

2012

# Communication Apprehension and Perceived Responsiveness

Elise Alexandra Fanney  
*The University of Montana*

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COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND PERCEIVED RESPONSIVENESS

By

Elise Alexandra Fanney

Bachelor of Arts, University of California, Davis 2010

Professional Paper

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in Communication Studies

The University of Montana  
Missoula, MT

Spring, 2013

Sandy Ross, Dean  
Graduate School

Dr. Betsy Bach  
Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Stephen Yoshimura  
Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Trent Atkins  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Fanney, Elise, M.A., Spring 2013

Communication Studies

Perceived Responsiveness and Communication Apprehension:  
A Speech Anxiety and Responsiveness Training Program for College Students

Chairperson: Dr. Betsy Bach

Committee Members: Dr. Steve Yoshimura and Dr. Trent Atkins

The purpose of this study was to construct a training program designed specifically for college students struggling with Communication Apprehension in the public speaking context. Research has consistently found that perceived responsiveness acts as one form of social support, and social support has been found to decrease stress (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008). Given the fact that anxiety is stressful, the purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between perceived responsiveness of an audience and CA. Using data from an earlier pilot study measuring for correlation between CA and perceived responsiveness in one's close relational partner, and using several focus groups as means for additional analysis, a training module was developed that provides responsiveness training as a means to reduce speech anxiety. The training plan modeled that of Beebe, Mottet, & Roach's (2013) Needs Centered Training Model, due to its high needs centered approach (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

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**Introduction**

About 70 percent of individuals in the US experience Communication Apprehension (CA) when they give a speech (McCroskey, 1966). Researchers have found that 20% of the U.S. population has such severe CA they will often avoid oral communication within their personal relationships, in public settings, and potential career opportunities when significant amounts of oral communication are expected (McCroskey, 1977; Daly & McCroskey, 1975). In many professions, employees are often required and expected to give presentations to their colleagues in order to be successful and respected. In the family context, certain family members are often expected to give speeches of tribute during weddings and funerals, and would be perceived negatively and suffer additional consequences if they were not able to follow through because of CA. Considering how many negative affects anxiety can have on one's life, resources for prevention and treatment for CA are in high demand.

While there has not been a 'perfect cure' found for communication apprehension, social support may be a way to reduce CA, as social support has consistently been correlated with better health, well being, decreased anxiety levels, and many other positive affects (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008). Maisel, Gable and Strachman (2008) discuss how perceived responsiveness can act as one form of social support, where an individual demonstrates support through non-verbal cues that are positively supportive. As social beings, we evaluate the responsiveness of others, whether in personal relationships or while giving a speech to a large audience, in order to discern how we are being viewed. When disclosing information, perceived responsiveness in a relationship has been shown to help individuals believe their partners are reacting positively to core features of themselves (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008). In

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addition, perceived responsiveness affects the level of satisfaction in a relationship (Rubin & Rubin, 1989)

Since perceived responsiveness is one form of social support, and social support has been found to decrease stress, there may be a correlation between perceived responsiveness and one's level of CA (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008). The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between perceived responsiveness and CA, by looking at how responsive an individual feels a particular audience to be, and whether that affects their level of CA or not. Using data from an earlier pilot study measuring for correlation, and using several focus groups as means for additional analysis, a training module is developed that will provide responsiveness training as a means to reduce speech anxiety.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Communication Apprehension (CA)**

Communication Apprehension has been a popular focus in the field of human communication since the late 1960's (McCroskey, 1966). It is defined most notably by McCroskey (1977), as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 78). McCroskey discusses CA as being extremely stressful and characterizes it as an internal feeling of discomfort and feelings of uneasiness. Individuals with high CA become more anxious when they feel they are forced to communicate, which not surprisingly causes many people with high CA to avoid communication settings when possible (McCroskey, 1977). Moreover, Stress is often discussed in the context of anxiety, since both constructs share many of the same symptoms, effects, and options for treatment. Common symptoms that are associated with stress and anxiety are: increased or

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irregular heartbeat, rapid breathing, sweating, trembling, tension, irritability, dizziness, and other negative side effects. Anxiety is often more associated with fear than stress, and interferes with one's ability to function successfully each day (McCroskey, 1966; 1972; 1977). However, it is now common knowledge that anxiety can cause stress and vice versa (McCroskey, 1977).

In the educational setting, researchers have found that CA can have several negative impacts on a student's success and learning opportunities. Students with high CA have been shown to participate less often in class discussions, are often perceived negatively by their peers and instructors, and subsequently receive less attention from their instructors. Furthermore, research has found that students suffering from high CA tend to view school more negatively, are less motivated to learn, and often receive lower grades throughout their academic experience (Daly & McCroskey, 1975; McCroskey & Andersen, 1976; McCroskey, 1977a).

In addition to educational issues, an individual's personal life can be greatly affected. Researchers have consistently found that individuals with high CA are often perceived as less credible and less attractive, which can lead to more rejection in social and work environments (Quiggins, 1972). Additional research reveals that communication satisfaction is negatively associated with communication apprehension. If individuals are satisfied in a communication situation, they have communication satisfaction. High CA is in itself a negative feeling, where individuals are not at peace with their social situation, increasing the chances that they will not have communication satisfaction (Rubin & Rubin, 1989). Since it is clear that CA may affect many different aspects of one's life, it is worth reviewing what research has found to be the cause of CA.

**Trait Correlations with Communication Apprehension**

CA has been discussed as being both a trait (Trait CA) and a state (State CA).

Individuals with trait CA tend to experience anxiety in various communication settings, whereas individuals with state CA tend to experience anxiety in isolated circumstances, such as during a speech. However, most individuals who suffer from state CA in regards to a speech are not apprehensive in other social settings (McCroskey, 1966). Many researchers have debated and explored the reasons why certain individuals are more apprehensive than others.

Several communication traits have been found to correlate to CA, but no specific trait has been found to have a causal relationship. One of these traits is shyness. According to McCroskey and Richmond (1982), shyness is defined as the tendency to be timid, reserved, and hold the desire to talk less. Shyness and CA have been found to be separate constructs that correlate strongly with one another, but being shy does not cause one to also have CA and vice versa (McCroskey & Richmond, 1982). A second trait, “willingness to communicate,” as developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1987), has been found to highly correlate with CA, but remains as a separate construct. It is defined as one’s predisposition toward communication settings (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). Individuals who are “talk-aholics” have not been found to necessarily be lower on the CA scale, revealing how just because someone is confident in one communication setting, does not mean that confidence will transfer to all other domains (McCroskey & Richmond, 1995). Self-esteem is a third trait that has been found to relate to CA. Perceptions of the self have been shown to influence one’s behaviors, cognitions, and evaluations. McCroskey, Daly, Richmond, and Falcione (1977) conducted a study on the relationship between CA and self esteem, and were able to find that individuals with lower self



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esteem scored significantly high on CA, revealing that self esteem is part of the CA construct (McCroskey, Daly, Richmond, & Falcione, 1977). In sum, researchers have found that the development of one's self esteem comes from interactions from others. Although there are many constructs that relate to CA, none have shown a clear, reliable, causal relationship between CA and a specific variable.

### **Social Support and Stress**

Most people prefer to have a supportive audience while giving a speech, whether or not they are apprehensive. Although there has been little research on exactly how social support can play a role in CA, researchers have found that social support may act as a buffer against negative effects from stress, like anxiety. For instance, Baqutayan (2011) found that adolescent students reported lower levels of stress when they viewed their social support as adequate. Adequate social support was defined as simply perceiving one's support as sufficient to meet one's needs, whether from one or two individuals or a number of different relationships. Research has found that an individual's perception of the amount of social support they receive can play a larger role in one's life than the actual support they are given (Baqutayan, 2011).

Much of the research on social support and health reveals a consistent link between adequate social support and positive health benefits, both physical and psychological. Beck (2007) discusses how evolutionary theorists have argued that as social beings, humans have evolved to seek social support, since it offers many benefits to our health and well being. Researchers have found that both in humans and animals, having a certain level of social status can shield one from physiological stress responses, negative health affects, and anxiety. This 'shield' helps individuals be able to handle possible threats of being negatively evaluated by

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others in a social context, since social support can improve one's sense of well being (Beck, 2007).

Having at least one or two close relationships helps individuals focus less on conflict with others, have a longer lifespan, higher recovery time after illness, decreased levels of stress and anxiety, lower rates of depression, and many other positive benefits. These relationships can be with anyone, whether related, romantic partners, or close friends (Beck, 2007). According to Bowlby (1973), a close relationship is marked by having mutual understanding that is often accomplished through non verbal communication, accompanied with physical affection and mutual dependence (Bowlby, 1973). Having a close relationship has been found to lower an individual's fear of being scrutinized by others, since the close relationship provides a sense of support during these circumstances, regardless if that individual is present or not. Having no close relationships or adequate social support can lead to less confidence, lower sense of well being, higher rates of depression and suicide, higher levels of stress, longer recovery time after physical illness, and many other negative affects (Beck, 2007; Gurung, 2006). Clearly having social support, regardless of where it may come from, is highly beneficial for an individual.

### **Types of Social Support**

Social support can be achieved through a number of different social networks, and can take on a variety of forms. Social support is usually defined as perceiving assistance from others, whether through emotional support, informational, or instrumental. There are two types of social support: received social support and perceived social support. Received social support is actually what support a person reports was given to them, whereas perceived social support is how much support a person believes they have available to them if needed. Perceived social

support is important, since regardless of how much support individuals are given, they have to first be able to perceive it as actual support.

Perceived responsiveness is one form of perceived emotional support, and is defined as “the process by which individuals come to believe that relationship partners both attend to and react supportively to central, core defining features of the self” (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004, p.203). Although perceived responsiveness has not yet been studied in the public speaking context, it has been studied within personal relationships.

Some researchers view responsiveness as a transactional process instead of solely an interpersonal one, in which perceptions of responsiveness are affected by each other’s reactions (Reis & Shaver, 1988). Researchers note that self-esteem plays a large role in how one perceives partner responsiveness (Murray, Bellavia, Rose, & Griffin, 2003; Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2003). In addition, several empirical studies have found that an individual’s goals and motives predict their own experiences of responsiveness, in how they project and interpret responsive behaviors (Canevello & Crocker, 2010). One’s level of self-esteem can also affect one’s ability to perceive partner responsiveness (Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, & Kusche, 2002). Overall, positive responsiveness proves to be a core aspect in romantic and platonic intimate relationships, (Murray, Bellavia, Rose, & Griffin, 2003; Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2003).

There are several different means by which one can communicate responsiveness such as giving verbal and non-verbal cues of responsiveness. In personal relationships, these behaviors act as an effective way of communicating emotional support, which naturally, could occur within the context of an audience during a speech. Non-verbal cues can occur in a variety of ways, one

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being simply nodding one's head in response to another's disclosure, or by simply smiling. In

personal relationships, partners can convey positive responsiveness in several ways:

communicate understanding, where an individual can articulate what the other person says in an accurate way, validating one's partner, by responding positively to their disclosures, actively reinforcing the partners self-views, valuing and respecting them, and showing one's affection and care for an individual (Maisel, Gable & Strachman, 2008).

Perceived support in one's personal relationships has consistently proven to be more beneficial than the actual social support one has. In regards to coping strategies, individuals who perceived they would have social support if needed tended to enact healthier coping strategies in stressful circumstances (Gurung, 2006). When sharing information, perceived responsiveness in a relationship helps individuals believe that their partners are reacting positively to core features of themselves, and can affect their levels of satisfaction in the relationship (Rubin & Rubin, 1989; Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008).

### **Connections Between CA and Responsiveness**

After reviewing the literature on social support and CA, key relationships are apparent. Given the fact that perceived responsiveness is one form of social support, and social support has been found to combat negative affects of stress, like anxiety or speech anxiety, perceived responsiveness and CA may correlate with one another. Perceived responsiveness is a huge indicator of how individuals will view their social support, regardless of how much social support they were actually given.

In the public speaking context, there is often a fear of being scrutinized by others, which often increases CA. Individuals seek out and interpret non-verbal cues from an audience in order

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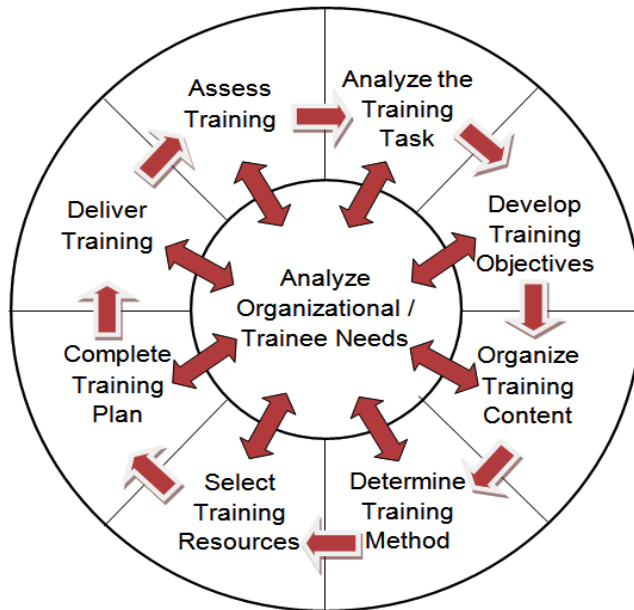
to gauge how much support they are receiving from them. It would be interesting to explore whether perceiving a supportive audience may act as a buffer against CA while giving a speech.

Although there has been a plethora of research looking at CA, as already noted, perceived responsiveness of an audience has not been investigated in relation to CA. Not only is this an important gap in research, it could also pose new treatment methods for individuals struggling with CA. If perceived responsiveness of one's audience has a large affect on CA, practitioners and educators alike could gear treatment accordingly, stressing more on perceived social support instead of strictly fear. Responsiveness training could help individuals learn how to speak confidently regardless of the non-verbal cues they may perceive or receive from an audience.

### **The Needs Centered Training Model (NCTM)**

After a thorough review of literature, it is apparent that CA is a significant issue for students in the public speaking context, and should be addressed in order for students to have a more positive educational experience. The goal of this professional paper is to develop a successful, empirically based training plan for those suffering from CA, where students will be given specific training to combat speech anxiety. In order to create a successful training plan, The Needs-Centered Training Model (NCTM) will be used, as developed by Beebe, Mottet & Roach (2013). Consisting of nine steps, this model is widely respected due to its high needs-centered approach, including instructional objectives and learning outcome assessment (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). In the following section I will identify and discuss each step of the training model, and outline both the process and content of the speech anxiety-training program.

**Table 1: The Needs Centered Training Model** (Beebe, Mottet & Roach, 2013)



### **Needs Assessment of the NCTM**

Conducting a training needs assessment allows the trainer to see what trainees already know and where they are lacking in knowledge, skills, and abilities. As discussed earlier, understanding one's audience, and adapting training accordingly, will help to make a training plan successful (Beebe, 2007). Identifying an audience's specific needs will help in the creation of a clear task-analysis: a step-by-step outline describing the skills a trainer will teach. In this training plan, trainees will be taught skills to combat speech anxiety. The method in which these skills will be taught will be dependent on the needs assessment. In order to effectively measure student needs, the needs assessment will consist of two phases: a pilot study and focus group analysis (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

### **Pilot Study on Communication Apprehension and Perceived Responsiveness**

The first phase of the needs assessment consists of a pilot study. The goal was to

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measure whether there was a correlation between CA in a public speaking context and the level of perceived responsiveness in one's close relationship. Since positive responsiveness is one form of social support, and social support has been shown to act as a buffer against stress, the goal was to understand if individuals who are in responsive relationships were less apprehensive in a public speaking context.

In order to recruit participants for the study, students from two sections of public speaking at the University of Montana were offered five points extra credit to participate in the online survey. Sections of public speaking were chosen due to the high availability of sections to work with, as well as their own familiarity with the topic of speech anxiety. Prior to entering the survey, all students were required to first sign a consent form to ensure they understood the survey was voluntary (Appendix A). The survey aimed to measure for correlation between CA and perceived responsiveness by utilizing the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety, (PRPSA) (McCroskey, 1970) along with an adapted version of Maisel, Gable, and Stachman's (2008) Global Perceived Responsiveness Scale (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008). In addition, demographic information of participants was gathered (Appendix A).

Overall, twenty-eight students participated in the study. There was a relatively equal distribution of males to females, with 93% of them identifying as Caucasian. Results indicate no significant correlation between perceived responsiveness of one's close relational partner and one's level of speech anxiety in the context of public speaking. There was also no significant gender difference evident in the data. Given the fact that close relational partners didn't play a role in communication apprehension, I was interested in exploring whether individuals in the immediate context would affect a speaker's level of apprehension. In order to explore whether

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or not perceived responsiveness of an audience affected a speaker's level of speech anxiety students were interviewed through the process of focus groups, as a second form of needs-assessment.

### **Focus Group Analysis**

Since results from the pilot study were inclusive, several focus groups were conducted to gain further insight into the needs of potential trainees. Conducting a focus group analysis was chosen due to the feasibility in interviewing many students at a time, ability to observe group interaction, and explore the research topic in more depth. As Lindolf and Taylor (2011) discuss, one of the many benefits of using focus group analysis is that the participants essentially lead the discussion, talking off one another, instead of the researcher directing the conversation. Focus groups also allow participants to critique, evaluate, compare and contrast different opinions, allowing more flexibility for participants to brainstorm their responses (Lindolf & Taylor, 2011; Morgan, 1977).

Focus groups involved an open discussion where students were asked a series of questions to gain insight into their thoughts about speech anxiety and having a supportive audience would speaking (Appendix B). The goal of conducting focus groups was to encourage discussion on audience responsiveness and anxiety, and be able to gather different viewpoints on the topic as well as ways they believe one can combat speech anxiety (Morgan, 1977). Twelve students participated in a total of three different focus groups. All students were registered in sections of public speaking at the University of Montana. Students were asked to attend a focus group for extra credit in their own course, where they would discuss issues surrounding speech anxiety. Students were instructed that they do not have to personally struggle with speech



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anxiety to attend the discussion group.

After analyzing student responses, I coded the data for themes by tallying the frequency of similar responses. Coding procedures were based upon Bahr & Albrech's (1989) typologies and the process of categorizing frames (Bahr & Albrech, 1989). Five main themes emerged. The first theme was a fear of being scrutinized. Many of the students feared being negatively judged by their peers while giving a speech, and shared a concern over making mistakes. The second theme that emerged was that many students reported being frustrated as an audience member when a speaker would appear to be anxious. Most of the students believed that a speaker who appeared to be anxious is often not well prepared. Therefore, speakers who are more anxious may create a negative self-fulfilling prophecy, since they may be getting less positive responses from their audience because of their anxiety. The third theme was that social support does not necessarily help CA. Many of the students believed that while having supportive friends is helpful, it doesn't necessarily help in the context of public speaking. Students did not seem to agree on whether having a close relational person in the room during a speech would be beneficial or detrimental. The fourth theme that emerged was that audience feedback can effect a speaker's state. Many students agreed that having a supportive audience can make public speaking a lot easier, especially when they smile and give eye contact throughout a speech. The last theme that was evident in student responses was acknowledging the importance of practice and exposure to public speaking to effectively combat CA. While many of the students shared a fear of speaking in public, they recognized the importance of facing their fear head on. The following chart highlights typical student responses for each theme that emerged through focus group analysis.

**Table 2: Themes in Focus Group Analysis**

Frequent Themes	Examples of Typical Statements
Fear of being scrutinized:	<p>“Audience might miss judge me thinking the way I talk means low preparation.”</p> <p>“...wonder if you are communicating effectively, worrying about delivery”</p> <p>“...always nervous beforehand and during especially since not native language.”</p> <p>“...felt like audience was just starring at me cause I am a foreign exchange student.”</p>
As an audience member, I am frustrated but sympathetic to students with CA:	<p>“I feel frustrated as an audience member, hard to pay attention, know its not their fault.”</p> <p>“I feel bad for them.”</p> <p>“...distracting from the speech.”</p> <p>“...either they didn’t prepare well enough, or they just need practice hope they keep going on.”</p>
Social support doesn’t necessarily help CA:	<p>“...close relational person wasn’t in the classroom. If they aren’t there not as helpful.”</p> <p>“...having them there could even be worse.”</p>
Audience feedback can affect speaker’s state:	<p>“I think if they give you positive feedback it can increase confidence.”</p> <p>“I don’t like blank stares.”</p> <p>“...you know those people are caring when they are responsive so its better to look at them, reduces speech anxiety.”</p> <p>“...clueless looks are awful.”</p>
To combat CA you need to practice:	<p>“...actually speaking and practicing.”</p> <p>“Just have to do it.”</p> <p>“...could give the speeches to smaller groups.”</p> <p>“...getting comfortable in the room especially with the people.”</p>

**Develop Training Objectives**

The next step in the NCTM is to develop training objectives. These objectives are based on the results of the needs assessment, and specify what trainees should be able to know or do by the end of training. Although similar to a goal, objectives are more specific, whereas goals may be the overarching objective such as combating speech anxiety. Training objectives must meet

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certain criteria in order to be written effectively. All objectives should be observable, measurable, attainable, and specific. In order for an objective to be measurable and observable, trainees would need to demonstrate comprehension of the material either through their own behaviors or written responses (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Having objectives that are attainable and practical are critical in the success of the training. For example, expecting that a training session would eliminate trainees' speech anxiety completely would be unrealistic. Finally, objectives must be specific, in order to avoid vague or unclear outcomes. Having specific criteria that trainees need to follow will ensure training goals are clear and will aid in the evaluation process of determining whether or not the objectives were met (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

After analyzing the results of the focus group analysis, it was clear that most students agreed the most effective way to combat speech anxiety was to repeatedly practice speaking in public. Students also tended to believe the audience could affect their level of anxiety when presenting a speech. Given the results of the needs assessment, objectives for the training plan were developed accordingly. Each objective was written in order to meet trainee needs. The following table lists each training objective.

**Table 3: Training Objectives**

Objective #1:	At the end of the training session, trainees should be able to list and describe three ways in which an individual can combat speech anxiety.
Objective #2:	At the end of the training session, trainees should perform a speech five different times.
Objective #3:	At the end of the training session, trainees should be able to list and describe three ways in which a speaker can be responsive to an audience.
Objective #4:	At the end of the training session, trainees should be able to list and describe three ways in which an audience member can communicate responsive behaviors to a speaker.

Objective #5:	At the end of the training session, trainees should score low enough on the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety to not be considered ‘highly anxious.’
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### **Assessment and Rationale for Training Objectives**

My first objective of training is to have students learn at least three tools to effectively combat speech anxiety. Before giving a speech, McCroskey (1972) has found that students need to have basic knowledge and tools that they can use to combat speech anxiety before they have to face their fear head on. The majority of students expressed a desire for tips and knowledge of how to combat speech anxiety. Having students be able to memorize these tools will help them be able to use the information on their own. This objective would be observable and measurable since students will be writing responses on paper during post-assessment after training has been completed, which will be discussed in further detail in the training plan. It would be attainable, since students will not have to memorize more than three tips. This objective is also specific because it is asking students to focus on reporting three tips to specifically combat speech anxiety.

The most common response from students in the focus groups was that they would like to have more practice speaking in front of an audience in order to reduce their level of speech apprehension. My second objective is designed to meet this need, by requiring all participants to practice speaking in front of the class five different times over the course of training. As discussed by McCroskey, (1972) students have been found to benefit most from speech anxiety training when they are exposed to speaking in public several times. In addition, it is important that students have a positive experience, in order to lower CA in the future (McCroskey, 1972). Research has shown that college students in particular become bored quickly, and are often

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difficult to recruit for training purposes. Therefore, in order to address this need, five speeches were chosen due to the feasibility in accomplishing them in a short amount of time. Having solely five speeches may increase the incentive for students to participate in training (McCroskey & Andersen, 1976, & Billson, 1986). This objective would be observable and measurable since as the trainer, I would be able to count the number of times they speak in front of the class. It would be attainable because students would only have to give five speeches total over a short period of time. It would be specific, because it is requiring students to practice speaking five times in order to increase their exposure to combat speech anxiety.

My third and fourth objectives aim to increase trainee awareness on how they can both increase positive responsiveness from their audience as a speaker, as well as how to communicate responsiveness as an audience member. The majority of the students interviewed for the focus groups reported that the audience played a role in the amount of speech anxiety they experienced while giving a speech. Research on social support, as evident in Maisel, Gable & Strachman's piece, (2008) has shown that positive, responsive behaviors can communicate non-verbal support (McCroskey, 1977, & Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008).

For the third objective, trainees will learn three ways to communicate responsiveness to an audience while giving a speech. To further instruct trainees on the process of responsiveness, the fourth objective asks trainees to learn three to communicate responsiveness as an audience member. Given the fact that responsive behaviors communicate confidence and ask for attention, the class will be more encouraged to stay engaged throughout the speech (Maisel, Gable & Strachman, 2008). As discussed in reference to having a successful business, Denton (2008) found the act of responsiveness increases the chance that responsive behaviors will be

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reciprocated, highlighting a reciprocal relationship of communication (Denton, 2008).

Objectives three and four are both observable and measurable, since trainees are asked to list three ways to be responsive as a speaker, and as an audience member. These two objectives are both attainable, because memorizing six items total is feasible, especially since information will be repeated throughout training. Finally, these objectives are specific, because they ask trainees to report at least three tips on specifically how to be responsive as a speaker and an audience member.

My fifth objective is for trainees to achieve a score lower than 131 on the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) by the end of the training session, which would ensure trainees are not categorized as having 'high communication apprehension' (McCroskey, 1970). Trainees will be asked to complete the survey before and after training, in order to effectively measure how effective training was in helping students feel more confident in regards to speech anxiety. It would be important to also identify whether or not trainee scores improve or not over the course of the training. This objective is observable and measurable, due to the numeric value of survey. It is attainable due to the survey being relatively short. Finally, it is specific, because it is looking at trainee's scores on the PRPSA (McCroskey, 1970).

Once objectives have been written and are all observable, measurable, attainable, and specific, Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) recommend designing a curriculum. A curriculum needs to specify how to teach skills relative to the training objectives. Beebe, Mottet and Roach (2013) highlight the importance of teaching skills in a chronological order in order for trainees to build off of prior knowledge. Therefore, it will be important to implement the training objectives in the order in which they were listed previously (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Trainees need

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to first learn tips to combat speech anxiety before giving a speech in order to combat CA effectively as McCroskey (1966) discusses (McCroskey, 1966). Furthermore, it would be difficult for a trainee to identify responsive behaviors in a speech before being given a background of knowledge on the topic.

### **Organize Training Content and Determine Training Methods**

After constructing clear objectives for training, the next two steps of the NCTM are to organize Training Content and determine training methods. When choosing training content, it is important to ensure all information provided during training is directly relevant to the training objectives. Training content should be credible and supported by other empirical, reliable sources in order to ensure information is accurate (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Furthermore, training methods need to be based on the specific needs of trainees in order to increase retention and learning outcomes. In order to address trainee needs effectively, training will consist of three 90-minute sessions occurring over the course of three weeks. Training sessions will focus on speech anxiety, speaker responsiveness, and audience responsiveness. These three topics were the central themes emerging from analysis of the data gathered from the focus group sessions. Each training session will also incorporate a speaking activity. Below I discuss the goals for each specific training session, provide a rationale for the training content chosen for training, and finally specify what training methods will be implemented.

#### **Training Session #1**

##### ***Training Content on Speech Anxiety***

For the first training session, there are two goals; discuss concrete ways trainees can combat speech anxiety, and practice speaking in front of an audience. As noted earlier, the first

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objective of training is to increase trainee awareness about speech anxiety, and inform trainees on ways in which they can combat CA. The topic of speech anxiety was chosen to be in the first training session, since McCroskey (1966), one of the leading experts on speech anxiety, found trainees benefit from learning tools to combat CA before giving a speech (McCroskey, 1966).

Trainees will be informed that research that has been done on speech has found specific strategies a speaker can engage in to successfully combat CA. One of the main issues that arise from speech anxiety is ‘anticipatory’ anxiety, which occurs prior to the speech itself. Anticipatory anxiety has been characterized as often being more detrimental and stressful than anxiety experienced during an actual speech. While speech anxiety can be frightening and at times debilitating for some individuals, researcher has found five significant strategies a speaker can utilize to decrease CA (McCroskey, 1972 ; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977). These five strategies will be discussed in training.

The first strategy discussed in training will advise trainees to ‘control what they can.’ While an individual cannot control everything about their speech experience, they can control what they wear. Dressing confident for a speech has been consistently been shown to increase an individuals level of self-esteem (Murray et al., 2002). Planning one’s outfit ahead of time can also prove beneficial, in order to decrease the amount of stress faced by a trainee. Furthermore, a trainee will be encouraged to practice their speech ahead of time if feasible, since the amount of practice and work on a speech can be controlled. Being familiar with the location and room of the speech when feasible can also be helpful in order help a speaker feel somewhat familiar with the situation and in control (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977; Murray et al., 2002).



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The second strategy discussed in training is to encourage trainees to ‘practice positive thinking’ when they experience anxiety regarding a speech, specifically addressing anticipatory anxiety. Research has shown a correlation between practicing positive thinking and experiencing positive emotions (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977). Since anxiety is a negative emotion, trainees will be encouraged to think positively by repeating the following statement, “The truth of the matter is what I fear may happen. If it does, all I can do is deal with it then” (Zasio, 2006). This statement has been used by many psychologists all over the country, specifically Dr. Robin Zasio, who is one of America’s leading experts on the treatment of anxiety. This statement encourages individuals to think more rationally by having them recognize regardless of what may happen during a speech, worrying about it will not prove beneficial. Trainees will be encouraged to process their fears by using this statement, in order to avoid ruminating about an issue with no solution in sight (Zasio, 2006).

For the third strategy trainees will be encouraged to combat CA by preparing their speech effectively ahead of time. While this may not always be an option, most speeches are scheduled ahead of time, allowing an individual time to effectively prepare (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977). Since students often struggle with speech anxiety the day of the speech, it is important to ensure the speech is written effectively and that the content is appropriate and credible. In addition, being familiar with the content covered within the speech will be useful to trainees. Research has shown that individuals who are not well prepared or familiar with the content they are discussing have been found to not surprisingly suffer from higher CA (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977).

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The fourth strategy to combat speech anxiety is to focus on the ‘external’ rather than the ‘internal.’ Trainees will be encouraged to focus primarily on their audience while they speak, taking their own needs into consideration. Focusing on the goal of the speech, and the importance of communicating information to audience members will help a speaker focus less on their internal feelings (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977). A speaker should essentially use the audience as a distraction to their own internal feelings of anxiety. Trainees will be advised to remind themselves of this the day of a speech, in order to focus on the importance of the ‘task’ rather than the negative feelings associated with giving a speech (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977).

The fifth and final strategy to help trainees combat CA is to continuously practice speaking in public when possible. Trainees will be encouraged to seek an opportunity to speak whenever possible, even if they involve minor speaking time, such as introducing a speaker at a business meeting. Trainees will also be encouraged to seek outside resources to practice speaking, such as community groups like “Toast-Masters” (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977).

### ***Training Methods for Speech Anxiety Training***

In order to effectively teach trainees five ways in which they can combat CA, training methods need to be determined. As discussed by Kolb and Kolb, (2005) training methods need to meet the specific needs and learning styles of trainees in order to effectively increase learning outcomes (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). In this case, all of the trainees participating in the training program will be college students, predominately in their late teens and early twenties. McBride and Neif (2012) found that college students report being bored quickly in school, which can be

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attributed partly to the ability of technology providing immediate gratification (McBride & Neif, 2012). They also found that students learn best when instructors vary their teaching methods every twenty minutes. In order to help keep trainees engaged throughout training, teaching methods will vary every twenty minutes, with the exception of speaking activities due to their high level of engagement.

Before beginning each training session, it is important to provide a clear introduction, outlining the topics that will be covered during training. Having a clear agenda for students will help them see early on how concepts relate to one another, and how the training session will be conducted. In order to help visual and aural listeners, the agenda will be discussed orally as well as be included in the Participant Handbook (Appendix F).

In order to address the topic of speech anxiety effectively, the first training session will begin with a set induction incorporating classroom discussion on common issues and topics associated with public speaking and speech anxiety. McCroskey (1966) highlights the importance of allowing students to reflect on the topic of speech anxiety and its relation to them personally, in order to help them identify with the strategies to combat CA (McCroskey, 1966). Beginning the first training session with a discussion will not only help students identify with the strategies that will be discussed, but it also communicates to trainees that their participation is desired and encouraged. During the discussion section of training, trainees will be asked a brief number of questions to address key topics and concerns commonly associated with giving a speech. (Appendix C). As Bebbe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) discuss, it is important to use general, open-ended questions for a group of individuals in order to encourage students to share their ideas and opinions. If trainees are hesitant to participate, specific questions will be asked to

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individual trainees. In this case, it would be important to ask general questions that are not ‘face-threatening,’ such as forcing them to talk about their own issues with speech anxiety. Instead, questions will ask general questions that are less ‘personal’ and more topics focused (Appendix C).

Once a brief discussion is completed, a brief lecture, no longer than twenty minutes as recommended by McBride and Neif (2012) will be incorporated (McBride & Neif, 2012). During this lecture, students will be taught the five strategies research has shown to effectively lower CA (McCroskey, 1972; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004; McCroskey, 1977). During the lecture, students will be asked to follow along in their handout from the student pamphlet, and take notes when necessary (Appendix F).

Each strategy to combat CA will be discussed and written on the board in order to help visual and aural learners. Kinesthetic learners will also benefit by writing notes on their own handouts (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). For each strategy, specific examples and additional information as discussed previously in relation to training content, will be provided to help trainees visualize how to implement each strategy in their own experiences with speaking in public. While the participant handbook will provide an outline of topics covered, trainees will benefit by attending the training session in order to gain further knowledge into how to specifically implement each strategy.

Another effective training method, as mentioned by Beebe, Mottet and Roach, (2013) is the importance of including internal summaries, with clear transitions, and repeating key concepts throughout a lecture (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Research has consistently found a correlation between the use of repetition in the classroom and student retention (Beebe, Mottet,

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& Roach, 2013). Therefore, throughout the lecture, trainees will be provided clear transitional ‘markers’ to help them follow main points covered. After each training session, it will be important to also provide a clear conclusion, summarizing the information covered during training. In addition, for each training session that occurs after the first, it will be important to refer back to what was previously covered in order to increase student retention as well as help trainees see how information is being connected over the course of three training sessions (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

The last training method to ensure a successful training session would be to engage in immediacy behaviors as the trainer. While this is further discussed in the section on “Delivery of Training,” incorporating responsive behaviors as a Trainer as well as learning trainee names will not only communicate support to the trainees, but will also help students feel the Trainer is taking a personal interest in their learning outcomes (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

### ***Training Content and Methods for Speech #1***

In order to meet the specific objective of having trainees speak five times in front of the class, specific impromptu speeches were chosen. Impromptu speeches were selected since trainees would not be required to prepare a speech outside of class. Since many students will be busy with their own classes and jobs, any work in relation to the training will need to occur during the training sessions. This will also increase the incentive for students to attend training, not having to worry about extra work outside of training. As noted previously, trainees will be asked to give three impromptu speeches in front of the class by the end of training.

For the first speech, students will be asked to give a two-three minute speech where they describe a favorite activity or hobby and provide reasons for why they enjoy it. The content of

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this speech acts as an ‘ice-breaker’ for the class, helping students build confidence by first speaking about something they are already familiar with and passionate about which research has found to be beneficial for students struggling with speech anxiety. There will be little focus on organization in order to keep the speech as being a ‘low-risk’ activity (McCroskey, 1972; McCroskey, & Richmond, 1987).

In order to meet the objective of speaking five times, students will first present their speech to a small group of students before giving it to the class as a whole, since research has found that ‘low-risk’ settings can be beneficial to boost self esteem in regards to CA (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987). In this setting, they can receive feedback from their audience on their delivery before they have to give the speech in front of a larger audience.

Since students will give their speech to a group of students before the entire class, it will be important to set ground rules for audience feedback. Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2013) emphasize the importance of giving specific instructions to what a small group is supposed to accomplish. In this context, audience members will be asked to provide general feedback that focuses on the content and delivery of the speaker, rather than judging the speaker themselves. Furthermore, group members will be asked to pay attention throughout the speech, not interrupt each other, and be positive in their delivery. Since trainees have not yet been instructed on how to be responsive as an audience member or as a speaker, constructive feedback will naturally be limited. However, the goal of the first training session is to expose students to speaking in front of an audience while learning tips to combat CA. There is little focus on effectiveness and delivery in the early part of training (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

*Training Content for Speaker Responsiveness*

The goals of the second segment of training are to help trainees learn ways in which they can be more responsive as a speaker, as well as to practice speaking in front of an audience. As noted previously, responsiveness is one form of emotional support that can be communicated through non-verbal cues (Canevello, A., & Crocker, J. (2010). Maisel, C. N., Gable, L. S., & Strachman, A. (2008). Denton (2008) points out how powerful responsive behaviors can be, and how an individual can essentially influence another individuals' behaviors. In this case, communication can be seen as occurring through a reciprocal relationship where practicing the 'golden rule' can create positive outcomes (Denton, 2008). Since responsive behaviors have an affect on others, a speaker can use responsive cues to their advantage to influence the audience to be responsive back (Denton, 2008). Through the results from the needs assessment, specifically through focus group analysis, it was clear that many students felt having a supportive audience would lower one's level of CA. Most of the students participating in the focus groups believed having a supportive audience would help them give a speech easier.

Trainees will be informed on several ways in which they can engage in responsiveness as speaker as evident in the literature on responsiveness (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Maisel, Gable & Strachman, 2008). First, they will be encouraged to provide consistent eye contact to an audience. They will be advised to look at individual audience members for an equal amount of time. Eye contact not only communicates credibility, but can also encourage audience members to reciprocate in giving eye contact. Having an audience engage during a speech can help a speaker feel more confident (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Maisel, Gable & Strachman, 2008;

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McCroskey, 1966).

Second, trainees will be encouraged to smile, laugh, and include hand gestures when appropriate while giving a speech. All three of these are responsive behaviors that encourage engagement and communicate support (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Maisel, Gable & Strachman, 2008; McCroskey, 1966). As mentioned by Schwarze (2012), these non-verbal cues as a speaker can communicate confidence and credibility to an audience which will increase the likelihood that an audience will be both positively responsive and receptive to a speaker throughout a speech (Schwarze, 2012).

### ***Training Methods for Speaker Responsiveness***

As discussed in relation to the first training session, the specific needs of the trainees will affect training methods chosen. Since most of the training methods model those used in the first training session, I will not only expand on training methods that are unique to the second segment of training.

First, students will be given the information on how to be a responsive speaker as they were in the first training session. The lecture will be twenty minutes or less, and responsive behaviors will be written on the board and referred to on the Participant Pamphlets (Appendix F). In order to effectively inform trainees on the process of responsiveness, it will be important to also incorporate video examples of speakers engaging in responsive behaviors. As mentioned in Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, (2013) people remember only 20% of what they hear. However, they remember 50% of what they hear and see, making the videos crucial for student retention. After each video, trainees will be asked discussion questions, as described in the first training session, that will ask them to identify specific responsive behaviors, and how they felt they aided to the



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speaker's effectiveness (Appendix C).

### ***Training Content and Methods for Speech 2***

For the second impromptu speech, the goal once again will be to have trainees practice speaking in front of an audience. Trainees will be instructed to pick a random object in the classroom or that they have with them. They will then be asked to write a 2-3 minute speech that attempts to persuade the class to buy the product. In this case, the speech will likely have a humorous component, which can often limit the amount of speech anxiety (McCroskey, 1966). Students will be asked to give at least two reasons why the class should buy their product, in order to be persuasive. Students will not be given tips on persuasive speaking, since the ultimate goal of the training is to have them practice speaking, not necessarily learn persuasive language techniques. The goal of training is to practice speaking in public, assuming trainees will be given the fundamental tools they will need in their own course of Public Speaking, in order to create an effective speech. As mentioned in the first training segment, due to the benefits of speaking in front of a small group, students will first present their speech to their same groups, and then finally to the class as a whole.

### **Training Session #3**

#### ***Training Content for Audience Responsiveness***

In the third and final segment of training, the goal is to have trainees learn three ways in which they can be responsive as an audience member, as well as speak in front of the class. Similar to the content covered in the second segment, trainees will be reminded of the importance of communicating support, not only to help support a speaker, but to also encourage reciprocal behavior when they have to speak as well (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Maisel, Gable,

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& Strachman, 2008; Denton, 2008). Similar responsive behaviors mentioned in segment two of training will be encouraged, by writing them on the board and elaborating on how to utilize them. Responsive audience behaviors include smiling and laughing when appropriate, nodding, eye contact, paying attention, and having open body language, such as not slouching. All of these behaviors were reportedly desirable as evident in the results of the focus group analysis. Having a supportive, engaging audience can make the speaking experience for a speaker significantly more enjoyable and easier (Canevello & Crocker, 2010; Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008; Schwarze, 2012).

### ***Training Methods for Audience Responsiveness***

Training methods in the third and final segment of training will model training methods used in the first segment of training, with the exception of incorporating a discussion section into the lecture portion.

### ***Training Content and Methods for Speech #3***

Given the fact that students will have spoken four times by the third day of training, trainees will be expected to give their final speech to the entire class without practicing in front of their small groups ahead of time. In addition, trainees will be asked to apply what they have learned about responsiveness in their own speeches. In this case, students will be asked to provide feedback as audience members on how responsive a speaker was. In addition, each speaker will be asked to provide feedback on how responsive he or she felt the audience was. In this case, specific trainees will be asked to answer questions, ensuring each trainee is speaking in front of the class, whether through a speech or through feedback opportunities.

The third speech asks trainees to give a 2-3 minute speech on a topic that they draw from

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a ‘hat.’ Each trainee will be given three options on each sheet of paper they choose, in order to allow flexibility for the trainee. Trainees will be allowed to either persuade us about an aspect of the topic they chose, inform us in some way, or share a personal story related to the topic. For the last speech, there is a lot of flexibility given to trainees in how they want to design their speech. Trainees will be expected to be creative with their topics, given the short amount of time for preparation. All topics are either ‘hot topics’ or popular topics, in order to ensure trainees have a level of familiarity (Appendix D)

### **Training Resources**

The next step in the NCTM is to selectively choose training resources. Since the training sessions will be relatively short, incorporating web-based learning tools or other texts would not be practical to require as part of training. However, it will be important to provide additional resources for trainees to utilize on their own after training has been completed. Trainees will be given resources in the Participant Handbook that provide information on how to find additional help in combating speech anxiety, ways in which trainees can practice speaking such as through toast masters, and finally contact information of the Trainer for follow up information (Appendix F).

Since the training session is organized like a college level classroom, it would be important to have the training occur in a classroom setting. A white board with markers would be important to have in order to write notes for the class, as well as extra paper, pens, and note cards for trainees to take notes on. Technology would also be important to have in order to show trainees videos of speeches as part of the responsiveness training evident in the second training segment.

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Trainees will be receiving information predominantly from the training session alone.

All of the information discussed during training will be from personal experience with teaching Public Speaking Courses at the University of Montana, Subject Matter Experts working in the field of Communication and Speech Anxiety, and from different scholarly sources in the field of Communication. All information presented during training will be cited when appropriate (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

### **Training Plan**

Now that the training objectives, training content, training resources and training methods have all been determined, the next step of the NCTM is to develop a detailed training plan (Appendix C). The training plan provides a detailed map of how training will be specifically conducted, by outlines all of the training objectives, training content, time constraints, training methods, and training materials (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). The training plan provides a clear lesson plan for trainers to follow when conducting training. As discussed earlier, the training program will consist of three training sessions over the course of three weeks.

### **Deliver Training**

After having completed the training plan, the next step of the NCTM is to deliver the training session to students. Due to time constraints, the training session could not be implemented for students.

When the training session is delivered to students, it will be important to vary the activities during training, since students often have a short attention span. The environment for training purposes will also be important to consider. Comfortable seating and a comfortable room will help students feel more comfortable and open to learning during training. It will also

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be important to create an open atmosphere that is inviting to students, especially since participation will be encouraged during training. Incorporating humor early on in the training session, as well as providing a snack for students to socially mingle in the beginning, will help break the ice for students. Having a discussion on my own struggles with speech anxiety will also be important to ease trainees' anxiety and build rapport with the audience, showing them that I haven't been immune to struggling with speech anxiety and have successfully overcome it (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

As for delivery, it will be important to speak extemporaneously in order to keep students engaged and interested. Eye contact will be important, especially in the introduction, to communicate to students that I am comfortable and confident with the information I will present, establishing my own credibility as a speaker. Giving students transitional cues, and gesturing to both sides of the room will help keep students focused and help them follow along. Also, any time students share information or answer a question during training it will be important to be positively responsive to them, by smiling or nodding my head, in order to communicate emotional support to them, increasing the likelihood that they will continue to participate during training (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013).

### **Assess Training**

After training has been completed, students will be given a post-assessment survey, consisting of three different sections (Appendix E). The first section of the assessment survey will measure whether the training objectives were met. For instance, if the objective was to learn three anxiety-reducing behaviors, students would need to be able to write and describe all three after training is completed. This assessment will help measure whether the objectives were

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actually met through training (Weisbord, 1985). The second section of the survey will be anonymous, asking trainees to give feedback on the training session. Students will be specifically asked what they were expecting to get out of the training session, what they actually received, what they enjoyed, and what if anything they wish would have been included. Having this honest feedback will help determine what aspects of the training were effective, and which aspects needed more work. Having this assessment after the fact will help make future training sessions on the same topic more successful and geared towards trainee needs (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Finally, the last section of the survey will include the Personal Report of Speech anxiety scale to determine if student scores were in the moderate range, and if they had improved in score or not from when they first registered for the training session.

### Summary

Communication apprehension is often experienced by undergraduate students. Researchers indicate that the best way to combat CA is to repeatedly practice speaking in public. This training was designed to meet the needs of students experiencing CA by following each step of the NCTM. After conducting a thorough needs assessment through the use of a pilot study and focus group analysis, it was evident students agreed they would need to practice speaking in public to combat CA. Students also agreed that having a responsive, supportive audience can play a large role in one's level of CA while giving a speech. Once the needs assessment had been conducted, training objectives and a detailed training plan were developed in order to address students' specific needs. Once the training program is implemented, the post assessment will help reveal how effective training was in meeting the training objectives. The training plan will likely be modified after it is delivered in order to best meet students' individual needs.

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Online Survey Consent Form and Survey

You are invited to participate in a research project about speech anxiety, and how perceived support in one's personal relationships can play a role. This online survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Five points extra credit will be allocated for full participation. Participation is voluntary, and responses will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by the technology being used. If you do not wish to participate, alternative methods for extra credit will be granted upon requests to the instructor.

You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with The University of Montana. Submission of the survey will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate and that you affirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact the Principal Investigator, Elise Fanney, via email at [Elise.Fanney@umontana.edu](mailto:Elise.Fanney@umontana.edu) or the faculty advisor Dr. Steve Yoshimura at [Stephen.Yoshimura@mso.umt.edu](mailto:Stephen.Yoshimura@mso.umt.edu).

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the UM Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (406) 243-6672.

Please print or save a copy of this page for your records.

\* I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_ Enter survey

Appendix B

Focus Group Questions: Needs Assessment Part 2

- What do you think about while giving a speech?
- How do you perceive students who are nervous while they are giving a speech?
- After hearing briefly about the results of the pilot study, what are your thoughts?
- Do you think responsiveness from an audience makes any difference in the level of speech anxiety?
- How do you think speech anxiety in the public speaking context could be managed?
- If you could develop a training session to help students who struggle with speech anxiety, what do you think would be useful to do during the training session?

## Appendix C

### Complete Training Plan

#### Training Session #1 (90 Minutes)

##### Introduction:

-Provide a brief introduction (5 Minutes) to formerly introduce oneself, sharing personal relation to the topic of speech anxiety and how common and debilitating speech anxiety can be (Helps to build rapport with the class and establish credibility on the issue)

-Briefly summarize training objectives (5 Minutes) and explain what will occur within each training session

-Over the course of training, trainees should be able to list at least three ways they can combat speech anxiety, be responsive as a speaker, and responsive as an audience member.

-Trainees should also speak in front of a class at least five times, and be classified as moderately anxious or lower on the PRPSA by the end of training.

-Training will consist of three 90-minute sessions, with a lecture and speech incorporated into each segment of training to meet these objectives.

Agenda: Write on board and discuss with class (5 Minutes)

-Speech Anxiety Class Discussion, Lecture on Speech Anxiety, Speech 1 presented to small groups and then class as a whole

Objectives for Training Session #1: Write on board and discuss with class

-Trainees should learn at least three ways to combat speech anxiety

-Trainees should practice speaking in front of an audience

Training Materials: Trainees should have Participant Handbook out and follow along with lecture material, writing notes when necessary. A whiteboard with markers would be necessary for the lecture portion of training.

Training Methods: Discussion section, brief lecture, speaking activity

##### Speech Anxiety Discussion (10 Minutes)

\* Transition: Before we dive into tips on speech anxiety, I want to first open up the floor to discuss speech anxiety in general. (Proceed with discussion questions below)

Objective: Discussion section aims to encourage trainees to practice talking out loud in the

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classroom setting, as well as have an open discussion on the topic of speech anxiety.

**Questions:** (Questions that are potentially face threatening will not be targeted towards individual trainees)

- 1.) Why do you think so many of us fear giving a speech in front of an audience? (Can be directed to a specific trainee if necessary to encourage classroom participation)
- 2.) What are the common fears you have about giving a speech in front of an audience? (Open-ended question not to be directed to specific trainee)
- 3.) Why do you think it is important to combat this fear? (Can be directed to a specific trainee or class as a whole)
- 4.) What are some ways you have found to alleviate or even exacerbate your speech anxiety? (Open-ended question not to be directed towards an individual trainee)

**\*Transition:** Lets now move on to discuss ways in which a speaker can combat speech anxiety.

**Lecture Content: (20 Minutes)** Five Strategies To Combat Speech Anxiety (Elaborate on Each)

- 1.) Control What You Can
- 2.) Practice Positive Thinking
- 3.) Prepare Ahead of Time5.)
- 4.) Focus on External (Audience) Rather Than Internal Feelings (Anxiety)
- 5.) Repeated Exposure to Speaking in Public

**\*Transition:** So we've just gone over five ways a speaker can effectively lower CA; control what you can, practice positive speaking, effective preparation, focusing on the audience rather than one's anxiety, and finally to continuously seek opportunities to expose oneself to speaking in public, like you are doing now within this training session. Lets now move to our first speech. This speech is impromptu, which means you will have little preparation. I know this may sound scary, but the topic is something you are very familiar with and it will act as more of an 'ice-breaker' for us to all get to know each other, rather than a formal speech.

**Impromptu Speech #1:**

**Time:**

- 3 Minutes to Assign Speech
- 5 Minutes for Trainees to Prepare Speech
- 3 Minutes to Discuss Ground Rules for Feedback
- 15 Minutes to Present Speeches to Small Groups with feedback
- 15 Minutes to present speeches to entire class with feedback

**Speech #1:** For the first speech, you will prepare a 2-3 minute speech describing your favorite activity or hobby, and provide the class with at least two reasons to back up your reasoning. Take the next five minutes to briefly write down what you want to discuss, and then I will pair you up into groups so that you can first practice in front of them before presenting to the class as a whole. (If you are anxious, try to incorporate the 5 tips we went over today!)

**\*Transition:** -Now get into groups of three, and present your speeches to each other.  
-(Group size may vary depending on the number of trainees participating)  
-Please provide constructive feedback to one another.

**Ground rules for group discussion:** Since this is the first training session, the amount of feedback you will be able to give will naturally be limited. However, please provide general feedback commenting on overall delivery. Focus on the delivery and content of the speech, rather than critiquing the speaker themselves.

**Present to the whole class:** Now that you got to first practice presenting your speech in front of your small groups, lets let the whole class hear them as well. (As the trainer, provide minor feedback on delivery, and allow class to ask questions regarding the trainees' hobby, rather than providing feedback on their performance since it is the first time they are speaking in front of the entire class)

**Conclusion: (3 Minutes)** Congratulate all trainees on successfully completing the first speech, and encourage them it will only get easier over time. Remind trainees that the following training session will discuss how a speaker can be responsive to an audience, and will include another speaking activity.



## **Training Session #2**

### **Agenda: (3 Minutes) Write on board and discuss with class**

- Lecture on Speaker Responsiveness
- Watch videos of speakers engaging in responsive behaviors
- Speech 2 (Present to group and class)

### **Objectives for Training Session #2: Write on board and discuss with class**

- Trainees should learn at least three ways to be responsive to an audience while presenting a speech
- Trainees should practice speaking in front of an audience

**Training Materials:** Trainees should have Participant Handbook out and follow along with lecture material, writing notes when necessary. A whiteboard with markers would be necessary for the lecture portion of training, as well as technology to play relevant videos.

**Training Methods:** Lecture, Discussion section with videos for application, speaking activity with class discussion on performance evaluation

**\*Transition: (2 Minutes)** Last time, we discussed ways in which a speaker can combat speech anxiety. Remember, positive thinking, preparing ahead of time, controlling what you can, focusing on the audience, and several others. Today I want to inform you on ways you can be responsive as a speaker

### **Lecture Content: (20 Minutes) How to be responsive as a speaker**

**Define Responsiveness:** Communicating support through non-verbal communication

-Research has shown that speakers that are more responsive encourage more audience interaction and positive feedback, which can subsequently lower your own CA (Who wants to be talking in front of an audience that isn't smiling or looking interested in what you are saying?)

### **Ways in which a speaker can be responsive:(Demonstrate each behavior to the class)**

- ❖ Eye contact-hold eye contact long enough, look at all audience members
- ❖ Hand gestures-use your hands when appropriate; put notes on a podium if shaking
- ❖ Enthusiasm-be enthusiastic about the information you are presenting to encourage the audience to pay attention
- ❖ Body Language-Stand up straight and do not do distracting behaviors (playing with one's hair) Need to communicate confidence and credibility, regardless of how one is feeling

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- ❖ Smile-Smile when appropriate in order to appear more relateable and conversational as a speaker

\* **Transition:** Now lets watch some videos to see these responsive behaviors in action!

Show Clip 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDdizoPKRzM> (**Show 1 Minute of Speech**)

-In this clip, the woman is paying tribute to her Aunt Sue. Notice how she eludes confidence, by standing up straight. She gives the class a lot of eye contact, smiles, and speaks in a conversational tone, despite having a manuscript.

Discussion Questions:(5 Minutes)

- 1.) In what ways does this speaker engage in responsive behaviors?
- 2.) How effective or successful do you think these behaviors were?

Show Clip 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YivQYeI0vys> (**Show 1 Minute of Speech**)

In this clip, notice the distracting behaviors she engages in and why they affect her credibility as a speaker. (playing with hair, lack of eye contact, little enthusiasm, huddled behind podium)

Discussion Questions: (5 Minutes)

- 1.) In what ways does this speaker engage in responsive behaviors?
- 2.) How effective or successful do you think these behaviors were?

\* **Transition:** So now that we have talked about how to be responsive as a speaker, lets try to put it into action in your next speech. The procedures are the same as last time, where you will first give your speech to the same group of students, and then will give it to the class as a whole. The only difference this time is that I would like each group and the class as whole to provide specific feedback on how effective the speaker was in being responsive.

Impromptu Speech #2:

**Time:**

Assign Speech (**3 Minutes**)

Preparation time (**10 Minutes to allow trainees to choose an object and prepare speech**)

Present to Groups with feedback (**15 Minutes**)

Present to Class with feedback (**15 Minutes**)

**Speech #2:** For the second speech, please choose any object that you have on your or that is in the classroom. You will need to try and sell us this object/product within a 2-3 minute speech. In this case, the speech will likely have a humorous component, which can often limit the amount of speech anxiety. Provide at least two reasons why the class should buy your product, attempting to be persuasive. (Students will not be given tips on persuasive speaking, since the ultimate goal of the training is to have them practice speaking, not necessarily learn persuasive language techniques. Try to practice engaging in responsive behaviors while speaking.

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-Present to Group

-present to Class

**Conclusion: (5 Minutes)** Congratulate trainees on completing another speech. Remind the class of the responsive behaviors discussed; smiling, hand gestures, posture, eye-contact, etc. Inform the class that for the next and last segment of training, students will be informed on ways in which they as audience members can communicate responsiveness, in order to communicate support and increase the chance of it being reciprocated when they themselves have to speak. Students will also give their last speech, and complete a post-assessment in order to see whether objectives were effectively met through training, as well as receive general feedback on effectiveness of training.

### **Training Session #3**

**Agenda: (5 Minutes)** Write on board and discuss with class

- Lecture on how to be a responsive audience member
- Speech 3 (Only to class as a whole; no group presentations)
- Post-Assessment Survey

**Objectives:** Write on board and discuss with class

- Trainees should learn at least three ways they can communicate responsiveness to a speaker as an audience member
- Trainees should practice speaking in front of an audience

**Training Materials:** Trainees should have Participant Handbook out and follow along with lecture material, writing notes when necessary. A whiteboard with markers would be necessary for the lecture portion of training.

**Training Methods:** Lecture, speaking activity, and audience discussion/feedback after each speech

**\*Transition: (7 Minutes)** So in the last two training sessions we went over ways to combat speech anxiety (Review main tips) and discussed ways in which a speaker can engage in responsive behaviors while speaking. (Review responsive behaviors) As we discussed in the last training session, having a supportive audience has been shown to help reduce the amount of CA experienced by a speaker. In addition, communicating support as a speaker and an audience can work to your advantage, due to the reciprocal relationship. (Golden rule: Do unto others as you would like to be treated)

- Lets now discuss ways in which you as audience members can also communicate responsiveness. A lot of the behaviors will naturally overlap with speaker responsiveness.

**Lecture Content: (15 Minutes)** How to be a responsive as an audience member

- Discuss the importance of being a supportive, responsive audience member (gives non verbal support for other speakers, builds rapport with other colleagues and students)

Ways in which an audience member can communicate responsiveness while listening to a speech: (Elaborate with each)

- ❖ Eye contact to speaker
- ❖ Nodding one's head when appropriate
- ❖ Body language that is engaged (Example: not slouched)
- ❖ Smiling when appropriate

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- ❖ Paying attention to the material discussed

**\*Transition:** For your last speech, I want you to think about what we have learned thus far on how to be responsive as a speaker and as an audience member. For this speech, we will not present in front of groups before speaking to the class as a whole to challenge yourselves a bit more. After each student presents, I want to hear feedback from the speaker on how responsive they felt their audience was, and provide specific examples. (For example, I liked with X smiled and nodded at me.”

### **Impromptu Speech #3:**

#### **Time:**

- Assign Speech (5 Minutes)
- Prepare Speech (5 Minutes)
- Present Speech with audience feedback (20 Minutes)

**Speech #3:** For speech three, you will need to draw a topic out of a hat. You will be asked to give a 2-3 minutes to discuss something about that topic. You can either talk about the controversy about the topic, inform us on some aspect about it, provide a solution to a problem associated with your topic, share your own viewpoint that is related to the topic, share a personal experience related to the topic, or anything else.

-In this case, students will have to be creative on the spot despite their speech anxiety. This activity will encourage students to prioritize their emotions, trying to focus on the task at hand since little preparation will be possible. Audience members will be encouraged to practice responsive behaviors, and each speaker will evaluate their effectiveness.

-Depending on the age group of the trainees and the current political events at the time of training, topics will be modified accordingly. Trainees that choose topics that are highly controversial will be encouraged to discuss the different viewpoints on the issue, in order to avoid heated debates during training. (See Appendix for Speech 3 Topics)

**Conclusion:** (10 Minutes) Excellent job completing all three speeches! You have all spoke in front of the class or a group a total of five times within a period of three weeks, so you should be very proud of yourselves. My hope is that you have learned ways in which you can combat speech anxiety, and be responsive both as a speaker and an audience member to increase the amount of perceived support you have while speaking. While I know many of you still may be anxious about giving a speech, you should be proud of yourselves that you are taking measures to combat it, like this training session. In your Participant Handbook, I have included additional resources for you that can help combat speech anxiety. (books and websites) In addition, I've provided some websites that include a lot of famous speeches if you would like to have some excellent examples to model. My contact information is also provided in the packet if you have any follow up questions or concerns. It has been a joy to direct this training session with you, and I wish you all the best! Before you leave today, I would like you to complete this post-assessment to help me decipher whether training was helpful in meeting the training objectives,

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and to hear your feedback on the effectiveness of the training in general.

**\*Pass out post-assessment survey: (20 Minutes)**

Step out of class while they complete it, and return when all students have left the room in order to ensure students feel comfortable providing feedback on the effectiveness of training. (Instruct students to leave them on the desk in front of the classroom when they are finished)

**Appendix D**

**Speech #3 Speech Topics (Cut-up and put in hat for students to choose)**

<b>Oprah Winfrey</b>	<b>Medical Marijuana</b>	<b>Online-Dating</b>
<b>Dr. Phil</b>	<b>Global Warming</b>	<b>Coffee</b>
<b>Walt Disney</b>	<b>Teens and Drug Testing</b>	<b>Vacation</b>
<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Lowering or Raising Drinking Age</b>	<b>J.K. Rowling</b>
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>DUI Rates</b>	<b>Text-Messaging</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>Learning a Second Language</b>	<b>Online-Dating</b>
<b>National Parks</b>	<b>Beauty Pageants</b>	
<b>Reality Television</b>	<b>School Lunches</b>	
<b>Animals</b>	<b>Smoking in Public</b>	

**Appendix E**

**Post-Assessment: Three Sections**

**Exit Survey: Section 1**

**Objective: To measure whether training objectives were met by trainees.**

**Directions:** Trainees will need to answer the following questions through a written response.

- 1.) Please list at least three different ways you can combat speech anxiety.
- 2.) Please list at least three ways you as a speaker can be responsive to an audience.
- 3.) Please list at least three ways you as an audience member can be responsive to a speaker.
- 4.) How many times did you speak in front of the class? (small groups included)

**Exit Survey: Section 2**

**Objective: To evaluate trainee feedback in terms of training effectiveness**

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

- 1.) What did you expect to get out of the training session?
- 2.) What did you receive from the training session?
- 3.) What did you enjoy about the training session?
- 4.) What if anything do you wish would have been included in the training session?
- 5.) Is there anything else you would like the Trainer to know regarding your experience in the training session?



**Exit Survey Section Three:**

**Objective: Measure Scores on the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)**

**Directions:** Below are 34 statements that people sometimes make about themselves. Please indicate whether or not you believe each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

**Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neutral = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. While preparing for giving a speech, I feel tense and nervous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I feel tense when I see the words “speech” and “public speech” on a course outline when studying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Right after giving a speech I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have no fear of giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I look forward to giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. My hands tremble when I am giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I feel relaxed while giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I enjoy preparing for a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I don’t know.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. My mind is clear when giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I do not dread giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I perspire just before starting a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. My heart beats very fast just as I start a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before my speech starts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Realizing that only a little time remains in a speech makes me very tense and anxious.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. While giving a speech, I know I can control my feelings of tension and stress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I breathe faster just before starting a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before giving a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I do poorer on speeches because I am anxious.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I feel anxious when the teacher announces the date of a speaking assignment.

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. When I make a mistake while giving a speech, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. During an important speech I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. My heart beats very fast while I present a speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. I feel anxious while waiting to give my speech.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.

## **Appendix F**

### **PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**

#### **Training Session #1 Outline**

##### **Agenda:**

- Class Discussion on Speech Anxiety
- Lecture on Speech Anxiety Tips
- Speech 1

##### **Objectives:**

- Learn at least three tips to fight speech anxiety
- Practice speaking in front of an audience.

##### **Speech Anxiety Discussion Questions:**

- 1.) Why do you think so many of us fear giving a speech in front of an audience?
- 2.) What are the common fears you have about giving a speech in front of an audience?
- 3.) Why do you think it is important to combat this fear?
- 4.) What are some ways you have found to alleviate or even exacerbate your speech anxiety?

##### **Lecture Content: Five Strategies To Combat Speech Anxiety:**

- 1.) Control What You Can
- 2.) Practice Positive Thinking
- 3.) Prepare Ahead of Time
- 4.) Focus on External
- 5.) Repeated Exposure to Speaking in Public

**Speech #1:** Give a two-three minute speech describing a favorite activity or hobby, and give the class reasons why you enjoy it.

## **Training Session #2 Outline**

### **Agenda:**

- Lecture on Responsiveness as a Speaker (with videos)
- Speech 2

### **Objectives:**

- To learn three ways a speaker can be responsive to his or her audience
- To practice speaking in front of an audience

### **Lecture Content: How to be responsive as a speaker**

Responsiveness: Communicating support through non-verbal cues

Ways in which a speaker can be responsive:

- ❖ Eye contact-hold eye contact long enough, look at all audience members
- ❖ Hand gestures-use your hands when appropriate; put notes on a podium if shaking
- ❖ Enthusiasm-be enthusiastic about the information you are presenting to encourage the audience to pay attention
- ❖ Body Language-Stand up straight and do not do distracting behaviors (playing with one's hair) Need to communicate confidence and credibility, regardless of how one is feeling
- ❖ Smile-Smile when appropriate in order to appear more relateable and conversational as a speaker

Clip 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDdizoPKRzM>

In this clip, the woman is paying tribute to her Aunt Sue. Notice how she eludes confidence, by standing up straight. She gives the class a lot of eye contact, smiles, and speaks in a conversational tone, despite having a manuscript.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1.) In what ways does this speaker engage in responsive behaviors?

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2.) How effective or successful do you think these behaviors were?

Show Clip 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YivQYeI0vys>

In this clip, notice the distracting behaviors she engages in and why they affect her credibility as a speaker. (playing with hair, lack of eye contact, little enthusiasm, huddled behind podium)

Discussion Questions:

1.) In what ways does this speaker engage in responsive behaviors?

2.) How effective or successful do you think these behaviors were?

**Speech #2:**

Choose an object from the classroom or that you have on you. Try to persuade the class to buy the product in 2-3 minute speech. Give at least two reasons why the class should buy your product. Apply what you have learning today in training by engaging in responsive behaviors as a speaker.

### **Training Session #3 Outline**

#### **Agenda:**

- Lecture on Responsiveness as an Audience Member
- Speech 3
- Exit Survey

#### **Objectives:**

- Learn at least three ways in which an audience member can communicate responsiveness to a speaker
- Practice speaking in front of an audience

#### **Lecture Content: Ways in which an audience member can communicate responsiveness while**

##### **listening to a speech:**

- ❖ Eye contact to speaker
- ❖ Nodding one's head when appropriate
- ❖ Body language that is engaged (Example: not slouched)
- ❖ Smiling when appropriate
- ❖ Paying attention to the material discussed

**Speech #3:** Draw a topic out of the hat, and discuss something about that topic for 2-3 minutes.

Audience members should practice engaging in responsive behaviors.

*Possible ideas for speech:* Could inform us about your topic, inform us about the controversy surrounding your topic, offer your opinion on the issue, offer a solution to the problem, discuss how the topic affects you personally, discuss opposing viewpoints on controversial topics.

## **Resources for Additional Help and Information on Speech Anxiety**

### **Recommended Books:**

- Markway, B. & Markway, G., *Painfully Shy: How to Overcome Social Anxiety and Reclaim Your Life*.
- Mckay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P., *Thoughts and Feelings: Taking Control of your Moods and Your Life*. (1997). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Press, INC
- Antony, M., & Swinson, R., *The Shyness & Social Anxiety Workbook*. (2000). Rain Coast Books.

### **Recommended Websites:**

- Toast Masters International: <http://www.toastmasters.org/>
- Freedom From Fear: <http://www.freedomfromfear.org/>

### **Exposure Opportunities:**

- Toast Masters International
- Volunteer to speak in elementary school on a given topic (young demographic is often less threatening)
- Enroll in a public speaking class (Can take a course at a junior college for no credit to benefit from practicing)
- Volunteer to introduce a speaker, run a business meeting, give a wedding toast (Seek every opportunity to speak in public)

### **Speech Examples:**

- Top 5 Commencement Speeches in the Last Decade:  
<http://www.parade.com/11475/viannnguyen/top-5-graduation-speeches-of-the-last-decade/>
- American Rhetoric: Top 100 Speeches

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<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/top100speechesall.html>

**My Contact Information:** Elise Fanney: [Elise.Fanney@umontana.edu](mailto:Elise.Fanney@umontana.edu)

## **Notes For Training:**



**Notes For Training:**

