



# The impact of teaching public speaking

Mariana Rivas

4<sup>th</sup> grade English Teacher Training Course

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Teacher Antonella Suarez

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## Introduction

This work analyzes and sheds light on the topic of teaching public speaking to students learning English as a second language in a primary school that delivers fifteen weekly hours of the target language.

In the current paper I have decided to investigate the impact and benefits of teaching public speaking to obtain the best results in acquiring effective communicative skills. I have been working in a private school where the English coordinator proposed us to start doing public speaking every Friday. Having told the instructions to students we started listening to continuous complaints which came not only from students, but from parents as well. This led me to start my research in order to find out how this has worked and how it has made an impact in students' oral performance.

## Research problem

According to the Ohio State University Extension, "Good public speaking skills are made, not born". The skill is believed to be important enough that most of us are expected to look beyond any personal discomfort and find a way through, yet valid reasons exist to avoid the experience.

By researching and reading articles about this topic from different authors around the world I would like to go deeper and better understand the use and benefits of developing this performance in class.

## Theoretical framework

According to Quintilian, the famous Roman rhetorician, in his comprehensive work, *Instituto Oratoria*, famously defined the ideal "orator" or public speaker as "a good man speaking well". His "orator" was the ancient world's ideal of an educated, involved citizen, a person of good reputation guided by ethics and in command of communication skills that enabled effective and responsible exercise of influence. What we still ideally want to achieve in learning not only to be competent oral public communicators, but also responsible critical receivers of messages today. (Kennedy, 1980, page 101)

Public speaking: - giving an oral presentation during the class or another group of people- is a special form of interaction common in education. You will likely be asked to give a presentation in one of your classes at some point, and future career prospects may also involve public speaking mastering.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the effectiveness of using public speaking or oral presentations in the classroom to improve communicative skills as well as student motivation and confidence when learning a foreign language. Throughout this research paper different aspects are going to be examined based on some experts that express that public speaking is an art that requires training.

## The importance of the development of confidence

Communication is the backbone of any society. It allows us to form connections, influence decisions, and motivate changes. Public speaking is one of the most important and most dreaded forms of communication. In the working world, public speaking is a vital skill to have. While some kids take it naturally, others tend to be more fearful of standing and talking in front of a crowd.

Public speaking helps to progress your child in the following:

- Improved communication skills
- Increased self-esteem
- Planning experience
- The power of persuasion

## Aspects

Structure: Advise students to clearly divide their presentations into introduction, body and conclusion. First, they should introduce themselves, state the aim of the presentation and the points to be covered. Then, they develop the topic. And finally, they should recap knowing that the last thing they say will be the most remembered.

Timing: Oral presentations should have an appropriate length. A good tip is to start saying “My name is . . . , I will talk about. . . , and the talk will last . . . minutes” for the public to know what to expect.

Attention gaining devices: Students should use visual props (notes, charts, markers, pens, and other audio/visual aids), to get everybody’s attention. This should be done frequently enough to keep the audience interested. Whenever they display posters or images, these must be large enough for everybody to see. When given oral presentations, students make their message clear, so they should use everything at hand

to ensure that. Likewise, the other students will remember topics better if they can associate content with an image or object.

Tips for using props: Tell students not to display everything at the beginning of the presentation. They should create interest and suspense, showing the props one at a time. They should also address the audience and avoid looking at the props all the time.

Rehearsal: Tell the students that they need to practise and rehearse speaking in a loud voice, making appropriate pauses, and modulating words clearly until they flow naturally. Reassure shy students that being extrovert is not a must; rehearsal can play the trick for introvert students.

Body language: Students tend to stand up still next to the wall, and that is no correct. They should stand up at the front glancing subtly from side to side in order to make eye contact with the audience. Words should be accompanied with actions: if they count, they should hold their fingers; if they say no, they should shake their head softly. Tell students they may feel awkward, but the mark will pay off. Taking care of their personal appearance and wearing appropriate clothes are also very important aspects they should take into account.

Cards: A student reading from a piece of paper is not a nice picture. Still, they can help themselves with cards containing words that will trigger ideas. Cards should be numbered to keep them in the right order.

Proper presentations and students will improve their fluency as well as their future real-life oral skills.

## How does technology improve public speaking skills?

The electronic media revolution that began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has made learning effective public oral communication skills as much or more essential than it ever has been. We share a great deal of important information and ideas through public oral communication. Today we may communicate face to face or we may use media technology to reach much larger and more diverse audiences than ever before. Hence, the need to help students gain the appropriate skill which will help them fulfill the need of expressing ideas clearly and purposely.

## How does Public Speaking work in our school?

Students are asked to learn something by heart. It could be a paragraph from a text in the book, from a story, new vocabulary with its definition, it could be a topic from History or Science, or sometimes they are asked to prepare their own public speaking. In the last case students focus on communicating ideas. Here, they may learn to calmly take up an opposing view, to present their own ideas in an organized and coherent manner, and to defend their views to others.

## Conclusion

To summarize, public speaking is a very valuable way of helping students acquire oral skills that will benefit them not only while they are in primary school but also in high school, college and even when facing the working market demands of being a good communicator. At the moment of expressing ideas, it is fundamental to do it efficiently in order to succeed at sharing the message intended to communicate. Consequently, the audience will be able to receive and process the idea successfully. Furthermore, it helps speakers develop intrapersonal skills such as assertiveness, emotional self-awareness and even stress management.

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