A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS
TO AID IN THE TEACHING
OF PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS/

MASTER'S PROJECT

Submitted to the Department of Teacher Education
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by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE ........................................... 11

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM .................. 1
   Background
   Justification of Problem
   Problem Statement
   Procedures

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ............................. 6
   The Speech Environment
   Anxiety Caused by Speech Preparation
   Anxiety and Its Effect on Nonverbal Communication
   Anxiety During the Performance
   Apprehension Caused by Videotape Equipment

III. THE HANDBOOK ....................................... 22

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION ......................... 60

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................ 62
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background

A professor relates the story of a student in speech class. Carl was an unfortunate senior who was finally taking the speech course required of all students for graduation. After putting it off for four years, the dreaded time had finally arrived. On the day of Carl's first major speech assignment, he felt that he was ready. With notecards in hand and his visual aids ready, Carl walked to the front of the room to stand behind the podium, which he hoped would hide his sweaty palms and knocking knees. As he gazed out over the sea of faces, he was gripped by a fear so strong that he felt there was only one viable solution. He made a 180 degree turn and promptly walked right from the room. Though Carl's solution to his speech anxiety was extreme, the feelings he was experiencing are not uncommon. Anxiety about public speaking is one of the more commonly reported fears (Bruskin Associates, 1973).

The purpose of any school system is to prepare its students to take on functioning roles in the society that someday they will become an integral part. Schools stress the idea of students achieving proficiency as quality readers and writers as well as having enough basic math
skills to perform various job requirements related to everyday existence in a democratic society. However, active citizens engaged in such a range of activities must also learn how to engage in political or public talk, which is quite different from engaging in private talk, scientific talk, and many other useful—though comparatively private forms of conversation (Barber, 1989).

Though all educators agree that making students efficient speakers is a worthwhile goal as Barber suggests, many teachers may be unsure as to how to help their students become future public orators to continue to lead the "Voice of Democracy" in the next generation. Instructors are faced with two questions. How do teachers get their students to see the importance of an activity, public speaking, which the student sees as facing a fate worse than death? Also, what kinds of advice and treatment can the teachers give to their students who are suffering from extreme communication apprehension and speech anxiety?

Justification of Problem

When posed with the question as to which choice of a future profession would not require the use of effective public speaking skills, a high school speech class came up with the response of a monk in a monastery who has taken a vow of silence. Yet after further discussion, the students conceded that even this monk would need to rely on effective use of nonverbal communication to get his everyday needs
In a society relying so heavily on the belief that "Freedom of Speech" is a right as well as a necessity, the importance of having well trained speech instructors, to provide students with skills to be competent in such a society, is imperative. To understand and treat communication apprehension invites the continued efforts of communication educators. Whether termed stage fright, speech anxiety, reticence, unwillingness to communicate, communication apprehension or shyness, this malady has been reported as America's number one fear (Bruskin Associates, 1973).

Problem Statement

The purpose of this handbook is to enumerate for speech instructors causes of student anxiety in a communication's class and methods for dealing with student's communication apprehension.
PROCEDURES

Subjects

The purpose of the handbook is to aid teachers in helping students who experience speech anxiety in high school speech classes. Also it may help those students who experience communication apprehension to understand their fears, and in turn by understanding these fears, the students may be able to overcome them.

Setting

This handbook will primarily be used by teachers of speech classes in generally rural school systems where students may have less chance for interaction with larger number of people. The handbook's use would be most effective with a class size of 15-20 students or in any situation where the students will have a chance to be in front of their speaking group at least once every week to week and a half.

Data Collection

Data was collected using a computer search of journal articles dealing with the topic of speech anxiety and treatment. The opinions and studies of these experts will in turn be combined with 15 years of teaching experience. Also, various speech text companies feel that the problem of communication apprehension to be so severe that they too
include information in their texts which will be useful to this study.

Design

The handbook is set up in two parts. Working on the assumption that most, if not all, students in a speech class would suffer from some degree of speech anxiety, the first part of the handbook will deal in helping teachers to recognize symptoms and causes of this stagefright in their students. The second portion of the handbook will concentrate on methodologies for teachers and students in handling these problems and concerns stemming from communication apprehension.

Results

The information gathered from the research is presented so that teachers will have a better understanding of speech theory, methods for overcoming speech anxiety, and a series of exercises and assignments to reach the goal of helping students overcome some of their fears caused by public speaking apprehension.
CHAPTER II
Review of Literature

Trepidation - (trep i da shun) n. A vibration or trembling, especially from fright. A state of alarm or trembling, terror, fear, dread, panic etc. (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1979)

Trepidation is a malady any public speaker is concerned with today, but if the speaker is a high school student, the problem can be so severe as to make him or her physically ill. However, students must be orators. Public speaking is an important building block if we are to have a future generation of well rounded democratic citizens. Once educators have recognized the fact the communication anxiety is a real problem and that the problem is treatable, teachers of public speaking in schools can continue the quest of having successful orators.

Research tells us that the first priority is to recognize nervousness in young speakers. Our psychologists today spend many hours researching the cause and solution of problems individuals have with one to one communication. Yet despite this, public speaking anxiety has received far less attention from scholars than have inter-personally-related sorts of shyness. (Daly and Others, 1989).
Fortunately, many experts in the field of communication anxiety are working to identify reasons for anxiety and
possible solutions.

One of the initial causes of anxiety from young speakers comes from their own lack of knowledge as to what public speaking is all about. In his research, John Daly states that the more anxious students can be recognized by the flood of questions with which they bombard their instructors. The greater interest in answers to questions about an upcoming speech by more anxious individuals could imply two things: (1) a true lack of knowledge about what happens in speeches, and/or (2) a true lack of knowledge about speech-making, that is exhibited by feelings of information inadequacy (Daly and Others, 1989).

Not only do students who have a lack of knowledge in public speaking tend to be more anxious, but also they seem to further complicate their own problems by desiring to even avoid watching others speak; as a result, they further alienate themselves from any chance of becoming less nervous. In addition they may even select speech topics they are not actually familiar with so that if they fail, they may simply shrug it off by merely pointing to the difficulty of the topic as an excuse for their lack of success.

In an article written by Mary Ellen Murray (1989) of Memphis State University, she reports that additional causes of students anxiety may come in other areas. One of her researched theories purports that some students are naturally apprehensive because of their heredity. Possibly
a student's parents are quiet and reserved causing these qualities to be transferred to their offspring. If this be the case, the instructor's role is doubly difficult because now he is also combating fourteen to sixteen years of anxiety and may have only have eighteen to thirty six weeks to rectify the problem.

Equally possible is the "state" of theory as to the cause of public speaking fear, being something that is acquired through an individual's life experiences. For example, children in their pre-school or early school years may never seem nervous during some sort of public performances, yet their high school counterparts will exhibit all of the key signs of trepidation when put in a public speaking situation. This would seem to point out that anxiety may be a characteristic acquired between the early and latter school years. If this be the case, then there may be hope for curing students of their communication jitters. Just as our students learn nervous traits when speaking before groups, they can also learn to control public speaking anxiety (Murray, 1989).

Recognizing pre-performance student anxiety is only part of the goal of a speech instructor, for if he is able to get students into a room to give a speech, he must still deal with the nervousness a student may feel during the performance itself. Winifred Brownell and Richard Katula have developed a unique tool in helping instructors and students alike to recognize and deal with speech anxiety.
"The Communication Anxiety Graph" is a chart that graphs a student's level of nervousness during a speech performance. Most speech teachers are aware of the fact that speech anxiety is not a constant phenomenon of the situation; rather, it changes as the situation progresses (Brownell and Katula, 1984).

A copy of the graph is included, but basically its goal is to ask students to remember back to a previous presentation. Then they are to state whether their speech anxiety was high or low immediately prior to the presentation, during the first minute or two, in the body of the speech, or at its conclusion.

During their study Brownell and Katula discovered that most speakers suffer the greatest anxiety immediately prior to a speech and during the first few minutes. Once the speaker is into his presentation, the anxiety level seemed to drop off somewhat.

Knowing when students are experiencing the greatest amount of anxiety can aid the teacher in two ways. Graphing anxiety will cause the nervousness to be seen as a tangible by some students. Since it can be seen objectively in a graph, it can be discussed and dealt with by the student and the teacher. Secondly, discussing the cause of the anxiety with the student can help an individual through the speech anxiety experience (Brownell and Katula, 1989).
Instructions: We would like you to think about the last speech you presented for this class. Think particularly about the speech anxiety that you experienced. We would like you to describe this anxiety with the help of the graph given below. On the vertical axis at left below are terms describing speech anxiety from “No Anxiety” or “1” to “Very High” or “7.” On the horizontal axis below right are terms prior to, during and after a speech presentation. Graph the amount of anxiety you felt by making an x at each of the points A to E. Now connect the x’s with a line.

### Communication Anxiety Graph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety Level</th>
<th>Prior to Speech</th>
<th>Introduction (First 1-2 Minutes of Speech)</th>
<th>Body of Speech (Middle of Speech)</th>
<th>Conclusion (Final 1-2 Minutes)</th>
<th>Question &amp; Answer Period (Immediately following speech)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately High</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Moderately Low</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Anxiety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1**

Communication Anxiety Graph
Others have also added some important advice to help students with various causes of pre-performance anxiety. John Daly (1989) echoes what many persons would take as common sense. His advice is to make sure that students be prepared before they speak. Though this may seem to be obvious, there are many young speakers who feel that they can get up in front of an audience and just "wing it" without much time spent in preparation. They may try this impromptu technique once and realize it doesn't work. When the next speech comes along, their anxiety is heightened by the frustration that public speaking didn't come as easily to them as they had hoped. Had they simply taken the time to prepare notes and a sequenced presentation, they may have felt much better about their effort.

A technique to help students be prepared for an impending speech is the belief that they should, whenever possible, be allowed to select their own topics for oral presentations. Since a student is nervous enough getting up in front of his peers, allowing him to select the subject for the presentation may help the student's confidence by having him believe he may know more about his topic than his audience. Addressing an extremely familiar topic, in all likelihood, should enhance one's performance (Daly and Others, 1989).

Even though most speeches done by students are individual endeavors, the old concept of there being strength in numbers could be applied to help highly anxious
students in a communication's class. Some speakers may see their efforts in front of the class as a battle. There they are in front of the class as solitary figures against a sea of faces ready to ridicule their every word and movement. Little do they realize that the opposite is true. Audiences, especially of speech students, tend to be sympathetic and attentive to their peers when they speak. After all they will soon find themselves in the same predicament in front of the class. Therefore, the logical solution according to Sherry Connell and George Borden (1987) is to allow students to share these feelings in pre-performance group discussions. While the major component of a public speaking course is the practice of in-class speeches, small group discussions seem to provide support which raises confidence and self-concept through self-disclosure (Connell and Borden, 1987). This bonding or sharing of anxieties by students prior to any major speaking assignment may be enough to give them the confidence to try their best and realize that a good effort is, in many cases, all that an audience wants to hear.

Finally, there is a certain faction of professionals who believe that cures for the "anxiety blues" that many novice speech students experience should start from within. "Visualization" and "Positive Thinking" (Ayres, 1985; Ayres and Hepf, 1988) are just two of the more common expressions used to help speakers lessen speech anxiety. Visualization involves asking students to imagine themselves making an
An effective presentation. If the mind wills it, the body will fall in line and accomplish the task the mind has set for it by doing a successful presentation. Like the little train that said, "I think I can; I think I can" and did, we are to believe that the power of positive thinking may be enough to make highly anxious individuals at least try oral presentations.

The Speech Environment

The speaker's environment can also lead to feelings of apprehension by the student. Advice given by most experts is random and in most cases obvious to anyone teaching speech. Usually the most common concern by a student preparing a presentation is his audience (Smith, 1986). "What will be the size and the make-up of boys and girls? How much do they know about the topic?" These are just some of the more common questions asked by students.

Many experts would agree that the ideal environment is a class size of 12 to 20 students. Since it is a smaller group, their overall presence may be less threatening to a beginning speaker. In addition, audience members should be cautioned that to react is fine, but they should refrain from commenting. Speakers have enough to worry about without distractions from the crowd.

Other than concerns about audience, there are a few other points which may cause anxiety. Whether a podium is to be used is a point some speakers want to know. It is
suggested that novice speakers be allowed to use a podium initially. They may feel more comfortable behind it since it may give them the feeling that they are sheltered from the group. Overuse of a podium is cautioned against since many students may come to use it as a crutch for leaning. This leaning may in turn lead to other problems such as poor stance and limited use of gestures by the speaker.

Anxiety Caused by Speech Preparation

What is actually ironic about the reasons for speech anxiety that have been discussed up to now is the fact actually very little has been mentioned about the actual speech presentations themselves. Most of what has been mentioned is anxiety a student may feel as soon as he steps into the room on the first day. When the day of a presentation comes, a student's anxiety level may again go up.

The problem for the speech teacher actually is the multiplicity of what can be the cause of student apprehension. In a survey done by John Daly (1989) students questioned that their concerns were centered around whether they could speak from notes, were allowed to use visual aids were to be critiqued in what manner, to be given how much time to prepare, and to give how much detail. In other words the causes for anxiety were many and varied. Thus a problem arises in the area of treatment since there is no guarantee that any treatment will actually address the problem or cause of the anxiety (Brownell and Katula, 1984).
In dealing with the myriad of concerns that are expressed by nervous speakers, the speech instructor must take on a variety of roles. Initially he must assume the role of a psychologist. In a report presented by Arden Watson and Carley H. Dodd (1984), they propose the concept of what is called Rational Emotive Therapy or R.E.T. Essentially, in this theory a person may change his emotional disturbances, caused by pre-performance jitters, by changing his thinking.

R.E.T. contains two assumptions. First, RET attempts to reveal basic irrational philosophies that people hold. Second, R.E.T. reveals how irrational philosophies may be rejected and changed. In short, R.E.T. seeks to change intensely and deeply held emotions and thinking patterns (Watson and Dodd, 1984).

In the method of R.E.T., by verbal discussion, action, effort and practice on the part of the student, he will be better prepared to handle the apprehension caused by performance stress. In other words, a student's best solution to solving his stress problems may be within himself.

Mary Ellen Murray (1989) echoes a similar theme in her research when she draws from an old adage to state: "What we think, we can become." Encouraging students to keep repeating to themselves that they can be or are great speakers, or that they really do have something important to say may give them enough of a push to want to do well when the time to speak arrives.
Finally in regard to handling pre-speech nervousness, the advice given by Terry C. Smith (1986) is very sound and common sensical, PRACTICE. Smith suggests the extreme that one hour of practice be spent for every minute of prepared talk. To simplify his thinking, one may say that any performance cannot be overprepared. Practice time is never wasted, and the better the student knows his material, the less nervous he may be.

Anxiety and Its Effect on Nonverbal Communication

It can be assumed that nervousness does create havoc with a speaker's presentation when in front of his peers. Items such as face-covering, body-blocking and postural tension are just a few of the more obvious detriments to a speaker's performance that can take place. The result of such negative traits may show from the speaker a reticent communication style that may be interpreted by strangers as expressing non-intimacy, detachment, submissiveness and noncomposure (Burgoon and Others, 1987).

Fortunately, however, Burgoon and her associates point out that not all speakers usually show overt signs of nonverbal anxiety. Usually the opposite is true. Instead of going to the extreme of showing extravagant physical signs of trepidation, most persons experiencing nervousness will tend to withdraw into themselves and move less. For example, rather than one's arm flailing spastically at the side, it usually hangs limp and lifeless by the side of the
body. From one’s initial thought, a person may see this lifelessness as just as much a problem as any nervous tick, yet this is not true. Burgoon and her colleagues (1987) have pointed up that peers of the speaker who is reticent may see the lack of any movement, be it nervous movement or whatever, as the speaker being less composed, but not any less competent as a speaker. In addition they may view the stiffness as being a trait more attractive to the speaker since he may seem to be exercising some kind of control.

Of course all speech instructors want their pupils to move freely in front of the group as well as use gestures and facial expressions as they normally might among friends. The truth of the matter is that most novice speakers will be nervous and their nervousness will find a way from the speakers' bodies whether it be random movement, a monotoned voice, a stiff body or whatever. The important conclusion at this point is that reticent behavior in student speakers is normal; they are capable of performing in a relatively normal fashion, and their deficiencies in behavior are readily correctable with practice. (Burgoon and Others, 1987).

Anxiety During the Performance

As soon as a student speaker steps in front of his peers, his level of apprehension is probably at its peak. Advice to deal with this situation comes from a variety of sources. to begin with, once the students are in front of
the class, their behavior may change because of their own expectations (Watson and Dodd, 1984). It is hopeful that when in front of the group, the "Hawthorne effect" will suddenly take place. In a basic sense the "Hawthorne effect" states that "introduction of anything new (in this case the speech experience) in itself leads to change"; therefore, it is believed that put in front of a crowd, a shy wallflower will become an extrovert since he now has had "fame", of a sort, thrust upon him.

Mary Ellen Murray (1989) offers similar advice when she states students should remind themselves that when they are in front of the class, they are the experts. Few in the class know as much about their topics as they do; consequently, a certain confidence can be contrived from this. In a sense it is a rendition of the old adage that "knowledge is power." Hopefully this inner confidence can exude itself in a more forthright speaking manner on the part of the student.

Additional advice for dealing with anxiety during a performance comes from Terry Smith (1986), who suggests first that students learn to keep their presentations simple. Fear that a speaker may present material that is too technical for his audience could cause unneeded nervousness. Audience member faces that are nodding approval or at the very least smiling are much better than receiving blank or bored expressions during a speech.

Also a speaker should not be afraid to use visuals.
Posters, graphs, the chalkboard all give the speaker a chance to move away from the podium and not appear so stiff. In addition with the use of visuals, the speaker captures two senses in both sight and hearing. Finally the speaker may feel less nervous if he feels his audience is focusing on the visual as opposed to him.

Finally, it is a good idea if the speaker avoids reading his speech. Though the speaker may feel that reading will make him appear less nervous, actually the opposite may happen. A rushed pace, monotone, and a lack of eye contact with the audience may lead to a poor performance. Equally important is the fact that by reading, the speaker transfers "authority" from himself to his text.

If a student practices his performance as should be done, anxiety during the performance can be kept to a minimum. Again, nervousness may not be limited, but drastically reduced.

Apprehension Caused by Videotape Equipment

When a speech instructor places a student in front of the class to do a presentation, he tries to do as much as possible to ease the student's fear. One may think it would be foolish to add to the speaker's environment a device such as a video cassette recorder to make him even more nervous. What's ironic is the point that in most cases the presence of a VCR during a speech performance does not noticeably increase a student's anxiety level (Lake and Adams, 1984).
Using 140 students placed into two randomly selected groups, Lake and Adams had the students present a series of speeches sometimes using the VCR and other times not at all. Using a "Likert-type" scale to chart student nervousness during the presentations, Lake and Adams found no appreciable upturn in the amount of anxiety, nervous ticks, or reticence in the students when the VCR was present; therefore, instructors need not be concerned about raising a student's anxiety level during public speaking by using a VCR for critiquing purposes. Though most of the students used in Lake and Adam's testing were of college age, it would appear that the VCR can be used in high school instruction as a feedback instrument without fear of serious negative effects on speaker performance or the general emotional condition of the student (Lake and Adams, 1984.)

CLOSING

Stage fright is a serious problem for the student speaker. What it does to him both physically and mutually can cause him to go through trauma which many young speakers see as insurmountable. Yet, as many of the preceding experts have shown, nervousness can be overcome through a variety of means as long as the instructor recognizes it and urges his students to practice and give their best effort possible.

Nervousness is an energy which can be used effectively once the student speaker learns to control it. Without
energy in front of an audience, any speaker would be lifeless and boring.

The success of young speakers will depend largely on how well the instructor and student together have prepared for a presentation. Any planned talk, whether formal or not, will be improved by the practice that would make it perfect.
CHAPTER III

A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS TO AID IN PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSES

by

John Fullenkamp
April 1, 1992
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE FEAR WITHIN</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. POOR SELF ESTEEM</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. MAKING BETTER SPEAKERS</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE ENVIRONMENT AND AUDIENCE</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. ANXIETY CAUSED BY PREPARATION</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. ANXIETY DURING THE PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. VIDEOTAPE EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

When a speech teacher arrives on the first day of class, he hopes that his students are full of eagerness and desire to tackle the course with intense interest. However, this is usually not the case. At most times, the teacher may see a vast array of faces expressing some fear and apprehension. Grumbles such as, "Why did I have to take this" or I'll never make it through", slowly emit from all corners of the room. One student even adorns herself with a shirt handed down from an older brother or sister that has printed on it the words "I Survived Speech Class", suggesting that the original owner of the shirt has ingrained into this student's mind that speech class is something to be seen as a challenge similar to climbing to the top of Mount Fuji. Stage fright, or varying degrees of it, is undoubtedly what these student are experiencing. Though these feelings are common to most students, many of them can be helped to overcome their natural fears to go on to become adequate if not exceptional public speakers.

Getting students to perform public speaking assignments much less enjoy them is difficult in any class setting, yet it seems to be especially difficult in a rural setting. There appears to be an underlying reticence among parents in small towns. Possibly this is due to the fact that most interchanging of ideas is done in usually small group encounters in the local grocery store or on street corners.
Not often are persons given the opportunity to speak publicly in a large group forum. This "keep to yourself" sort of mentality is often times present in the students in these country areas making their desire to even try to learn to speak publicly all but nil. However, speak they must, if they are to be an integral part of this democratic society. It is for this reason that this handbook is being done.

The fear of public speaking is probably the most common anxiety shared among persons today. "I'd rather die than get up in front of a crowd" is a statement probably not too far from the truth in regard to some people. Like any fear, its causes can be numerous and varied; however, it is by bringing out these phobias and understanding them that some students can be helped to overcome them.

The Fear Within

The greatest amount of anxiety students feel is in most cases caused by something inside themselves, a fear of the unknown. Many students fail to realize that no communication is ever 100% complete, yet their true lack of knowledge about what happens in communication causes them to feel that it will be their own inadequacies which will eventually embarrass them in front of their peers and doom them to failure as public speakers.

In turn students must realize that as public speakers there will always be variables out of their control. In any type of public speaking format, various forms of
interference will always be present. When a public speaker has an idea he wants to convey, he encodes his ideas into words and actions he feels his audience will understand. Differences in the speaker and his audience such as sex, economics, age, interests, social background and environment can cause any message to be interpreted differently between the speaker and his audience. However the student presenter will lay blame on himself if the audience doesn't respond in what he feels is an appropriate fashion.

In addition, beginning student speakers fail to note that their ideas aren't always clear due to problems in interpretation of the English language which is in actuality no fault of their own. A clear example of this comes in the old story of the man who asked another, "Is there anyone staying with you right now?" Of course the second man replies, "No" since he's not sure of the true meaning of the question and thinks the questioner must be asking about a visiting relative such as an uncle or grandparent. Yet when the question is put again to the second man who now understands the questioner is a doctor looking for persons to inoculate against a terrible disease, he responds, "Yes, there are several people staying with me. My wife and children." Our language and its words full of wonderful multi-meanings can be nightmare for the beginning speech student who is maybe trying to convey just the simplest of messages. Though students are not always conscious of these variables, they can sense that they may lead to their
eventual doom as public speakers.

Though it may appear to be nothing more than common sense, a solution to the problem of helping students to cope with these external variables is to explain to them the idea that the failure of any message to be completely understood by their audience is not entirely their fault. Making students aware of these variables may help them to see that there is an empathy between themselves and their audience that each will be somewhat forgiving if a complete idea isn't clear from their presentations. A good example to cite would be the teacher in a classroom. Teachers are supposedly some of the most effective communicators in society, yet not every student receives an A on every test and quiz. Is the teacher a poor communicator? Probably not; those external variables again of age difference, background, and so on have come into play keeping the whole message from being communicated.

On the other hand, it is a key idea to stress to students that these variables can't be used as an excuse for poorly prepared presentations. They will have a responsibility to be ready to anticipate some of these problems and prepare a speech that is flexible to the audience and easily understood. Instructors should make clear to students also that understanding these variations in people should make them more sympathetic listeners and less critical of speakers to whom they must listen.

Poor Self Esteem
Not only can lack of understanding of audience differences cause anxiety within speech students, but also much fear is generated by the student himself. Poor self esteem or a lack of confidence in the student is equally damaging. "I have nothing worthwhile to say" or "I'll make a fool of myself if I get up there" are not uncommon quotes when students are faced with public speaking for the first time. An overactive adrenalin gland will produce in a speaker enough nervous energy to cause sweaty palms, jittery fingers, and upset stomachs, all of which may interfere with a student's speaking style and convince him that no matter how good his speech will be, he will not succeed.

Along with the varied causes of poor self esteem in students, the solutions are multiple as well. A beginning speaker should have the idea that those in his classroom are in the same boat as he. Many of them are empathetic to what he or she is going through since they will more than likely have to follow in turn and give their presentations as well. Also most of the audience members want a speaker to succeed and may have only the best wishes for him or her. When we watch any speaker stumble or shake nervously in front of the room, the audience will usually feel uncomfortable as well. Most people don't enjoy the feeling of pity, nor do we usually want it toward us.

As humans we are naturally curious; for example, anyone can note the popularity of such TV programs as "Ripley's Believe It or Not" and the various "video" programs that are
on today. Since we strive to be informed or entertained, we want speakers to do well. Unfortunately some younger speakers see the audience as a vindictive mass waiting to pounce on their first mistake. We must remind students that actually the opposite is true.

Making Better Speakers

To help students to gear themselves toward success is what might be referred to as a sort of "pygmalion" approach to speech instruction. There is a possibility that when students enter a classroom one of two things may happen. Either verbally or nonverbally, the speech teacher could convey to the students that they can be effective speakers. Expecting them to do well may be just the push some of the more reluctant students need to at least try to have faith enough in themselves and overcome their communication anxieties.

A similar technique is one where instead of giving students confidence through suggestion, teachers ask their students to shift their view of the audience. They should see their position in front of the audience not as one of isolation, but rather as a "power position" where they are really in control. If a student has prepared a speech properly, he will know more about his topic than any audience member. This superiority in knowledge can be a great mental edge. Granted this may not be effective with all anxious speakers, yet some may actually begin to sense
that having all eyes on them can be gratifying in the sense they may realize that most audience members are ready to listen to what they have to say.

To tie directly into this concept is the idea of visualization. As explained in the previous chapter, visualization is the concept that prior to a public speaking performance, the student watches himself in his "mind's eye" giving the speech in front of his audience much like a batter who sees himself hitting a homerun before going up to the plate of the gymnast executing a difficult flip. This visualization should in no way make up for good old-fashioned practice; however, this technique may be an excellent suggestion to aid students in alleviating some of their internal fear.

As was noted earlier, nervousness is like a strange animal inside a person and can cause a person to do some pretty strange things while in front of a group. For example, there is the story of the young woman who wore a set of clogs, a single strapped shoe, in front of the class as part of her dress for her speech. During the course of her speech, her nervous fidgeting caused her to slip the shoes off, stand there in her bare feet, and by the end of the speech have her shoes back on again. When questioned about the foot exercise at the end of the speech, she was totally unaware of what she'd done.

Nervousness is an energy or pressure that builds inside a speaker. Like air that will eventually find its way from
a balloon, nervous energy will find its own path from a speaker. It may come out in the extremities by shaking or in the voice with a quiver or nervous laughter. In some speakers it causes a higher pitch from the stressed vocal chords. If a beginning speaker can learn to harness this natural energy, it can become a great asset rather than a distraction or a concern to cause the speaker embarrassment.

Various methods can be used to control anxiety in the beginning speaker. One simple method is for the student to do some very simple isometric exercises at his desk prior to speaking. Tightening and loosening muscles in the legs and arms will help reduce nervous energy to a point where it is easier for the student to control. Athletes who are on the bench during an exciting sports contest have been seen yawning during what would seem to be very ironic times; however, what we are seeing is not so much an apathetic attitude as a form of energy release taking place. Much the same is happening to the novice speaker.

A similar exercise which may help the nervous energy to be let go is to clench the sides of the desk or chair. While this is being done, the student can also breathe deeply and exhale slowly. The point most students may find acceptable behind these ideas is the fact that the exercises and the breathing can be done without drawing attention.

Finally, a student's internal nervousness should be something an instructor can help him to overcome gradually. What many new public speakers will find easier to accept is
a gradual breaking in to a public speaker program. A simple opening exercise is one called "The One Hundred W.A.M.S. (Words A Minute)". In the exercise, each student selects a book passage of approximately 100 words, give or take 4 or 5 either way. The student will then practice the passage so that it can be read between 55 to 65 seconds. Since the average person speaks at a rate 2 to 3 times faster, the speaker must realize that he must slow down dramatically. Of course we don't expect students to normally speak this slow, but it will force them to practice having control of their own speaking rates.

As well as practicing controlling nervousness, the speaker is allowed the opportunity to be in front of an audience in a less threatening speaking situation. The exercise may be less frightening since the material selected is not actually the speaker's own words. Also, since the student is reading, he doesn't have to make that much initial eye contact, which many speakers find disconcerting. Getting students in front of the class the first time is an important goal.

A word of caution should be inserted here however. This assignment should be seen by students as an exercise in controlling nervousness and not as a true speech. Since reading is not true public speaking, instructors will note that when the exercise is being presented, the students voice may lack any true vocal energy for he is concentrating on keeping his pace slow and even. But for now, we've put
the student in front of the class and that experience is important.

Once students have done something like a "100 W.A.M.S." assignment, the speech instructor will want to get them up in front of the class again within the next week while any confidence that has maybe come from the first exercise is still with them. A 1 to 2 minute biographical speech can work. Students don't need to be asked to tell their most intimate family details; rather they can orate on 2 or 3 favorite activities or goals that they have and feel comfortable talking about them. It will be best if students limit themselves to just a couple of key points so as to avoid merely standing up there and listing "I like this, this and this" or "I hate that and that". Students must understand early that better speakers will usually spend more time on the "Why" than just the "What".

Upon completion of this relatively short speech, another minute or two can be added to the overall time. Something like a personal experience speech can be done. If a student can recall a time when a lesson was learned from something that happened to him, he will have several points working in his favor. First he won't have to go running off and find 10 different books to research since most of the information comes right from him. At the same time, choosing an experience with a lesson may help the student to see that his speech must have a direction towards stating the lesson and not merely a random list of details. Also,
since most stories require showing maybe the size or shape of something involved, the student may begin to use more natural gestures as he speaks. Finally stories are generally accepted an enjoyable listening topics by most audiences since listening to stories is something many of us naturally grow up with.

After students have had a few opportunities in front of an audience, they probably will be able to handle longer speeches on more difficult topics. The main idea for instructors to keep in mind is that no one can become an effective speaker until he can overcome enough of his fear to stand at least somewhat calmly in front of his peers.

The Environment and Audience

One of the more common causes of stage fright is brought on by elements which are out of the speaker's control in many cases. The speaking environment is often controlled by the instructor. How much higher the speaker is above the audience and the class size are specific examples of what a student may fear. In addition, some speakers feel that the friends who are in the class with them may turn into their mortal enemies and embarrass them in some way while in front of the group. These anxieties are real and must be confronted by the instructor if he wants his students to succeed.

At first most novice speakers are not ready for a room of 200 people and for preparing a speech of 10 to 15 minutes
in length. As was mentioned in the previous section of the building up a student's speaking stamina, the same is true for the environment as well.

The teacher must build up a student's immunity to the speech environment. This can be done in a variety of ways. The students first few times up should be for shorter periods of time, starting with 1 to 2 minutes and then building from there. Many students feel a sense of gratification just being able to get up in front of a crowd.

Also beginning students should be allowed to use a podium. Some instructors refute this by saying that students may use the podium as a crutch to hide behind or lean on. This may be true, however, having the podium is something which most students can be weaned from once they are over the initial shock of seeing that mirage of faces focused on just them for the first time. Furthermore, podiums of varying thickness can be used. Using one which has the width similar to a music stand may give them an initial feeling of comfort, but it will be relatively simple to show them that it really hides nothing and they could be just as successful without it.

The height and placement of the podium is also important. In some schools the speech class is held in the same room as the drama class where there may be a stage anywhere from 2 to 5 feet higher than the classroom floor. Though it may seem best to place speakers way up high to be seen easier, the height could have a negative effect. It's
true that a speaker must stand out from the crowd but isolation can go too far. Too much isolation can create greater nervousness. For the student's well being anyway, the podium or speaking platform should be kept on ground level. The mere fact that the student is standing in front of the room will automatically draw the needed attention to him without him feeling too uncomfortable.

Finally, there is the concept of audience size. Around 15 is an ideal class size in as much as it will seem like a true audience to the group; however, it will not appear too overwhelming to each speaker. Nervousness is always present, but it does not always increase when the audience size increases. In other words, if a student is able to control his anxiety in front of a group of 15 or 20 of his peers, he may find it easier to control this anxiety even though in the future he may have to speak in front of 2 to 5 times that many.

Relating to the idea of audience reaction during a presentation, it is imperative that the instructor set up an environment where teasing or heckling a student speaker will not be tolerated. In general however, most students are sympathetic to speaking peers since they too will find themselves in front of the class in time.

Finally nervousness about the environment will never go away for a speaker, but at the same time it shouldn't. It is again relevant to remember that nervousness is an energy that can be used to a speaker's advantage, and he never
wants to get to a point where he is without it and is lifeless in front of the group.

Anxiety Caused by Preparation

No speech instructor should stand in front of his class and assign a speech one day and expect a polished performance 1 or 2 days later. There is a place for impromptu and extemporaneous speech assignments in a speech course, yet these should be saved for a later time when the speech students have a little experience. For many students the greater amount of the anxiety they feel is before the presentation rather than during the speech itself. Time and care should be taken to address and alleviate much of a student's fear even before he steps up the podium.

One of the early fears a student may feel when an assignment has been made may come from his dilemma of what to talk about. The same student who can sit with his friends for hours and discuss music, dating, or cars can suddenly dry up when confronted with the idea that he must now prepare a speech for class. Though ironic, this malady is fairly common. A number of students feel that they must select a "heavy" topic such as abortion or capital punishment; otherwise, their peers won't find what they have to say to be "exciting". True, no audience member wants to listen to a speech on a topic that is too trivial or broad; however, they also don't want to hear about something too technical or irrelevant.
What students must realize is that formal public speaking does not always require a change in topics, but rather a change in purpose. Music and cars are still important but now the idea is to broaden their ideas into speaking to convince or create an interest and not merely entertain through casual conversation. Once students see that communication must have purpose, they are on the track to being better speakers.

In selecting a topic for a speech much of the anxiety can be lessened by following several steps. Realizing that public speaking is more formal than casual conversation, the student must put some care and thought into choosing a speech topic. Also a topic should be selected soon as putting it off can only cause anxiety to build as the speaking day approaches.

"Self" is a student's greatest source of knowledge. We often speak of the "generation gap" which is seemingly evident between the old and young. Instead of condemning students for their youth, instructors must consider the point that the 15 to 18 year olds in front of them have lived and survived up to this point and probably have something worthwhile to say. By exploring his own "self", each student will find that he has something worth saying. After considering his audience and exploring his own life experiences, many students will find they have something worth saying. Once a student selects a topic, the instructor may want to step in again and be sure the
presentation will have purpose.

Though a student may feel somewhat relieved having selected a topic, he still will experience apprehension. As in the story of the boy who grabbed a tiger by the tail, the inexperienced speaker has found an idea, but he has no idea what to do with it. Experience has shown that given a topic, almost anyone can stand in front of a group and ramble for any length of time, but rambling is not true communication. What the student needs now is direction, a chance to see a more specific goal for the topic he has selected. Getting specific is not difficult, but does take some time. It is necessary that the instructor have in mind a specific goal he may want the student to carry out. The teacher must decide if the student's speech should be to merely inform or go further to be persuasive or convincing. Without a specific goal beginning speakers can become easily frustrated and move forward on their speech assignments in a haphazard fashion.

To help students to be more sympathetic to this notion, speech instructors should remember the courses they had taken in college. On the first day the professor would usually walk in and present the class with a 4 or 5 page syllabus. Immediately the mind went into spasms thinking that all of those papers and tests could not be accomplished in such a short amount of time. For some a defeatist feeling immediately set in. However, what must be recalled is the fact that though they believed they wouldn't make it,
all the instructors, who at the time were the students, survived and went on to pass or even possibly enjoy the class. For the novice speaker, a first major speaking assignment creates the same trepidation as was felt by the instructor in his college class. Remembering this feeling may help the speech teacher to understand just how his students feel. Helping the speech student to become specific with his topic is not doing the speech for him but rather is an attempt to guide him through the speech process, and in turn lessen the anxiety that may come with it.

The next step in preparing a student for a presentation is getting organized. The student may logically wonder, "I've got my topic and a purpose, now what am I supposed to do with it?" What the student is asking for is a plan. There are a number of excellent books out on outlining and time should be taken by the instructor to select one he feels will best suit his class and speaking situation. Regardless of what type of outlining technique is used, the important point to remember is that the teacher find an outlining style that is simple and can be consistently followed. Too much variation in outlining from speech to speech can be confusing and cause unnecessary anxiety on the part of the student. An outline that is done well provides both the teacher and the student with a method of evaluating a proposed speech idea and a means for recalling information once a speech has been done.
But just how does one get a student from being an anxious individual with a proposed topic to an organized speaker? Again the answer is to have the student look back to his "self". People are naturally curious, and when a topic is raised, questions will naturally follow. For example, if someone might raise the topic of subliminal advertising. Logical questions from an individual might be "What is it" and "When is it good" or "How is it used incorrectly?" From these questions, students should be able to see a pattern developing for a possible outline for a presentation. Each question raised will eventually turn into a major heading for the outline.

Students seem to fall pretty much into two categories. There are those who want to rush through work and get it done; it no longer needs any revision or changes. They feel it won't get any better than what it is. On the other hand, some students love to procrastinate and feel the best time to worry about any task is the night before. As instructors, we must stress to our students the importance of a happy medium. In a sense we want students to realize that a good deal of their pre-speech anxiety can be reduced if they will become good planners. Good planning is flexible in that the speaker will create a number of choices or directions his presentation can take. Also he should be able to make new choices as new ideas or new information comes to him through his personal experiences or research he may do. Most importantly the student must learn to gain
enough confidence in his abilities to revise or abandon a plan that turns out poorly. Finally he must keep in mind that his planning must always be controlled by a major purpose.

As soon as a student's plan or outline for a presentation is pretty well set, it would be a good idea to allow the student to "test the waters" so to speak before he gives his actual presentation. This part of the preparation can be done in a number of ways. Initially, the instructor may want to sit down one on one with each student to merely discuss the planned speech. This discussion will achieve two goals. First the teacher will get a general idea of how well the student is researching his topic and how well the student may be organized. Also by hearing his thoughts vocalized the student may get a better grasp on his knowledge of the subject area and begin to build his confidence by merely talking about it. Secondly it may help all students by taking part in some sort of panel discussion about the topic. This way each student may be less hesitant to vocalize his thoughts since he sees himself as a part of the whole and not as an individual isolated in front of his peers.

Now once again, this handbook comes back to one of its central themes. When preparing for a presentation, the one single element which can be most responsible for reducing anxiety in novice speakers is practice. As was alluded to earlier, there are few natural speakers in the world. Few
can get up in front of a group and sound eloquent with little preparation time. Almost all speakers need to plan time before a presentation for practicing what will occur.

A major portion of a student's practice time should be spent with the preparation of the final presentation, but specific time should also be given to a presentation's various parts. A good example of this is with the introduction. Many students wonder, "How do I begin a speech?" Merely announcing the topic may be the most logical method that pops into student's head, but in actuality nothing could be worse. A simple statement of a proposed topic is too boring and may do more to turn off an audience than get them enticed. What students and instructors alike need do is look to the world around them to note how many movies, TV shows, and other forms of the media attempt to gain attention. As human beings, we like to be enticed into subjects before we may latch onto them. TV or movies will run commercials for weeks showing highlights to grab the viewers attention. Granted some commercials are to sensationalistic and often misleading, which is not what we want students doing; however, they do logically play upon the notion that humans are naturally curious. It is this natural curiosity that we must teach novice speakers to be able to use.

The anxious speaker must keep in mind that humans are unusual beings. We have this strange habit of remembering firsts and lasts. If an instructor were to ask any student
to recite "The Gettysburg Address", he'd by able to find almost any student who could give the first line or two "Four score and seven years ago..." and then eventually he would trail off. At the same time ask any student to restate Clement C. Moore's "Twas the Night Before Christmas." Again most would be able to state the first stanza and probably not much more. The explanation for the phenomena is actually simple; as listeners people are at their peak attention at the beginning and end of a presentation. Listeners are to often easily distracted in the middle. Knowing this then, it is imperative that students plan and practice an introduction that grabs the listener's attention, introduces the speech's topic, indicates the speeches direction, and shows the mood the speech will take.

Accomplishing these goals may seem difficult even for an accomplished speaker much less for a student who is suffering from a severe case of communication anxiety. Yet, if the instructor again stresses the concept of common sense to his students, the task of a well planned introduction won't be that disturbing. An example of a possible introduction could be a story. As children we all loved to hear stories and were enthralled as our parents or an older brother or sister would read or tell tales. Nothing has really changed in that all persons still enjoy a good story. A well selected and thought through story concerning the topic to be spoken on can be easily attained often times
from personal experience or from pieces of literature and magazines if they are being used.

Another logical method for a nervous student to introduce a speech is to appeal to a sense of self-interest in his audience members. If a speaker can offer to his listeners a chance to make money, become more popular or appeal to their sense of self-preservation, he is likely to draw their attention much quicker than a speaker who merely announces, "Today I'm going to talk about..."

In addition to self-interest, a speaker may also want to play to his audience's curiosity. In recent years, the astounding popularity of the various trivia games points out how most human beings naturally want to know things. Using a device such as a startling or striking statement as an opening can have a rather dramatic effect on a listener. To state to an audience that they could be killed by lightning since it is nature's most destructive act may draw the desired attention to a speaker's opening. A word of caution here again is to be sensible in the use of this technique. If the speaker's effort to be startling sounds phony or bizarre, the attention he gained may be quickly lost in a negative reaction from the audience.

Finding usable startling statements is really not that difficult. How often have we quoted a piece of information that we though was truly amazing or fantastic. Students are constantly repeating tid-bits of information that they thought were just too astounding not to share. Surprising
sport scores, the details of a local incident, or the number of slices of pizza they saw someone eat at one time are just a few examples. These are striking statements.

Regardless of the type of introduction used, it is again worth noting that any type of introduction used should be well practiced. Starting off without faltering, stumbling or repeating will give the speaker more assurance and give himself a better impression toward his audience. At the same time, speakers may want to keep their opening sentences short since longer sentences may be more difficult for an audience to follow and create unwanted obstacles between the speaker and his audience. Also the speaker doesn't want to waste time with his introduction since early ramblings may lose his listeners. Finally the speaker must remember to be confident. He should remember to never apologize for a speech he is about to give. Such statements slow the beginning and weaken any respect or interest there may be between him and his audience.

Earlier it was noted that humans are curious creatures in that we can often remember beginnings but have difficulty recalling middles. The same fascinating point can be made of conclusions as well. Adequate time for preparation must be spent with the body of a presentation. The point being made here, however, is for the instructor to note that both introductions and conclusions are equally important. So often these are tossed off by both instructors and speakers alike because of their shorter length. Nothing will
actually create more pity from an audience than watching a student give a well prepared presentation. But he has no idea how to get out of it, so he mumbles and stumbles, says a short "Thank You" and returns to his seat, dismayed for the last few seconds created a momentary nightmare.

Instructors and students alike should consider the following illustration - Finish this quote from the infamous book and movie, *Gone with the Wind*, "Frankly my dear...," or this quote from John F. Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address, "Ask not...". There are probably few persons who would have difficulty recalling the endings of the famous quotes. Why? A good portion of the reason is that they are endings. The first is Rhett Butler's final line in the movie; the other is the closing to JFK's speech. Students who suffer from communication anxiety need to be taught that a greater confidence can be gained when a presentation is 100% prepared, including the closing of the presentation. A summary, a call for action, an emotional appeal or an appropriate quote are all viable means for closing a presentation.

Regardless of the type of closing used, what is necessary is that the young speaker keep in mind several concepts. He need remember not to bore the audience, and long-windedness leads to boring an audience. At the same time he doesn't want to end too quickly. Two to four sentences are generally adequate for most 3 to 5 minute speeches. Length can always be adjusted to the overall time
of the speech. Also it must be stressed to students not to introduce new material in a conclusion. When an audience senses the signals from the speaker that the ending is coming, their minds begin to wind down and adjust to the closing ideas. Adding new material is like forcing a car from first to fourth gear in a few seconds. A car can't handle it and neither will the minds of listeners. Finally, the student must know the closing; he wants this to have the same smooth pace and tone as the opening and body of his presentation.

The importance of stressing gestures and movement within the preparation of a speech will be emphasized more in the next section; however, this part of the section can not be closed out yet without more stress being made on the importance of practice. True formal public speaking, which is what most students fear, is for them a foreign process. Practicing aloud for family, friends, or whoever they can find to listen will guarantee a more confident and polished presentation in front of their peers.

Nonverbal Communication

Novice speakers are often embarrassed by not knowing how they should behave at the podium. They feel afraid that they may look awkward; furthermore, when then do think about what they will do physically in front of the group, their hands seem to become larger than usual and their legs and feet will seem uncomfortable regardless of the position
where they are placed. When working with all elements of speech preparation, practicing nonverbal elements are just as important as the verbal.

Before discussing the various elements of physical nonverbal communication, some background on nonverbal communication should be given. Many student speakers are under the misconception that public speaking only involves opening one's mouth and saying words. Actually verbal communication or "words" only make up 35% of all true communication. The other 65% of communication is nonverbal. When a student enters a speech class, he brings with him messages he delivers to his peers. His background and upbringing tell his audience who he is and what they expect of him. If his family is economically well off, the audience may expect him to be possibly aloof or overly confident in his manner. If he has been known as the "class clown", the audience may have difficulty taking him seriously. These may seem like stereotypes, and in a sense they are; however, they are the interpretations audiences will make of each student. It is terribly difficult to change these impressions, but novice speakers should be aware of them as they may help them to understand when an audience is reticent to respond to them right away or react to anything that is said. What a speaker should want is for his audience to look at him and appraise his performance for the events that take place during the speaker's presentation. To reiterate, it is difficult to change one's
status, but a strong nonverbal performance when in front of one's peers can help to alleviate any past stigmas an audience attaches to a speaker.

A beginning speaker should understand that strong nonverbal communication begins with a proper stance. Slouched or curved body lines such as leaning forward on a podium may give an unwanted sign of weakness. The feet should be shoulder width apart or less with one foot slightly in front of the other. Being overly stiff or rigid is an extreme which should be avoided. Many speech texts today suggest standing in front of a mirror to be an excellent device to be able to see what sort of a stance will appear most comfortable.

Once a proper or appropriate stance has been attained, the novice speaker must consider the use of gestures. What is often ironic is the same student who will sit at a cafeteria table with friends and motion or point using a spoon or his bologna sandwich becomes stiff in front of his peers. It is almost as if someone has stuck glue to his sides, and the arms refuse to move when the student begins a presentation. Here is where the instructor must step into remind and retrain students to use their basic gestures, not movements which are foreign and awkward, but those which will appear natural and smooth. Counting lists on the fingers or showing the size, shape, or distance of objects are natural movements and can easily be done using the hands and arms. A good exercise for having the students practice
this is to have them find a simple graph or chart from a magazine or newspaper. The graph can easily be reproduced on the chalkboard or on poster paper. Once the chart is in front of the class, the teacher should ask each student to show the class the meaning of the information on the chart. Most students will naturally go through the motions of pointing out the highs and lows on the graph. Even the more reticent students can get the idea of the exercise if the instructor explains by possibly doing an example. It should be stressed to students that whenever they do more during a presentation, they must move completely and with confidence. Half-steps or sluggish movements only continue to suggest to the audience the anxiety the speaker may feel.

Following gestures is the attention a young speaker should give to his attire. In most classroom settings such formal attire as dress shirts for guys or dresses on girls are not necessary, but appealing dress or presentable slacks and shirts will help a performance. As was mentioned in the earlier section on "Self-Focus", how a person appears may greatly affect how he feels when in front of the group. If a student speaker looks presentable, that confidence may carry over into the performance, and for the overtly anxious student, every advantage helps.

Undoubtedly one of the most difficult tasks a young speaker has is trying to maintain some sort of eye contact with his audience. This must be done, for looking to audience members while speaking is what distinguishes
talking at people from what could be called talking to an audience.

A speaker's facial features while speaking, including his eye contact, carry to an audience meaning that can often times not be carried by the voice alone. The raising of an eyebrow or a twisting of the mouth can show surprise, interest, excitement, and a myriad of other emotions so vital for true communication to take place; consequently, speakers must feel comfortable enough to raise their faces toward the group as they speak. Unfortunately the reticence that many students feel causes them to tilt their heads down or do anything to avoid direct eye contact with the audience.

One method, which can be very effective with novice speakers, is the use of the "Friendly Face" approach to making eye contact with the group. Often times, many young speakers are reluctant to look into the faces of their peers for fear that they may laugh or lose their concentration. Since eye contact is vital, the speaker should be instructed to select two or three individuals in the class, the teacher will probably be one of these, whom he feels he can safely look to without cracking up. Often a stern look or a reassuring nod from one of these persons is enough to get the speaker back on track or retain his composure until the nervousness has abated.

Finally anxiety brought forth by what may happen during nonverbal communication is normal. Nervousness again is an
energy, and once it is controlled it can be a tremendous asset to any speaker. Through practice of the nonverbal actions of a speech while practicing a presentation's verbal section, the student will reduce the tension he may feel concerning any upcoming speech.

Anxiety During the Performance

The practice is over and the time for the actual presentation has arrived. It is at this time that many students will feel their highest level of anxiety. In many cases, the tension a student feels about an upcoming performance is unwarranted if he is truly prepared for the speech. A common reaction is for many students to be anxious, but once a speech is completed, the instructor will find many of them commenting that speaking wasn't as awful as they had feared. Unfortunately this is a classic example of a Catch-22. They won't realize this fact until after the speech, and the instructor must deal with the anxiety prior to the presentation.

In the Review of Literature earlier in this thesis, numerous isometric exercises were mentioned to help speakers relieve themselves of physical tensions that may be experienced before speaking. Also instructors must be ready to prepare their students mentally for what is to come.

To begin, instructors must make clear to students that a true speech performance doesn't begin with the first words leaving their mouths. It starts as soon as they rise from
their seats. By rising, they place themselves on a different plane than the rest of the audience; therefore, the classes attention is drawn to them, and they are being critiqued by the group. For this reason, any distractions or stray remarks may turn out to be a detriment to the overall performance, and the student must act calm and confident, trying to hide any inner tension he may be feeling. In addition the student must look directly at his audience. A lack of direct eye contact may betray more nervousness than is desired. This eye contact is not so much to stare the audience down as to show that the audience is worth talking to and not just at. A friendly smile toward the group could work wonders for the speaker's benefit.

If the speaker is feeling nervous before he speaks, he should take a few deep breaths, swallow several times, and tighten and relax his muscles several times to release nervous energy. Most of this can be done inconspicuously. Also if the speaker experiences cotton mouth prior to beginning, a lozenge of some kind can be used up to just prior to the speech, and then he can get rid of it so that it doesn't interfere with his diction while speaking. A student should remember that the impression he makes through the first few moments of his speech will likely carry him through the entire presentation. A strong start is vital.

As a speech progresses, the speaker should try to keep his verbal and nonverbal portions of the speech coordinated.
Movement is meant to punctuate the speech, not detract from it. Novice speakers should remember that few presentations go exactly as planned; however, 90% of the time flaws are missed by the audience unless the speaker himself makes a big deal of them.

Many speakers will find that once a speech has started, the worst is actually over. In many cases the anxiety that occurs prior to a presentation is far greater than which is felt during the actual speech. Some speakers may feel a desire to rush once the end is near, yet with some mental reminders to stay calm, this won't happen.

Upon completion of a speech, the student should hold the floor, for a second or two before returning to his seat. It's actually best for a student to remain stoic after a speech. If he is overly emotional one way or the other, these displays could be misinterpreted by the audience, swaying them to a possible negative reaction.

In conclusion, instructors must stress to their novice speakers that proper preparation is a wonderful fear remover. If a student is set for his speech, he is most assured of a successful presentation.

Videotape Equipment

What a marvelous invention! Many instructors may feel that they would have to have a hidden camera somewhere in the walls before they could effectively use videotape equipment. They probably believe that students will clam up
at the sight of a TV camera in the audience. Fortunately, none of this has to happen. Research has shown and experience will point out that the presence of a video camera in the room does not noticeably increase a student’s anxiety during a speech performance.

The best part of using video equipment is that it is an excellent teaching tool. Instructors can talk to their students and write critiques, while the students speak, until their fingers fall off, but few things can be more instructive and constructive than being able to show a student the strengths and weaknesses of his speech performance. Of course some speakers will initially be shocked by the way they look or sound on tape, but often times initial anxiety fades, and the student will watch attentively.

When video equipment is used, the instructor will be pleased to know that most speakers will be able to treat it as just another audience member though there are few tips to make it less bothersome. First, the camera should be used alone if possible. The presence of a TV monitor may shake a speaker’s nerve if he has to watch himself as he speaks. Even if the monitor is turned away, sometimes its size can create a distraction. At the same time, the camera should be placed in the rear of the audience either to the far right or left. It can still pick up a desirable picture, but is less likely to be as distracting to the speaker since many times cameras have red or blinking lights, which would
be easily picked up by the speaker. Finally when taping, the camera should be placed at a level just above the audience member's heads. This is done again to keep it as inconspicuous to the speaker as it can be.

Considerable research and experience have shown that videotape equipment, which is used in a non-threatening manner with the students, can be an extremely valuable tool in the teaching of public speaking skills.

Summary and Conclusion

To sum up this handbook, its main ideas are probably best put as a communication philosophy. Public speaking is a necessity for all persons regardless of the profession they may choose. Students are going to feel naturally apprehensive and these fears, which they experience, are more likely to be eased if the students receive the proper training and encouragement from their instructors. The main philosophy or theme of this handbook can be best stated by recapitulating it in four major concepts.

First, teachers must remind students that true communication doesn't begin when they merely open their mouths and begin talking. Communication is an ongoing process. It is perpetual in that all that is said and done by a student both verbally and nonverbally affects communication when it takes place. When students are aware of the fact that communication is ongoing, they can be conscious of the idea that they need to polish all aspects
of a speech performance form their initial appearance in front of the audience until they take their seats at its conclusion. A total performance is not just from the first to the last word.

Second, it is necessary that students keep in mind that any audience, whether it be as few as two or three people to as many as two or three hundred, desires to be talked to and not at. For example, too often in the education system, we lecture students and talk at them. Parents are guilty of this at times as well. True public speaking involves eye contact being made with the audience. When persons are aware that a speaker is truly talking to them, they are likely to become more responsive and considerate since they feel that there is an honest sincerity behind the words being spoken.

In addition to eye contact is the idea of actually talking to the audience. Reading is not true public speaking, and if a speaker has his face buried in a pile of notes, which he merely recites word for word, he may not be actually carrying out a real speech.

Also a speaker must be strong in his performance. A bold speaking voice will command the respect and attention of one's listeners. Audiences will often times be forgiving of a speaker's flaws in some areas, but any audience will request that a speaker be at least audible and clear. If these traits cannot be attained, the audience will turn him off as they might switch off a radio.
Finally for anyone to be successful as a public speaker, he must be prepared. Communication anxiety is a definite hurdle every novice speaker must deal with. However, a great deal of that nervousness can be reduced if the speaker has adequately collected his material, spent time organizing it into the most logical manner, and practiced the verbal as well as the nonverbal portions of his presentation. It would be ludicrous to expect a sprinter to run a 40 yard dash without properly stretching before a race. It is likewise imperative that students understand that no polished speech can be given without the needed and expected amount of time given to the preparation of the presentation itself.

The purpose of any school system is to prepare its students to become an important part of this democratic society. For a student's education to be truly complete, instructors must do their best to make each student the best public orator possible.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In a society relying so heavily on the belief that "Freedom of Speech" is a right as well as a necessity, the importance of having well trained speech instructors, to provide students with skills to be competent in such a society, is imperative. To understand and treat communication apprehension invites the continued efforts of communication educators. Whether termed stage fright, speech anxiety, reticence, unwillingness to communicate, communication anxiety or shyness, this problem has been reported as America's number one fear.

Based upon a review of the literature and the researcher's philosophy on communication, based on fifteen years of experience, the handbook has been constructed.

The purpose of this handbook is to enumerate for speech instructors causes of student anxiety in a communications class and methods for dealing with student's communication apprehension.

The handbook has been set up in eight sections: the initial fear within all students toward a public speaking course, problems or poor self-esteem, goals for making better speakers, dealing with the speech environment and audience, anxiety caused by preparation, nonverbal communication, anxiety during the performance, and anxiety caused by videotape equipment.
Regardless of his or her profession, each person will find that there is a time when he or she will need to speak in some sort of public forum. Public speaking is a frightening experience for any person, frightening, but not impossible. It is doubtful that educators can train students to be totally relaxed in a public speaking situation; however, there are a number of procedures or techniques which can be taken to help to alleviate the fears a student has when speaking in front of his peers.

Not every student will become a marvelous orator and ascend to heights of total confidence in front of a group, but if students can be trained to meet and deal with the problems of communication anxiety, our society and its goal of true and better communicators may be met. It is the goal of any school district to better a student's language skills in public speaking as well as reading and writing.
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