

harder for other speakers to challenge as no loose ends of information are lying around for them to tug at.

Warrants

Warrants are a process of reaching a conclusion that the audience can see works in another situation and so can easily be applied to the one at hand. They are why an audience believes the claim is true. A good debater will be familiar with many types of warrants, which he can apply to any particular situation. For example:

- examples leading from a specific to a more general truth
- analogies with similar or diametrically opposed situations
- authoritative or widely acknowledged views
- cause and effect (judgment based on consequences)

Just look at the range of options set out in that short, and by no means comprehensive, list. The debater could contend that because a government has consistently failed to deliver large, complex information technology (IT) projects under budget, it will fail to do so in this situation (*example*). Or she might argue that other types of capital projects tend to overrun their budget so it is likely that IT projects with similar management practices will as well (*analogy*). She could point to the report of a legislative committee or a consistent finding of public opinion polls that such an outcome is likely (*authoritative view*). Or she might point out that budgets always overrun because the tendering process is flawed. That same process has been used for this project, which is highly likely to go over its budget as a result (*cause and effect*).

In reality she is likely to use several of these warrants or something else altogether. The general point is that you have several different ways to get from differing pieces of evidence to the same conclusion. You should also notice that the approaches overlap; the “cause and effect” warrant given above has more than a whiff of analogy about it. Added to which, if you happen to have an authoritative source—an academic report or the findings of a reputable firm of consultants—saying that this was the root of the problem, you could safely throw an “authoritative view” in for good measure. The common feature of all of these warrants is that they are grounded in concrete, real-world situations—the audience can accept them as the basis of a reasonable statement.

Warrants can also be based on principle. By accepting that the principle is a fundamental value (free speech, or equality before the law, for example), the debater can tie a particular action or decision to it. For this approach to work, the principle needs to be widely