How to Conduct an Effective Speech Evaluation

Before the Speech

1. **Talk to the speaker and ask two questions**. *"What are you personally trying to accomplish?" "What should I focus on as the evaluator?"*

2. **Read over the project in the book**. Pay particular attention to the "Evaluation Guide" for the project. The questions there will help you focus your attention. If no book is available, give a general evaluation following the PIES technique (see reverse).

During the Speech

1. **Notice how the speaker starts**. Did he grab your attention with a story or quote? Did she apologize? Did he look at the audience and smile, or bury his head in his notes?

2. **Make notes as the speech progresses**. Jot down key words for stories, quotes and ideas that the speaker uses. This will help you focus on the content plus help you visualize the structure and message of the speech (or lack thereof).

3. **Observe the physical behaviors**. Notice the speaker's use of eye contact, vocal variety, gestures, body positioning, and movement in the speaking area. Keep asking yourself: *Do his (or her) actions add to or detract from the presentation?*

4. **Listen for the speaker's conclusion**. Did she summarize her main points? Did he abruptly end because he saw the 'red light'? Did the ending 'fit' the rest of the speech?

Presenting the Evaluation

1. **Consider the speaker's expertise and *always* offer suggestions for improvement**. For a new speaker, be more lavish in your praise to build his or her confidence. For intermediate or advanced speakers, give targeted areas of improvement and praise to continue work.

2. **Evaluate the speech, not the speaker**. Focus your comments on the speaker's delivery and how the message is organized. Although it can be hard to do on a topic with which you disagree, you *must* disassociate from the content of the speech and avoid challenging or offering a rebuttal to the speaker. Let the audience accept or reject the speaker's opinions, ideas, beliefs or conclusions. Your job is to help the speaker communicate his or her message more effectively, whether you agree with it or not.

3. **Use "I" language**. Your evaluation is always based on how you processed the speech. *"I heard you use the word …" "As I saw you handle the prop, …" "I felt confused when you …" "I appreciated how you …" "I sensed a little nervousness in you when you …"*

4. **Package your evaluation comments** from your notes and the "Evaluation Guide" for the project by using the PIES technique (see reverse).

Developed by David Caban, ATM-S/AL, and 4-time winner of the District 10 Evaluation Contest. Updated June 2012.

THE PIES EVALUATION TECHNIQUE

(PIES = Positives, Improvements, Encouragement and Summary)

Start with (P) Positives

Mention *specific* positives qualities you observed. (For time, limit yourself to 4.)

- (Example) "I liked the way you organized your speech. *I heard three points with specific, relevant examples of each, and a powerful conclusion."*
- (Example) "I thought your eye contact was particularly good. *I noticed you focused on each audience member for a couple of seconds. I think we all felt included."*

Give your personal reaction, either positive or negative.

- (Example) "*I personally found your speech* entertaining and fun."
- (Example) "*I didn't personally feel inspired to try this technique,* but I think it has merits for people who are struggling with that problem."

Offer one or two (I) Improvements

Mention *specific* areas of improvement and give *specific* ideas to try. (Limit yourself to 2.)

- (Example) "I felt you were looking over us, not at us. *Try focusing on specific people for two seconds each and then moving on*."
- (Example) "Rather than leaning on the lectern, *push it out of the way before you start*."
- (Example) "I heard you say you had four ideas for us, but I only counted three. *Next time I suggest enumerating the points clearly as 'first', 'second', 'third' and 'fourth'*."

Give (E) Encouragement and a (S) Summary of Your Evaluation

Not so good: "Well, that's my evaluation. Thanks for a great speech!"

Better: "Overall, I think you did a nice job on this project. Next time, pay particular attention to your tendency to clear your throat and watch some of those awkward word choices I mentioned. I think you have super speech organization skills and I look forward to how you'll apply them in your next project. I'm sure that next time you'll really sell your message to us with even greater impact. Thanks for a great speech!"

Remember This, Too …

Avoid reviewing all of the content of the speech. The audience heard it once already from the speaker. Everyone wants to hear your feedback and suggestions. You only have 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 minutes for a Toastmasters evaluation. Use the time wisely and focus on Positives, Improvements, Encouragement and a quick Summary.

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How to effectively give a Speech Evaluation using the PIES Evaluation Technique

(PIES = Positives, Improvements, Encouragement & Summary)

List two specific (P) positive points you observed.

1. _____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

State one personal reaction to the speech, either positive or negative.

_____

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_____

State one (I) improvement.

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_____

Give (E) one encouragement statement.

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_____

Give (S) a summary statement.

_____

_____

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Created by Donna Williams based on David Caban's PIES Technique.