

LEADERS THAT LISTEN
PUBLIC SPEAKING CURRICULUM

Coaching Guide



Every public speaker and emerging leader needs a “coach” who can help them refine their ideas, polish their oral delivery, and anticipate the needs of their audience. The resources in this toolkit are applicable to all forms of public speaking covered in this curriculum (storytelling, presentation, advocacy, and debate), as they help coaches become mentors who can establish the positive culture and meaningful relationships necessary to building confidence. Use these resources to improve the learning culture, provide better feedback, manage time effectively, encourage peer coaching and youth leadership, and inspire confidence.

If you are an educator who is interested in teaching a public speaking elective course, there is also an example public speaking college course syllabus in this toolkit!



Why We Need Leaders That Listen:

A Note from the Author

As a teacher and public speaking coach, I have always been drawn to the quirkiest students.

I love unexpected perspectives that make me think about an issue in a different way and inspire me to care about experiences I never understood. Unfortunately, we are surrounded by images of leadership and models of public speaking dominated by examples that are loud, angry, and driven by ego. Every day, I encounter students from as young as 7 all the way to adulthood who have beautiful voices and incredible stories but do not believe they are important. They have been taught that they aren't leaders because they do not look, act, or sound like the people in power.

It is important to have mentors and a community to help you have the courage of your own convictions; just because you don't look or sound like everyone else doesn't mean you don't deserve to have a voice. Our society needs leaders who know how to facilitate diverse perspectives, learn from different experiences, care about human beings, and listen without an agenda. This curriculum is a starting point for educators, coaches, and emerging public speakers of all ages who want methods for communicating in a way that is authentic and real, empowering their inner leader and encouraging diverse voices through inclusive education. Explore the guides in any order and choose tools that best fit your needs and build your confidence. Gather inspiration and feel free to adapt as you develop your skills and the abilities of those you lead.



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About the Author

As Founder and Executive Director of Bay Area non-profit, The Practice Space, AnnMarie Baines brings 20 years of experience coaching public speaking for youth and adults and currently teaches public speaking at UC Berkeley. As a Filipina leader, Dr. Baines is deeply committed to equity, and was awarded a Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship. In prior work, Dr. Baines was a program officer at the George Lucas Educational Foundation, where she applied her expertise in curriculum, project-based learning, and professional development. She began her career as a high school special education teacher and utilizes the Universal Design for Learning framework. Dr. Baines received her PhD in Learning Sciences from University of Washington, teaching credential from Boston Teacher Residency, and Master's in Education Policy from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

COACHING GUIDE

Table of Contents

Resource 1	Coaching: Establishing and Sustaining a Culture of Talk.....	1
Resource 2	Conditions for Equitable Voice: What to Say and Do	3
Resource 3	Self-Assessment of Coaching Mindset and Skills	4
Resource 4	Coach Learning Plan.....	6
Resource 5	Trajectory of Speaker Skill Development	7
Resource 6	Example of Public Speaking College Course Syllabus.....	11
Resource 7	10 Techniques to Promote Confidence and Early Success.....	20
Resource 8	Helping People Contribute: Facilitation Moves to Improve Communication	21
Resource 9	How to Coach Better Speaking Delivery.....	22
Resource 10	How to Coach Speech Writing.....	24
Resource 11	Do's and Don'ts of Oral Feedback.....	26
Resource 12	12 Tips for Time Management	27
Resource 13	How to Run a Public Speaking Practice	29
Resource 14	7 Steps for Peer Coaching and Student Leadership	30
Resource 15	How Friends and Families Can Coach Speakers.....	31
Resource 16	Before the Final: Inspiring Speaker Confidences.....	32

COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 1

Coaching: Establishing and Sustaining a Culture of Talk

Helping Leaders Battle Deficit Mindsets



To feel capable enough to lead and speak, people need to first feel like they belong to a community that cares about them. Public speaking of any kind requires deep vulnerability and a willingness to grow and take risks, which is not possible without a strong culture and facilitators who help maintain that culture. Instead of “teachers”, emerging public speakers need “coaches”, guides and mentors that foster the sense of safety, fun, and support they need as they embark on a journey to express their views and identities.

Mindsets, perceptions of ability, and trust play a key role in setting a positive tone and establishing a strong culture of talk, where people feel free to articulate diverse viewpoints. Coaching public speaking must begin with the assumption that every person is capable and the role of the coach and community is to help people express those abilities, reveal their strengths, and seek out potential. It is too easy to slip into the mindset that coaches must fix mistakes and distractors like “umms” or fidgeting. While this kind of technical work might be relevant later, the focus of coaching should be on getting to know each person, establishing a relationship, and understanding the intent of their message. The relationship necessary to help develop a public speaker cannot be built upon deficit thinking.

Barriers to an Inclusive Culture

When working with a group or a classroom of students, sustaining a culture of talk goes beyond work with individuals. People are hardwired to rank one another and compare themselves to the people around them. As Stanford University’s Ray McDermott and colleagues highlight in their 2006 research article, “The Cultural

Work of Learning Disabilities”, changing disabling practices requires a constant battle against deeply embedded “cultural facts”. While adults may adjust their mindsets to become more inclusive and ability-oriented, youth can continue to reinforce them, especially when the culture isn’t regularly tended and cultivated. The authors continue:

- *Even if the teacher manages to treat every child as potentially*
- *capable, the children can hammer each other into negative*
- *status positions; and even if both teacher and children can*
- *resist dropping everyone into predefined categories, the*
- *children’s parents can take over, demanding more and more*
- *boxes which specify the kinds of kids who do better than*
- *others. (McDermott et al., 2006, p. 15).*

Public speakers need reassurance that they are making progress and the subjective nature of communication skills and how ideas are perceived can lead to a great deal of insecurity. When people feel insecure, they are more likely to criticize one another, compete for approval, and try to assert their dominance over others. On the flip side, people can also be their own worst enemies. According to one high school public speaking student, “I actually need more help to escape my own limitations and reach past the labels I put on myself.” As a coach, supporting their development means interrupting these tendencies and continuing to reinforce the values of diversity and inclusion.

What to Look For Over Time

Building a culture of talk can be a fragile process, which must be modeled, revisited, reinforced, and assessed at regular intervals. Fortunately, there are many verbal and non-verbal indicators to look for over time to anticipate any issues in advance. Some indicators include:

- **Open vs. closed body language.** Open body language looks like: eyes up, engaged facials, attentive, sitting at the edge of the seat, or eagerly listening. Closed body language looks like: hunched shoulders, avoiding eye contact, facials that look bothered or visibly upset, or head down.
- **Direction of talk.** It is good for talk to be directed mostly to each other, as opposed to towards the teacher for approval.
- **Distribution of talk.** It is good for contributions to be distributed throughout the group, as opposed to held primarily by a few people.



- **On-guard vs. Relaxed energy.** Are people at ease? Or do they look stiff, worried, and concerned? People don't necessarily need to be talking all the time to indicate a supportive culture, but they should usually look relaxed.
- **Draft thinking.** When people are able to “think out loud” or take risks and try out new ways of doing something, it is likely that the culture is supportive.
- **Participation over time.** Over time, there should be positive developments in people's ability to participate. Ideally, this means that a greater variety of people speak more often and when they do, their thoughts are more-developed, independent ideas.
- **Demonstration of care.** A supportive culture is one where people show that they care about one another through their actions and words.
- **Willingness to help each other improve.** While this is related to care, an inclusive culture is also one where people actually feel invested in the performance of others. Instead of competing, they help coach one another and give helpful advice.
- **Informal comments.** Listening for the little off-hand comments people say in reaction to one another can be a strong indicator of how positive or negative the culture is.
- **Extended interactions.** It is a good sign when people genuinely want to spend time with one another. A positive culture is one where people want to interact beyond the learning setting during their informal and social time.

The Final Takeaway

Coaches have an important responsibility to disrupt negative patterns of behavior that lead to some people feeling excluded. To intervene when there are indicators of negative, restrictive culture, it is always good to begin with relationship-building. Know your students and what makes them feel valued and don't be afraid to ask questions about what makes them feel happy, scared, or angry. Experiment heavily at the beginning by changing up groupings and having an especially wide range of types of activities (i.e. independent vs. group, silent vs. enthusiastic, physical vs. creative, prepared vs. spontaneous, performing in pairs vs. performing for the class). Collect evidence over time about how different people respond and repeat what goes well. More than anything, it is also important to realize that the coach cannot set the culture alone, nor can a coach take total credit when the culture is strong. Instead, an effective coach creates the models, routines, and structures to help the group shape the culture in a way that supports everyone, and knows when to let go and allow the culture to evolve on its own.

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COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 2

Conditions for Equitable Voice: What to Say and Do

Building culture is a complex task, especially with the goal of creating a more equitable learning environment.

Establishing conditions for equitable voice means actively interrupting tendencies to put people down, and instead reinforce interactions that validate diverse contributions and help everyone fully participate and be powerful. It is important to reflect on your own perceptions and assumptions about people in the room and be open-minded. Perceptions shape our words and our actions, which are also essential to setting a tone for equity right from the beginning.

What to Say...	What to Do...
Frame your hopes for a positive, inclusive experience for everyone.	Co-determine norms and how people should treat each other.
Communicate care and support.	Be consistently fair and model the interactions you want.
Give examples of how people can be themselves.	Start with a wide range of activities.
Say specifically how you hope people should participate and contribute (not just that they should participate).	Establish easy points of entry.
Mention ways you hope people will take charge of the culture over time (i.e. planning activities for everyone, decorating the space, mentoring each other, taking on leadership roles).	Balance structure with freedom.
Validate early contributions from as many people as possible.	Start getting to know people and deepen this knowledge over time.
Ask questions that make people add onto or reflect on the statements of others	Assign groupings and change them often
Suggest ways to get started with participation.	Interrupt negative talk, but forgive easily.
Don't wait too long to check-in with questions and encouragement.	Know when to leave people alone and let them be -- revisit later.
Gradually say less over time, except to guide and reinforce positive culture.	Observe responses over time and make adjustments.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 3

Self-Assessment of Coaching Mindset and Skills

Coaching public speaking begins with a mindset driven by four principles:

1. Everyone is capable of expressing themselves;
2. Coaching is about sharpening someone's voice and uncovering someone's best self;
3. Coaches must rigorously hunt for undiscovered areas of potential; and
4. Coaches help people own their voice and make more intentional decisions about their speaking, even if the end product isn't what they would do. To stay in this mindset, it is important not to be distracted by supposed norms of success or helping people please others. Start with what is important to the student and help make ideas and positions more precise.

Mindset

- ___ I genuinely believe that everyone can be an effective public speaker.
- ___ I can set aside preconceived ideas about what a "good" public speaker is.
- ___ I can avoid comparing students to each other and meet them where they are.
- ___ I genuinely enjoy hearing what people have to say.
- ___ I am flexible in my thinking about how to help people be strong speakers.
- ___ I am open to learning from my students.
- ___ I am willing to take a completely different approach (even something I have never done before), if that's what the student requires.
- ___ I want students to push me to be a better coach, even if it requires more time from me.
- ___ If a student doesn't get it, I realize that there may be something different I need to do.
- ___ I can handle negative criticism to adjust and improve.

Use this self-assessment to see where you are and how you might improve. On the line next to each item, rate yourself from a scale of 1 to 5 (1: just emerging; 3: developing; 5: expert). This isn't a quiz and the goal isn't to get a perfect score in every area. Instead, this will help you identify specific areas for your own growth and development.

Skills

Facilitation:

- ___ When I coach, everyone is able to participate and be themselves.
- ___ I can manage large groups so everyone stays engaged and can participate.
- ___ I can facilitate small groups so that everyone can participate and feel productive.
- ___ I make sure that I don't dominate interactions or make the experience about me.

Pedagogy:

- ___ I can design experiences with multiple ways to interact and express thoughts.
- ___ I can give instructions and explain things clearly.
- ___ I can balance different pedagogical approaches (i.e. lecture, groupwork, silent work).
- ___ I can manage time effectively to help everyone accomplish their goals.
- ___ I can handle when things don't go perfectly.
- ___ I can adjust my approach on the spot.
- ___ I adjust my own communication style and approach to enhance clarity and engagement.

Guidance:

___ I can give specific and helpful feedback.

___ I know how much feedback to give and when to give it.

___ I can assess where someone is developmentally and adjust to meet their needs.

___ I can effectively read a student and determine what they need in a particular situation.

___ I can help someone organize their thoughts and put them into words.

Relationship-Building:

___ I use my knowledge of students to adjust and redesign future approaches and plans.

___ I can relate to my students and build strong relationships.

___ I can tell when what I think I mean doesn't match how others interpret it.

___ I can listen without judgment or an agenda.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 4

Coach Learning Plan

Improving your skills as a coach means knowing your strengths and prioritizing your goals.

Many facilitation-related skills take years to develop, and there is no substitute for sheer experience. That said, every coach, with no matter how little or how much experience, has room to improve to better support the needs of emerging public speakers. People's needs change as well, so it is important to rethink and refine your planned approach to meet those needs. Beyond coaching skills and mindsets, culture-building may also be an area of focus. Fill out these columns to narrow your short and long-term goals, and rank their priority (use the back for more room!).

As a coach, I want to be able to...	I already feel confident with...	In the short-term, I need to focus on...	Over time, I gradually want to....



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 5

Trajectory of Speaker Skill Development

Note for Coaches and Teachers:

Teaching communication skills requires a developmental approach. This chart offers a rough guide for where to start and how to progress over time. Youth and adults often follow different trajectories from one another, so this includes guidance on both. Of course, people are always different and this description may not always fit your situation -- remember, this is not a fixed process! Use this as a guide and stay flexible and informed by the people in front of you. For more ideas, see activities later in this guide and in other guides in this curriculum.

Youth Trajectory

Phase 1: Build Personal Connections.	Beginning young speakers benefit from building personal connections. When designing activities, use prompts to unearth shared beliefs and interests or discussions and share-outs to help students find what they have in common (in terms of working style, interests, goals, etc).	<i>Ideas: Try to include structured social time, games, and time to share interests, expertise, or progress towards goals.</i>
Phase 2: Initiate Team Culture.	After building personal connections, deepen the culture of the group. Have students come up with team names, mascots, and rituals that they will have as a group. Hold a discussion where students collectively define what they see as ideal communication traits and how they might recognize when they've been achieved.	<i>Ideas: Early on, try student-led routines, including speaking warm-ups such as stretches, vocal exercises, and tongue twisters.</i>
Phase 3: Make Personal Choices.	Students need to try out different ways of speaking and then make a choice about what suits them. Use demos or mini-speeches to explore basics of speaking genres (narrative, persuasive, informative, interpersonal). Then, help students make choices about what format and style of speaking best fits them and their message.	<i>Ideas: Try short speaking drills to practice different genres using silly or "hot" topics that don't require prior knowledge. For example, tell a story about one of three random words. Or, give students a paragraph of a speech script to try delivering.</i>
Phase 4: Increase Comfort.	After students make choices about what style of speaking they want to try, start with low stakes experiences to help them feel like speaking is possible. Over time, gradually: 1) Increase speech length; 2) Increase content difficulty; 3) Reduce amount of prep time; 4) Increase delivery demands; 5) Increase audience size; 6) Decrease audience familiarity	<i>Ideas: Have students collaborate with a peer coach before speaking for the class. For speech writing, use templates or post-its to scaffold their brainstorming.</i>
Phase 5: Accomplish Personal Project.	As students advance, have them take a deep dive into a personal project (see examples in Resource 15 of the Storytelling Guide). Have them choose a style to personally master (storytelling, issue speeches, podcasts, monologues). Refine their delivery techniques and personal style along the way.	<i>Ideas: Have students identify specific delivery goals and their preferred methods for feedback (written, oral, video). Have a class discussion on how to give quality feedback.</i>



Youth Trajectory

Phase 6: Collaborate to Use Voice in the World.	Take students beyond their own individual goals and take a deep dive into a group project involving advocacy and persuasion. Focus on how to work together in a group to use their voice to improve the world, utilizing advanced spontaneous speaking and debate skills as well as field research (see examples in Resource 15 of the Advocacy Guide).	Ideas: Explicitly discuss student leadership structures, including how to assign roles, decide their process, and create project task lists. If using field research, include class activities where students practice interview techniques to gather field data.
Phase 7: Lead and Coach Others.	The most advanced phase for a public speaker is to be able to lead, coach, and mentor others. This can involve mentoring younger students, planning an event, creating a club or a team at their school, or even teaching mini-lessons to the class on speaking.	Ideas: Try creating simulations to practice facilitation skills (see facilitation skills in Resource 8 in this Coaching Guide). Discuss how to identify and anticipate needs of others and generate ideas for how to give “props” and celebrate their classmates through positive feedback.

Adult Trajectory

Phase 1: Build Self-Awareness.	<p>Often, adults are not always aware of their own personal strengths or have trouble telling their own stories. Coaches for adult public speakers should help people:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Articulate their personal core values and tell their personal stories; 2) Set personal speaking goals and analyze everyday situations of challenge and triumph; 3) Reflect on natural style and affirm personal strengths 	<p>Ideas: Use personal storytelling templates and have discussions assessing where people feel comfortable and where they don't.</p>
Phase 2: Clarify Purpose.	<p>After building self-awareness, it is important to have a clear purpose behind any talk. Coaches for adult public speakers should help people:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Explore basics of speaking genres (narrative, persuasive, informative, interpersonal); 2) Practice being flexible about using different speaking genres for different situations 	<p>Ideas: Use simulations of everyday situations (i.e. interviews, presentations, panels) and practice storytelling, persuasive speaking, and informative speaking</p>
Phase 3: Organize Ideas.	<p>Organization is often a major challenge for emerging public speakers. Coaches should help adults:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Clarify main ideas; 2) Improve the sequencing and structure of ideas; 3) Use powerful language that is meaningful and memorable to audience; 4) Be concise; 5) Practice strong transitions; 6) End with recaps. 	<p>Ideas: Have the adult student talk through their ideas as you scribe and take notes. Try having the student write down each idea on a single post-it and then place them on the board and group common ideas together and order them in a way that flows best.</p>

Adult Trajectory

Phase 4: Internalize Strong Delivery.	<p>After working on content, focus on improving oral delivery. Coaches should help students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify personal style or “color” (see Resource 11 in the Presentation Guide); 2) Create habits around warming up breath support, voice, stance, enunciation, gestures, facials and eye contact; 3) Build awareness of natural strengths and pinpoint distractions and troublespots. 	Ideas: Try warm-ups in Resource 9 of the Presentation Guide as well as the checklist for using your body as a speaker in Resource 12 of the Presentation Guide.
Phase 5: Prepare Effectively.	<p>After building a strong foundation, it helps to prepare for a specific situation. If an adult speaker is preparing to give a talk, coaches should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ask about objectives, event details, audience; 2) Create outlines that state the “gist” of each point they want to make; 3) Practice the sequence of ideas and transitions (if relevant); 4) Practice how to “reset” themselves to maintain energy and endurance for long talks. 	Ideas: Have the student practice making quick outlines with limited time or practice telling spontaneous stories with themes.
Phase 6: Advocate and Participate More.	<p>Beyond preparing for a single situation, adult speakers can benefit from talking through everyday communication with a coach. Coaches should discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How to speak up for personal needs and interests; 2) How to ask questions and listen to the needs of others; 3) How to figure out areas of comfort and discomfort when participating in conversations. 	Ideas: Help the student seek out speaking opportunities for practice and reflect on them together.
Phase 7: Facilitate and Mentor Others.	<p>Like young speakers, the most advanced stage of public speaking is being able to mentor others. Adult speakers can do this by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improving their questioning techniques; 2) Helping others feel heard and listened to; 3) Noticing when someone is not included; 4) Giving others opportunities to lead; 5) Providing actionable feedback; and 6) Modeling strong communication 	Ideas: Coaches can try simulations for people to practice facilitation, hold discussions of how to identify and anticipate needs of others, and even film simulations of coaching sessions to analyze and look at together to find ways to improve.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 6

Example of Public Speaking College Course Syllabus



A Note to Teachers

This is an example of a college-level syllabus for a public speaking course taught at UC Berkeley. While the particulars of this class may not necessarily fit your situation, it is intended to spark potential ideas for what the flow of a formal public speaking class in school might look like. This syllabus was designed with 6 hours of instruction time per week and 35 students in the class, where none of the students had any experience with public speaking and took the class to gain confidence.



FALL SYLLABUS

Theater 5 001 – STD 001
Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies
University of California, Berkeley

Public Speaking and Presentation Skills

[Instructor]

Course Section:
M, W, F, 8am – 10am
[Location]

OH: By appointment or Fridays, 10-10:30 after class

OVERVIEW

Throughout this course we will explore the following:

- How can we authentically and creatively express our personal identities through different methods of oral communication?
- How can we improve our self-confidence, comfort with vulnerability, and sense of connection to others through public speaking?
- How do different genres of oral expression help strengthen our ability to use our voices to advocate, lead, and publicly engage?

This course is designed to help students analyze and reflect on how they express themselves, connect with others, and use their voices in service of improving the world around them. By exploring public speaking techniques in the context of a range of persuasive and creative styles, students will find an entry point to effectively communicate what they care about. Throughout the course, students will have multiple opportunities to learn different techniques, apply them in practice sessions, receive quality coaching, and perform in a safe, supportive environment. The course is designed so students gain experience with both prepared and spontaneous speaking, building self-awareness about their goals and needs as a public speaker. Work is largely designed to be completed during class time, with multiple practice opportunities to increase confidence and comfort before class performances.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Clearly and effectively structure and present content in a clear and compelling way
- Utilize voice, stress coping strategies, and movement to effectively engage an audience
- Practice strategies for listening and connecting to the presentations and performances of others
- Use rhetoric to persuade and advocate for a position in both prepared and spontaneous contexts
- Explore how public speaking can be used to express identities through performances
- Craft engaging stories that communicate values, interests, vulnerabilities, and personal growth
- Communicate their best selves and connect with others in everyday situations
- Practice giving quality feedback and enacting feedback from others to improve oral expression
- Reflect on personal growth and overcome fears and anxieties around public speaking

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES & MILESTONES

Fall – Theater 5 001 – STD 001

Week 1 - Powerful Storytelling	
Weekly Objectives During this week, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline the major components and expectations for the course, get to know one another, and discuss some of our personal goals and experiences with public speaking;• Set class routines, warm-ups, and practice structures;• Discuss how we can authentically and creatively express our personal identities through different methods of oral communication;• Practice structures and templates for powerful storytelling; and• Assess ourselves in terms of personal fears, anxieties, and challenges related to communication and public speaking	Daily Details and Notes Wednesday, August 28th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students familiarize themselves with one another and with class routines, building a strong team culture through storytelling. Friday, August 30th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students analyze examples of powerful storytelling and apply their understanding of story structure to tell personal stories on a variety of topic areas.
Week 2 - Introduction to Public Speaking	
Weekly Objectives During this week, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get to know personal interests through informative presentations;• Review and apply techniques for effective speech writing;• Practice foundational techniques to improve oral speaking delivery; and• Set personal public speaking goals.	Daily Details and Notes Monday, September 2nd: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holiday – NO CLASS Wednesday, September 4th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students become familiar with the basics of an effective presentation and practice constructing clear and organized informative speeches on a topic of personal interest. Friday, September 6th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students learn basics of effective oral delivery, including vocal tone, gestures, stance, projection, and movement.
Week 3 - Present, Perform, Engage	
Weekly Objectives During this week, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become familiar with three different speaking formats (persuasion, performance, and storytelling);• Practice exercises associated with each type of public speaking;• Introduce acting techniques to enhance emotional delivery;• Introduce persuasive techniques to deliver an effective argument;• Introduce storytelling techniques to clearly engage an audience around a lesson; and• Reflect on personal preferences and areas of comfort and discomfort.	Daily Details and Notes Monday, September 9th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students learn the basics of an effective persuasive issue speech, including making clear content decisions and delivery choices. Wednesday, September 11th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students apply storytelling techniques from Week 1 to tell TED-style stories to teach the audience about a lesson. Friday, September 13th: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students learn how to utilize acting techniques to perform a speech or monologue with effective delivery.

Week 4 - Polish and Precision

Weekly Objectives

During this week, we will:

- Select a speaking format from Week 3 that best suits your style and message;
- Construct content to develop an identity performance piece in the style of choice;
- Workshop performance pieces with feedback on speaking delivery and use of vocal techniques;
- Reflect on how to improve and act on quality feedback;
- Explore sources of anxiety and insecurity related to oral presentations;
- Discuss self-talk strategies to address counterproductive self-critique; and
- Review techniques for supplementing speeches with engaging movement and physicality

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, September 16th:

- Students construct content for their identity performance pieces and learn techniques for making powerful language choices.

Wednesday, September 18th:

- Students learn delivery techniques to help clarify and enhance their identity performance piece content as well as strategies for coping with anxiety and insecurity. (Coaching and Practice Day)

Friday, September 20th:

- Students practice with one another and learn to give quality feedback and act upon feedback from others. (Coaching and Practice Day)

Week 5 - Performance Week: Identity Pieces

Weekly Objectives

During this week, we will:

- Workshop performance pieces with feedback on engagement, facial expression, connection to content, and speaking with feeling;
- Organize individual and group coaching sessions to receive in-depth feedback in advance of class performance;
- Practice strategies for improving engagement, energy, and passion in speaking delivery; and
- Perform 5-minute individual piece in a class “variety show”.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, September 23rd:

- Students perform their 5-minute pieces for second hour of class, after spending the first hour on workshop and blog time.

Wednesday, September 25th:

- Students perform their 5-minute pieces for second hour of class, after spending the first hour on workshop and blog time.

Friday, September 27th:

- Students perform their 5-minute pieces for second hour of class, after spending the first hour on workshop and blog time.

Week 6 - Speaking Up For Yourself

Weekly Objectives

During this week, we will:

- Introduce the basics of limited prep/spontaneous speaking;
- Apply spontaneous speaking techniques to personal introductions for meetings, interviews, and sales pitches;
- Discuss the art of listening and how to use active listening skills to facilitate conversations and respond to questions;
- Practice spontaneous speaking drills and warm-ups to address habits and anxieties.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, September 30th:

- Students practice spontaneous speaking skills for personal introductions to use in meetings, interviews, and sales pitches.

Wednesday, October 2nd:

- Students practice applying active listening skills to identify storytelling opportunities on the spot and formulate effective responses in job interviews.

Friday, October 4th:

- Students practice using active listening skills to be an effective facilitator and guide conversations through questions and strong summaries.

Week 7 - Feeling Prepared and Inspiring Action

Weekly Objectives

During this week, we will:

- Improve rapid outlining skills to create talking points;
- Apply spontaneous speaking techniques to inspire people to buy a product, take action on an issue, and collaborate;
- Identify areas of stage fright and anxiety and create plans for coping with fears of spontaneous public speaking; and
- Continue to practice spontaneous speaking drills and warm-ups to address habits and anxieties.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, October 7th:

- Students practice spontaneous speaking skills in the context of sales pitches, creating effective outlines that anticipate their audience needs.

Wednesday, October 9th:

- Students practice spontaneous speaking skills to take a stand on an issue of importance, creating effective outlines that inspire people to take action.

Friday, October 11th:

- Students discuss and problem-solve around challenges related stage fright and anxiety and apply anxiety-coping techniques to spontaneous speeches.

Week 8 - The Speaker as Advocate

Weekly Objectives

During this week, we will:

- Become familiar with how to use public speaking skills in the real world to advocate for an issue of importance;
- Discuss ways to use interviews, evidence, and human stories to enhance audience connection and speaker credibility;
- Discuss techniques for improving speech clarity around complex topics;
- Work to collect field data to support our final advocacy research speeches;
- Use questioning and conversational techniques to conduct interviews;
- Analyze ideas in field interviews and incorporate into next-draft advocacy speeches; and
- Work with team to construct a set of advocacy speech presentations on a single theme to deliver during Week 10.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, October 14th:

- Students become familiar with how to use public speaking to become a community advocate and work in teams to identify an issue for the group advocacy project.

Wednesday, October 16th:

- Students work in teams to plan interview protocols and field research for the group advocacy project.

Friday, October 18th:

- Students refine the content for their team presentation and identify areas for coaching and check-ins.

Week 9 - Polish and Precision

Weekly Objectives

During this week, we will:

- Receive customized coaching to improve group advocacy presentations;
- Utilize practice time with teams to strengthen presentations; and
- Arrange for virtual check-in with instructor and one peer to receive personalized support.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, October 21st:

- Students practice with their teams and receive personalized coaching – 3 groups only. (Coaching and Practice Day)

Wednesday, October 23rd:

- Students practice with their teams and receive personalized coaching – 3 groups only. (Coaching and Practice Day)

Friday, October 25th: VIRTUAL CHECK-INS

- Students check in on coaching needs and arrange for independent practice time.

Week 10 - Performance Week: Advocacy Project Presentations**Weekly Objectives**

During this week, we will:

- Improve our speeches to enhance clarity and credibility;
- Introduce techniques for supporting vocal health, support, and resonance;
- Utilize breath support and appropriate stance to improve volume, pitch, and speed to deliver a powerful performance;
- Practice capturing and holding the interest of an audience by making effective vocal choices; and
- Organize individual and group coaching sessions to receive in-depth feedback in advance of class performance;
- Present in a 20-minute team presentation (roughly 5 minutes each)

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, October 28th:

- Students practice delivering speeches, with an emphasis on techniques for effective voice, face, and physicality (Coaching and Practice Day).

Wednesday, October 30th:

- Three teams perform their 20-minute team presentations (roughly 5 minutes per person) for second hour of class, after spending an hour on practice/blog time.

Friday, November 1st:

- Three teams perform their 20-minute team presentations (roughly 5 minutes per person) for second hour of class, after spending an hour on practice/blog time.

Week 11 - Adapting to Audiences**Weekly Objectives**

During this week, we will:

- Discuss methods for adapting to a variety of unfamiliar audiences, including public comment scenarios, professional networking, and virtual communication;
- Dive deeply into personal goals related to spontaneous speaking;
- Apply techniques for building connections, making strong impressions, and speaking succinctly and clearly; and
- Discuss ways to read audiences and adapt on the fly.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, November 4th:

- Students revisit spontaneous speaking techniques in the context of a public comment simulation, learning to adapt to a community audience.

Wednesday, November 6th:

- Students explore how to communicate effectively and spontaneously in the virtual world, including Zoom calls, video recordings, and phone interviews.

Friday, November 8th:

- Students apply spontaneous speaking to professional networking situations, including spontaneous storytelling, questioning, and connection seeking.

Week 12 - Navigating Difference**Weekly Objectives**

During this week, we will:

- Discuss factors that silence people's voices and prevent them from speaking up for themselves;
- Share strategies for navigating power and being an advocate for others;
- Brainstorm ways to use our voice to improve conditions for speaking up; and
- Develop a safe space for sharing personal challenges and barriers.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, November 11th:

- Holiday – NO CLASS

Wednesday, November 13th:

- OFF CAMPUS BREAKFAST
- Students discuss inequities and factors that silence people and prevent them from speaking up for themselves, learning to anticipate barriers and potential bias.

Friday, November 15th:

- Students apply strategies for being authentic while also navigating power dynamics, stereotypes, and assumptions.

Week 13 - Professional Keynotes**Weekly Objectives**

During this week, we will:

- Revisit storytelling in the context of constructing keynote speeches that illustrate vulnerability and authenticity;
- Decide on topics for final keynote speech assignment; and
- Revisit and deepen understanding of how to apply effective oral delivery strategies.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, November 18th:

- Students become familiar with how to structure effective keynote speeches and identify a topic for final showcase.

Wednesday, November 20th:

- Students practice constructing stories in the context of their keynote speeches and receive peer feedback to improve their content.

Friday, November 22nd:

- Students practice effective delivery techniques to use in their keynote speeches.

Week 14 - Polish and Precision**Weekly Objectives**

During this week, we will:

- Workshop keynote speeches with feedback on personal areas of growth; and
- Organize individual and group coaching sessions to receive in-depth feedback in advance of class performance.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, November 25th:

- Students have time to work on keynote speeches and receive individual and group coaching. (Coaching and Practice Day)

Wednesday, November 27th:

- Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS

Friday, November 29th:

- Thanksgiving Holiday – NO CLASS

Week 15 - Performance Week: Final Keynote Showcase**Weekly Objectives**

During this week, we will:

- Practice techniques for effective communication coaching and teaching;
- Perform in a final class showcase.

Daily Details and Notes

Monday, December 2nd:

- Students perform their keynotes for second hour of class, after spending the first hour on workshop and blog time.

Wednesday, December 4th:

- Students perform their keynotes for second hour of class, after spending the first hour on workshop and blog time.

Friday, December 6th:

- Students perform their keynotes for second hour of class, after spending the first hour on workshop and blog time, and then reflect on lessons learned.

NOTE: This syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

ASSIGNMENTS

Fall – Theater 5 001 – STD 001

1. *Class Attendance*

All students will be responsible for coming to class on time every week. Absences are only excused if they are approved in writing by the instructor via email in advance of the class, or if there are special emergencies. Students should come to class prepared to be a participant who listens actively and respectfully to the thoughts and opinions of others and is willing to speak publicly and participate in class workshop time. Students are allowed up to 3 excused absences without penalty over the course of the semester, as long as the student contacts the instructor in advance. Four tardies counts as one absence.

2. *Class Participation*

DUE: Two self-assessment checks during semester

Given the interactive and project-based nature of this class, participation is calculated separately from attendance. Students will be given a rubric for participation and will complete self-assessments of their participation and previously announced points throughout the semester. Quality participation includes demonstrating effort, coaching others, practicing, and participating in discussions.

3. *Blogs*

DUE: Class Following Each Prepared Presentation

During the three weeks of prepared performances, students will be given time during class to document their stories, experiences, and reflections in the form of a short 300 to 500 word blog. Blog articles will be emailed to the professor and are due by the class following the student's presentation.

4. *Identity Performance Piece*

DUE: Week 5

The first section of this course is focused largely on self-expression. The Identity Performance Piece is the culmination of student learning in this section and each student is responsible for performing a 5-minute individual piece in a communication "variety show" during Week 5. Students can select from any style of communication that best expresses their identity out of the formats covered during Week 3 (issue speech, monologue, story). For more information, please see the rubric and performance guidelines distributed in class.

5. *Advocacy Project Presentation*

DUE: Week 10

The second section of this course is focused on advocacy for self and others. The Advocacy Project Presentation is the culmination of student learning in this section and students work in teams of 4 or 5 to construct a 20-minute research presentation on an advocacy question of their choice. Each student must present for at least 5 minutes and the overall presentation must incorporate field interviews and other evidence to support arguments. For more information, please see the rubric distributed in class.

6. *Final Keynote*

DUE: Week 15

During the second to last week of the semester, students create a 5-minute individual keynote speech designed to inspire the audience about ideas, experiences, and issues of personal importance. Students are encouraged to use this opportunity to reflect on their journey as a public speaker and ways they want to use their voice in the world. For more information, please see assignment description and rubric.

GRADING POLICY

Fall – Theater 5 001 – STD 001

Class participation is a substantial part of the course grade, calculated separately from class attendance. All presentation assignments should be completed on time during the assigned week. Assignments will be weighed as follows:

Class Participation	30%
Class Attendance	10%
Blogs (at least 3)	10%
Identity Performance Piece	15%
Advocacy Project Presentation	20%
Final Keynote Speech	15%

Please double-space all written work and use a 12-pt. font. All written work should be emailed, no hard copy required. Any references to readings should be in APA format.

Reference assignment rubrics for specific grading expectations for each assignment, including expectations for class participation.

Letter grades are assigned on the standard scale based upon a possible total of 100 points.

(A: 95-100; A-: 90-94; B+: 86-89; B: 83-85; B-: 80-82; C+: 76-79; C: 73-75; C-: 70-72; D: 60-69)

COURSE POLICIES

1. Promote/Drop Policy: As of the beginning of the semester, there is a wait list for this course, so students who decide to drop the course should do so as soon as possible after the first meeting of the course, so as to give students on the wait list a chance to enroll. Any student who does not attend the first two meetings of the class will be immediately dropped in order to make room for those on the wait list. The instructor will promote students on the wait list so that they can roll into the course according to the wait list order (i.e., the first student on the wait list will be rolled in first, the second student will be rolled in next, and so on) – there will be no “jumping ahead” of one’s order in the wait list, for any reason.
2. Regular attendance and active participation is required. If for any reason a student must miss the class, it is his/her responsibility to notify the instructor beforehand by email and to arrange with a fellow student to make up work and/or to obtain class notes. Students are allowed up to 3 excused absences without penalty over the course of the semester, as long as the student contacts the instructor in advance.
3. The class will start promptly at 8:10am and tardiness is not tolerated. Four tardies will be considered the equivalent of one absence.
4. Cell phones must be turned on vibrate and cannot be out during class. Laptops may be used during select periods during class for note-taking or other required online exercises, but may not be out during class discussions and practice time.
5. Students enrolled in the class are expected to adhere to university’s student code of conduct and cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.
6. Confidential support services and accommodations are available for all students with disabilities and students who need accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor.
7. When religious holidays require students to be absent from class activities, students should inform the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the class each semester and will be responsible for making up any missed work.

COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 7

10 Techniques to Promote Confidence and Early Success

When learning any new skill, it is important to feel successful along the way.

If too much time passes before you feel any improvement, the experience of learning something new can be daunting and overwhelming. Coaches can help promote confidence by helping students experience small victories and success as early as possible, while continuing to guide development and improvement.

- 1. Make it a Game, Not a Test.** Start out with speaking-related activities before turning to instruction. Set the tone that this is going to be a fun, interactive experience and avoid too many restrictions on how people should participate, especially at the beginning.
- 2. Use Familiar Activities with a Twist.** Add a public speaking component to familiar activities like Simon Says (i.e. Simon has to use direct eye contact) or scavenger hunts (i.e. the group has to present out about their findings).
- 3. Incorporate Activities Requiring Little Preparation.** Help students avoid overthinking something by doing activities that require little thought or preparation, like easy warm-ups.
- 4. Connect to Preferred Modes of Interaction.** Once you know what students like, start off with their preferences first and then gradually introduce new skills (i.e. starting with art or physical activities and then introducing more writing tasks).
- 5. Give Multiple Choices.** Let students choose what works best for them by giving choices about elements like topics, how they want to prepare, or whether they want to present sitting or standing. Gradually restrict choices and increase difficulty over time.
- 6. Encourage Collaboration.** Remind people that working with others is not a weakness and encourage them to ask for help. Have people prepare remarks in pairs or groups if that helps.
- 7. Chunk Tasks to Encourage Repetition.** Regular run-throughs and repetition drives improved speaking. Make sure tasks or activities are short enough so that students can have several “do-overs” as they rehearse and practice.
- 8. Prioritize Positive Feedback.** At the beginning, spend more time on giving specific positive feedback to help students build self-awareness of their strengths. When asking the audience to give feedback, restrict feedback only to questions like, “What was memorable about the speech? What resonated with you?” Gradually add in opportunities for specific critique.
- 9. Build Awareness of Skills.** Students often do not know what they are good at, especially with public speaking. Articulate what you notice about their skills and encourage them to do the same for others.
- 10. Narrow Perceived Issues.** To avoid overwhelm, students need help getting specific about what they need to work on. Tackle broad statements like, “I am just bad at this”, by talking through their strengths and helping them articulate perceived issues and areas of discomfort using precise and narrow language (i.e. “I need to work on the beginnings of my speeches, but I am fine once I get started”).



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 8

Helping People Contribute: Facilitation Moves to Improve Communication

When used effectively...

...facilitation moves can help guide learning and help learners feel comfortable using their voice to contribute and fully participate. Facilitation is also essential to reinforcing an inclusive environment for public speakers, breaking patterns that might privilege some learners over others.

To help people feel comfortable....

People need to know you have their back and that you are genuinely interested in getting to know them and helping them. Some techniques:

- **Validate:** Whenever anyone says anything, make sure you listen deeply and respond first by validating what they say.
- **Clarify:** It is hard to connect if you're confused. Ask questions to make sure you understand what they are saying. ("Tell me more about..." "Can you give me an example of..." "I'm curious, what do you mean by...")
- **Generate:** Offer ideas as questions, instead of as directives. This ensures the learner is still in charge of their own learning. ("What do you think if we...." "What do you think about the situation where we....")
- **Inspire:** Give examples from your own experiences to inspire their ideas. Offer examples that you have seen so they can riff off of something concrete. ("I went to this event once, and I saw..." "I've seen something like that before, and they...")
- **Suggest:** Sometimes you do need to provide answers or offer direct suggestions to save time, but try to do this after learners have tried out ideas of his/her own.

To facilitate equitably....

When people feel put on the spot or unsure of whether their contributions are going to be "right" or valued, they cannot participate to their fullest ability. A few ways to avoid exclusion:

- **Pose an open-ended, but concrete prompt.** Questions are hard to answer if they are too long, contain too many parts, or use unclear language. For instance, instead of "What do people think about this question and what should we be doing to address the issue?" try "What is your first reaction when you hear this question?" and after receiving a few answers, follow up with the second part, "What is one possible action step we should explore?" Questions are intimidating to answer if there is a "right" answer.
- **Take care with tone.** Your tone might reveal you have an answer in mind. These discussions become more about guessing your answer as opposed to genuine learning.

- **Encourage people to take time to formulate responses.** Too many discussions privilege the ability to answer the fastest. Incorporate time to create quality responses by weaving in time for turn-and-talk, silent writing, or advance preparation and research.
- **Distribute attention.** If there is an answer you are looking for, do not spend all of your time drilling one student until you get that response. Instead, start with one person and then have other people contribute to the original idea, until ideas build on each other.
- **Know when to wait and when to move on.** It takes practice to feel comfortable with awkward silences (but it's worth it!). That said, sometimes it is much more useful to stop and move on, or plan to revisit a question at a later time.
- **Prepare people privately.** If there are people you want to participate more, give them even more advance preparation, contributing to something specific at a specific date, (especially around areas of expertise or interest).
- **Teach sentence starters.** Help people build on each other's ideas by teaching sentence starters for how to add on, disagree, agree, or question. Help them rely less on you and maybe even practice having students facilitate discussions while you observe.
- **Be consistent.** To feel comfortable participating, students need to know what you expect. It helps to have rituals, clear expectations, and familiar activities so students feel more confident over time.
- **Keep an eye on the clock.** Facilitation is sometimes more about timekeeping than being the person in charge. Giving regular time checks and adjusting time to support students teaches them how to manage time, especially with speech preparation.
- **Balance time with different people.** It is good to check in with yourself about who you tend to spend your time with. While you may not get to talk to everyone in a single session, distribute your interactions over time to attend to all relationships.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 9

How to Coach Better Speaking Delivery

Coaching speaking delivery should focus on helping students be the most intentional and purposeful version of themselves.

Coaching speaking delivery should focus on helping students be the most intentional and purposeful version of themselves. Getting them to this place means starting with establishing a strong foundation and eliminating habits that distract from their style and message.

Over time, refining speaking delivery means helping students explore different delivery techniques, so that they are aware of available options and can ultimately make informed decisions about how they want to present. See the Oral Delivery Cheat Sheet for a supplementary resource to provide students.

Overall Coaching Approach:

Do's:	Dont's:
Practice on small chunks of content to practice.	Too much advice and feedback at once, even if it is all potentially useful.
Balance directives (i.e. telling students what feedback they must implement) with experimentation (i.e. giving students a few options to play with).	Too much feedback without taking the time to practice implementing it.
Talk through reasoning behind your feedback and how it will help with the message and audience connection. Even if you are less experienced, there is always subjectivity behind public speaking. Your reactions are valuable and the key is to be able to describe your personal reaction and where it comes from and then pinpoint one or two concrete ways to address it.	Too much feedback that doesn't connect to the specific content or isn't important to the context.
Encourage intentional decision-making, by having students talk through why they want to deliver content in certain ways or why they plan to take certain pieces of advice.	Too much feedback that goes beyond students' reasonable capabilities and cannot be implemented in the short-term.

What To Refine Over Time:

Delivery Area	Focus On...	Watch Out For...
Stance	Grounding feet underneath shoulders and polishing overall posture.	Distracting foot movements, hands in pockets, shoulders up or hunched, tense body.
Diction	Putting energy into consonants and practicing “plosive” sounds (like p, t, or d) and “fricative” sounds (like s or f).	Blurry words, dropping or over connecting small words like “and”, dropping the ending consonants.
Volume	Assisting the voice with good breath support and using energy, breath, and diction to drive volume.	Shouting or unsupported volume, strained voice, not breathing enough or taking shallow breaths raising the shoulders.
Vocal Tone	Establishing a rounded tone by practicing yawning and raising the “soft palate”; going over different vocal colors and reflecting on what best fits the content.	Speaking too low or going into the “vocal fry” (“uhhhh”) sound at the bottom of the range or speaking in a tone that doesn’t fit the content.
Energy	Practicing the “on” switch and going into speaker mode (more enhanced version of self); engaging the face, eyebrows, and bringing a light to the eyes.	Dead eyes, stiff facial expressions, tired energy, loose, sloppy movements, looking distracted or not in the moment.
Speed/Cadence	Slowing down and taking the time for silences, pauses, and letting the content settle; deciding between a more clipped, sharp cadence or a relaxed, conversational one.	Rushing through ideas, not pausing in between thoughts, not separating ideas, sentences that are too long or run-on, or a cadence that doesn’t match the style of the content.
Eye Contact	Getting comfortable looking at people and switching eye contact in between ideas, making everyone feel they are in a 1:1 conversation with the speaker.	Overall focal point is too high, eyes moving too much, eyes look in a different direction from the body or hands, scanning the room too much.
Hands	Using hands to highlight and illustrate content so that they are a part of communicating the ideas (as opposed to being a distraction).	Hands in pockets, distracting fiddling habits, gestures are too high or low, elbows are glued to the body, gestures originate from the wrist instead of the full arm.
Movement	Moving around the space to emphasize transitions or distinctions between ideas, including walking to the sides, front, or diagonals to get closer to different parts of the audience.	Pacing aimlessly without purposeful movement, shifty movement that doesn’t quite commit to moving one way or another, kicking feet.
Connection	Letting go of internal worries and directing energy and attention forward, towards the audience (as opposed to being too self-conscious).	Blank facial expressions, holding back, giving away concentration or internal dialogue, recitation or memorized feel.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 10

How to Coach Speech Writing

To craft engaging, compelling speeches, it is important to start with how ideas are selected, written, and organized.

Remind students that speech writing is different than regular writing, since the listener has to be able to learn, remember the content, and stay engaged without being able to go back and reread what the speaker just said.

Coaches play a key role in the speech-writing process, both as a sounding board and as a source of feedback on ideas, organization, language choice, and reasoning. Even with limited time, it is better to focus deeply on two or three main areas than to try and cover everything. It takes time to improve speech writing skills, so it's important to give students focus and time to develop.

Overall Coaching Approach:

Do's:	Dont's:
Encourage students to get all the ideas out and avoid trying to be too perfect at the beginning.	Avoid telling them exactly what to do and instead guide them with questions.
If working 1:1, take notes on a student's intended ideas to help document thoughts that may not have made it to the page.	Avoid putting too many of their ideas into your words or your agenda.
Understand the essence of what they are trying to say and what ideas they find most important.	Avoid steering them away from what originally excited them (even if refocusing their ideas).
Balance different types of feedback, including both positive reinforcement and constructive criticism, making sure everything is as concrete and actionable as possible.	Avoid making them change everything all at once, or letting them get too far along in the writing process before being able to give feedback.

What To Refine Over Time:

Writing Area	Focus On...	Watch Out For...
Passion	Is the student speaking about what is deeply important to him/her?	Generic content, focusing on what someone thinks others want to hear, content that is too far outside the student's expertise and interest.
Scope and Coverage	How much content is the student trying to cover and how much time to cover it?	Too many complex ideas, too many different directions, too many thoughts.
Audience Fit	Are the student's ideas aligned with the purpose of the talk and the interests of the audience?	Examples that aren't relevant or accessible to the audience, or conclusions disconnected from the audience.

Writing Area	Focus On...	Watch Out For...
Organization and Sequence	Are the ideas structured into larger “buckets” or categories and are they covered in an order that promotes understanding and connection?	Jumping around too many thoughts that don’t relate to one another, rambling or stream-of-consciousness ideas, not planning a clear outline.
Previews and Recaps	Does the student preview ideas before going into the speech, and then summarize the important takeaways?	Moving too quickly into the body of the speech, giving examples without context, or ending too soon.
Stories and Examples	Does the student bring in the humanity behind the main ideas through stories and examples?	Abstract content that stays too high level, stating ideas without elaborating further or presenting other views.
Evidence and Reasoning	Does the student support the more controversial ideas with credible evidence and logical reasoning?	Too little or too much evidence that doesn’t serve to illustrate and defend the main ideas, evidence that isn’t credible, too many logic leaps.
Transitions	Are there transitions between ideas and do the transitions help the audience follow and prepare for each idea?	Awkward silences between slides, abrupt changes between ideas, stilted transitions that are hard to follow.
Wording Choice	Is the language powerful and memorable, helping the audience visualize the content or retain certain phrases?	Lack of description, unintentional repetition, words that lack “umph”, words that don’t paint a picture.
Pacing and Build	Does the student spend the appropriate amount of time on each idea and do the ideas build on one another?	Too much time spent on simple ideas, too much time on abstract content without bringing in stories, questions, or examples, flat ideas that don’t move the message forward.
Length	Are the sentences concise and does the speech itself stay within the required time limit?	Rambling ideas or run-on sentences, lack of destination to the speech as a whole, cramming too many ideas into a short time limit.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 11

Do's and Dont's of Oral Feedback

Feedback should always be in service of helping public speakers improve; it should never be to show off what a coach knows.

While some feedback might be written, coaches should also be able to communicate feedback out loud in a way that is supportive and clear. Receiving feedback is one of the most sensitive and vulnerable times for any public speaking student. It is directly related to one of our greatest fears: being judged and being evaluated. Also, it is important to remember that feedback is based on an implicit assumption of what excellent public speaking is. Coaches need to recognize where their standards come from and question whether these standards are what is best for the speaker.

Principles of Feedback

Regardless of whether it is positive or critical, both written and oral feedback should be:

- Specific: clear about the focus of the feedback and where it is evident
- Helpful: improves the speech and enables the student to accomplish goals
- Kind: tone and language is supportive and productive
- Actionable: concrete enough to be able to immediately act on and improve and/or developmentally-appropriate so that action is possible.

Tips for Feedback

- It is important to first have a strong relationship with the speaker. Begin with a conversation about the speech before diving into the actual work. Ask the speaker what he/she is working on, what the goals for the work are, or what he/she is most afraid of. Validate speakers' concerns and anxieties, ideally by relating to them or by explaining to them that they are not alone.
- Ask the speaker what type of feedback you should give.
- Ask yourself: where is this person in the process of learning how to speak publicly? What will be the easiest and most concrete thing that this person can act upon?
- Make time for a second or third run-through of a speech, so that the person can practice acting on your feedback. Provide positive reinforcement when you see evidence of your feedback. If there isn't, don't lie – instead, use different words or examples to clarify your feedback without additional comments. Write down the feedback, or make sure the person is taking notes.

What to Avoid

- Too many comments around too many different areas (content, delivery, physicality, timing, memorization, etc).
- Saying phrases like, "I want you to...." – this makes it about you, not about the speaker's goals and progress.
- Pushing forward when the speaker's face or nonverbal cues are telling you he/she is overwhelmed (instead, this is when you go back to a section that went well or take a break and talk about a completely different goal).
- Too much vague positive feedback – people don't believe it.
- Feedback that mentions too much about you and what you do – sometimes, this is helpful, especially in the beginning conversation, but by the time you are doing a run-through, it should be all about them.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 12

Tips for Time Management

One of the biggest coaching challenges is being able to manage your time effectively so that you get to help as many people as possible and cover your desired content.

It is important to get to know yourself as a coach and set goals that you know you can reasonably achieve. Fortunately, the more focused and organized you can be with your time, the more students will be able to feel like they can actually improve. More time and more content coverage does not necessarily mean more learning; instead, be efficient and selective about how you spend time.

Time Management Technique	Benefit
1. Leave enough room in the overall agenda and avoid overpacking with too many activities.	Less is more when building new skills. Make sure people have enough time to feel prepared, practice, and digest new information.
2. Define one primary goal or area of improvement and stick to it. If appropriate, have students come prepared with identified goals.	Focusing on one goal deepens the feedback you are able to give. You are also more likely to cover it, with higher quality work and actual results.
3. Cover public speaking skills through whole group warm-ups and drills.	By covering key skills for the day as a whole group, you can avoid repeating yourself to individuals and small groups.
4. Focus your attention on the early stages of the process and the ending refinement.	Make sure that students are off to a good start and then let them go to practice independently until they are ready to work with you again to refine and polish.
5. When practicing with multiple people, create a timing sheet ahead of time, accounting for who you think needs more or less help.	Build your awareness of how many people you can realistically help in a given amount of time. Organize extra outside sessions, if needed.
6. Mix up the size of groups for practice sessions, including practicing in pairs or small groups.	Running simultaneous pair or small group practice saves time and allows students to get in more practice.
7. Teach and incorporate peer coaching strategies.	When peer coaching is done well, you can help students build relationships with one another in addition to allowing you to focus on harder, more complex coaching.
8. Remember that sharing out or presenting run-throughs always takes longer than you think.	When possible, ask students to select smaller chunks of content to share out, focused around specific goals. Reserve full run-throughs for practicing transitions, endurance, memory, and build. Set expectations for not making it to everyone.
9. Wear an actual watch.	Keep overall time using a watch (as opposed to a cell phone, which can look like you aren't paying attention). Use timers for getting a more precise time on a speech.

Time Management Technique	Benefit
10. Always make sure you leave time for goal-setting and reflection.	Even when time is tight, goal setting and reflection is important for solidifying learning, so this is time well-spent.
11. Bring in help.	Before final events, assignments, and performances, everyone needs more practice time on full run-throughs. Bring in an assistant or some volunteers who can watch and maximize the amount of run-throughs.
12. Incorporate enough buffer time.	As you get to know your students, you will start to notice patterns in how much you tend to run over time each practice. Make adjustments to future agendas and incorporate the appropriate “buffer”.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 13

How to Run a Public Speaking Practice

Running a public speaking practice requires a careful balance between freedom and structure.

Students need enough structure to be able to focus their work and be as productive as possible, but have enough freedom to be able to practice independently and work through their own specific needs. Too much guidance can take away from the important time students need to work with one another and problem-solve on their own, while too little guidance means that practice time can devolve into socializing or being overwhelmed and not knowing where to start. A good pattern can be to set students up with enough structure at the beginning to be able to work independently for about 30 minutes (20 for younger students), which is then followed up with a check-in to provide additional options so that students can refocus their remaining work. It is okay for practices to not be 100 percent productive all the time -- socializing and down time is important to building team culture and helping students reset before getting focused again.

Structuring Practice Time

Common elements of practice time include: (time estimates are flexible, based on a 1hr practice, and depends on whether the focus is on debate or prepared speeches)

Group discussion, check-in, share out,
or group storytelling
(5 min)

Icebreaker, warm-up, or practice drill
(7 min)

Review the goals and plan for practice
(2 min) – (if debate, announce the topic)

Open practice or preparation time
(25 min)

If longer practice: Check-in and refocus
and then continue open practice

Present out progress, perform selections
for the group, or start debate
(15 min)

Reflect on what got done and
what improved
(5 min)

Cheer or ritual
(1 min)

Setting an Objective for Practice

When identifying objectives, think about what people should learn and accomplish, not about the activities in the schedule. Objectives result in more intentional planning for practice time, rather than resorting to running through speeches or debates without a clear focus for what students should get out of it. Ideally, a 1 hour practice shouldn't have more than 2 objectives -- too many means they won't get done. Objectives also change depending on the timing of the particular practice in the bigger picture -- some example objectives for different times include:

- Beginning: Develop strong relationships on the team; Become familiar with a new style of public speaking or debate.
- Beginning: Identify topics that students are passionate about; Map out the flow or structure of speeches and cut extraneous material; Work on outlining skills.
- Middle: Make decisions about delivery, "characters", and speaking style; Take a deeper dive to improve specific parts of a debate or speech.
- End: Run-through material and receive peer feedback; Apply more sophisticated performance or debate techniques; Accomplish individual speaking goals.

Preparation Checklist:

- ☐ A set of objectives or goals about a specific style of speaking
- ☐ Warm-up activities and/or drills
- ☐ Practice time checklist (if practicing prepared speeches)
- ☐ List of topics (if doing a debate or impromptu-style speaking)
- ☐ Chart paper or whiteboard for writing out format and times (if doing a debate)
- ☐ Pens and paper
- ☐ Timer



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 14

7 Steps for Peer Coaching and Student Leadership

Students can serve as important resources for each other, helping improve public speaking and facilitate practice sessions by running warm-ups and drills, determining topics, taking charge of team-building, and supporting 1:1 coaching.

When coaching your peers one-on-one, a more structured, planned approach can help make the process more comfortable and less awkward. Even with structure, it is important to continuously reinforce norms about treating each other with kindness and respect. Closely monitor the culture of the group and check in with people about how their coaching relationship is going and intervene in conflicts early.

Step 1: Selection

Avoid favoritism and cliques by creating an activity where people get to choose partners based on the type of issue, goal, preferred working style, or how they like feedback (rather than who their friends are). Have people write their preferences on a post-it first and then spend 10 minutes walking around and trying to find a “match” for the kind of peer coach they would find useful. Rotate partners every so often so people can try other coaches.

Step 2: Pre-Conversation

Once paired, the peer coach has a discussion about the motivation and intent behind the speech, the specific goals for peer coaching, and any preferred norms and type of feedback. The peer coach should write down these details to inform their coaching.

Step 3: Diagnostic Run-Through

The speaker runs through the entire speech or presents as much current progress as possible. To address nerves, it helps to start with, “This is where I am right now.” The peer coach primarily just observes and makes the occasional note, mentally noting how much to push the student and what seems like the next nearest level of success.

Step 4: Debrief Discussion

After the run-through, the peer coach and student have a discussion about their overall impressions and reactions. Together, they refine goals and agree on a first step for the practice, taking into account how much time is available and how soon the final presentation is scheduled.

Step 5: Targeted Work

The peer coach focuses on a specific short section of the speech. Ideally, this can include: 1) something that requires the most work or will take the longest to improve; 2) something that connects to the desired goals; or 3) something that will allow the speaker to work on a skill or technique that is common throughout the rest of the speech. The peer coach provides specific feedback and then helps the speaker practice making changes based on that feedback. The peer coach should keep an eye on whether the speaker is looking overwhelmed with the comments.

Step 6: Reinforcement

After the targeted work is complete, the peer coach leaves time to run-through the speech again (or at least run-through the material surrounding the targeted section, if there’s not enough time). Sometimes, it can be useful to video-tape the first run-through and the reinforcement run-through to see if there’s improvement.

Step 7: Reflection

Before ending a peer coaching session, pairs should spend at least 5 minutes reflecting on progress. The peer coach should take notes and ask what helped, what improved, and where their partner still has questions.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 15

How Friends and Families Can Coach Speakers

Public speakers can always use time to practice and it helps when the audience is kind and supportive.

If the speaker doesn't mind, friends and family members can be great resources to provide more opportunities to practice. At the same time, speakers should always guide the focus for practice and should not be forced into a direction that is contrary to their needs.

These ideas are intended to illustrate a few starting points for friends and families.

Support that doesn't require actual speaking practice....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral Support. Public speakers of any age can always benefit from a confidence boost. As a friend or family member, you personally know their insecurities and worries, so you are in the ideal position to let them know you will be there for them, no matter what. • Practice Plan Accountability. Public speakers should have a plan for getting ready, either from their coach or themselves. While it is important that they stick with that practice plan themselves, you can help by knowing the plan and checking on progress.
Support for upcoming speeches and performances...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run-Throughs. It is hard for speakers to practice fully without the pressure of an audience. You can help by having them run-through their remarks, testing their memory, flow, or transitions. Sometimes, helping speakers create notecards and then testing them on them can be useful, as is filming/recording their performance so they can watch. Even if you make zero comments, just running through a speech is helpful support. • Light Comments on Content and Delivery. While you may not be a trained coach, you can still provide useful comments. After a run-through, state your overall impression of the speech and what you took away from it. Say what was clear or unclear as well as what was distracting or powerful. Start with positive comments, then state areas for improvement, and end with one final positive takeaway. Even if you don't know what to do about it, these comments help speakers check how audiences perceive their work.
Support for general skill development...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous Speaking Drills. In the car or in regular conversation, make a game out of a binary topic like, "Hot vs. Cold", and assigning them a side to defend (while you take the other side). Go back and forth, stating reasons to support either side. • Topic Discussions. Help increase awareness about key issues by posing a question that gets at a moral issue or a current event issue from an editorial. A good starting point is to say..."Would you rather...?" or "What if....?" or "How would you solve the situation where....?" Launch into an open-ended discussion about the controversial topic. • Storytelling Practice. Make a game out of giving someone one word or a theme to inspire a story. After 30 seconds to formulate thoughts, the person has to tell a true, personal story related to the theme, ending with a clear moral to the story.



COACHING GUIDE: RESOURCE 16

Before the Final: Inspiring Speaker Confidence

An effective coach is able to know when to stop giving feedback and when to focus on inspiring self-confidence.

Public speaking is a social and emotional act, and even when speakers are fully prepared, they still need the mental strength to deal with nervousness, unexpected obstacles, stress, and self-doubt. As a coach, you need to leave sufficient time in the coaching process to focus on goals to inspire speaker confidence, even if this means sacrificing some areas of work you may want to practice. Every student is different in terms of how they react to high-stakes situations; some may actually perform better in the final performance, while others may stumble. Part of a coach's role is to help students understand their experience and create a concrete plan for what to do next time.

Reminders to Coaches

In the run up to a final performance or high-stakes situation, it is important to prioritize:

- Repetition and reinforcement of previous accomplishments;
- Rewording and clarifying previous advice (as opposed to saying anything new);
- Reflecting with students on worries and creating a plan to address areas of concern;
- Encouraging students to trust in themselves (never underestimate the power of a well-done pep talk!).

Goals to Inspire Speaker Confidence

For students to feel confident, coaches can help them:

- Know what it feels like to perform well. Every student needs at least one small part where they feel accomplished and successful.
- Internalize the flow of remarks. Every student needs to be able to talk through their rough outline for what will happen in the speech.
- Narrow down areas of concern. Rather than worrying about the entire speech, it helps to be specific about the top 2 areas of concern.
- Anticipate possible errors and have a plan for dealing with them. After several run-throughs, there are usually a few "trouble spots" that happen repeatedly, so it helps to have a plan for what they will do if they go wrong.
- Have an idea of what to expect from the context and audience, while also being prepared for surprises.
- Affirm abilities through self-talk. Every student should have a phrase or message that they write down and say to themselves to remind themselves to believe in their abilities.





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