

Types of Supporting Evidence (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

Using a variety of supporting evidence help speakers clarify their topic and connect with their audience. Supporting evidence frequently comes from the speaker's research.

▪ Numbers and statistics

- Numbers are quantitative data. A speaker might report that ten of their classmates participate in intramural activities.
- Statistics are sets of data that have been calculated. For instance, if a speaker reported the average amount of student loan debt held by UWL students they might use a statistic. Statistics are usually drawn from research and are verbally cited in a speech.

▪ Examples are short stores used to explain or enhance a topic

- Brief examples – short stories are often used as attention getters.
- Extended examples – longer stories that may be referenced throughout the speech, often in the introduction and conclusion to demonstrate the takeaways of the speech.
- Hypothetical – fictional stories used to connect with the audience.
 - When using hypothetical examples, be sure that they are based on speech research. When using examples, be sure to use typical examples that accurately represent the speech research.

▪ Testimony – statements used to explain and support speeches.

- Expert testimony – statements from individuals who have knowledge, training and/or experience in a specific field. For example, a biomedical engineer could be an expert in new medical devices.
- Peer testimony – statement from a peer of the audience, often used when talking about a specific issue relative to the campus. For example, if a student were giving a speech encouraging students to volunteer with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, they might include testimony from a student who regularly volunteers with the program.

▪ Definition – terms or concepts that need to be defined for the audience to understand what the speech.

- Denotative meaning – the dictionary meaning of a term or concept
- Connotative meaning – the meaning of a term in a specific context

Handout adapted from Communicating Effectively

Husiman, D., Berry, I., Peterson, J., Van Oss, J. (Eds.) (2019). *Communicating Effectively*. Southlake, TX. Fountainhead Press.