

CONFIDENCE-BUILDING GUIDE: RESOURCE 12

9 Ways to Lower the Stakes in Public Speaking Situations

1

Small Audiences

Start by practicing in pairs, then standing in small groups, then in front of the class, then in front of a public audience.

2

Seated Presentations

Have students practice speaking seated before they stand in front of the class.

3

Limited Choices

Offer students a limited set of 3 to 5 topic choices that range in difficulty, so that they aren't overwhelmed by unlimited possibilities but also have a choice.

4

Simultaneous Practice

Have students practice their remarks all at once -- it's noisy, but it makes them feel like they can blend in and no one is listening to them while they practice.

5

Frequent Rehearsal

Practice remarks in class...a lot!

6

Run-through the Opening Walk

Have students practice walking up to the front of the room and feeling secure in their opening stance.

7

Increase Presentations

Increase the number of public speaking assignments so that they become less of a big deal.

8

Adjust Grading

When appropriate, incorporate self-assessment as part of the grade and adjust the weight of some public speaking assignments to take the pressure off.

9

Be Careful What You Ask For

Take care when you include requirements that raise the pressure, like requiring students to memorize their speech.

