Anxieties in the Classroom: A Teacher Checklist

Knowledge of Students

- ☐ Do I know how my students feel about public speaking?
- ☐ Do I know what makes different students nervous about public speaking?
- ☐ Have I considered any specific student needs that may affect their public speaking (i.e. difficulty with English, stutters or lisp, slower information processing, challenges with vocabulary, difficulty reading aloud, volume/vocal issues)?
- ☐ Do my students know how to support one another and make each other feel confident?

Opportunities to Succeed

- ☐ Have I provided my students with a clear description of my expectations for public speaking?
- ☐ Do I have warm-ups, activities, lessons, or units that are focused explicitly on teaching and practicing communication skills?
- ☐ Does my class include a balance of prepared public speaking assignments (i.e. presentations) and spontaneous public speaking activities (i.e. discussions and debates)?
- ☐ When appropriate, do I lower the stakes to make students feel less nervous (i.e. sitting instead of standing during speeches, presenting in small groups, increasing preparation time, letting them have notes)?

Balanced Assessments

- ☐ When I have discussions and other collaborative speaking activities, does everyone get the chance to contribute and express what they know?
- ☐ Have I created rubrics for all public speaking assignments?
- ☐ When I grade public speaking, do I reward students for their preparation ahead of time (i.e. content, collaboration) in addition to factors that are harder to control (i.e. presentation delivery, responding to questions)?
- ☐ Do I share presentation rubrics with my students?

Coaching and Preparation

- ☐ Does my classroom include clear norms for audience behavior and peer support?
- ☐ Do I offer opportunities for students to practice their speeches in class?
- ☐ Are there chances for students to receive detailed feedback to improve?
- ☐ Do I make myself available for additional support around public speaking?