

➤ **Voice modulation** (pitch, tone, pace/pause, volume). Learn to vary how you use your voice. Some points require you to pause after making them. The pause often underscores the importance of the point. It requires constant practise to use your voice effectively in debating/public speaking. Let your voice work for you. Get the audience to feel happy, sad, expectant, etc using your voice. Do not race nor are you to lumber.



MANNER CONT'D

➤ **Gestures** – learn to use these effectively.

Body language often conveys a lot more than the spoken words as people gather most of their information through their eyes. A good idea is for you to get a video made of your speaking engagements. This provides you with an opportunity to know what you look like when you speak in public. Work on making your gestures tell the story you wish to be told.



MANNER CONT'D

- **Language.** Verbosity detracts from substance. Use clear, simple, precise language.
- **Repetition.** Develop and use themes and labels to anchor main points. Repeat these throughout the presentation. Do not overdo it.

Presentation is to be mastered, you are on show.

It involves:

- ✓ **Matter** (content, argument & analysis)
- ✓ **Manner** (organization and style)

PRACTISE

✓ Practise, the final 'P'.

- Use all available opportunities to sharpen your skills: off the cuff arguments/discussions, presentations at work/school/social club/religious fora. Be deliberate in practise. Identify a particular area and work on it.
- Know what you look like, sound like, your strengths/weaknesses. Work on sounding better, looking better, maximising your strengths and minimising weaknesses. Practise like an athlete would train.



PRACTISE CONT'D

- Reflect on your practise sessions and presentations. Get feedback where you can. Evaluate and note improvements. Practise, Practise, Practise.
- If you are a regular speaker, try to get videos of presentations so that you can review and note areas for improvement.

CONCLUSION

Effective debating starts with learning to be a good public speaker.

- ✓ Good public speaking involves **3 'P's: Preparation, Presentation, and Practise.**
- ✓ **Preparation** focuses on: **Objective, Context, Time, and Research.**



CONCLUSION CONT'D

- ✓ **Presentation** focuses on **Matter** and **Manner**.
- ✓ **Matter** involves: **Content** and **Argument & Analysis**
- ✓ **Manner** involves: **Organization** and **Style**
- ✓ Finally, **Practise, Practise, Practise.**



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