

## REAP SPEAKER CHECK LIST

You have chosen your topic\*\*. You've done your research, organized your notes and put together your slides. You are ready to give your talk. Or are you? The following is intended as a checklist that you can use as you prepare your REAP presentation. It is intended to serve as a guide while you prepare and a checklist once you have prepared your talk. This is not intended as a template you must follow but rather as a useful tool to help you deliver your topic effectively. (*Examples are from an imaginary talk on the History of Public Education in the U.S.*)



### ○ ORGANIZATION

- You have begun your talk by letting your audience know what the topic is and why you have selected it.
  - Your personal passion can help connect your audience to your topic.
- You let your audience know the two or three or four major points that you will cover.
  - *Public education in the U.S. developed in response to the political and economic needs of the nation. This talk will explore:*
    - *The development of the common school*
    - *The rise of the high school*
    - *The impact of a business model on school organization*
    - *The pressures of globalization*
- Your overall talk is organized by main points; you show how one point leads to the next or you signal a shift in focus.
  - *And so, we have seen how the development of public schooling in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was responding primarily to the political demands of nation building. But as we move into the 20<sup>th</sup> century the pressures on schools will change....*
- You have ended your talk by pulling together your main points – what you hope your audience will take away when they have forgotten the details.
  - *And so, we have seen that schooling isn't simply about educating young people but about constantly addressing and re-addressing the question of educating who for what.*
- You have shared your idea with a speech mentor or critical friend – preferably as soon as you started pulling your ideas together. Ask your critical friend:
  - Does this make sense? Are the main ideas clear and supported?
  - Will someone who knows little about the topic be able to understand it?
  - Is it interesting?

## ○ **SLIDES**

- You are clear on the purpose of your slides. This might include:
  - Text to guide your listener (avoid text dense slides)
  - Images to illustrate your talk
- You put your slides together several weeks before your actual presentation OR you have met with someone from the AV committee **well in advance** of your talk.
  - Consider listing exactly what you want each slide to show – this is a must if you are having someone else prepare your slides.
- You have reviewed your slides well in advance to be sure they are accurate, complete and complement your talk as you planned
- You have reviewed your slides while AT THE SAME TIME reading through your talk

## ○ **GETTING READY**

- At least two weeks before your talk develop a rough draft of your notes
  - Recommended – use an outline of key points to help avoid reading from a text
  - OR – Develop an outline and fill it in with text in case you feel you must have something to read. To help avoid straight reading consider:
    - Bolding key ideas so when you look at your audience you can find your place again.
    - Write your text in blocks (perhaps one block per slide) rather than a straight narrative; again, that helps you keep your place.
  - Indicate on your notes when you will change slides. Some people use color dots, some block their notes – one block for each slide. Find something that works for you.

## ○ **PRACTICE AND PRACTICE AGAIN**

- Some REAPers are experienced public speakers or teachers – still they practice!
- Read through your talk several times while at the same time you click your slides on the computer in front of you.
  - Time your practice presentation
- Once you are comfortable find a “critical friend” who will listen to and critique your presentation. Ask your listener if:
  - Your pacing is good (neither too fast or too slow)
  - Your organization is clear:
    - the talk moves clearly from one point to the next;
    - Your main and supporting ideas are clear and well presented
  - Your expression is appropriate (you are not reading a “flat” text)
- Be sure to give yourself enough time to revise and revise again

\*\* - Remember, in the REAP spirit of lifelong learning, your topic should be outside of your area of professional expertise and is in an area that is new to you.