

Adapting to Audiences

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Jeff Greenberg / PhotoLibrary

Initial Audience Disposition

- ▶ Initial audience disposition is knowledge and opinions audiences have about your topic before they hear you speak
 - Narrowing topic
 - Determining main points
 - Selecting supporting material
 - Making language choices

- ▶ **Common ground** - a sense of shared background, knowledge, attitudes, experiences, and philosophies
- ▶ Use **personal pronouns**
- ▶ Ask **rhetorical questions**
 - Stimulate mental response on the part of the audience
- ▶ Draw from common experiences

Sample Rhetorical Question

- ▶ Awkward situation involving a rhetorical question

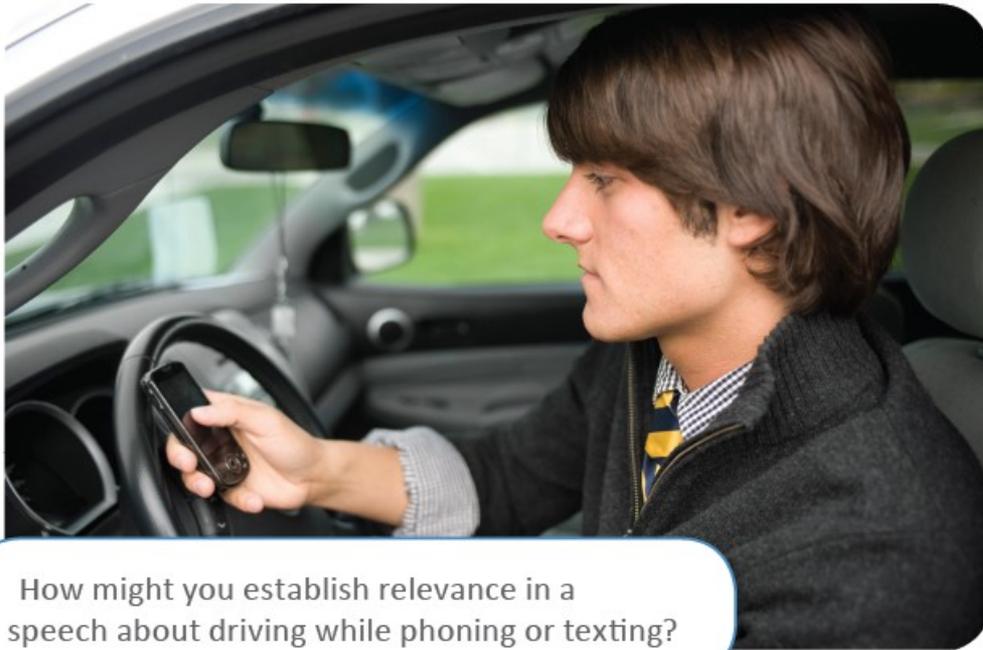


- ▶ Demonstrating **relevance** - adapting the information in ways that help audience members realize it is important for them to listen
 - Emphasize timeliness
 - Emphasize proximity
 - Emphasize personal impact

Relevance

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Matthew Rambo/Photodisc/Getty Images



How might you establish relevance in a speech about driving while phoning or texting?

Speaker Credibility

- ▶ **Credibility** – audience’s perception of a speaker as trustworthy and knowledgeable about the topic
 - Articulate knowledge and expertise
 - Disclose experiences, education, special study, skill, “track record”
 - Convey trustworthiness
 - “Believability”
 - Display personableness
 - Pleasing personality

Information Comprehension and Retention

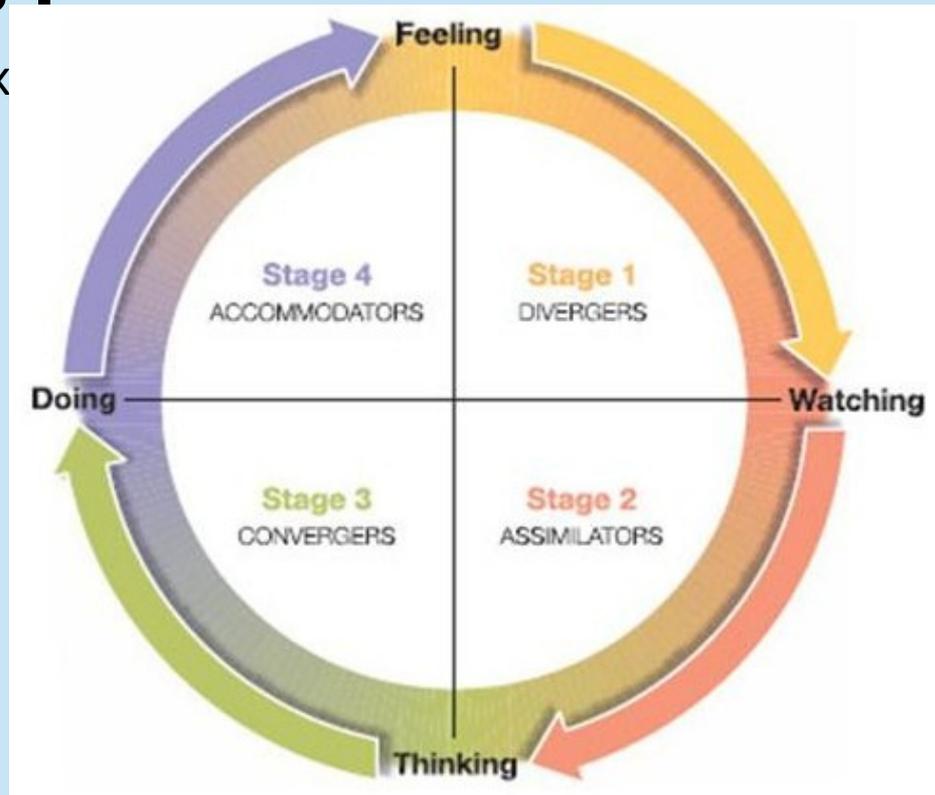
- ▶ Appeal to diverse learning styles
 - Preferred way of receiving information
- ▶ Use transitions
- ▶ Choose specific and familiar language
- ▶ Use vivid language and examples
- ▶ Compare unfamiliar ideas with familiar ones

Improving Comprehension & Retention

- ▶ Appeal to diverse learning styles.

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Language and Cultural Differences

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- ▶ Work to be understood when speaking in your second language
- ▶ Choose Culturally Appropriate Supporting Material

Forming a Specific Audience Adaption Plan

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The Six Questions of a Good Audience Adaption Plan

Forming a Specific Audience Adaptation Plan

- ▶ What is my audience's initial disposition toward my topic ?
- ▶ What common ground do audience members share with one another and with me?
- ▶ How relevant will the audience find this material?

Forming a Specific Audience Adaptation Plan

- ▶ What can I do to enhance my credibility?
- ▶ How can I make it easier for audience members to comprehend and remember the information?
- ▶ What language or cultural differences do audience members have with one another and with me?

- ▶ Learning styles

<http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>

- ▶ Speaker credibility

<http://webhome.idirect.com/~kehamilt/spkcred.html>