**FRAMING SPEECHES IN A MUN CONFERENCE**

This post is about a very helpful analytical tool you can use when making speeches.

In an MUN context, the concept of “framing” refers to “framing the debate,” i.e. breaking down one large, complicated topic into many smaller, simpler issues. Framing can help you structure your speeches and resolutions, and more importantly, it can help you look like a leader.

My first speech for any topic is typically a framing speech. For example, at this year’s Harvard National MUN Conference (HNMUN), I debated Security Council Reform as the representative of the United Kingdom to the Security Council. For my very first speech, I said something similar to the following:

“Thank you, honorable Chair, and good evening, fellow delegates. Now, the United Kingdom views the larger topic of Security Council Reform as comprising three smaller issues. First, membership expansion; second, the veto; third, working practices.

Regarding membership, the United Kingdom supports the G4 plan, which gives permanent non-veto seats to Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil. Moreover, we are flexible regarding the number of non-permanent seats to be added.

Regarding the veto, the United Kingdom believes that any conversation on this issue will deadlock progress on actual reform. The members of this committee know that the Permanent 5 will not give up or grant to others their veto power.

And regarding working practices, the United Kingdom wants to incorporate informal practices into the formal rules of procedure, particularly the Arria Formula. We think that non-state actors should be allowed to address this body.

That is the United Kingdom’s position on membership expansion, the veto, and working practices. Thank you very much, and we look forward to working with all of you this weekend.”

See how I broke down the massively complicated topic of Security Council reform into more easily digestible issues? That’s framing. There may be countless other things that could be considered issues, but I’m not trying to break up the topic into every single issue. I’m simply trying to emphasize the most important ones. Essentially, framing is about coming up with a structure. In a speech, framing helps both the speaker and the listener.

A cohesive structure helps the speaker stay within the typical one minute time limit. It also helps him look like he knows what he’s talking about. Someone who knows how to analyze a topic, i.e. breaking up one big thing into many smaller things, looks like they’ve done their research. And, framing helps the speaker transition from point to point and improvise parts of their speech.

For my speech above, I basically wrote down three words on a notepad: “Membership, Veto, Practices.” I knew that I wanted to outline my country’s position, and I remembered a bunch of stuff from my research, but for the most part, I improvised a minute-long speech based on these three words. See my post on “[Making It Up](http://www.bestdelegate.com/2007/11/how-to-win-best-delegate-making-it-up.html).”

A logical structure helps the listener follow what you’re saying, which also means that they’re more likely to listen. Have you ever fallen asleep listening to another delegate drone on and on? You probably thought of this other delegate’s speech as boring. There are likely 3 three reasons for this: 1) you didn’t care anyway, 2) you didn’t like listening to the other delegate, i.e. he or she had poor delivery, or 3) you couldn’t follow what they’re saying, i.e. the speech lacked structure.

Look at it the other way. After a boring speech, have you ever woken up because a delegate gave a great speech? You probably thought of this delegate’s speech as exciting, at least somewhat. Again, there are likely 3 reasons for this: 1) you started to care about what he or she was saying, 2) you liked what you were hearing, i.e. the speaker had excellent delivery, or 3) you understood what they’re saying, i.e. the speech had a logical structure.

In short, you want to be the second speaker. Assuming your audience cares, then you want excellent delivery and interesting things to say. Having a structure helps you say interesting things.

Most importantly, framing can help you look like a leader. The committee can’t find solutions if it doesn’t know the problems. By breaking up the larger topic into smaller issues, you are showing the committee the problems, which implies that you can lead the committee towards the solutions.

Framing helps delegates and dais staff remember you. If your frame “sticks,” i.e. people like the way you broke up the topic, then other delegates will say something like, “Just like the United Kingdom said, we have three issues to deal with: membership, veto, and practices…”

Of course, different delegates can present different frames. This is an advanced MUN concept, but the “strongest” frame will win out, meaning that the committee will collectively like one delegate’s frame better than those of other delegates. In another post, I can write about “dismantling” other frames. But for more information, you can read George Lakoff’s book [Don’t Think of an Elephant!](http://books.google.com/books?id=ZFS7HQAACAAJ&dq=don%27t+think+of+an+elephant) or the Wikipedia page on [framing (social sciences)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Framing_%28social_sciences%29).

Framing is most useful for speeches, but it can also be used in resolutions. A resolution can comprise any number of operative clauses. If you have 10+ of them, then you need some way in which to organize them. How to do so? Frame it. I’ll discuss this in a separate post on resolution writing.

In closing, think of framing as coming up with a list. What are your 3 favorite places in the world? What’re your Top 10 Favorite Movies? Who’s in your Fave 5? However you form these lists from the myriad number of places, movies, and friend you’ve known–that’s framing.

*Source: http://bestdelegate.com/how-to-win-best-delegate-framing/*