Outlining in Speeches (UW-La Crosse Public Speaking Center)

Most professional and classroom presentation require speakers to develop speech outlines. Here are some ideas for developing effective outlines:

**Functions of outlines**

- A blueprint or road map of a speech
- Shows connections between ideas
- Provides structure for speaker and audience

**Types of outlines**

- Full sentence preparation outline
  - All main points and subpoints in a speech
  - Includes examples, research, and transitions written out
- Developed as a full draft of the speech

**Key word speaking outline**

- Created from the full sentence outline
- Uses key words and phrases
- Includes source citations from research
- May be transferred to notecards
- Might include delivery cues/notes for a speaker
  - Slow down, smile, breathe!
  - You are doing great!
Incorporate principles of effective outlining

▪ **Subordination**: Speeches have “a hierarchy of ideas” (p. 143)
  o Main points are more important than subpoints
  o Use indentation to show subordination

▪ **Coordination**: All ideas at the same level have the same importance
  o All main points are of equal value in terms of time, support, and development in your speech
  o Consider coordination when developing the speech

▪ **Division**: any time a main point has a subpoint, there must be two or more subpoints
  o If not, revise speech to include an additional subpoint or eliminate subpoint
  o Include additional examples so each main point has enough support

**Tips for developing effective outlines**

▪ Practice with key word outline (as opposed to practicing with a full sentence outline)

▪ Use automatic outlining function on Word programs
  o Using the space bar or creating your own outline can create inconsistent outlines
  o Automatic outlining can create a clean and consistent outline

▪ Be consistent with outline format
  o Use all key words or full sentences for your information
  o Check outline before submitting it

▪ If available, use instructor resources for specific formatting for the assignment