

# **Improving Lecture Effectiveness through Training in Public Speaking**

**This thesis is presented for the degree of Master of Education (research) of**

**Murdoch University, 2010**

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

(Robert Mowbray)

## **Abstract**

Many tertiary educational institutions are interested in upgrading teaching standards. However this process is especially slow in parts of the world where finances or traditional education systems make the introduction of improved techniques a challenge (Vosper, 2009). The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a public speaking skills program as a method of improving lecture delivery standards, developing better student contact, increasing student interest in the lecture material and improving retention of the information presented (Knight & Wood, 2005; Visioli, Lodi, Carrassi & Zannini, 2009). The program was designed to be inexpensive to implement and suitable even for institutions possessing only basic facilities.

A mixed methods approach was used in this study. A group of eleven lecturers from a private university in Malaysia participated in the Public Speaking for Educators program and were involved in the study. Data were collected through the use of questionnaires given to students and lecturers. These questionnaires revealed both the lecturers' and the students' view of the effectiveness of the program. The lecturers were also interviewed regarding their perceptions of the public speaking program and its impact on their lecturing. Analysis was carried out on final student grades, comparing results of students taught by lecturers not participating in the program with the results of students of lecturers who did participate in the program, as well as results from classes taught by the participant lecturers before and after their public speaking training.

The results of this study reveal that the public speaking program correlated with greater self confidence amongst the participating lecturers,

although the students generally did not rate their lecturers any more highly than before the program. Final grades were, however, significantly higher for the students of the lecturers trained in public speaking, both in comparison to other lecturers and to previous classes from the same lecturers before the program commenced. The results indicate that successful training in public speaking benefits both students and lecturers and has potential to improve the value of lecturing as a method of student instruction.

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