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## Treating communication apprehension in the basic public speaking course: A national survey and recommendations

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**University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1993**

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**TREATING COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION  
IN THE BASIC PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSE:  
A NATIONAL SURVEY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

by

Thomas Eugene Robinson II

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

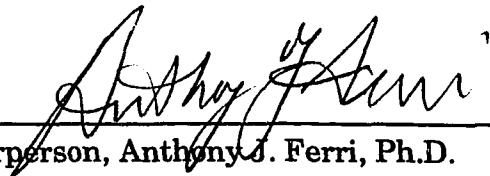
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Greenspun School of Communication  
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March 1993

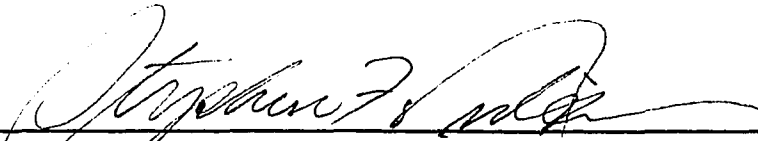
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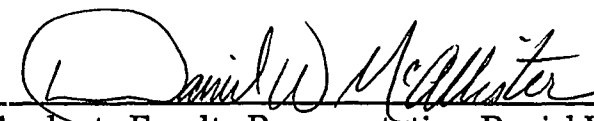
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## **ABSTRACT**

Communication apprehension (CA) or stage fright can result in shaking hands, a quivering voice, nausea, in addition to causing permanent emotional and social damage. Most students enrolled in the basic public speaking course suffer at some level with communication apprehension. With what is at stake in terms of success and failure, there needs to be some treatment for CA in these basic public speaking courses. A number of institutions have created special courses to treat apprehensive students, while others leave the treatment up to the individual instructors. These instructors must then decide, from the resources available, what treatment techniques best fit their time limitations and class structure.

Through a national survey of college and university speech departments this study determines the number of speech departments treating CA in the classroom and the methods they use as treatment. From the results, recommendations are made on how these techniques can be put to use in the classroom.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

McCroskey (1977) states that communication apprehension (CA) is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 78). This fear or anxiety known as "stage fright," "nervousness," "speech anxiety," and "performance apprehension" can result in shaking knees, a quivering voice, the inability to speak, nausea, or may lead a person to completely avoid communication situations. Beatty (1988) says that, "the long term effect of experiencing anxiety in public speaking situations is the development of a predisposition to avoid communication" (p. 28). The price apprehensive individuals pay for their inability to communicate is significant. Apprehensive students have lower overall grade-point averages and score lower on college entrance examinations (McCroskey & Anderson, 1976). Socially, they are considered less competent, composed, and attractive than more outgoing individuals (McCroskey & Leppard, 1975, cited in Adler, 1980). Highly apprehensive individuals are less likely to receive job interviews and when they are hired they are less likely to seek career advancements (Daly & Leth,

1976, cited in Adler, 1980). These negative consequences leave most communication apprehensive people with a "diminished self-esteem" (Adler, 1980, p. 216). With so much at stake in terms of social, professional, and personal growth, it would seem advantageous for both students and instructors to find a way to treat CA in a non-threatening, supportive atmosphere.

At most colleges and universities the basic public speaking course serves as an ideal setting for this type of CA treatment for a number of reasons. First, the course reaches a large audience which allows instructors to treat a large number of apprehensive students at one time (Adler, 1980). Second, CA is a common problem for most students. According to McCroskey (1977 & 1982) all students in the basic speech course experience CA, and 20% of them have a serious CA problem. In a class of 25 students that means 5 suffer from severe CA. The basic speech course is for many, the only public speaking experience they will have in their entire college career and CA may have a negative influence on that experience (Pelias, 1989). This is especially true for those students who tend to avoid all situations where they are required to interact (Adler, 1980). Pelias (1989) says this may be an indication as to why so many students are absent on their assigned speaking days or drop the course even if it is required for graduation.

Because the basic public speaking course is ideal for CA treatment this thesis is concerned with determining the degree to which instructors of the basic public speaking course are treating CA in the classroom and what methods or techniques they use as treatment. After these determinations have been made, the results will be analyzed so that recommendations can be made on how the techniques used by communication instructors can be put to use in the classroom.

Treating students' CA is a problem that speech departments and instructors are faced with each semester. This concern has caused many colleges and universities to develop a special course that requires students to attend a class where their level of CA can best be treated. For many departments, adding a special CA course is not physically or economically possible so other means of treating CA must be selected (Hoffman & Sprague, 1982; Adler, 1980). Connell and Borden (1987) claim that adding a special CA course may not be necessary because the treatment can just as easily be done in the basic speech course. This may be why many colleges and universities choose to leave the responsibility of treating apprehensive students to the instructors of the basic public speaking course. This does, however, present a dilemma for the instructors. Do they ignore CA, do they treat their students outside of class, or do they take valuable class time to handle the



problem? At least one researcher has concluded that most instructors choose to use class time to address and treat CA (Kougl, 1980).

Ayres and Hopf (1985) observed that "a means of training speech-anxious students within the confines of the normal classroom routine is sorely needed by those who do not have the resources to provide individualized treatment programs for such students" (p. 318). At the present time there is no program available for instructors to turn to for in-class treatment techniques. Experts in CA, however, have recommended the use of treatment techniques such as systematic desensitization (Friedrich & Goss, 1984; McCroskey, Ralph and Barrick, 1970; McCroskey, 1972; 1977; 1984; Pedersen, 1980), cognitive modification (Fremouw, 1984; Fremouw & Zitter, 1978; Fremouw & Scott, 1979; Glaser, 1981; Meichenbaum, Gilmore, & Fedoravicius 1971), visualization (Assagioli, 1973, 1976; Ayres & Holf, 1985), and skills training. In addition to these techniques, instructors use the textbook, scholarly writing and their own knowledge, skills, and experience to aid students in reducing CA during the normal classroom routine.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research available on CA treatment in the classroom concentrates predominantly on CA programs that provide a special class, section and/or workshop for apprehensive students. Although this does not relate directly to the present study it is recognized as an important aspect of the research. By determining the number of universities and colleges that operate special treatment programs we will have a better understanding of the amount of treatment that takes place in the classroom.

Hoffmann and Sprague (1982), surveyed 1,628 universities and colleges to see how many offered a special CA program. They were interested in the perceived need and operation of these CA treatment programs. Institutions not offering an apprehension program were asked why such a program was not part of their curriculum.

Ninety-three percent of the schools surveyed said they did not have a special program and over half of those schools did not feel a CA treatment class was needed at their institution. The main reason given

for this belief was that, "the problem is and/or should be handled in the classroom" (Hoffmann & Sprague, 1982, p. 191). Ways of handling this problem in the classroom included "speaking positively of the public speaking experience, no evaluation of the early speeches, encouraging minimal efforts, building on successful experiences, recognizing and identifying students' fears as normal, having them speak about subjects they are familiar with, focusing on self concept development, working in small groups, establishing a climate of warmth, and keeping enrollments small" (Hoffmann & Sprague, 1982, p. 191).

The fact that faculty members at most colleges and universities believe there is not a need for a special treatment program provides support for the present research. With such a large number of colleges and universities selecting classroom treatment it has become increasingly important to gather as much information as possible on the instructional techniques being used to treat CA in the classroom.

Since special CA programs play a significant role in the treatment of apprehension it is necessary to explore these courses in more detail. Foss (1982) prepared a list of guidelines complete with resources, techniques, and a reference of scholarly writings for communication departments interested in establishing a special CA course.

An index of colleges and universities operating CA programs is included with each school's approach to treatment and method for determining a student's need for the course. The approaches to treatment are divided into three categories. The first two are "approaches based in learning theory," which consists of systematic desensitization and cognitive modification and "approaches based in skills training" (Foss, 1982, p. 197).

The third, "is an approach which assumes the appropriateness of the communication fundamentals class as the traditional means of dealing with communication apprehension" (Foss, 1982, p.197). The basic speech course with the assignment of classroom speeches is designed to treat CA by teaching students the skills needed to deliver a successful speech while building their self-confidence. This approach is as Foss (1982) believes the "traditional approach" to treating CA.

Finding few colleges or universities operating special CA programs, Kelly (1989) presents a detailed description of an existing program called the "Reticence Program." Her intended purpose is to introduce an effective CA treatment program for schools interested in developing their own course. The "Reticence Program" is used successfully at Pennsylvania State University where creator, Gerald M. Phillips, is a professor. This program utilizes a skills training

technique called "rhetoritherapy" which is "a form of systematic, individualized instruction directed at improving speech performance in mundane, task, and special situations" (Phillips & Sokoloff, 1979).

Kelly (1989) furnishes complete instructions on the recruitment of students, instructor training, organization and teaching procedures of the program. For many schools the "Reticence Program" may not be a viable option because it requires a complete reconstruction of the basic speech course.

An option that may be more appealing is a treatment program that can be effectively implemented into the basic speech course. Connell and Borden (1987), have combined systematic desensitization, cognitive modification, and skills training as part of the instruction of the basic speech course.

The first stage of their course begins with the basic lectures and skills training (e.g., organization, non-verbal communication, and listening). On the first day of class students are required to deliver their first speech, an introduction of a classmate. This first speech is intended to create a positive speaking experience and, according to Connell and Borden (1987), "reinforce students' self-esteem and confidence for future speeches" (p. 58).

The second stage centers on cognitive modification and self-disclosure. Small groups are organized and students are asked to discuss, within their groups, problems they have communicating and situations when they feel particularly anxious about communicating. During these sessions students discuss the negative self-talk statements they associate with these situations. Then group members help each other formulate positive self-talk statements to replace the negative ones.

The same relaxation technique used in systematic desensitization (see chap. 3) is reduced to a brief exercise at the beginning of each week in which the entire class participates. Finally, group discussions of controversial topics and practice of in-class speeches are used to encourage interaction of opinions and ideas. This activity helps develop persuasive thinking and teaches students to support their opinions.

This program was tested using four communication classes divided into two groups (experimental and control). Two of the classes used the Connell and Borden (1987) instruction technique while the other two used a standard approach. Students in each class were tested for CA at the beginning and end of the course using the McCroskey's *Personal Report on Communication Apprehension* (PRCA-24). The results of each test were analyzed to determine if there was a difference

between groups. A significant difference was found between the two groups with the control group measuring higher overall levels of CA.

Communication apprehension has been determined to be lower when using Connell and Borden's (1987) guidelines but they admit that the instructor and his/her teaching style will have an effect on the overall results. This program treats each student, regardless of their level of CA which benefits even those students not registering high CA scores by relaxing them more, improving their communication skills, and by helping them recognize problem areas they may experience at one time or another (Connell & Borden, 1987).

In an attempt to help instructors in the basic public speaking course better understand their apprehensive students, Koug1 (1980) developed a set of guidelines for instructors to follow as they assess and instruct their students. Before making her suggestions, Koug1 (1980) reminds instructors that the way they view the course objectives and overall situation of the basic public speaking course is quite different from their apprehensive students. The instructor's objective is to teach the course content and to help students increase their public speaking skills. However, students are in the class because it is required and the course is viewed as a means to graduation. What is expected out of the course is another area where instructors and apprehensive students

have differing ideas. The instructor focuses on planning the lectures, the number of assignments, and administrative matters, while the student's only belief is that he/she will be required to speak in front of the class.

The first task for instructors is as Koug1 (1980) recommends, "To persuade them (the apprehensive students) that the class environment is practical and supportive" (p. 235).<sup>1</sup> The first step in achieving this goal is to build and create "a supportive yet interactive environment" (p. 235). It is suggested that instructors start with a syllabus that describes requirements, major assignments, course objectives and grading policy. This gives order and structure to the class. Explaining the syllabus in a manner that involves members of the class will give students a feel for the type of interaction the instructor wants in his/her class. This interaction with students can be accomplished daily while checking the roll by simply asking a question that requires each student to respond.

The assignments and course lectures are another opportunity to promote order as well as support the apprehensive students. Situations that allow students to speak in front of the class can be used to provide successful speaking experiences. Selecting familiar or non-threatening topics (e.g., my home town, my favorite hobby) will ease the pain of the first few speeches. Assignments that include small group activities



help students get acquainted with their classmates and assists in creating a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom.

Other advice such as "using students' names, allowing them to sit where they wish, and only calling on students whose hands are raised" (Kougl, 1980, p. 237) will enhance class participation. Instructors' reactions and interest in students' questions and comments may encourage additional responses from apprehensive students.

Kougl (1980) gives a word of warning about the use of impromptu speeches, open-ended role plays, and introduce your neighbor speeches, which are popular in many basic public speaking classes. These are the most challenging speeches for an apprehensive student to present because they require them to develop and deliver a creative speech with little or no preparation. Instead of an easy non-threatening experience such assignments, "spell another defeat" for apprehensive students (p. 236).

By creating a supportive interactive atmosphere in the classroom, instructors can develop the kind of class that invites apprehensive students to open up and begin to improve their communication skills. Kougl's (1980) approach does not involve new or unusual treatment techniques, but rather utilizes solid teaching practices that can be implemented into any basic public speaking course.

Implementing CA management into the basic public speaking course is ideal according to Adler (1980). Since almost all students suffer from CA at some level the course can treat a large number of students at the same time. This implementation can take place without sacrificing valuable class time by "exposing students to the traditional subject matter of the course and at the same time build confidence in communication" (p. 217).

Alder (1980) proposes several activities divided into categories that represent areas of difficulty for most apprehensive students. The categories are introductory activities, activities to promote question asking and to express confusion, and activities to promote sharing of ideas.

The introductory activities are used to establish a warm climate in the class that will help students feel enthusiastic about the course and comfortable enough to participate and express themselves. Activities to promote question-asking and to express confusion are designed to assist apprehensive students who suffer in class because of a reluctance to ask questions or have certain lecture items clarified. Activities to promote sharing of ideas create situation for students to share their ideas about the subject matter. These activities are designed to boost enthusiasm and heighten the learning for both instructor and students.

Adler (1980) describes a number of specific activities in each area that will help instructors get started. He also encourages instructors to use their own imagination and circumstances to create more strategies to help students overcome their CA. Implementing these activities into already established lectures and class times will not only enhance learning but will help apprehensive students feel better about their communication experiences.

## DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENT TECHNIQUES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

When deciding to treat CA in the classroom, instructors must determine which resources and techniques best fit their class structure and time limitations. Many rely on the textbook as their principal means of treating CA. This may not be effective, according to a study by Clevenger and Phifer (1959) who found that the only advice for students in most texts is that CA is common and students should "be prepared" for their speeches. A more recent study by Pelias (1989) found that "relatively little attention is given to CA in many of the basic speech course textbooks" (p. 49). Her examination of 25 basic speech textbooks found that each book made at least one reference to the "phenomenon" of

CA. The total number of pages devoted to CA ranged from three to fifty-one, covering a variety of subjects including "how CA is characterized," "the causes of CA," and "what remedies are offered" (pp. 46-48). Of all the information given in the textbooks much of it is as Pelias describes, "folk wisdom" or information that is rather common and, although, the information is safe, it is not extremely helpful. For example, telling a student to simply relax and not be nervous may not be the answer to his/her CA. On the other hand, information such as selecting a familiar topic and becoming audience centered can be helpful if discussed and presented in class.

Pelias (1989) concludes by saying that "the majority of textbooks do not suggest more sophisticated methods of remediation like . . . systematic desensitization and cognitive restructuring" (p. 50), and most textbooks do not include fully developed treatments of CA. With this in mind instructors must turn to scholarly literature for further CA treatment techniques.

Allen, Hunter and Donohue (1989) in an extensive literature search of 97 manuscripts determined that there were seven major CA reduction techniques (the last four being a combination of the first three): "(1) systematic desensitization, (2) cognitive modification, (3) skills training, (4) cognitive modification and skills training, (5)

systematic desensitization and skills training, (6) systematic desensitization and cognitive modification, (7) cognitive modification, systematic desensitization and skills training" (pp. 57-58). A complete description of these CA reduction techniques is as follows:

### Systematic Desensitization

Friedrich and Goss (1984) describe systematic desensitization as "a treatment package that includes (1) training in deep muscle relaxation, (2) construction of hierarchies of anxiety-eliciting stimuli, and (3) the graduated pairing, through imagery, of anxiety-eliciting stimuli with the relaxed state" (p. 175).

In the first step, students are taught to relax each area of their body starting with their hands, moving to their head and finally to the lower extremities of their bodies until the entire body has become relaxed. This process of complete relaxation normally takes 30-40 minutes.

The second step requires students to construct a list of circumstances they believe cause them anxiety when thinking about delivering a speech in class. These should be placed in a hierarchy of order from the very minor (e.g., selecting an appropriate topic) to those

that are more troubling (e.g., delivering the speech in front of the class). The situations should be operationalized so they can be easily constructed in the mind during desensitization (Friedrich & Goss, 1984).

During desensitization students should be seated with the lights lowered in a comfortable temperature. Students then go through a shortened relaxation method and the instructor presents an anxiety provoking stimuli (e.g., being introduced to a stranger). If students feel any anxiety they are asked to return to their relaxed state and forget the stimulus. After returning to their relaxed state a new anxiety provoking stimulus is presented. If they experience no anxiety, they are instructed to relax once again. At this point, the instructor begins to present the situations on their hierarchy list. Each of the anxiety causing situations is presented until the students experience no anxiety in relation to the items on there list (Friedrich & Goss, 1984).

### Cognitive Modification

Researchers have discovered one reason many people feel anxious about public speaking is that they think negatively about it and have developed what is called negative self-talk (Fremouw, 1984). Negative self-talk, as described by Glaser (1981), includes statements such as: "I'm really not smart enough to speak in front of people," "I can't finish

a coherent sentence in public," and "I say some really ridiculous things at times" (p. 330).

Since negative self-talk is a learned behavior it can be changed and corrected by simply replacing the negative statements with positive ones (Fremouw, 1984). This requires students to identify their negative self-talk statements, list them, and describe how each effects their communication. Once the negative statements have been evaluated students can then replace them with positive statements like, "I can give this speech" or "I will succeed because I know my subject and I am prepared." By creating positive self-talk statements students lower their CA and feel more confident about their ability and potential as a speaker (Glaser, 1981).

Practice time and role playing situations should be made available so students have actual speaking experience in a non-threatening atmosphere. This interaction benefits students by allowing them to express their fears as they replace their negative thoughts with newly developed positive self-talk statements.

### Skills Training

It is suspected that instructors who choose to treat CA in the classroom use skills training as their primary technique. Skills

training assumes that students experience CA because they have poor speaking skills, and once the proper skills are learned, CA will be reduced (Allen et al., 1989). This is accomplished by teaching those skills that bring students to the point of delivery, such as note taking, topic selection, research, outlining, and audience analysis. Additionally, practicing speeches, increasing speaking experience, physical preparation, and maintaining a positive attitude are all subjects that might be included as part of skills training.

With the extensive support Allen, Hunter, and Donohue (1989) have provided to these major CA reduction techniques, it would seem appropriate to use them as a model to determine how CA is being treated in the classroom. Another technique scholars often include as an effective treatment for CA is visualization. Visualization is the process of picturing yourself actually succeeding in a public speaking situation. This is the same technique used by athletes to prepare for a game or event. The athlete pictures him/herself successfully performing each phase of the event as he/she has practiced and trained. Then the performance of the actual activity is merely a repeat of what was visualized in his/her mind. For speech making the process is exactly the same. Students see themselves delivering an excellent speech as the audience is captivated by their message. Ayres and Holf (1985) found



that students who practice visualization experience less CA than students that do not.

The above procedures can be used individually or combined to produce a number of different CA treatment techniques. Each of these CA reduction techniques, however, require a considerable amount of time to develop and operate, with the exception of skills training which may be included as part of normal lectures. Also, systematic desensitization and cognitive modification may require some special training in the proper method of presentation and delivery which may eliminate their use by the novice instructor (Pelias, 1989). In addition to what the scholars have recommended and what is available in textbooks, it is possible that a number of instructors are applying their own contemporary CA treatment techniques in their classrooms. If this is the case, what are instructors doing? Do they use those techniques recommended by the scholars or do they simply depend on the textbook and their own knowledge to treat CA? With these questions in mind, this research is guided by the following three questions:

1. Are instructors of the basic public speaking course taking class time to treat CA?

2. Which of the major CA reduction techniques (systematic desensitization, cognitive modification, visualization, and skills training) are being used to treat CA?
3. Which general instructional techniques are used in the classroom to help students reduce their CA?

By determining if instructors at colleges and universities are employing the CA reduction techniques the scholars have suggested or if they are creating a CA treatment program that fits their individual interests and needs we will better understand the education of CA in the basic speech course.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

Instructors' approaches to dealing with CA can be gathered through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire used in this study (see Appendix 1) consisted of one double-sided page divided into three sections. The information contained in each of the three sections is as follows:

#### Section 1

Here respondents were asked if their department treated students' CA in the classroom. They were also questioned about the operation or intended operation of a special CA treatment program as studied by Hoffmann and Sprague (1982). This section then addressed the use of systematic desensitization, cognitive modification, visualization, and skills training as CA treatment techniques in the basic speech course.

The questionnaire was distributed to speech departments at public and private universities and colleges across the United States. Since this study examines the instruction techniques used in basic public

speaking courses, only colleges and universities operating a program in speech were surveyed. *The Communication Disciplines in Higher Education - A Guide to Academic Programs in the U.S. and Canada* (Elmore, 1990) lists the curricula offered at most colleges and universities providing a large resource for the sample selection. A total of 555 schools fitting the criteria of offering a basic public speaking course were selected for the sample. An additional 175 schools were obtained from the *1991-92 Speech Communication Association Directory* (1991). The *SCA Directory* lists the different communication departments within the college and universities, so only schools with a speech department were selected for the study. This decision was made under the assumption that a basic public speaking course would be a course offered in a speech department. Schools listed as operating only a communication department were not chosen because of the uncertainty of a basic public speaking course in the curriculum.

## Section 2

This section of the survey listed a number of techniques commonly used to treat CA (e.g., outlining, effective research, establishing a warm climate, encouraging practice, etc.). Respondents were asked to check all that are used by the instructors in their departments. Additional

space was made available for respondents to write in other methods they frequently use that were not included as part of the survey. Many of the techniques described in this section were the classroom treatment techniques reported to Hoffmann and Sprague (1982) in their survey of the special CA treatment programs at colleges and universities.

### Section 3

This section of the questionnaire requested subjects to indicate the characteristics of their college or university, school or department, and its basic public speaking course. These data provided valuable information about the participants in the research project.

The survey questionnaire was piloted at two speech communication departments at two universities in different areas of the United States to ensure its accuracy and reliability. Changes made due to the pilot included clarification of instructions (making them more detailed and understandable so desired information could be obtained), additions to the list of classroom treatment techniques, and more detailed data on the responding schools (specific areas such as "the number of sections of the basic public speaking course" and "rank and position of the respondent of the questionnaire).

A cover letter (see Appendix 2) accompanied the survey explaining the project and the need for this research. The questionnaires and cover letters were mailed on May 28, 1992. No deadline was set for the return of the questionnaires in an attempt to receive as many as possible during the next month. A follow-up post card (see Appendix 3) was sent on June 16, 1992, as a reminder for the respondents to complete the survey. Since the surveys were sent to department administrators, the time period between end of the spring semester and the beginning of the summer semester was assumed to be a down time in the department allowing them more time to respond to the survey.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

##### THE INSTITUTIONS

Of the 730 survey questionnaires distributed, 300 were returned, or a 41% return rate. Hoffmann and Sprague (1982), had a 52% return on their surveys and it was hoped that a comparable rate would be achieved for this thesis. Analysis of the respondents' colleges and universities indicated 66% were public and 34% were private with a mean total enrollment of 8,906. The enrollment ranged from a minimum of 100 to a maximum of 92,000. Eighty-two percent of the schools operate on semesters while the other 18% are on a quarter system. Approximately 42% of the departments represented in this survey offer a bachelors degree, 25% a masters degree and 6% a doctorate.

##### THE BASIC PUBLIC SPEAKING COURSE

With regard to their basic public speaking course, 83% of the respondents indicated structuring their course in independent sections

and 17% have large lectures with speaking labs. The approximate number of sections offered per semester or quarter ranged between 1 and 100 with a mean of 12.5.

The respondents were next asked to specify how many students were enrolled in each basic public speaking course. Class enrollment ranged between 8 and 200 with a mean of 25. Both the median and mode of students enrolled was 25.

The number of faculty teaching the basic public speaking course in departments ranged from 1 to 40 with a mean of 7. This number includes full- and part-time faculty and graduate assistants.

#### THE BASIC PUBLIC SPEAKING TEXTBOOK

The next question asked if there was a standardized public speaking textbook used in the department. Seventy-eight percent reported using a standardized textbook, while the other 22% indicated that the individual instructors select their own textbook. If a standardized textbook was used respondents were asked to provide the name and author of their department's textbook. There were 52 different public speaking textbooks reported. The top five include *The Art of Public Speaking*, by Lucas (25%), *Public Speaking*, by Osborn and Osborn (14%), *Principles and Types of Speech Communication*, by



Gronbeck, German, Ehningier, and Monroe (9.5%), *The Challenge of Effective Speaking*, by Verderber (6%), and *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach*, by Beebe and Beebe (4%).

## RESPONDENTS OF THE SURVEY

The respondents in this survey included a variety of administrative titles and ranks in the public speaking departments. The top three professional titles were Chair or Head (35%), Director of the Basic Public Speaking Course (18%), and Lecture or Instructor of the basic public speaking course (13%).

## TREATING COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

### CA TREATMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

The first question in the survey asked respondents if the instructors in their department treated CA in the classroom. Eighty-one percent said they did treat CA in the classroom.

### SPECIAL CA TREATMENT PROGRAM

The second question asked respondents if their department operated a special CA treatment program. Responses indicated that only 13% did have such a program. Of that 13%, a little over half said

their program was an actual course while the others said they provide workshops, labs, one-on-one counseling, and/or a special section apprehensive students may attend.

### SCREENING FOR CA

Respondents were next asked if their students were screened for CA prior to entering the basic public speaking course. Eighteen percent confirmed that they do employ some type of screening method to determine if their students are apprehensive about the public speaking experience. The other 82% gave no indication that students' apprehension levels were measures prior to their entry into the basic public speaking course. McCroskey's *PRCA-24* was by far the top method for screening apprehensive students (86%). Individual interviews and self-evaluation were also mentioned as CA screening methods.

### MAJOR CA REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

The last section in Part I listed and briefly described each of the major CA reduction techniques recommended by the scholars (systematic desensitization, cognitive modification, visualization, and skills training). The respondents were asked to specify, by checking the

appropriate box, which of the major CA reduction techniques instructors in their departments used to treat CA, regardless of the number of faculty using it. Table 1 lists each of these methods and the frequency and percentage of individuals indicating the technique is used in their department. Skills training was the most widely used (96%), with cognitive modification (63%) and visualization (59%) second and third respectively. Only a small percentage (25%) of the departments include systematic desensitization as part of their CA treatment.

**Table 1**

**Major CA Reduction Techniques Used**

Method	Frequency	Percentage
Skills Training	267	96%
Cognitive Modification	173	63%
Visualization	163	59%
Systematic Desensitization	69	25%

**TREATMENT TECHNIQUES IN THE SPECIAL CA PROGRAMS**

Cross-tabulations were run on the four major CA reduction techniques (i.e., systematic desensitization, cognitive modification,

visualization, and skills training) and those departments answering "yes" that they do offer a special CA treatment program. These were calculated to determine if the major CA reduction techniques are associated with the special CA programs. The results of each of the techniques are shown on Tables 2-5. The results reveal that of the four major CA reduction techniques skills training is the most widely used with 90 percent of the departments reporting using it. Cognitive modification was second with 71 percent and visualization and systematic desensitization were third and fourth with 60 percent . Each of the four techniques are shown statistically ( $p < .001$ ) to be associated with the special CA treatment programs.

**Table 2**

**Use of Skills Training in the Special CA Programs**

Uses Skills Training	Dept. Does Offer a Special CA Program	
Yes	37	90%
No	3	7%
Don't Know	1	3%
TOTAL	41	

Chi Square = 143.1

$p < .001$

**Table 3****Use of Cognitive Modification in the Special CA Programs**

Uses Cognitive Modification	Dept. Does Offer a Special CA Program	
Yes	30	73%
No	10	24%
Don't Know	1	1%
TOTAL	41	

Chi Square = 102.6

p&lt; .001

**Table 4****Use of Visualization in the Special CA Programs**

Uses Visualization	Dept. Does Offer a Special CA Program	
Yes	27	66%
No	10	24%
Don't Know	4	10%
TOTAL	41	

Chi Square = 33.8

p&lt; .001

**Table 5**

Use of Systematic Desensitization in the  
Special CA Programs

Uses Systematic Desen.	Dept. Does Offer a Special CA Program	
Yes	24	58%
No	13	32%
Don't Know	4	10%
TOTAL	41	

Chi Square = 60.4

$p < .001$

### IN-CLASS COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION TREATMENT TECHNIQUES

The second section of the questionnaire examined the CA treatment techniques instructors use in their basic public speaking classrooms (i.e., outlining, encouraging practice, working on the delivery, group projects, etc.). Given that each of the items are instructional techniques and are generally included as part of the basic public speaking course, the respondents were asked to simply identify the techniques utilized by instructors in their departments as a means of

treating CA. Table 6 shows each of the items listed on the questionnaire with the frequencies and percentages of respondents that indicated instructors in their departments did use the technique to treat CA. In order to determine which of the items have either a strong use or non-use, those items receiving 60% or above or 25% or below "yes" responses are assumed to be important.

Identifying Students' Fears as Normal (88%), Encouraging Practice of Speeches (87%), and Establishing a Warm Climate in Class (87%) all had percentages in the high 80's. Selecting Familiar Topics (79%), Making the Evaluations of Speeches a Positive Experience (78%), Becoming Audience Centered (75%), and Encouraging Class Participation (75%) all received percentages above 75. The questionnaire items considered the mechanical aspects of a speech such as Developing the Introduction (62%), Outlining (66%), Effective Research (65%), and Developing the Delivery (73%) all had percentages well above 60 percent. The only item below 25% was Small Group Discussions about CA (15%). However, two others did receive percentages in the 20's, In-Class Practice of Speeches (26%) and Self-Disclosure about CA (29%). Other items like Encouraging Outside Speaking Experience (31%), Goal Setting (31%), and No Evaluation of Early Speeches (36%) all received low "yes" response frequencies.

In addition to responding to the items listed on the questionnaire, respondents were encouraged to provide any additional classroom techniques used in their departments. The responses varied widely and included the following: one-on-one counseling, not drawing specific attention to CA, suggesting apprehensive students speak early, watching video tapes on stage fright, self-evaluation of speeches, reading in front of class, allowing students to select their own topics, and oral and written speech critiques by classmates.



**Table 6**  
**In-Class CA Treatment Techniques Used**

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Identifying Students' Fears as Normal	241	88%
2. Encouraging Practice	239	87%
3. Establishing a Warm Climate in Class	237	87%
4. Selecting Familiar Topics	216	79%
5. Making Evaluations of Speeches a Positive Experience	214	78%
6. Encouraging Class Participation	204	75%
7. Becoming Audience Centered	204	75%
8. Developing the Delivery	200	73%
9. Lecturing on CA	188	70%
10. Outlining	181	66%
11. Effective Research	180	65%
12. Introductory Speeches	175	65%
13. Developing the Introduction	169	62%
14. Building on Successful Experiences	167	62%
15. Being Physically Prepared	165	60%
16. Using Visual Aids	166	60%
17. Impromptu Speeches	142	52%
18. Non-graded Speaking Assignments	142	51%
19. In-class Social Conversations	132	49%
20. Group Projects	108	39%
21. No Evaluation of Early Speeches	96	36%
22. Encouraging Outside Speaking Experience	84	31%
23. Goal Setting	85	31%
24. Self-disclosure about CA	78	29%
25. In-class Practice of Speeches	72	26%
26. Small Group Discussions about CA	40	15%

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

In order to organize the discussion of results in a clear and cogent manner the results will be examined in relation to the three research questions.

Research Question 1: Are instructors of the basic public speaking course taking class time to treat CA?

With CA being such a wide spread problem it is not surprising that such a large number of respondents (81%) said they treated CA in the classroom. This supports the findings of ten years ago by Hoffmann and Sprague (1982) who found most schools (93%) did not offer any type of special CA treatment program. It was the belief of these colleges and universities that CA is and/or should be treated in the classroom. The results of this study show that this is still a common belief. When asked if they offer a special CA program only 13% of the respondents said that they did have such a program. This is a 6% increase from what

Hoffmann and Sprague found in 1982. The results show that although the increase in special programs is low, there are a number of colleges and universities that have found the best way to treat CA is to offer an alternative to the basic public speaking course.

This 6% increase in special programs only includes departments that indicated offering an actual course in apprehension treatment. Other respondents stated that their departments do offer some special assistance for apprehensive students such as labs, workshops, video tapes, help sessions, and one-on-one counseling. This supports those suggestions for additional CA treatment made by Hoffman and Sprague (1982) and Adler (1980). These departments recognize that CA is a problem and are interested in offering additional help for students without creating a specific course. This type of arrangement allows students to receive treatment for CA without being taken out of their regular basic public speaking class.

Many instructors screen their students for CA at the beginning of each semester/quarter. This allows the instructor to measure the apprehension level of each student. Knowing the apprehension level allows the instructor to design lectures and classroom activities that best suit the overall apprehension level of the class. Hoffmann and Sprague (1982) found in their survey that self-reporting was the most common

method of screening and the *Personal Report on Communication Apprehension* (PRCA-24) was the instrument most widely used to report CA. McCroskey's PRCA-24 was the only self-reporting instrument identified in the present survey with 86% of the departments screening students for CA using it. Amongst much controversy McCroskey (1985) tested the PRCA-24 and determined it to be "the dominant instrument employed by both researchers and practitioners for measuring trait-like CA" (p. 165).

One interesting result found in the survey is the number of different textbooks used in the basic public speaking course. There were 52 titles reported as the department's official textbook. Of those 52 textbooks, 16 were in the sample of 25 examined by Pelias (1989) in her study on the content of communication apprehension in contemporary textbooks. Her findings revealed that in many of the basic public speaking textbooks little attention is given to CA, causes of CA are vaguely mentioned, and remedies are all too familiar: "prepare, practice, relax, think positively, focus on the audience, get as much experience as possible, etc." (Pelias, 1989, p. 50). Even with this information, the amount of material devoted to CA is still limited. Only two of the textbooks in Pelias's (1989) study give extensive attention to CA, and they are written by CA scholars. Though the material in each

textbook is similar, authors still determine the number of pages to devote to CA while providing their own view of the phenomena, its causes and remedies of treatment.

In addition to Pelias's (1989) research, this study may guide directors and instructors of the basic public speaking course to select a textbook that will match their course objective and instructional practices with the CA needs of their students.

Research Question 2: Which of the major CA reduction techniques (systematic desensitization, cognitive modification, visualization, and skills training) are being used to treat CA?

With such a large number of departments treating CA in the classroom, it was suspected that the most widely used major CA reduction technique would be skills training. Ninety-six percent of the respondents reported using skills training in their basic public speaking course. This is understandable since the classroom offers many opportunities to teach the skills necessary to deliver a speech. Learning

these skills increases student's confidence while helping them reduce their CA.

Cognitive modification is practiced by 63% of the respondents and visualization by 59%. This provides evidence that instructors are teaching students to recognize their apprehension and they are helping them develop ways to overcome their fear of speaking in front of an audience. Visualization and cognitive modification can be included as part of a lecture on how to treat CA which may account for their high use by instructors.

Only 25% of the departments reported using systematic desensitization as a CA reduction technique. Systematic desensitization does require a considerable amount of time to execute in addition to some kind of training in the proper method of presentation. Because of the time required to prepare for and execute, instructors treating apprehension in the classroom are obviously selecting other methods of treatment.

#### CA REDUCTION TECHNIQUES AND THE SPECIAL COURSE

The special CA program by definition is designed to help students who experience high levels of apprehension prepare and deliver speeches in front of an audience. In an attempt to do this, instructors in

these programs are still relying on the development of practical skills to better prepare their students for the speaking experience. As shown in Table 2, skills training is used by 90% of those offering a special CA course with a significance level  $p < .001$  and a chi square of 143.1. Cognitive modification is used by 73% of the departments with a significance level  $p < .001$  and a chi square of 102.6. Visualization had a 66% departmental use with a significance level  $p < .001$  and a chi square of 33.8. Systematic desensitization which increased its use in the special CA programs to 60% also had a significance level of  $p < .001$  and a chi square of 60.4.

These high percentages of use and statistical association between each of the four major CA reduction techniques and the special CA programs are due to the fact that special CA classes are devoted to treating CA which allows instructors more time for activities like group discussions, practice sessions, and relaxation exercises.

**Research Question 3:     What general instructional techniques are used in the classroom to help students reduce their CA?**

The data in this survey indicates that skills training is the method most used for CA treatment. The basic premise behind skills training is that by teaching the necessary skills students become more confident with the speaking experience (Allen et al., 1989). The items listed in Table 6 are skills and activities that instructors commonly use to treat CA in the basic public speaking course. Concentrating on each of these items as a method to reduce students' CA enables the instructor to use the basic public speaking course as a positive tool in CA reduction. For many instructors time is still a problem; how do they add the element of CA treatment to their already limited class time? The solution, Adler (1980) explains, "involves the introduction of a series of (skills and) activities which expose the students to the traditional subject matter of the course and at the same time build confidence in communication" (p. 217). <sup>1</sup>

There are heuristic or pedagogical implications for these research results (e.g., How can instructors better or more effectively use lectures and class climate to treat CA). Therefore, the items in Table 6 with



"yes" responses over 60% will be analyzed (in order of highest to lowest), to determine their use in CA treatment. These items are being analyzed because they have been determined to be the most commonly used, not necessarily the best method of treatment. In addition, recommendations on how these instructional techniques can be implemented into the classroom will be made to assist instructors in treating their apprehensive students. The recommended activities are not designed to take a large amount of extra class time and most can be placed or emphasized as Adler (1980) suggested, into existing lectures and activities. The items have been organized in two categories: (1) those that can be presented as lectures or classroom activities; and (2) those that pertain to the climate that is created by the instructor in the classroom.

## LECTURE ITEMS

The lecture provides instructors with the necessary time to teach the skills needed for effective speech giving. This is skills training. The items discussed during the lecture include the skills that bring students' speeches to the point of actual delivery (e.g., outlining,

research, the introduction, etc.). Each of the items in this section, encouraging practice, selecting a familiar topic, becoming audience-centered, developing the delivery, lecturing on CA, outlining, effective research, developing the introduction, being physically prepared, and using visual aids can all be presented in a lecture situation and all may be used to effectively treat CA.

### 1. Encouraging Practice

The most common in-class treatment technique in this study (88%) was to encourage students to practice their speech. Part of being completely prepared is allowing for enough time to practice. Practicing several times before the assignment date helps students to feel more comfortable with the wording of the speech when they are in front of the class (Metcalf, 1991). Practicing aloud may also help students become accustomed to hearing their own voice which will take some of the strangeness out of the speaking situation (Reid, 1971; Gronbeck, et al., 1992).

Students that wait until the last minute will have to "cram" for the speech. This will not only lower the overall quality of the speech but will increase their CA (Bostrum, 1988; Bradley, 1988; & Metcalf, 1991).

Verderber (1985) suggests that students do a little preparation each day for one week before the speaking date. This will reduce the amount of pressure the student has to complete the speech by the deadline. The following timetable has been established for the preparation of classroom speeches (Verderber, 1985, p. 120):

Days Before The Speech	Task
7	Select a topic and begin the research
6	Continue research
5	Outline the body of the speech
4	Work on introduction and conclusion
3	Finish outline - Find additional research material if needed
2	First practice session (2 to 3 times)
1	Second practice session (2 to 3 times)
Due Date	Give the speech

Experience in preparing a speech, the time limit, and the difficulty of topic and assignment will affect the overall preparation schedule.

Adler and Rodman (1991) recommend that students go through as many of the following steps as possible when practicing their speeches:

- "(a) Present the speech to yourself by talking through the entire speech;
- (b) Tape or video-record the speech and listen to it; (c) Give the speech in front of the mirror and watch your physical mannerisms; (d) Present

the speech in front of a small group of friends and/or family members;

(e) Give the speech to at least one listener in the classroom or similar room to the one you will be giving the speech in" (pp. 384-385). Having someone like a friend or family member listen to the speech is an excellent way for students to prepare through practice. The person listening should be asked to give an honest evaluation of the speech especially noting those areas that need improvement. This type of practice improves the content of the speech and also increases the students' quality of delivery.

It is important to note that the purpose of the rehearsal is not to memorize the wording but to become familiar with the sequence of ideas, supporting materials, and delivery of the speech (Reid, 1971). Becoming familiar with the order of information in the speech allows the student to deliver in a confident extemporaneous manner.

## 2. Selecting a Familiar Topic

The best way to control nervousness according to Verderber (1985), is for students to pick a topic with which they are familiar with, about which they know something, or in which they are interested. Interest in a topic is directly related to the amount of confidence a student has in

their ability to present the speech (Adler & Rodman, 1991). Seventy-nine percent of the respondents in this survey said they encourage the selection of a familiar topic to their students. Students who select a topic they are interested in will be more confident when it comes time to deliver the speech. On the other hand, a topic that is not of interest to the speaker will guarantee nervousness (Verderber, 1985).

One mistake students make when selecting a topic is to pick a topic based on what they believe the audience would like to hear rather than something they would like to talk about. This is one way to reduce confidence and increase stage fright (Brilhart, Burhir, Miley, & Berquist, 1992). By selecting a topic they know something about or have a particular interest in, students will be inclined to do more complete research, become better informed, and to feel more confident with the speaking situation.

Class time can be taken to discuss possible topics and topic selection processes (e.g., individual inventory, brainstorming, library review, etc.). These topic selection techniques may help students feel confident in selecting a topic while other students may need individual attention to help them select a topic they can speak on.

### 3. Becoming Audience-Centered

Knowing and understanding the audience is a key component in reducing CA (Hanna & Gibson, 1992). Most people feel more comfortable speaking to people they know rather than people they don't know (McCroskey, 1984b). By learning as much as possible about who the audience is, and how much they know about the topic, students can better relate their topics to the audience and their needs. This will make the audience seem like something the speaker can work with, not something they should fear (Hanna & Gibson, 1992). Seventy-five percent of the respondents in this survey are instructing their students to relate their topics to the audience in an attempt to lower overall apprehension.

Effective audience analysis can be taught with the use of demographic, psychological, and situational audience analysis to build a strong audience centered foundation for students. As the students become more audience centered the attention they normally give to themselves and their own CA will be shifted to the needs of the audience. By observing the audience and their feedback the speaker can react by modifying his/her message to the particular needs of the audience. During the speech students should be asking questions like, "Is the audience hearing and understanding what I am saying?" or "Is the

audience responding in the ways I desire?" (Bradley, 1988; Brilhart et al., 1992). When students concentrate on these questions they can determine if their message should be changed to fit the needs of the audience rather than worrying about their own nervousness.

#### 4. Developing the Delivery

The way the speech is delivered plays an important role in the effectiveness, level of influence, and overall success of the speaker and his/her speech. Because the delivery is so important, instructors (73% in this survey) are helping students develop their delivery techniques in an attempt to improve their presentation skills and lower CA. The minimum essentials of a good delivery include posture, eye contact, the speaking voice, and using gestures.

**POSTURE.** Good posture Reid (1971) says, "indicates a measure of poise; or to put it another way a speaker who has learned to stand comfortably in front of an audience has increased his/her own feeling of self-confidence" (p. 179). No one position is suited for all speakers, but they should find their bodies natural position. The natural position according to Woodall (1989), is an upright position with the shoulders

back, head high and relaxed. This will allow proper breathing and natural word flow. The feet should be slightly apart and comfortably balanced, arms loose at the side with the hands resting lightly on the front of the thigh. This allows the hands to naturally move and gesture.

Many apprehensive students clutch the sides of the podium, clasp their hands in front or behind them, or put their hands in their pockets to keep them from shaking. These behaviors should be avoided because nervousness then locks the students' hands and feet not allowing them to "move out of fear" (Makay, 1992). Bradley (1988) comments that, "inhibiting the dissipation of excess energy in one set of muscles simply means that another set will have to do their job. This often means greater trembling of the knees or more tremulous vocal tones" (p. 42). By learning and using the body's natural position students can minimize tension and project confidence and enthusiasm.

**EYE CONTACT.** Speakers should make eye contact with every person in the room at some time during their speech. If the speaker looks into the eyes of the audience he/she will feel the "energy and support" the audience projects (Woodall, 1989). Behaviors such as looking over the heads of the audience, or staring at the back of the room only shows fear and simply makes the listeners feel uncomfortable. The



audience wants the speaker to succeed and they will provide encouragement through their non-verbal communication (e.g., smiling, nodding heads). This added support increases the speaker's self-confidence but they must look into the audience to receive it.

One activity that can help students learn to make eye contact with audience members involves telling a short story in front of the class. The stories should be on simple subjects (e.g., Where I Went on Vacation, My Favorite Restaurant, or Why I am in College) and presented in a presentational manner. The object of the exercise is to have the speaker, while telling the story, make eye contact for three to four seconds with each member of the class. The class members should be instructed to signal the speaker with a raised hand when eye contact has been made for the required amount of time. The speaker should look directly into the eyes of each person and talk to them until the signal is given. This can be accomplished by going up and down each row or by randomly selecting people throughout the room. The signaling by the audience reinforces the speaker providing him/her with the confidence and encouragement to continue (Woodall, 1989).

**THE SPEAKING VOICE.** Controlling and using the voice effectively can increase the speakers confidence while improving the

quality of their delivery. The voice can be controlled by learning how to use the aspects of volume, pitch, rate, pauses, pronunciation, and articulation.

Each of these areas in the speaker's vocal variety can be learned by becoming aware of their value, necessity, and by practicing them in their speaking. For example, by simply controlling their volume the speaker can create a feeling of power and confidence. In addition, learning how to pause will allow the speaker to speak with greater thought as they create new ideas in their mind. Effectively using pauses also eliminates the annoying mannerism of nervous fill-ins like "uh," "er," and "um" (Lucas, 1992a).

One way to help students learn how to use vocal variety in their speaking is to have them read poetry or tongue twisters (Lucas, 1992b). An activity that combines the rhyming of poetry with the pronunciation and articulation challenges of tongue twisters is to have students read Dr. Seuss books in front of the class. Books such as *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham* provide unlimited opportunities for a number of vocal variations that can create countless possible emotions. This is a fun and simple activity that can be done in small groups or individually. Students find that by changing their volume, rate, or by including

pauses in their reading they can make the words of the speech work for them.

**GESTURES.** In addition to vocal variety the speaker can use a variety of visual characteristics to enhance his/her delivery. Visual variety is an assortment of visual aspects such as spreading the arms, pointing, or stepping to the side of the podium that the speaker inserts into his/her speech to make them visually appealing. The use of these gestures and planned movements in a speech is another way a speaker can gain confidence and reduce CA. By simply stepping out in front of the podium or walking from side to side the speaker will be able to relieve any tension he/she may be feeling while building the audience's perception of their confidence.

Teaching someone how to properly gesture is a difficult task because many gestures come as the student feels more confident with the speaking experience (Reid, 1971). Gestures and movements during a speech should, however, be planned and practiced so they "appear natural and spontaneous, help to reinforce or clarify ideas, and be suited to the audience and situation" (Lucas, 1992a, p. 245). Other principles of good gestures include, "variety - do not over use a gesture; wholeness - use the whole body to gesture not just the hands; purposiveness - use a

gesture with a desire to emphasize a point; timing - let the gesture accompany or precede the point, not follow it" (Reid, 1971, p. 145) There are certain words in every speech that encourage gestures. Words such as number words, words that indicate size, direction words, adverbs, verbs, and descriptive words about people and things all can include a gesture as they are spoken (Woodall, 1989).

By looking through their speeches and utilizing these and other gesture words, students can find places and come up with ideas where they can use gesture to increase the visual variety of their speech.

## 5. Lecturing on Communication Apprehension

Seventy percent of the respondent in this survey said they spend some lecture time discussing CA. Lecturing on CA gives instructors an opportunity to speak openly about the normality and commonality of the problem of stage fright. The information in most basic public speaking textbooks consists of causes and treatments of CA and using a lecture period is the perfect time to discuss this material in class (Pelias, 1989).

Lectures on CA also provide an opportunity for instructors to introduce their intentions to teach the necessary public speaking skills

in an attempt to increase students confidence while lowering their apprehension.

## 6. Outlining

One of the best ways for a student to reduce their CA is to be completely prepared for the speech in terms of the outline, research, and delivery (Metcalf, 1991). The development of a functional outline is a common subject for lecture in the basic public speaking course and many instructor (66% in this survey) are taking the opportunity to use the outline as an instrument to help students reduce CA. The outline is a blueprint (Carlile & Daniel, 1991), or skeletal map (Wilson & Arnold, 1976) of the intended communication. It is when students actually put their speech together by deciding what to include and what to leave out. Outlining, according to Lucas (1992a), is the stage of the speech when students decide what they will say in the introduction and conclusion, how they will organize their main points, and what type of supportive material they will use.

The structure of the outline should be simple and logical so the student can fix it firmly in his/her mind. The structure should be that of a standard outline (i.e., Roman numerals, capital letters, numbers, and

small letters) limited to two or three main points. This allows for greater recall and gives less reason to worry about forgetting the information in the speech. As Wilson and Arnold (1976) explain, "We remember those things that are orderly and logical but we easily forget that which lacks system, order, and unity" (p. 178). By concentrating on the development and structure of a clear outline students will find it easier to practice and deliver their speech.

Students should be encouraged to write outlines out in full complete sentences. This is especially best for beginning speakers because in a full sentence they can express the complete thought that will be communicated (Wilson & Arnold, 1976). Additional outlining help for students might include handing out example outlines and making homework assignments that require them to create outlines in complete sentences.

## 7. Effective Research

In addition to the outline, instructors have found that it is important to teach students how to effectively do research in the library. In the present survey sixty-six percent of the respondents said they encourage their students to do effective research on their topics. This

full and complete research not only enriches the content of the speech but builds confidence in students' knowledge of the subject matter. The key to effective research is to start early (Brilhart et al., 1992; Lucas, 1992a; Verderber, 1985). The more research time students devote to their topics the more confident they will be when they deliver their speech (Bostrum, 1988, Bradley, 1988, Metcalfe, 1991). Starting the research as early as possible will not only ease the tension of the assignment but will provide more time to prepare the outline and practice the speech.

To do effective research students should explore two major areas. First, they should determine how much they know about the particular topic. Many students fail to use themselves as a resource. Questions such as "Why is this subject important to me?" or "What do I know about the topic?" are the best place to begin the research process (Brilhart et al., 1992). If the speaker has selected a topic he/she is familiar with or has an interest in, then their knowledge and experiences should provide them with a large amount of information.

Second, students should find out what experts know about their topic. This will require them to go to the library. The best way to help students become familiar with library research is to take them to the library and show them the location of important books and research areas. Students should become familiar with the card catalog or

computer information system, reference works, periodicals, newspapers, government documents, and non-print documents (Brilhart et al., 1992). If going to the library is not practical then lecturing on the library with examples of research materials and library maps may be a helpful alternative.

Another way to increase students' knowledge of the library is to give a homework assignment that is based on a treasure hunt of reference materials (e.g., What was Willie Mays' batting average in 1970? or What are the call letters for *Gone with the Wind* ?) This exercise allows students to explore the library on their own time and discover the wealth of information available there. A follow-up to this assignment would be to require students to turn in bibliography sources with their speech outlines.

## 8. Developing the Introduction

The introduction is the beginning, the start, it is the first impression the audience will have of the rest of the speech. Getting off on the right foot is vital for a speakers self-confidence (Lucas, 1992a). When the speaker observes the audience becoming interested in the topic and responding in a positive manner he/she becomes very confident and



encouraged to deliver the rest of the speech. The speech introduction is a basic concept covered in most basic public speaking courses and sixty-two percent of the respondent of this survey said they use the development of an effective introduction as a technique to treat CA.

Since a good introduction is an excellent confidence booster it is essential that the speaker knows what goes into an introduction. An introduction should contain the following four objectives: (1) Get the audiences attention; (2) Introduce the topic; (3) Establish the speaker's credibility; and (4) Preview the body of the speech (Lucas, 1992a). The first objective "To get the audience's attention" is the most important. Once the speaker has the audience's attention they will then be more interested in what he/she has to say (Brilhart et al., 1992). The others simply introduce the speaker's specific purpose, qualification for delivering the speech, and the thesis statement.

One activity that increases the quality of speech introductions while building confidence in the speaking situation is to have students write an introduction as a class activity. Students should be placed in groups of three or four and given a specific topic. Group members then work together to develop an introduction that contains each of the objectives. One person from each group is then asked to deliver the introduction in front of the class. After each introduction is presented

the class should critique it for content and quality. This activity gives students an opportunity to actually prepare an introduction under the supervision of the instructor preparing them to write the introduction of their own speech. Students should have a better understanding of what is included in a good introduction and why the introduction is so important in successful speaking.

## 9. Being Physically Prepared

In addition to mental preparation instructors are finding that a student's physical state can be a factor in the success or failure of the speech. In this survey 60% of the respondents said they encourage students to be prepared physically as well as mentally for their speeches. Physical preparation includes the presence of drugs and alcohol, physical exercise, and sleep.

Sometimes before a speech a student will say, "I should have had a drink to relax me before my speech." Others may side with a tranquilizer to calm their nerves. When giving a speech students' minds should be clear and free from artificial chemicals that could lower the concentration of an already nervous speaker (Metcalf, 1991). Students should learn to channel their own adrenalin and nervousness

into a positive, motivating factor that will build speaking confidence without the aid of alcohol or drugs.

In addition to having a clear mind, students should be encouraged to exercise to help them relax. Physical activities like aerobics, weight-lifting, and jogging will reduce stress allowing students to relax and better able to concentrate on delivering their speech (Dusek-Girdano, 1979). Exercising the night before the speech will not only help reduce stress but helps students get a good nights sleep (Metcalf, 1991).

Physical exercise can also be performed immediately before the student presents his/her speech. Activities such as neck rolls, walking, knee bends, arm swings, and isometrics are all great warm ups. One student actually shadow boxes before speaking to relieve his/her tension. These activities prior to speaking add to the physical and mental well being of the speaker (Reid, 1970).

Maintaining a healthy body and exercising prior to speaking are two ways students can prepare themselves physically for their speech presentation. All students can do these simple physical activities to help reduce the amount of CA they are feeling while at the same time improving their overall communication skills.

## 10. Using Visual Aids

Using visual aids during a speech is one way instructor (60% in this survey) believe students can reduce CA and build confidence in their speaking. Simply having something to handle during the speech will make the student feel more comfortable (Reid, 1971). Using a visual aid in a speech also increases the audience's interest in the topic while diverting attention away from the speaker, making them feel less apprehensive (Lucas, 1992a).

One way to show the effectiveness a visual aid is to assign a demonstration or "how to" speech. This type of speech requires students to actually perform an activity in front of the class with the help of a visual aid. Communication apprehension levels are normally lower during this type of speech because students are so busy working with their visual aids they do not have time to think about themselves or their nervousness. Students may find they are able to deliver this speech without reading it word-for-word because of the added confidence of working with a visual aid. This positive experience may have a lasting effect on later speeches.

Other speeches such as a short speech that requires the use of a drawing or map to describe a particular situation or event (e.g., How to Recycle; Our University - How to Get Around) or a speech where the speaker uses his/her own body to demonstrate a skill (e.g., Basic Exercises, The Golf Swing) can be assigned in addition to the demonstration speech to encourage students to incorporate visuals into their speeches (Reid, 1971).

## CLASS CLIMATE

Since the thought of being in a basic public speaking class is distressful for some students, it is important they understand that the class environment is positive, practical, and supportive of their needs (Kougl, 1980).

The instructor must, as early as the first day of class, create an atmosphere that makes students feel comfortable and willing to interact with each other and the instructor. This can be accomplished by understanding and practicing each of the following: identifying fears as normal, building on successful experiences, encouraging class participation, the introductory speech, establishing a warm climate, and making evaluation of speeches a positive experience.

## 1. Identifying Students' Fears as Normal

Communication apprehension is not limited to those speaking in public; anyone performing in front of an audience will experience some kind of stage fright. Athletes, actors, musicians, and doctors all, at one time or another, experience apprehension. In a study cited by Lucas (1992a), individuals were asked what social event caused them the most apprehension. Seventy percent of the respondents said giving a speech in public. Being afraid to speak in public is common, but for most learning to put their nervousness to good use is the difference between a poor performance and an excellent one (Reid, 1971).

In her study of basic speech textbooks Pelias (1989) found that 16 of the 25 sample texts made some reference that CA is normal and that by channelling that nervousness it could actually benefit the speakers performance. A large percentage of the respondents in this survey (88%) believe that by addressing stage fright as a normal occurrence they can actually help students eliminate some of their CA.

It is important for students to understand that there are no perfect speeches. Mistakes are going to happen and they will have to deal with those mistakes as they occur. If they lose their place, the best advice for

them is to just step back, gain their composure, locate their place and continue (Makay, 1992). Many of the mistakes made during a speech go unnoticed by the audience and are only brought to the audience's attention when they are announced by the speaker. For example, the speaker will stop in the middle of the speech and say, "I messed up, may I start over?" What they fail to realize is that up to that point the audience had no idea they had lost their place. By simply pausing and gathering their thoughts the speaker could have continued error free. In a study of students enrolled in the basic public speaking course Behnke, Sawyer and King (1987) found that speakers report having more anxiety than the audience actually attributes to them. This means students think the audience is aware of their nervousness when in fact the audience has no idea the speaker is nervous.

Normally, when speakers are nervous they will make mistakes or develop mannerisms that are uncharacteristic of them (e.g., forgetting a section of information, shaking hands, cracking voice, speaking too fast). These mistakes go unnoticed by the audience because, as mentioned earlier the audience is unaware of them and they are interested in listening to the message of the speech. In the movie *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken* (1966), the hero is presented with the challenge of delivering a public speech.<sup>2</sup> During his speech he makes a number of

mistakes and displays an assortment of nervous mannerism (e.g., he loses his place, he cannot remember what he wants to say, his eyes roll to the back of his head, his voice quivers, he does not know what to do with his hands). He is so distracted by his nervousness that he fails to deliver a message which only highlights his mistakes and mannerisms.

Students are going to be nervous and they are going to make mistakes when speaking in front of the class but despite the mistakes they must continue to present the message of the speech. The audience will overlook the speaker's mistakes if they believe they have been given some information or taught something (Behnke, Sawyer & King, 1987).

## 2. Establishing a Warm Climate

A large percentage of the respondents in this survey (87%) believe that by creating a warm climate in the classroom they can reduce students' apprehension of speaking in public. The basic public speaking course is very difficult for many students so the instructor must convince students that the class environment will be supportive and interactive. This starts on the first day of class while presenting the syllabus. As stated in the review of literature a syllabus outlining requirements, assignments, and grading policy will add to the structure



of the class (Kougl, 1980). The presentation of the syllabus gives the instructor the opportunity to make comments, act in a positive manner, and involve each student in the conversation. This interaction is a good time for the instructor to introduce students to the type of climate he/she wants for the class (Kougl, 1980).

Another way to develop a warm climate in the class is to use the "Question of the Day."<sup>3</sup> The "Question of the Day" is a fun activity that gives students an opportunity to talk and express themselves in front of the class. Each day as the roster is checked a question is presented to the class, (e.g., What is your favorite and most disliked food?, Where would you most like to go on vacation?) and one-by-one students respond to the question. The questions should be simple, non-threatening, even funny but require students to disclose information about their themselves and their personalities. The instructor should also answer the question allowing the students to get to know him/her. As the questions are answered the students find that they have things in common with their classmates and the instructor. This realization will assist in reducing CA (McCroskey, 1984b). Example questions for the "Questions of the Day" are located in Appendix 4.

Two additional activities that establish a warm climate and increase students' self-esteem are suggested by Adler (1980). The first is

"Rank Ordering." In this activity the instructor presents a question or situation and provides three possible answers. Four to six students are asked to rank in order of personal preference the answers, describing the reasons behind their choice. A new question is presented until each student has had an opportunity to participate. A typical question might be, "Which do you think is the greatest cause of violence in America?" with possible answers including, "(a) limited gun laws; (b) television; (c) lack of education" (p. 218).

The second is called "Group Bragging." In "Group Bragging" students are asked to share two or three things in their life that they are particularly proud of or pleased with (e.g., "I am doing well in all of my classes so far this semester" or "I am living in the dorm this semester and surviving"). The "brags" can be as important or insignificant as the student feels necessary. The instructor should encourage students to not be modest or shy and to really brag. This activity helps students get to know each other, increase their own self-esteem, and creates a warm climate in the class.

### 3. Making Evaluations of Speeches a Positive Experience

A large percentage of students' time in the basic public speaking course is spent giving speeches and for the most part final grades are determined by these speeches. Many students feel apprehensive about speaking in a situation where they will be graded on their performance. McCroskey (1984) believes "that a student giving a talk in a public speaking class for a grade may be more apprehensive than the same student would be if he/she were giving the same talk to the same group of people in a meeting in the dorm" (p. 26). Even if students are audience centered and have overcome their fear of having the audience looking at them, they will still be nervous by the presence of the instructor (McCroskey, 1984b). Some students believe the worst part of speaking in class is having the instructor watching and giving them a grade. The evaluation of speeches can be distressing to apprehensive students because they already expect low evaluations and "these expectations feed into their anxieties about communicating" (Pelias, 1989, p. 42). Unfortunately there is little an instructor can do about this part of the students' apprehension. The instructor must be in the room taking notes so an honest and helpful evaluation can be made of the speech. The best solution to this problem is to make the evaluation of

speeches a positive experience just as 78% of the respondents in this survey do.

Near the beginning of the course it may be necessary for the instructor to state his/her purpose and function as the instructor of the class. Students should know that the instructor is there to help them improve their communication skills and succeed in public speaking. While students are speaking, the instructor should make his/her presence in the room as positive as possible. Reinforce the speakers' efforts by making constructive comments, "human beings are sensitive to comments made about them, a word of praise may be remembered forever" (Reid, 1971, p. 272). The critique should be made of the performance not the speaker, but is important to remember the speaker by showing interest in him/her as a person.

When the speeches are delivered the instructor should be an active listener and interested in what the speaker has to say not just simply interested in critiquing the speech. Taking notes will allow him/her to later recall exactly what needs to be criticized. The instructor can also provide emotional support for the speaker by being a "smiling face" in the audience. By becoming an active participant students will see the instructor as a member of the audience and not an authoritative figure only interested in giving a grade.

When speech evaluations are made the comments should be positive and constructive, yet critical enough to help students improve on their next speech. Positive comments build confidence and reinforce the fact that the speech did have some good qualities. Begin criticism by discussing as many good points as possible. "Candid approval opens the recipient's mind and allows him/her to shed some of his/her tension" (Reid, 1971) Discussing the positive aspects of the speech will make students more open and teachable, which allows the instructor to address areas of improvement. The critique should end, however, on a positive note, again going over those exceptional areas of the speech. Lucas (1992a), has developed a speech critique form (shown in Appendix 5), that contains a section for comments on "What did the speaker do most effectively?" and "What should the speaker pay special attention to next time?" Both of these comment areas are used in a positive sense even when it is most obvious that one is a "needs improvement" comment. Many of the speeches delivered in the basic public speaking course will "need improvement," but when it comes to informing the students of these improvement areas it is important that they are made in a positive reinforcing way.

#### 4. Encouraging Class Participation

Class participation can be accomplished by having an open and enthusiastic lecture setting with the instructor interjecting questions throughout the class period that invite all to participate. As stated in the review of literature, by simply addressing students by their name, allowing them to sit where they wish, and only calling on them when they have their hand raised or when their face indicates they have a response students will feel more comfortable about joining in on the conversation (Kougl, 1980). By encouraging this exchange of ideas in class instructors (75% in this survey) believe they are able to reduce the CA levels of their students. When students do respond it is important for the instructor to treat each comment seriously and with genuine interest. This can be accomplished by simply saying, "Good question and/or comment" or "I am glad you asked that." A positive treatment of the responses may, in turn, encourage additional responses.

Working in groups or participating in small group activities is another way to increase class participation. These activities provide students with an opportunity to get to know other classmates, become comfortable with the class setting, and practice their communication skills (Kougl, 1980). The relationships created between students during

these group activities are valuable and often turn into support groups on speech days. Group activities can be developed to accompany many of the lectures in the basic public speaking course. The activities not only improves students' relationships with each other but increases their attention to valuable information contained in the lectures.

When groups are organized students should be placed with as many different individuals as possible so they can work with and get to know a large number of the class members. As stated earlier, getting to know the audience is key to reducing CA and building speaking confidence (McCroskey, 1984b).

## 5. Introductory Speech

It is important for students to get on their feet and speak in front of the class as soon as possible and a number of instructors (65% in this survey) use the introductory speech to do this. The introductory speech is normally a nongraded assignment presented the first week of class in which students introduce themselves or a classmate. The assignment requires a biographical description that introduces the student to the rest of the class. Introducing a classmate not only gives students an

opportunity to speak but will help them get to know a member of the class which reduces CA and increase self confidence (McCroskey, 1984b).

The first speaking assignment should be, according to Connell and Borden (1987), "a positive experience which will reinforce the student's self-esteem and confidence for future speeches" (pg. 58). Instructors should be aware, however, that the introductory speech can be very difficult for some apprehensive students to give because they believe they are the focus of the classes attention (Kougl, 1980). Care must be taken in the assigning and presentation requirements for this kind of speech so that it is a positive experience and not a negative one.

## 6. Building on Successful Experiences

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "I believe anyone can conquer fear by doing the things he fears to do, provided he keeps doing them until he gets a record of successful experiences behind him" (cited in Carlile and Daniel, 1991). For student in the basic public speaking course these positive experiences come from speaking in front of the class. Building on these successful experiences is one way instructors (62% in this



survey) are helping students reduce CA and build confidence in their communication skills.

The biggest part of stage fright comes, as Lucas (1992a) describes, from not knowing what to expect. Many basic public speaking course textbook authors (Adler & Rodman, 1991; Bostrum, 1988; Bradley, 1988; Hanna & Gibson, 1992; Lucas, 1992a; Makay, 1992; Metcalfe, 1991; & Verderber, 1985) encourage apprehensive students to get as much experience in public speaking as possible. The theory is that the more you perform a particular task the more familiar it becomes and then it will be less threatening (Bradley, 1988). The in-class speaking assignments play a major role in students gaining positive speaking experiences. A student once commented that when she started taking the basic public speaking course she was scared to death, but after two or three speeches she was considerably less apprehensive. Connell and Borden (1987) suggest the first few speeches be of a positive and reinforcing nature. This type of speech will build self-esteem and confidence for future speaking assignments (Connell and Borden, 1987).

First speaking assignments might include an introduction speech (discussed earlier), an impromptu speech, or a simple informative or demonstration speech. Other opportunities to have students speak in front of the class might be included as part of the classroom activities.

Many of these activities have been discussed earlier (e.g., vocal variety, eye contact, introductions). Group activities that allow apprehensive students to work with other students also help create positive experience (Kougl, 1980).

The speeches and classroom activities provide situations that students interpret as positive (e.g., they make the audience laugh, they give an exceptional introduction, they do excellent research, etc.). The task for the instructor is, however, to take these speaking situations and make them into a positive experience for each student (discussed in Making Evaluations of Speeches a Positive Experience). After the student feels confident about a particular aspect of his/her communication skills the instructor must build on that aspect while creating more with each additional speaking assignment.

## CONCLUSION

As students enter the basic public speaking course they are going to be nervous about the thought of giving speeches in front of an audience. For some this may be a mild nervousness while others may suffer severe speech anxiety. Which ever the case, they will look to the

instructor for support and guidance in dealing with their stage fright. For many instructors knowing how to treat CA and finding time for treatment in an already hectic schedule are two problems they are faced with each semester.

The results of this study show that most CA treatment in the basic public speaking course is done right in the classroom through the use of skills training. Time restrictions are handled by placing CA treatment into existing lectures and classroom activities. Instructors throughout the nation are using lecture items and activities such as outlining, doing effective research and developing the speech introduction to help students lower their CA while increasing their confidence in their ability to communicate. In addition, the type of climate the instructor creates in the classroom helps students feel comfortable, positive, and willing to interact.

Students will always be nervous and apprehensive about speaking in public but with the proper guidance and necessary skills they will be able to channel their nervousness into a positive, strengthening feeling that enables them to deliver their speeches with confidence. It is this confidence in communication that improves an individual's self-esteem and helps him/her successfully face the challenges in his/her personal, social, and professional life.

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## NOTES

1. Parentheses added by author.
2. Parentheses added by author.
3. Special thanks to Michael Upchurch who discovered the speech by Don Knotts in *The Ghost and Mr. Chicken*, and introduced it to the School of Communication at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
4. The "Question of the Day" was brought to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas by Linda Stewart from Long Beach State. She was introduced to this activity by one of her professors, Fred Rogers, who uses it successfully in his communication classes.

## APPENDICES

## **Appendix 1**

### **Survey Questionnaire**

# Communication Apprehension Survey

This questionnaire has been designed to determine the techniques used to treat students' communication apprehension (CA) in your basic public speaking course. Please read all instructions completely and answer each question as accurately as possible. Thank you for your participation.

## Part I - Communication Apprehension (CA) Treatment Techniques

Please answer the following questions according to how CA is treated in your basic public speaking course.

1. Is CA treated in individual public speaking classes? ☐ yes ☐ no
2. Do you offer a special program for treating CA? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, is the program: ☐ a special course ☐ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are students in the basic public speaking course screened for CA? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, how? (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are the following **USED** as treatment techniques in your basic public speaking course (Regardless of the number of instructors using the method)?:

### Systematic Desensitization

During deep muscle relaxation students are asked to think about public speaking and eliminate any fears of the public speaking situation.

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

### Cognitive Modification

Recognizing negative statements associated with the public speaking situation (e.g., I do not speak coherently in front of a group) and replacing them with positive statements (e.g., I can deliver this speech because I am prepared).

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

### Visualization

Asking the speaker to picture him/herself delivering a successful and competent speech in front of the audience.

- ☐ yes. ☐ no ☐ don't know

### Skills Training

Teaching students the proper skills necessary to deliver a speech (e.g., outlining, research, delivery, etc.).

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ don't know

## Part II - In-Class CA Treatment Techniques

Given that the items below are generally included as part of the basic public speaking course, which of the following are used by your instructors **AS A MEANS OF TREATING CA** in the classroom? (Check all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outlining   | <input type="checkbox"/> Group projects                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effective research                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group discussions about CA       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging practice of speeches                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-disclosure about CA               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing delivery techniques                      | <input type="checkbox"/> In-class practice of speeches          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Selecting topics students are familiar with         | <input type="checkbox"/> Impromptu speeches                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming audience centered                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory speeches                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developing the introduction                         | <input type="checkbox"/> No evaluation of early speeches        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using visual aids                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Building on successful experiences     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being physically prepared                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying student's fears as normal  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging outside speaking experience             | <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing a warm climate            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal setting  | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging class participation        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In class social conversations                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-graded speaking assignments        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making evaluation of speeches a positive experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Lecturing on CA - causes and solutions |

In the space below please indicate other CA treatment techniques used by your instructors that are not included in the list above:

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## Part III - Institutional Characteristics

For each of the following, please provide a response that best describes your institution, department, or basic public speaking course.

1. Type of institution     ☐ Private     ☐ Public
2. Approximate total enrollment (Institution as a whole): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is your institution on     ☐ Quarters     ☐ Semesters
4. Highest degree(s) granted in your department: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are your public speaking courses     ☐ independent sections     ☐ recitation/lecture
6. Approximate number of sections of the basic public speaking course (per sem. or qtr.): \_\_\_\_\_
7. Approximate number of students per class: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Approximate number of instructors teaching the basic public speaking course: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Is there a standardized public speaking text used in your department?     ☐ yes     ☐ no  
If yes, what is/are the title(s) and author(s)? \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 2 Cover Letter

Dear Colleague,

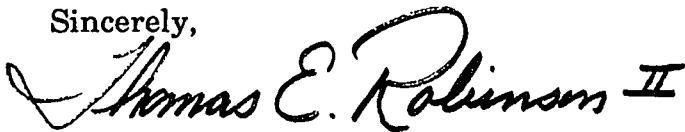
As you know, communication apprehension (CA) (e.g., stage fright, nervousness, speech anxiety, etc.) is endemic to students in the basic public speaking course. Each semester instructors are faced with the dilemma of treating CA without sacrificing valuable class time. For this reason many departments and instructors have developed contemporary methods to deal with CA and its attendant problems.

As part of my master's thesis I am conducting a survey assessing the techniques used to treat CA in the basic public speaking course. Since my interest is the treatment techniques used in a public speaking course, I am asking that you route the enclosed questionnaire, along with this letter, to the person who directs the basic public speaking course, if that person is not yourself.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part deals with general treatment techniques while the second part seeks to determine more specific techniques used in your classrooms. The third part requests institutional and departmental characteristics.

Your participation is very important to the validity of this study, and your comments on this research topic are appreciated. Please take a moment to fill out the questionnaire; it should take less than 3 minutes to complete. For your convenience in returning the questionnaire, a postage paid envelope has been enclosed. Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Robinson II  
Graduate Assistant

**Appendix 3**  
**Follow-up Post Card**

# HELP!

Recently you should have received a survey questionnaire regarding treatment techniques of communication apprehension (CA) in your basic public speaking course. In order to attain a reliable sample for this important study, I need your full cooperation.

Please take a moment to fill out and return the questionnaire if you have not already done so.

*Thanks!*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas E. Robinson II". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle initial.

Thomas E. Robinson II

**Appendix 4**  
**Example Questions of the Day**

### Questions of the Day

1. What is your year in school and major?
2. What is the most unusual/funniest gift you have ever given or received?
3. What is the funniest prank or joke you have played on someone or someone has played on you?
4. What is your perfect study environment?
5. What do you like most about Las Vegas?
6. What do you least like about Las Vegas?
7. What is your biggest pet-peeve?
8. What is your best physical asset?
9. What is your worst physical asset?
10. Who do you believe is the best public speaker of all time?
11. What is the first thing you notice about a person of the opposite sex?
12. Name 2 adjectives that best describe your dream date.
13. If you were given \$100,000 what would you do with it?
14. What do believe is your best personality trait?
15. What do believe is your worst personality trait?
16. Who was the last person you kissed and when?
17. Give 2 numbers. The number of people you said "I love you" to and the number of times you meant it.
18. Complete this sentence:  
I think men/women spend too much time \_\_\_\_\_ .
19. What is you favorite and most disliked TV show?
20. If you were stranded on a desert island who would you want to be stranded with?

**Appendix 5**  
**Speech Critique Form**

SPEECH EVALUATION FORM

Speaker \_\_\_\_\_ Rate the speaker on each point by using this scale:

Topic \_\_\_\_\_

5	4	3	2	1
excellent	good	average	fair	poor

Introduction

- \_\_\_\_\_ gained attention and interest
- \_\_\_\_\_ introduced topic clearly
- \_\_\_\_\_ related topic to audience
- \_\_\_\_\_ established credibility
- \_\_\_\_\_ previewed body of speech

Delivery

- \_\_\_\_\_ began speech without rushing
- \_\_\_\_\_ maintained strong eye contact
- \_\_\_\_\_ avoided distracting mannerisms
- \_\_\_\_\_ articulated words clearly
- \_\_\_\_\_ used pauses effectively
- \_\_\_\_\_ used vocal variety to add impact
- \_\_\_\_\_ presented visual aids well
- \_\_\_\_\_ communicated enthusiasm for topic
- \_\_\_\_\_ departed from lectern without rushing

Body

- \_\_\_\_\_ main points clear
- \_\_\_\_\_ main points fully supported
- \_\_\_\_\_ organization well planned
- \_\_\_\_\_ language accurate
- \_\_\_\_\_ language clear
- \_\_\_\_\_ language appropriate
- \_\_\_\_\_ connectives effective

Overall Evaluation

- \_\_\_\_\_ met assignment
- \_\_\_\_\_ topic challenging
- \_\_\_\_\_ specific purpose well chosen
- \_\_\_\_\_ message adapted to audience
- \_\_\_\_\_ speech completed within time limit
- \_\_\_\_\_ held interest of audience

Conclusion

- \_\_\_\_\_ prepared audience for ending
- \_\_\_\_\_ reinforced central idea
- \_\_\_\_\_ vivid ending

What did the speaker do most effectively? \_\_\_\_\_

What should the speaker pay special attention to next time? \_\_\_\_\_

General Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix 6**  
**Consent to Use Human Subjects in Research**



**TO:** Thomas E. Robinson II  
**FROM:** Dr. William E. Schulze, *WES* Director, Research Administration  
**DATE:** 22 April 1993  
**RE:** Status of human subject protocol entitled:  
"Treating Communication Apprehension in the Basic Public  
Speaking Course: National Survey & Recommendations"

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The protocol for the project referenced above has been reviewed by the Office of Research Administration, and it has been determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from full review by the UNLV human subjects committee. Except for any required conditions or modifications noted below, this protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of this notification, and work on the project may proceed.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond a year from the date of this notification, it will be necessary to request an extension.