

Public Speaking Workshop - Part 1

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

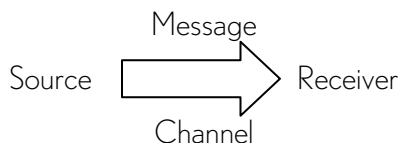
Friday, August 26, 2011

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Dr. Paul King

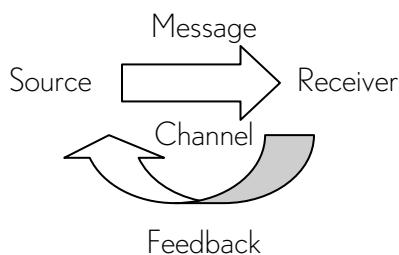
- I remember the docents as much as I remember the art. Their enthusiasm and passion cemented my impressions and understanding as much as the objects themselves.
- Art itself is communication. Here are three models for understanding communication:

The Linear (Berlo) Model



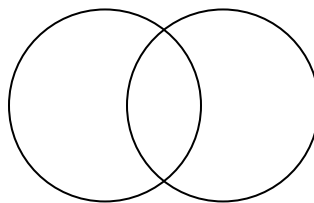
- In the Linear Model, it is believed that information is sent unilaterally from source (artist) to receiver (viewer) and successful communication occurred when the receiver clearly understands the message the source transmitted. This is the classic means of understanding communication and might relate to traditional art where there is a "right" interpretation.

Interactive Model



- In the Interactive Model, communication is two-way and involves feedback from the receiver back to the source.

Transactional Model



- In the Transactional Model, meaning is socially constructed through conversation as opposed to transmitted from a source to a receiver. This approach seems well-suited to modern and contemporary art where the message is more open-ended. Docents and viewers should investigate the piece together to explore potential meaning.
 - This model is appropriate when the artist wants viewers to think, not just react and receive information. This model sustains an ongoing conversation.
 - Meaning is constructed depending on what the viewer brings to the table.
- Get the viewer's mind and heart involved so that they become active in the interpretation of the piece.
 - Providing context and history are important, but go beyond mere facts to construct a story. Oral history is still a strong part of human nature. We remember stories with a beginning, middle and end better than isolated facts.
 - Introduction
 - This is the orientation for the tour. Set the tone for the tour to encourage visitors to converse and interpret in an active way.
 - Ask visitors about themselves and their reasons for coming to the Museum. Listen and remember so you can personalize the tour for them.
 - Body
 - Make visitors feel important; let them know their opinions are valuable and interesting.
 - Ask questions of them and encourage them to ask questions of you. By asking questions, you can demonstrate that you, too, are a student of art and that hearing their thoughts helps your own understanding.
 - Mention your own eureka moments to demonstrate how you have come to understand the work in new ways. How have you found inspiration in the piece?
 - Conclusion
 - Look at each person and individually thank them for coming. Encourage them to go back through the galleries and continue looking and thinking on their own.

Dr. Amber Finn

Macro-Organization of Tours

- Introduction
 - Public speakers are often most nervous at the beginning of their talk. It might help to script your introduction to allow your nerves to calm down.
 - Greet your guests and build a rapport with them. Be friendly and approachable.
 - Introduce yourself and provide the agenda for the tour. This helps set reasonable expectations, can ease anxiety for new visitors, and gives you an air of credibility.

- Where will you start? Where will you end?
 - How many pieces can you expect to see? Explain why you will not be covering all of the pieces on view.
 - Get to know your guests.
 - Where are they from? Have they been here before? What are they interested in seeing?
 - Let visitors know that it is okay to ask questions and share their opinions.
 - For children, rather than telling them the rules, ask them for the rules. They will remember what they tell you more than what you tell them.
- Body
 - Have a plan, but adapt for your specific audience.
 - Ask and encourage questions along the way. Think ahead about how you will encourage more interaction.
 - Reference information you gleaned about the visitors during your introduction to help them relate to the work on a more personal level.
 - You do not have to share all of the information you know about each piece. In addition to giving select information, have the visitors tell you about the works. Have them tell you what they see and how they interpret it, how it is similar or different from the work you had seen before, etc.
- Conclusion
 - Thank visitors for coming and encourage them to return.

Nonverbal Communication

- The advice below is both culturally and contextually bound to the United States and the art museum. Other cultures and situations may call for different guidelines.
- Eye contact
 - Have eye contact with all individuals on your tour.
 - Helps establish credibility
 - Directs attention
 - So when you look at the art, tour patrons will too.
 - Be sure to then turn back around to face your group to maintain eye contact with them.
 - Signals that you are paying attention and understanding what they are saying
 - Holds others accountable for remaining engaged
 - In large groups, the back row tends to lose interest the fastest. Mentally break the group into three chunks (left to right and front to back) and look periodically at all of them in order to keep everyone engaged.
- Gestures
 - Add interest and clarity
 - Planned and deliberate

- Make these gestures for a reason, such as to direct attention to a portion of a painting.
 - It is often considered rude to point with your finger. Instead, hold out your hand with the palm up and make a sweeping gesture to direct attention.
 - Spontaneous
 - These gestures are often done automatically, such as those made when you say “move in closer” or “let’s stand back a little”. They are basically a visual image of what you want your group to do and help to clarify the verbal message.
 - Control the flow of conversation
 - These gestures help indicate when it is your turn to speak or when you expect them to answer.
- Facial Expressions
 - This is the primary source for emotional expression and helps indicate your mood.
 - A genuine smile goes a long way. Fake smiles involve only the mouth; genuine smiles also involve the eyes.
 - If you are having a bad day, that will show on your face. Try to allow time before the tour to calm down, breathe deeply and have a peaceful moment so that your smile is genuine.
 - Would it help to share that you’re having a bad day, but are looking forward to the tour with them? Only if you can do so with humor. Otherwise, a statement like this can be a downer and make the group feel uncomfortable.
 - The greeting period during your introduction may be a good way to become so engaged with the tour group that you get out of your own head.
 - They show you are paying attention.
- Body Orientation
 - Demonstrates you are willing to communicate
 - When your feet are pointed toward someone, it indicates you want to talk to them.
 - When your body is turned away from someone, it indicates you do not want to engage with them.
 - It is important to turn toward your tour group (which may mean turning away from the art) to facilitate conversation.
 - Orient your body to individuals as well as the entire group.
 - For challenging individuals, such as those who are dominating the conversation, you may be able to cut them off through body language.
 - First, actively look at others in the group to indicate you want more people to get involved.
 - Direct questions to specific individuals in the group.
 - Gently use your body orientation to cut the domineering person off by turning your shoulder or back to the person.
 - Finally, you may need to be straightforward and tell the person that you appreciate their enthusiasm, but that you want to hear from others as well.

- Distance/Space
 - Communicates expectation
 - For instance, you can indicate where you'd like your group to stop and stand before a work of art (for example, halfway across the gallery for a broad overview, then moving closer to examine details).
 - If you move closer/lean in to your group, you communicate that you expect more interaction. If you take a step back, you communicate that you have the floor.
- Voice
 - Volume can enhance your credibility. If you talk louder, you seem more commanding. If you talk too softly, it may become hard to hear you and visitors will lose interest more quickly.