

4.6 Demonstrating Flowing

This activity introduces structured note-taking skills. By using an overhead projector, students will examine a model flow sheet and critique their own flowing technique.

Time Allotment

Approximately 20 minutes. If extensive discussion about flowing ensues, this activity could take as long as 45 minutes to an hour.

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- be introduced to techniques of identifying and recording critical information from a speech.
- be able to identify several ways in which they can improve their own flowing technique.

Materials and Preparation

Photocopies of a pre-written 1AC speech on the current resolution. Students should be familiar with the case you select. The length of the 1AC should depend on the skill level of the students. For beginning debaters who are just learning to flow, it might make sense to have the 1AC be no longer than four or five cards. You will also need an overhead projector and a pre-written flow of the 1AC speech on a set of transparency sheets for the overhead projector that you prepare. Each contention of the case should be flowed on a separate transparency sheet. You might want to type up this model flow.

Method

Ask a student volunteer to read the pre-written 1AC speech. This is an opportunity either to allow an individual with well-honed presentation skills to model effective practice, or to give a novice student the opportunity to speak in front of the course for one of the first times. Warn the volunteer that you will occasionally be stopping her during the speech. Ask students to take out a pen and paper, and to flow the speeches.

Before the student begins, set up the overhead projector with the transparency of the first contention. Cover the transparency so that none of the points are visible at the beginning of the speech.

Ask the speaker to begin presenting the 1AC, reminding the class to flow the speech. At the end of the first contention or observation, stop the speaker. Uncover the transparency with your flow of the first contention for the class to see. You can either uncover the flow one card at a time, or uncover the entire contention at once. Allow the class time to ask questions or discuss differences between their flows and yours. Students should indicate ways in which your flow needs improvement. Engage them in conversations about what information is most important to keep track of on a flow.

Ask the speaker present the rest of the speech, and stop him after each contention. Let the class see and discuss your flow of each contention after each contention has been presented. Students should try and make each contention that they flow more complete and structured than the last by modeling your examples.