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*