

Spring 3-8-2022

Exploring Types of Evidence in Oral Communication

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Exploring Types of Evidence

Objectives:

- Practice active listening while closely studying a speech
- Observe how accomplished speakers utilize evidence/supporting materials
- Engage with a variety of supporting materials
- Work collaboratively with a group of peers
- Practice writing clear oral citations
- Understand the importance of having a diversity of sources

Steps:

- Watch the following Ted Talk as a class: [“For the Love of Fangirls”](#) by Yve Blake
 - Students are instructed to actively listen with particular attention to the speaker’s supporting materials
- Worksheet: The instructor distributes a two-part worksheet for students to work with during the activity. (Located at the end of this document.)
 - Part One: As students watch Blake’s speech, they must make a note on the provided chart every time they hear a piece of evidence mentioned
 - Students then work in groups of three to compare their results
 - Students end Part One by responding to four questions
 - The class engages in a discussion about what it looks like to have a diversity of evidence, as well as what it adds to the speaker’s credibility and larger message

For instructors’ reference, here is an example of how students might track sources as they watch:

Scholarly literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research from psychologist Carol Gilligan
Books, book chapters	
Popular sources (news, magazines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Various online articles about fangirls
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fan-created pages/accounts (no specific names/titles listed) ● YouTube compilation video of fan reactions
Dictionaries, encyclopedias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Merriam-Webster dictionary, “fangirl” ● Origin of term “hysterical”
Interviews, anecdotes, personal testimony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2015 conversation with teen girl about Harry Styles ● Her dad told her a story about the Beatles ● Voice coach Amy Hume ● The speaker’s own musical, <i>Fangirl</i>

- Part Two: Crafting clear citations
 - The instructor rewinds the video to the 7:05 mark and asks students to listen closely to a ~30-second excerpt of the speech where Blake mentions two sources but leaves out some important context
 - Students respond to the questions on the back of the worksheet
 - Students revise the excerpt (to the best of their ability with a brief Google search, considering they did not perform extensive research on Blake's topic) to make the discussion of these two sources more effective, explicit, and credible
 - Students share out their ideas for enhancing the excerpt

For instructors' reference, here is an example of a possible revision (with edits in red) that gives more context about the sources Blake used, giving both sources more authority and credibility:

- “Then I meet Amy Hume. She's a voice coach **with several years of experience as a voice and dialect expert**. And she blows my mind. Because she tells me that the female voice between the ages of 11 and 13 is one of the most interesting things to study. Why? Because there's this research **dating back to the 1980s, conducted** by Carol Gilligan, **a psychologist and author of five books**, that says that is the age when girls begin to perform and alter their voices. For example, adding breath for maturity, (Imitating vocal fry) or adding vocal fry for apathy.”

Worksheet begins on next page.

Exploring Types of Evidence

Part 1: Tracking Sources

Use the chart below to track the supporting materials Yve Blake mentions in her speech. Write down any piece of evidence she includes, along with any relevant details she notes. For example, something like “*Teen Vogue* article from 2018” would go under “popular sources.” This activity requires you to practice active listening throughout the speech so you can try to catch every piece of evidence she mentions.

Scholarly literature	
Books, book chapters	
Popular sources (news, magazines)	
Social media	
Dictionaries, encyclopedias	
Interviews, anecdotes, personal testimony	
Other types of evidence	

After comparing your results with your group members, answer the following questions:

1. Were there any pieces of evidence you missed that your peers noticed?
2. Why is it important to have several different types of evidence in a speech? What does it add to the speech itself or to the speaker’s credibility?
3. Which supporting materials were more effective than others in this speech? Why?
4. Is there a particular type of evidence that Blake didn’t use that could have further enhanced the message of her speech? Explain.

Part 2: Crafting Clear Citations

In her speech, Yve Blake *mentioned* a number of sources from a variety of genres. Do these all “count” as explicit oral citations for the purposes of our class speeches? Would we consider them to be sufficient pieces of evidence?

Let’s take a look at one excerpt of her speech and consider ways to rewrite it. Rewatch the brief section (~7:05 to 7:35) of Blake’s speech, where she says the following, mentioning two different sources:

“Then I meet Amy Hume. She's a voice coach. And she blows my mind. Because she tells me that the female voice between the ages of 11 and 13 is one of the most interesting things to study. Why? Because there's this research by Carol Gilligan that says that is the age when girls begin to perform and alter their voices. For example, adding breath for maturity, (Imitating vocal fry) or adding vocal fry for apathy.”

1. What necessary information is Blake missing that would make this a more effective, explicit oral citation? List them below.
2. Using your device, perform a brief Google search to find any details that could enhance this excerpt of the speech. Jot down any key details you might want to add.
3. Use the lines of text above these questions to make any edits that will enhance Blake’s credibility in this section of the speech. Closely examine areas where you can add more information, cross out words, or make any other changes that would improve this excerpt.