



Speaking Privilege

In light of the recent threat to marriage equality in Florida, public speaking students were challenged to explore how they would feel if one of the privileges they cherish was threatened. In their one-minute speeches, they shared their personal thoughts and experiences related to understanding how privilege or - lack of it - shapes their lives. This was after a discussion of the need for rhetorical sensitivity and empathy towards the diverse audience they will be speaking to in their future careers.

Course:	SPE 208 - Speech for Business and Professions Spring 2015
Learning Objectives:	<p>This lesson in empathy was designed to help students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of empathy, rhetorical sensitivity, and audience analysis. • Gain experience in delivering a speech with confidence. • Learn to work in an interdisciplinary environment and recognize that emerging technologies will dictate the need to present their speeches in multiple platforms.
Assignment:	Write and deliver a one-minute speech addressing the question "What if one of the privileges you cherish the most was taken away from you?"
Assessments:	Diversity Worksheet, Speech Grading Rubric.
Instructors:	<p>Renee Brokaw, Visiting Assistant Professor Department: Speech, Theatre and Dance School: University of Tampa rbrokaw@ut.edu</p> <p>Renee Brokaw, Visiting Assistant Professor of Speech at the University of Tampa, teaches courses in Public Speaking for Business and the Professions and Oral Interpretation of Literature. Prior to joining the University of Tampa, Brokaw taught courses at the University of North Carolina Charlotte. Brokaw's work at the University of North Carolina Charlotte included teaching public speaking courses, coordinating a leadership learning community and creating an online template for diversity infused courses. Areas of interest include public speaking, diversity and embracing emerging technologies in an effort to improve course design. Brokaw received her M.A. in Communication Arts from the University of Notre Dame.</p>
Comments:	<p>What worked well?</p> <p>This lesson evolved from a collaboration of an interdisciplinary team of professors, dedicated to incorporating a social justice issue into their syllabi. The result was an assignment challenging students to consider their privilege and how they would feel if they were in the minority. While I've always incorporated a diversity theme in the past, this particular perspective enhanced the effectiveness of the exercise. Additionally, as a result of the collaboration, students had the unique opportunity to learn from a rich resource we have here on campus, Film Professor Christopher Boulton. During a television studio session, he taught them how to speak on camera. As new technologies emerge, it is important for them to learn to speak to an audience in multiple media platforms.</p>

What did you learn?

I learned that I want to do this again and again. I would like to continue this collaboration and explore other social justice issues and integrate them into my syllabi in the future.

What would you change?

In an ideal world, I would have liked this collaboration to have culminated at the end of the semester. I wanted more opportunities for students to speak and overcome their fear before they were tasked with speaking in such a public forum.

What was the student response/feedback?

Student feedback exceeded my expectations. They reported that the lesson on empathy enhanced their understanding of the diverse audience they will be addressing in the future. They also said that treating people with dignity and respect had a positive affect on their confidence level. In other words, having empathy made them “feel good,” about them selves. This lesson didn’t just affect their minds, I saw it touching their hearts. In terms of the opportunity to learn from Professor Boulton, at first students were reticent to step out of the classroom and into a television studio, but every one of them walked out after their session with him excited about having had the opportunity. Having positive feedback from another professor enhanced their confidence and was invaluable to me, since that is one of my primary goals as a speech instructor.