Public Speaking

A Stanford University study reported that a person’s success in life can be predicted by the way he or she answers this question: Are you willing to get up and give a speech right now? Most people would say, “No Way!”

Know Thyself: What type of Communicator are you?

Look at the following list of adjectives - circle the ones you think best describe you as a public speaker.

- Accurate
- Assertive
- Believable
- Bold
- Boring
- Competent
- Confident
- Courageous
- Creative
- Determined
- Direct
- Dramatic
- Dynamic
- Effective
- Eloquent
- Energetic
- Expressive
- Helpful
- Humorous
- Intense
- Methodical
- Motivated
- Nervous
- Organized
- Perfectionist
- Personable
- Persuasive
- Positive
- Prepared
- Quiet
- Scared
- Sensitive
- Shy
- Spirited
- Stiff
- Successful
- Talented
- Technical
- Tongue-Tied
- Unsure
- Upbeat

Now go back and draw a square around at least five words that you would LIKE to describe you but that you didn’t circle before. How would they make you a better public speaker?

So what exactly are people afraid of when it comes to public speaking? Here’s a list:

- ‘Drying up’ or not being able to speak.
- Forgetting what you are talking about your mind going blank.
- Having someone in the audience who knows more than you do.
- People noticing that you are nervous.
- The impossible-to-answer question
- The audience talking over you or walking out

Polish Your Voice

Think about Communication: word choice -- tone of voice -- nonverbal body language

Improve your vocal skills

- Use appropriate language and descriptive words
- Vary (1) voice and pace of speech, (2) vocal pitch and inflection, (3) volume
- E – nun – ci – ate
- Eliminate, um, filler, um, words, you know?

Use descriptive words and build your vocabulary. How many synonyms can you think of for the following common words?

Good: Fast: Bad: Slow:
Evaluate Your Voice - Tape record your voice then listen back. Yes, it sounds weird. Very few people like the way they sound on tape. After you listen, ask yourself these questions:

- Did you speak clearly so that you were understood?
- Did you hear the beginnings and ends of words? (them/'em, going/goin', doing/doin', being/bein', want to/wanna, could you/cudja, to/ta)

Be Aware of Your Body Language - Body language signs are non-verbal cues that we give others. Body language expresses feelings by looks, movements, and posture. Understanding Body Language is very important because what we express non-verbally is often far more revealing than the words we use. For example, what assumptions do you make about others by their handshake?

How would your Body Language demonstrate the following?

- Confident / Arrogant
- Angry
- Trustworthy
- Shy
- Dishonest
- Defensive
- Nervous
- Interested / Really Interested

Use the following techniques to present a more confident and likeable body language.

- Increase your physical space.
- Have good posture.
- Plant yourself evenly on both feet.
- Move deliberately.
- Relax your hands at your sides.
- Make sure your body language matches your words.
- Use your eyes.

Project a Positive Self Image - Look your best, is the package complete?

- Accessories
- Shoes
- Clothing
- Cosmetics
- Hair
- Hands

Pick 3 of the above Public Speaking tips that sound like something that would help you. Write them down below along with how and when you will incorporate them into your Becoming a More Successful Student Plan.

1.
2.
3.

Power of Positive Thinking - Public Speaking

I shouldn’t be afraid when public speaking. I can prepare and practice and become confident on my topic. Projecting a strong and positive image when I speak will inspire people to believe what am saying. I pay attention to my words, my tone, and my body language to present a unified and confident message. Becoming a better public speaker will definitely contribute to becoming a more successful student.

www.utep.edu/ous
Student Resources