

T H E M I R R O R

Etiquette Expert Serves lessons of Propriety

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Success in business relationships may depend on manners and etiquette. Because of this, UNC's Student Public Relations Network organized an etiquette dinner Wednesday for attendees to enjoy a three-course meal while they learned about social skills, manners and business etiquette.

Katherine Mason, vice president of JDW Social Education Programs, began her keynote presentation with a brief definition of manners and etiquette. She said that manners refer to how someone acts and that etiquette is a fancy word for rules that tell us how we should and should not behave.

"What is the very first thing you do when you sit at the table?" Mason asked. "Take your napkin, fold it diagonally in half – it will then stay on your lap until the end of the meal. There can be up to 10 utensils at your place setting, and if you are not sure which utensils to use, work your way from the outside - in." Mason said etiquette is a lot like language and a part of our everyday culture. The key is to be comfortable with yourself and make those around you comfortable as well. She said it takes about seven to 10 seconds for a first impression to be made. In that time frame, about 11 assumptions are deduced.

"Don't do anything at the table that you would not want to see others do," Mason said. Mason also demonstrated how silverware should be held in one's hands and the different styles of eating: The European/Continental Method and The American Method.

The European/Continental style involves using the same hand to both eat and cut with the fork's tines facing down when eating. The American method, on the other hand, sets the knife down and switches the fork to the other hand to eat, with the fork's tines facing up.



Katherine Mason, vice president of JDW Social Education Programs, speaks to students at the UNC Student Public Relations Network Etiquette Dinner in the University Center.

Mason provided some specific tips when practicing dining etiquette and table manners. She said some dining rules have exceptions, such as always passing to the right, unless the person is sitting directly to your left and how it is acceptable to rest your elbows/forearms on the table when there is no food on the table.

"The SPRN wanted to do something big for students from business and journalism and mass communication," said Chelley Knight, secretary of SPRN and a junior journalism major. "It was definitely fun to meet new students and for them to have the opportunity to network — very helpful and informative."