

Improving Lecture Effectiveness through Training in Public Speaking

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

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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.

Table of contents

Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of contents	v
Chapter One	1
Chapter Two	7
Chapter Three	28
Chapter Four	41
Chapter Five	64
Appendices	
Appendix A	80
Appendix B	81
Appendix C	82
Appendix D	83
Appendix E	84
References	121

Chapter One:

Introduction

Educators today need to make constant changes to the way they teach. The demands of society are changing constantly as the world focuses more than ever before on receiving and processing information. As a consequence of these changes the ability to think, learn, and adapt has become increasingly crucial. Employers are demanding more and more complex skills, and an increasingly global economy means that companies will hire graduates that can provide the skills they want from anywhere in the world. As a result of this trend one of the most important competencies for graduates to master is the ability to learn, not just to retain, information. The never ending technological evolution that envelops students adds to the challenge as student interests and learning styles change along with their environment (Spencer, 2009). Consequently lecturers need to be innovative enough to keep up with the needs of their students, and society in general.

The biggest challenge for university lecturers today, however, may predate the need to keep updating their lecturing techniques. The greatest need may be for lecturers to develop good teaching skills right from the outset of their career (The American Psychological Society, 2009). As part of their pre-service training, primary and secondary school teachers have generally been taught how to teach before placement in a classroom. An emphasis on pedagogy is a major component of most teacher education programs. In many countries, however, university lecturers are chosen from successful and motivated students who may, or may not, be able to teach effectively. Often they are provided with little or no pedagogical training, yet the new lecturer is expected to be an effective presenter of information (Grollmann & Rauner, 2007). Unfortunately it is not an unheard of experience for students to attend lectures presented by a well

seasoned and well respected academic and to walk out of the lecture theatre without having learnt anything at all (Stevens, 2004).

Over the past two decades universities have shown a perceptible bias towards research and production of academic publications as a means of producing an institution recognised for its academic achievements, rather than its focus on the classroom and the quality of the teaching provided (Wolff, 2006). It is only recently that emphasis has been placed on the need to upgrade delivery quality and thus improve the overall standard of tertiary education. American institutions in particular produce regular pages of advice and lists of suggested techniques to improve teaching skills. Pressure from such diverse sources as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the American Association for Higher Education, state legislatures, campus faculty members and students have motivated American institutions to reconsider the importance of teaching and the role of the teacher in the classroom. Institutions worldwide have been, and are still considering ways and means to improve the educational services they offer (Fonseca, 2006; Graves, 2005; Keig & Waggoner, 1995).

One way to improve the educational services of these institutions is to help develop their lecturers' lecturing skills. Today it is not uncommon for universities and theorists to offer guidelines for improving lecturing abilities. It seems that there is an almost endless supply of web sites providing practical and worthwhile suggestions designed to improve lecturing standards, but there are very few empirical studies that examine the effectiveness of programs for improving lecturing skills and student outcomes.

The Purpose of this Thesis

This thesis will make no attempt to criticize or provide alternatives for any existing education process. It will, however, investigate the effectiveness of a public speaking

training program (with particular focus on university lecturers) which may improve lecture quality through training in public speaking and consequently assist educators to make their method of instruction more valuable.

The study was conducted at a university in Malaysia. The reason for conducting this research in Malaysia stems from the general trends found in education throughout Asia. Traditionally, teaching in East Asian countries is dominated by a teacher-centric system emphasizing rote learning (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). This traditional teaching approach has resulted in a number of typical learning styles in East Asian countries resulting in introverted, but not introspective, students (Boumphrey, 2007). Such is the case in Malaysia, where this study was conducted. In Malaysia, most students see knowledge not as something to be discovered by the learners, but as something to be transmitted by the teacher (Zhenhui, 2001). Lecturers in Malaysia, therefore, find it normal to engage in modes of delivery which revolve around the teacher and involve a constant cascade of information being thrown at the students. High school and primary school students normally attend after-school tuition classes in the quest to understand what was presented in class during the day. Tertiary students rely almost entirely on reading through course notes provided by the lecturer, rather than expecting to learn from paying attention in class.

There is no effort being made here to discredit this mode of education. It does produce some remarkably proficient and successful students. Personal experience has revealed an amazing number of students being sent from Malaysia to Western universities where they are often ranked amongst the most successful students. This traditional system of education, however, leaves large numbers of students without an inquisitive attitude toward learning. Many students feel that, if they wait long enough, all available information will be presented to them and hence they learn to be neither inquisitive nor exploratory in their learning. It is hoped that effective Public Speaking

training can help lecturers to become more effective in stimulating an inquiring attitude amongst students while also making the key points of lectures easier to recall.

Malaysia was chosen as an appropriate place to conduct this study as it is typical of much of Southeast Asia in its methods of teaching but open to the consideration of ways to improve education. Prior to conducting this study it was evident to both myself and to other staff members at Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR), Sabah, that those students who were being taught using less traditional and more interactive techniques, were achieving higher than average grades. These students also claimed to enjoy an interactive classroom more than the one they had grown up with and were quite vocal about the deficiencies of other lecturing styles within the UNITAR campus. Comments like these inspired me to develop a short-term public speaking training program for volunteer lecturers that could help them instruct their classes more effectively. The 'Public Speaking for Educators' course was developed as the most cost and time effective way to upgrade lecturing skills based upon my previous experience in training Malaysian public speakers. The program became the basis of this thesis in which participants provided feedback on the value of being trained in the use of public speaking skills. The aim was to determine if the program had changed the way they lectured and/or the way the students responded to their lecturing.

Effect of This Research

This research has essentially been designed to investigate whether a course in public speaking, suitable for use in the university setting, can improve the quality of university lectures (Lucas, 2007). Three research questions were used to analyse the information produced by this study, namely;

1. How is the lecturing skills program associated with student evaluation of their lecturer?
2. Do lecturers view the training program as beneficial to them?
3. How is the lecturing skills program associated with changes in student outcomes?

The primary goal of training lecturers in the use of public speaking skills is to increase the level of student attention to material presented by lecturers and to assist lecturers to increase their students' engagement with their subject. This involves examining the extent to which lecturers implement the strategies demonstrated throughout the public speaking program. Data was gathered using questionnaires and, in the case of the lecturers, interviews. If there is a relationship between lecturer participation in the course and improvement in lectures then students should develop greater comprehension of the material presented and subsequently have much better recall/comprehension of their lectures. In other words, student engagement should be greatly improved, leading to a subsequent improvement in educational outcomes.

In the 1980s and '90s studies showed an alarming number of students disengaged from the instruction taking place in their classroom (Meece & McColskey, 1997). This apparent lack of engagement in class led to copious amounts of literature being written about educational engagement. According to Newmann (1992), engaged students make a "psychological investment in learning. They try hard to learn what school offers. They take pride not simply in earning the formal indicators of success (grades), but in understanding the material and incorporating or internalizing it in their lives" (pp. 2–3). According to this definition, an engaged student is *intrinsically* motivated to learn—they are motivated by a desire for competence and understanding.

Engagement is precipitated by engendering a desire for successful learning. Lecturers need to be able to develop the needed skills to maximize student engagement

and create a positive learning environment. Engagement is essential if students are going to successfully absorb and relate to the information they are being taught.

Wiggins and McTighe (1998) state that educators must help students to understand what they learn and apply this knowledge to real-life situations. It is not sufficient simply to restate basic facts. A real understanding cannot develop if students are not engaged in their topic of study.

The lecturer, consequently, has a responsibility to tap into a student's innate desire to learn and succeed academically. If students are failing to become engaged with the material being presented the lecturer is failing to produce sufficient academic stimulus to assist the student to do so and subsequently capitalise on their learning potential.

This public speaking skills training program is intended to assist lecturers to encourage engagement and build on the students' innate desire to learn by presenting material in a vibrant, stimulating and enthusiastic way. The outcome of this study produced evidence that student learning and, to a limited degree, satisfaction with the education process, was enhanced by the application of basic public speaking skills that were taught through the program. This thesis was developed to document the effect the 'Public Speaking for Educators' program had on the participant lecturers' style and to analyse any subsequent changes to their students' results. With an ever-present need to improve the benefits derived from attending university lectures, a lecturer improvement course developed and transmitted in the context of the actual university setting where money and time are scarce resources would be invaluable (Arubayi, 2009; Ligarski, 2009).

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

Many students, commentators and educators critique the current state of teaching and learning in higher education around the world. Bloggers, particularly professional people who have had unproductive university experiences, are very outspoken about one point or another that they wish to see improved. Furthermore, current research on learning reveals that traditional lecturing, with the lecturer doing all of the talking while the students are passive, non-participatory listeners, does not support effective learning (Mann, 2009). Many academics and researchers, as well as representatives of institutions, have produced copious suggestions on how to better conduct class activities, how to improve the presentation of lectures or more fully involve students in the material being discussed. Despite this proliferation of information about how to improve lecturing and subsequently produce benefits in higher education institutions, few studies have examined the actual effectiveness of these recommendations and programs. This chapter will discuss the current goals of institutions of higher learning and the use of lecturing to reach those goals. It will also discuss the pros and cons of this very common, and necessary, mode of delivery.

Goals and Approaches of Higher Education

Typically institutions of higher education strive to produce students who can not only assimilate knowledge but also think critically, solve problems, communicate effectively, engage meaningfully in research, become efficient learners, respond appropriately to novel situations and draw conclusions that are both appropriate and valuable (Smalley, 2008). Creativity is considered to be an integral part of successful learning, not as a standalone

competency but as something that links to other abilities that are developed throughout a student's higher education. Sternberg and Lubart (1995) argue for the existence of three principal features of creativity: *analytical abilities* – to analyse, evaluate, judge, compare and contrast; *practical abilities* – to apply, utilise, implement and activate; and *creative abilities* – to imagine, explore, synthesize, connect, discover, invent and adapt (Jackson, 2006). Along with these skills it is also considered essential to direct student learning so as to improve written and oral communication skills and develop a capacity to work with people from different cultural backgrounds (Pink, 2005).

Despite the best intentions, though, many students graduating from colleges and universities struggle with basic learning skills (Newcombe, 2002; Strohschneider, 2002). Often students retain only a partial understanding of the material they have studied, a problem compounded by an inability to extend their knowledge themselves. There are several possible reasons for these problems. One of the most important may be the situation common in many Malaysian institutions, and possibly elsewhere, where surface learning, rather than deep learning, is considered acceptable. Deep learning occurs when students are aiming at in-depth understanding, whereas a surface approach to learning occurs when students are aiming to reproduce material in an exam rather than actually being concerned about understanding it (Houghton, 2004). In Malaysia, for instance, it is common for lecturers to present material with little regard for whether or not the material is actually being understood (O'Donoghue, 1996; Ryan & Hellmundt, 2003). Brady (2008) suggests that it is essential to redirect lecturers from purely presenting content to focusing more on developing understanding (Ruhl, Hughes & Schloss, 1987; Russell, Hendricson & Herbert, 1984). Students need to understand the material that they hear so that they can apply critical learning skills and utilize their new found knowledge effectively.

To reach the goals of today's institutions of higher education, students need to do more than just sit and listen to information. Lectures that simply supply facts fail to encourage either comprehension or self-directed learning. As stated by Merzenich (2007), if humans are to become successful learners the brain should be forced to figure some things out itself, rather than being 'force fed'. Kandel (2000) stated that the brain is fully capable of forming new pathways but tends to lose this ability if it typically accomplishes a task with little effort. If instruction is provided in such a way that there is little or no effort involved in the learning process the brain becomes poorer at developing new pathways and, in turn, degrades in its ability to learn new things. In a world of ever changing demands and expectations students need to develop the skills required to become life-long learners (European Commission, 2006). They need to learn to think creatively, to recognize patterns and discover 'the big picture' (Massetti & Munchus, 1986). If using the brain and creative skills stimulates thinking, and in turn learning, then lecturers should be providing mental stimulation for their students, leading to increased mental activity and involvement in the learning process. A higher demand for creative interaction may, in turn, promote better comprehension, and retention, of the topic presented (Jackson, 2006).

The significance of promoting creativity in learning and teaching was examined by Dale (2008). He stated that the need to nurture creativity within higher education has become a focal point for many universities, and indeed many of these have written mission statements highlighting their focus on creativity. A number of other studies have attempted to consider how the development of creativity can be affected by the learning and teaching environment. Grainger, Barnes and Scoffham (2004), for example, describe a cocktail of ingredients necessary to develop a learning environment that would be conducive to the development of creative thinking. This mix includes an entwining of content and various styles of teaching (including lecturing) to stimulate

and enhance the learning process. Some researchers promote the necessity of developing graduates who demonstrate creativity as opposed to purely knowledge-based skills (Freeman, 2006; Jackson, Oliver, Shaw, & Wisdom, 2006; Morrison & Johnston, 2001). This promotes the value of learning to think in a broader sense, comprehending cause and effect relationships and developing the abilities needed to successfully apply learned concepts to other situations. If institutions of higher education are able to encourage creative thinking by the way they deliver material then it is possible that they can encourage better retention and comprehension (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, 2006).

Many suggestions for stimulating creativity within the learning and teaching environment have been made. In order to assist lecturers to encourage creative learning many writers have suggested, and tried, a number of different techniques. These suggestions include preventing groups of friends from working together so as to avoid either exclusion or conformity. It is suggested that this will, in turn, allow free flowing discussions regarding opinions and ideas to occur, producing a more relaxed, interactive and productive learning environment (Grundy & Kickul, 1996; Morrison & Johnston, 2001). Cloete (2001) and Donnelly (2004) both argued for a paradigm shift from focusing on how the information is presented to how the student learns. To encourage the development of learning skills and creative thinking some researchers have advocated the complete removal of the traditional 'sage on stage', believing that it is time to take on a completely new approach which changes the role of the lecturer into the facilitator, rather than the controller, of learning activities (Ebert-May & Hodder, 2008). Others suggest that a gradual approach to change be taken (Gess-Newsome, Southerland, Johnston & Woodbury, 2003; Taylor, Gilmer & Tobin, 2002). One popular suggestion is that the traditional lecture be combined with some form of student

group work wherein the lecturer combines his/her craft with interactive group sessions (Leonard, 2000; Wyckoff, 2001).

Based upon the current trend to promote creativity it seems that an effective lecture system should do more than just present facts, it should also encourage creativity. Other authors suggest that there is even more that needs to be achieved. Wilen-Daugenti, Grace and McKee (2008) argue that higher education should be producing graduates who are capable of adapting to and adopting new technologies, and are literate in all forms of information systems. Current demands are more complex than in previous generations and require changes to the instructional system that will integrate these needed skills into the education process. Is it realistic to assume that the current style of education, heavily reliant upon lecturing and originating in the 19th century, is still the best system to use in the 21st century? Can the lecturing process be modified, updated or in some way altered to more effectively present course content, familiarize students with the things they *need* to know, stimulate creativity and also develop students' abilities to reason, adapt and become effective learners?

The Role and Purpose of Lectures

Institutions worldwide generally recognise the need to improve the standard of lectures provided. Many authors such as Sullivan and McIntosh (1996), Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck, (1995), Exley & Dennick, (2009), Fry, Ketteridge & Marshall, (2003) and Greenbowe (2008) have produced step-by-step guidelines suggesting techniques to improve lectures. Others emphasize the role of student learning techniques, rather than the development of teaching skills, giving a general impression that many researchers feel that students are not learning as much as they should from lectures. (Andrews, 2006; Felder & Brent, 1999).

Despite the fact that researchers have been examining the effectiveness of different methods of instruction, the majority of universities still have not replaced the lecture as the most practical teaching method for large undergraduate courses. Some believe that lecturing is not the most productive form of teaching practice, even suggesting that the use of lectures as a means to instruct students can actually hamper the creative potential of students (Brown 2003). It is important, then, to consider both the value of promoting creativity and the potential, or otherwise, of doing so using lectures. Blich (2000) argues that lecturing typifies a mode of education in which teachers who know everything about a subject give knowledge to students who know nothing about the subject. Consequently the students have nothing of value to give as input in any discussion. Based on his review of numerous studies, he concluded that lecturing is relatively effective as a method of instructing large numbers of students, but not any better than many other teaching methods. He argued, however, that integrating group work, short interruptions and a variety of in-class activities, can significantly improve lectures. Many institutions in the United States have demonstrated extensive support for changes to traditional lecturing, such as recommendations for inquiry-oriented instruction in science classes (American Association for the Advancement of Science 1993; National Research Council, 1996). However, the traditional lecture format is still demanded by such issues as large class sizes and economic factors (Brown & Race, 2002). Undoubtedly many students have been stimulated to achieve great success by great lecturers, but ultimately it is due to the cost-effectiveness of large student-to-teacher ratios that classes reliant upon lectures are still one of the major sources of income for universities. Considering this reality, lectures should be seen as a teaching tool that needs to be refined so as to achieve the desired outcomes, rather than discarded as an outdated method of teaching.

There are a number of reasons, apart from financial ones, why lectures are still in use today. Lectures can be an efficient means of communicating course content. They allow academics to communicate their enthusiasm for their field of specialization, which can in turn enhance student motivation. Lecturers can present their personal interpretation of contemporary research and subject matter and give a “human face” to the discipline (Walker, 2002). It is necessary to consider the positive aspects of the traditional lecture format if we are to understand the value of modifying the techniques currently in use in the lecture theatre. After all, an effective lecture provides opportunities to emphasize important ideas and to allow a sharing of the most up-to-date, and even unpublished, material. The lecturer is able to direct student activities so as to meet all predetermined aims whereas, in comparison, totally student-centred systems may fail to reach certain goals. Rogers (2002) wrote positively about the potential of student-centred learning but recognized that this teaching technique faces limitations due to problems such as class sizes, resources, originality of submitted work, resistance to change and effective evaluation of learning.

An effective lecturer can stimulate interest in material, explain practical applications and even use personal experiences to help students see how and why the subject material is valuable to the student. Text-based material can be both complemented and clarified. The lecture can also be considered as the most effective way to disseminate a large amount of information in a relatively short time. Sometimes it is essential that students be quickly presented with new concepts so they can progress to a further stage of their education or to an activity-based session. What is really required of lecturers, then, is that they teach in a way that effectively instructs students without encouraging them to become passive learners (Goess, 2009). If students still need to invest enormous amounts of time outside the classroom just to comprehend the

concepts presented at lecture sessions, then the lecturers have been ineffectual in their role.

Worldwide trends indicate that lecturing will not quickly be replaced as a teaching method, hence it is essential to find techniques whereby the value of lectures can be maximized, benefiting students to the greatest extent possible. Many analysts have stated that effective lecturers are those who have already made adaptations by using multiple approaches: lecturing, group discussions, problem-solving sessions, small-group work, hands-on activities and so on (Lang, 2006). Yet, not all lecturers have upgraded their skills and the majority of tertiary institutions worldwide continue to employ the basic lecture format despite any potential weaknesses of the process.

Potential Weaknesses of Lectures

Students worldwide are affected by the quality of lectures at their respective institutions of education. Many students today live in a world dependent upon instantaneous information transfer and highly stimulating visual and auditory input. They spend their spare time blogging, creating video clips, playing high-intensity video games and socializing with friends on networked sites. They may listen to their iPod, conduct research on the internet, chat online with friends, type an assignment and play a game all at the same time. By the time they attend university they have experienced this type of multitasking for most of their lives, generally, though, the lecturer will expect students to sit down, listen and take notes for an hour or two on one specific subject (Son, 2008). For many students this is a very difficult change in lifestyle. Even secondary schools typically provide a more varied delivery system. In 2004 an Australian primary school classroom had at least one computer between every ten students and high school classes had at least one computer for every five students. The national plan in 2008 was that every high school student in year 9 or above would have

instant computer and internet access (Australian Department of Education, 2008), so is it reasonable to expect that students will, just a few months after completing high school, be satisfied with, or learn effectively under, a boring lecture system that provides no variety of pace or creative challenge for them?

Education can be considered successful when it benefits the individual student and society in general (Gourley, 2009). If a lecturer fails to bring benefits to their students then logically this would indicate that either the mode of delivery is ineffectual, or else the one delivering the information is unable to do so in an appropriate manner. If a lecturer is failing to effectively teach a class the question has to be asked, 'Why?' Often students fail to involve themselves with the topic because the lecturer fails to successfully engage them. Learning in a large class environment can be a passive experience, which can make it difficult for students to become, or remain, engaged with the material (Middendorf & Kalish, 1996). Students are typically provided with few, or no, opportunities to be actively involved with the topic during such a lecture.

In an effort to overcome the problem of students' lack of engagement with the lecture material Deniz and Harwood (2007) critically examined traditional lectures within the context of an upper level biology course in a highly technical university environment. They studied the effect of interspersing student presentations amongst the traditional lecture format and recorded the lecturer's and the students' observations on the effectiveness of the course. Analysis revealed that students found it most difficult to process the information presented during the traditional lectures. When student presentations were included they felt that they were learning much more, although not all of the course material was actually covered. When there was an overload of information they found it impossible to process the lecture material. This study indicated that lectures have the potential to be too 'information heavy' and not formatted in a way that really benefits students.

Another potential problem with lectures is that, typically, lecturers teach the way they have seen others teach, without developing techniques of their own. Some researchers have suggested that it may be possible to improve the lecturer's typical form of presentation by changing the traditional lecture-based learning system into a problem-based learning approach (Dehkordi & Heydarnejad, 2008a.). This is not always practical or possible, as class sizes continue to increase in many countries and often university budgets constrict the available options, including any significant use of problem-based learning (Blankinship 2009). Consequently lecturing remains the predominant teaching method in most universities today (Brown & Race, 2002; Perry & Smart, 1997).

The most obvious weakness in the lecturing system that can be addressed stems from the way information is delivered (Goess, 2009). In Malaysia, for instance, students who are educated using traditional lectures are generally expected to memorize specific points rather than developing comprehension of the overall concepts needed to understand and evaluate a subject. This memorization of information leads to a tenuous link between concepts and their practical application. The relationship between theory and practice may not be successfully strengthened at all by this type of traditional lecture (Scheerens, 1993).

That there are serious flaws in today's education system has been pointed out by Ackoff and Greenberg (2008) who stated that modern education focuses on teaching rather than learning. They argue that humans are more adept at learning than they are at teaching. Hence, they recommend that the role of teacher be relinquished to computers or other electronic equipment. Many studies have emphasized the suitability of electronic systems for assisting students to learn more efficiently and effectively (Cloete, 2001). This suggestion, however, must be considered in light of the economic constraints most institutions are under, the majority (worldwide) could not supply the

needed infrastructure or related maintenance required to instruct large numbers of students in this way. So, again we need to consider the issue of whether or not lecturers are able to meet the needs of students by teaching in an appropriate way to help students learn.

To summarize the situation, then, lecturing as a method of instruction is considered by some as outdated, with some suggestions that traditional lecturing is detrimental to the mental development of the modern day student as poor lecturing can have a negative effect upon student motivation, engagement and learning (Cambourne, Kiggins & Ferry, 2003; Pugsley & Clayton, 2003; Van Dijk & Jochems, 2002.) Certainly there is the potential for students to fail to engage with the lecture material, particularly when lecturers do not present well, as often happens when lecturers fail to adapt the way they teach to the real needs of their students. Some lecturers expect students to memorize specific points rather than develop comprehension of the overall topic, with a focus on covering material, rather than ensuring student understanding and retention of the concepts. Subsequently lectures have the potential to become uninspiring and of little positive value to students.

Making Lectures More Effective

There is no inherent fault with lecturing as a method of instruction. La Trobe University (2009) published a website describing the benefits and value of well presented lectures. The website states that good lectures can help students to be inducted into a culture of academic learning or a particular field of study. They also provide a way for many students to be taught by an expert in a field of study who can, with skilful planning, model academic argument and problem solving simultaneously. However, it is important to consider whether all lecturers can exhibit such skilful planning. Gall

(2004) stated that any lecturer could make improvements to their style of instruction if they were to 'acquire teaching skills', rather than just 'acquiring information about teaching'. He considered the possibility of adjustments in teaching practice on a number of scales. A training program might involve a relatively limited domain (e.g., giving effective directions to students) or a relatively large one (e.g., using cooperative learning in an instructional unit). Whatever option is chosen the real challenge lies in discerning the most effective way to help the lecturer develop the skills that will facilitate student learning and engagement (Pearce & Crouch, 1996).

Enhancing Student Engagement

According to the cognitive information processing view, human information processing is similar to that of a computer. When learning occurs, information is input from the environment, processed and stored in memory. Output is then produced in the form of some learned capability (Driscoll, 2000). This analogy can be used to help lecturers analyse what they are actually doing. After receiving a modicum of information, students need an opportunity to make the information meaningful to themselves (to store and process the data). This suggests that lecturers should stop from time to time and introduce an activity or discussion that will clarify points or demonstrate the application of the information supplied (Harwood, 2004). This simple to implement change to lecturing style is something that can easily be included in a lecturer development program.

Certain teaching practices hold the potential for improving student engagement. Some researchers have suggested that it may be possible to bridge the gap between education theory and practice by changing the traditional lecture-based learning system into a problem-based learning approach (Dehkordi & Heydarnejad, 2008 a). Hake

(1998) compared pre- and post-course test results for six thousand students from high school and university physics courses. Significantly more improvement was found amongst students enrolled in courses that used interactive-engagement methods throughout the lecture program (hence encouraging more complete engagement with the subject), than in those that promoted passive learning via a 'traditional' lecture style. Wenzel (1999) reviewed research on college lectures and reported that the longer the duration of a lecture, the smaller, proportionately, the amount of material that was actually transcribed as notes. He found that classes which broke up the lecture, effectively giving multiple short lectures, led to more effective note taking, presumably with a higher level of student engagement and a higher percentage of material being retained from each lecture session.

Active Learning Strategies

Currently there is a lot of emphasis being placed on the use of active learning strategies as a means to make lecturing more effective as a method for instructing students. In contrast to traditional lecturing, active learning involves students being actively engaged with course material. This can be through carefully constructed activities ranging from group work, in which students may discuss material during a calculated pause in a lecture, to role-playing, case studies, group projects, or presentations. Essentially the responsibility of learning rests on the learners with the lecturer acting as a facilitator rather than the source of all information (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

The Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE), Hiroshima University, developed a study designed to improve educators' facilitation of active learning. In particular, their study aimed to identify the gap between teachers' perceptions of active learning and their teaching practice. Efforts have also been made

to introduce peer assessment and self reflection practices among lecturers with the aim to develop workable mechanisms for self reflection and peer-assessment practices in order to enhance active learning (Berihun, Tesera & Desta, 2006).

Active learning strategies can be used effectively to involve students more fully in the subject of a lecture. Cooperative and collaborative learning provide opportunities for students to learn in an interactive setting (University System of Georgia, 2004). Walker, Cotner, Baepler, & Decker (2008) examined the effectiveness of active learning strategies in lectures. They split a large university class into two sections, each with two hundred and fifty students. A typical lecture format (with one expert presenting the material whilst the class listens, with little or no two-way interaction) was followed in the "traditional" section; lecture time in the "active" section was drastically reduced in favor of a variety of in-class student-centered activities. Results demonstrated that students performed as well, if not better, in an active situation than those students learning in the typical/traditional environment. However, there were student concerns about instructor expectations and some academics revealed uncertainty over what sort of pressure the interactive system could put on students if these expectations were not spelt out precisely. Lecturers with these types of concerns may not appreciate the fact that students typically learn more when they are more fully engaged in the class. Of course, they will only stay engaged if they perceive a reason to do so (Kuh, 2004). Intellectually stimulating experiences that involve direct participation can keep students mentally active and thereby promote learning. Whether using an interactive approach or otherwise, an effective lecturer must be able to present the audience with opportunities for meaningful engagement with the subject material (Held & McKimm, 2008).

Student attention remains highest when there are occasional variations in the style of lecture delivery. Lecturers need to learn, and utilize, a variety of delivery

techniques, including giving students opportunities to interact with each other (Griggs, Barney, Brown-Sederberg, Collins, Keith, & Iannacci, 2009). Of course with the anonymity produced by larger classes, it has been noted that students are more likely to feel they can escape notice and may start sending text messages, browsing the internet on their laptop or phone, or even fall asleep (Hogan & Kwiatkowski, 1998). Students must remain engaged with the lecture if they are to remain involved in the learning process, keeping students engaged requires a skilled lecturer.

Use of Technology

The Duke Center for Instructional Technology North Carolina (2007) produced guidelines to help lecturers capture and stimulate the interest of their students. The objective was to provide lecturers with a means of stimulating student engagement with the subject under discussion through the use of various electronic devices. The options recommended included such things as digital whiteboards, streaming videos, electronic personal response systems, video clips, projected photographs and a number of other forms of electronic media. Of course such heavy reliance upon expensive technology would prevent many educational institutions from being able to implement such changes and, as mentioned earlier, class sizes continue to increase and in many cases university budgets continue to tighten (Blankinship, 2009). This study, then, does not focus on these options as many educational institutions in Southeast Asia, as well as other parts of the world, have neither the necessary funding nor facilities to establish or maintain a technologically oriented teaching system.

The focus of this thesis is therefore on the value of teaching lecturers to use public speaking skills that can make the traditional lecture system more valuable by improving the way lecturers teach, thus helping students learn more effectively (Osborn

& Osborn, 2000). In view of the currently deficient state of empirical research that investigates practical methods for improving lecturing techniques the intention of this study is to explore a time and cost effective way of improving the way lecturers present material to their students.

Refining Lecturing Techniques

It remains a modern day reality that lecturing is still the dominant teaching method in most countries (Brown & Race, 2002; Perry & Smart, 1997). Lecturers, therefore, need to refine and improve their craft. After all, if a lecture is not educationally valuable to students, academics could spend the time they used to prepare and present the lecture more profitably by focusing on research. Students could spend their time more effectively by independently studying existing texts or course notes. However, institutions generally recognise that there is a need for an effective lecture delivery system, but one that does not rely upon technology or expenditure of large amounts of economic resources. Westberg (2008) argues that modification of a lecturer's style of delivery is a key way to motivate students to be successful in their learning. She indicates that it is essential to stimulate student interest by working at a level the students can comprehend, to carefully assess the amount of material to be presented and to make the presentation lively and relevant to the audience. These types of adjustments in lecturing techniques are by far the most accessible to educational institutions around the world as there is little or no capital expense involved in making the changes required. Hence a refinement of lecturing style is something that can be advantageously applied by educational institutions anywhere in the world.

Previously it was indicated that an effective method of improving the value of the lecture is to improve the quality of its presentation. This thesis investigates whether

lecturers can improve student engagement, learning and retention by developing the skills of lecturers through training them in the techniques of successful public speakers. Although there is ample literature indicating that lecturing styles can be adjusted to create a more interactive classroom, the lecturer still needs to have effective speaking skills to make these suggestions work (Verderber, 2000). Why implement a public speaking training program? In the US some public speakers are paid upward of three thousand dollars an hour. Obviously not everyone can earn this amount of money, however the fact that people are willing to employ public speakers at that rate indicates the value that is being placed upon their skills. Highly paid public speakers are expected to attract and motivate an audience, if lecturers are able to develop the same skills then students would probably benefit. Improvements in lecturing skills can potentially result from analyzing and applying the techniques typically used by successful public speakers. These techniques, as suggested below by Hayes (2006) have the potential to benefit both the lecturer and the student.

Consider some common techniques of effective public speaking adapted to lecturing as they have been proposed by Hayes (2006):

- Posing questions to the audience throughout the lecture.
- Calling on non-volunteers in a non-threatening manner, or using multiple responder strategies to engage more students.
- Using charts, diagrams, and photographs in slide presentations that may serve to prompt questions.
- Answer students' questions by redirecting appropriate questions to the audience (these questions should themselves be engaging and deal with core content, or perhaps relevant current events, and should be chosen to stimulate higher order thinking about concepts).
- Create time for students to work individually on problems, or in groups.

- Use occasional pauses, leaving only silence in the room, to allow students to reflect on critical topics and perhaps develop questions to ask.

Each of these suggestions has been extracted from the basic principles of successful public speaking and modified slightly to fit the needs of a successful lecturer.

Improving Lectures Through Public Speaking Training

‘Public speaking’ typically describes the act of presenting a speech or information to a group of people as a single speaker or presenter. This can take place as part of an educational program or part of a sales or business arrangement. In the Malaysian education system there are plenty of opportunities for students to involve themselves in public speaking. Often secondary school and university or college students are involved in debating or other forms of public speaking. Many universities even conduct classes in public speaking as part of their ‘co-curriculum’ program. From personal experience and the comments of students involved in these courses, however, these classes are not generally taught well, hence it can be stated that public speaking is quite common in Malaysia but not, as is also true in many countries, of a particularly high standard.

The most important point to have in mind in this discussion is that a public speaker has a clearly defined audience and, to be successful, must also have a clearly defined goal. Typically that goal involves teaching or convincing their audience about a specific point or concept. Some researchers have suggested that training in public speaking is more than sufficient to cover a whole gamut of techniques that can help the lecturer improve delivery, speaking and audience interaction (Cooper, 1985; Reece, 1999). Just as a public speaker needs to make the point of discussion clear when initially addressing the audience so, too, the lecturer can work to:

- maximize clarity and organization by announcing objectives and making transitions between segments of the lesson explicit;
- proceed with a class activity and ask students to explain the purpose of the activity and list the objective(s) supported by it (Stehr & Grundmann, 2005);
- avoid overloading the audience with information;
- aim to establish audience contact and involvement and attempt to ‘reveal’ information rather than ‘unloading’ it;
- ensure that students remember the material, rather than just hear it (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2007).

Memory formation occurs in the brain's limbic system, which is largely involved in emotional and pleasure responses. This suggests there may be a strong link between emotions and learning (Connell & Langelier, 2005). The lecturer needs to use skills which help the students relate to the material and enjoy listening to it. This involves remembering that there is a potentially unlimited number of individual learning styles within one class (Morgan, 1997). As students learn differently from each other the lecturer must attempt to accommodate at least the majority of different learning styles.

Ultimately the focus should be to teach for long-term memory retention. This involves using all of the public speaker’s skills to make concepts and key points memorable. Whenever possible the lecturer needs to stimulate thinking rather than just presenting knowledge, so as to create a richer learning experience. According to the Speechmastery (2009) website, ‘An informative speech needs to be tasty brain food for the brains of your audience. It must leave them mentally nourished and satisfied.’

Just as a successful public speaker keeps the attention of the audience, lecturers must also strive to stimulate the thinking of their students. Learning ultimately rests on engagement, which requires that students be attentive. This is facilitated when students

are convinced that there is value in listening. When a lecturer speaks engagingly, even conversationally, and interacts with the students rather than lecturing at them the value of a lecture for students can be increased. This, along with other techniques, can improve the effectiveness of a lecture and possibly improve student learning and comprehension.

Conclusion

Lecturing is still the most common way of presenting information to students in institutions of higher education. It is efficient in terms of money, time and space. One of the main reasons for using such a traditional method of teaching is that successful lecturing can lead to achieving the goals of today's institutions of higher education (Aarabi, 2007; Reime, Harris, Aksnes, & Mikkelsen, 2008). However, the use of lectures can also be fraught with peril if they are not delivered properly. Unfortunately poor quality lectures are still common in many educational institutions around the globe. There is, though, no valid excuse for ineffective lectures in the current educational climate. Lecturers are not innately successful or unsuccessful. All lecturers have the potential to improve their skills through application of good teaching techniques (Weir, 2009).

It is not uncommon today for educational institutions to offer professional development programs for lecturers to improve their lecturing skills. However, very few researchers have examined the value of different methods of improving lecturing skills. This study will contribute to the research literature by examining the effectiveness of public speaking training in improving university lecturing in a Southeast Asian setting. It will consider the effect of public speaking training upon the final results of students of participating lecturers. The study will also investigate the attitude of the lecturers

themselves and whether or not they felt that they received any personal benefit from the public speaking program.

Chapter 3:

Method

Introduction

This study analyses the effectiveness of a public speaking research program for improving university lecturing. The program was not intended to develop a new method by which to instruct students but, rather, to improve existing lecturer techniques so as to produce improved understanding and retention of information. This, in turn, should reduce the need for extra tuition classes and could result in students who develop learning skills, not just memorization techniques (Greenleaf & Wells-Papanek, 2005). Of course having a good memory is a bonus for a student, but without the skills needed to utilize the points learnt the knowledge is of little or no value.

The public speaking training program used for this research was based upon a program that was originally conducted with a group of thirteen professional Non Government Organisation public speakers in Malaysia. After a two-month part-time course (April-June 2007) the class of thirteen experienced public relations managers had developed from people who could talk before an audience for hours to people who didn't need to talk for hours as they could explain themselves quickly, clearly and in a way that captivated their audience. As they already had ample experience in speaking they simply needed to learn how to reach their audience in the most understandable, and memorable way (Glasson, 2009). They also developed skills in using visual aids effectively and experienced an obvious increase in their levels of self-confidence in front of others. Since these experienced public speakers were so quick to develop new skills it was decided to trial a shortened form of the program to encourage development of the same skills amongst lecturers.

Research Design

Different types of research designs have different advantages and disadvantages. Experimental research designs (Hopkins, 2000) are the most exact way to examine causal relationships. Since this design demands the random assignment of subjects and random assignment of subjects to groups, it is particularly suitable for controlled settings such as laboratories. In the authentic setting of the university it was not possible to choose the participants from the small, specific group of lecturers in an entirely random way. This study therefore uses a quasi-experimental design, wherein participants are not randomly assigned to groups. The lecturers who volunteered to participate in the Public Speaking for Lecturers program had timetables that allowed them to participate. The lecturers who were unable to attend due to lecturing obligations agreed to act as a comparison group and their class results were examined and compared with the results of the program participants. This means that the participants were a sample of convenience without randomization, so any differences in the two groups might reflect group differences rather than a treatment effect.

Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews (Hollowitz & Wilson, 1993) and quantitative examination of student results for the teaching period following the Public Speaking for Lecturers program. Hence this research includes examination of both quantitative and qualitative data. By using this mixed method approach it was possible to analyse pre and post program results for the students' end of term marks and also compare any changes in student satisfaction levels and staff attitudes before and after the training given through the Public Speaking Program.

Participants

With the previously reported experience in training public speakers in mind, it was decided, after consultation with the CEO of the Sabah campus of Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR), to conduct a professional development program for lecturers involving a group of lecturers from a variety of faculties. UNITAR has its main campus in Kalena Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, but has another six campuses spread throughout Malaysia and Indonesia. The campus selected for the study was the UNITAR campus in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, which is located in East Malaysia on the island of Borneo.

Of the original fifteen lecturers who volunteered to be involved in the program (the maximum number that could be accommodated at one time in the program due to its largely interactive nature), there were eleven participants who were able to fully participate in the research. Efforts were made to encourage a gender and faculty balance but the final factors affecting the choice of participants were individual timetables and class commitments. The final faculty balance represented a cross-section of content areas (three participants from Education, three from Business Administration, two from Information Technology, and three from Accounting). Although the gender balance amongst the total number of lecturers in this campus is quite even, the final number of participants included only two women and nine men. The fact that there were more men than women involved in the study is considered unlikely to have had any significant impact as the public speaking program was not in any way gender specific.

Typically the participating lecturers were experienced at conducting a variety of differently sized classes varying from ten students up to one hundred and thirty. No matter how many students were in attendance, however, the typical teaching style involved the use of PowerPoint presentations and a recitation of information with little

variation in technique between lecturers. Lectures run for two hours (whether a small or a large class) with most of the time spent reading out notes, and the inclusion of mathematical exercises in the case of arithmetic-based subjects. All classes are presented in English, however none of the lecturers participating in this study are native English speakers. All of the participants communicate well in English, although interviews revealed that they all felt a need to improve in this area.

Each participant is a university graduate with a relevant bachelor's degree and work experience, and two hold master's degrees. Three of the participants received their education in the US, whilst the rest completed their studies in Malaysia. For the most part the participants had similar teaching responsibilities and work loads. One lecturer, however, was heavily involved in administrative duties and found it very difficult to apply the techniques discussed throughout the training program. The median age was thirty two years with the range being from twenty eight up to fifty seven years of age. Lecturing experience ranged from a minimum of one year up to a maximum of ten years. The eleven volunteer lecturers from UNITAR attended the six week public speaking training program, starting in May, 2009.

Data Collection

UNITAR administration supplied copies of pre-program as well as post-program student results for the relevant subjects. Even though the comparative results were taken from different samples of students, the results from previous classes provided a good indication of typical results prior to the lecturers' training.

Unfortunately these results cannot be viewed as categorical indicators of the success of the program as only nine of the participant lecturers had been teaching their subject long enough to have a result history available for comparison. Questionnaires were also used

to reveal up to date data. The opinions of students regarding whether or not they felt there was any significant change in the level of interaction between lecturers and students during class sessions was very informative. Questionnaires were also used to seek responses from lecturers regarding their perspectives on any changes they may have made to their teaching techniques.

Questionnaires

Lecturers and students filled out two questionnaires involving lecturing style: lecturers about perceptions of their own style and students about the instructional style of their lecturers. All questionnaires used a four point Likert scale including 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. An 'unable to rate' option was also available while no neutral response was available. This format was chosen to avoid an overabundance of neutral opinions and to encourage people to think seriously about their responses.

The purpose of the questionnaires was to give a base line to help determine the effectiveness of the training program. Pre and post program questionnaires were administered to students to detect whether they felt that their lecturers had made any improvement or changes to their lecturing style by the end of the term. Lecturers were given a follow-up questionnaire and were also interviewed at the end of the program.

Interviews

Interviews conducted with the lecturers were designed to establish what the lecturers hoped to achieve through their lectures, how they aimed to achieve those goals and whether or not they believed the public speaking training had helped them to better reach those goals. Lecturers were also asked what specific changes they had made as a

consequence of attending the course, if any. The responses of lecturers were used to draw conclusions regarding their opinions about the training program and its effects upon how they lecture.

Student Results

At the conclusion of the university term during which the training program was conducted, results for the students of participant lecturers were compared to the pre-program results from students studying during the previous short term. Although there is always the possibility that different cohorts of students will produce different result sets, comparing results from students of lecturers who attended the program and the preceding short term's students taught by the same lecturers prior to the training course can indicate possible relationships between the program and student results. To allow further analysis, term results from students of untrained lecturers for both years were examined to check for any trends that may indicate a significant difference between the 2008 short term student cohort and the 2009 one.

Data Analysis

Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, interviews and an analysis of student results from the term both before and after the public speaking training program. A comparison was also made between results from students of lecturers who were participants in the program and students of lecturers who were not in the program. In this way it was possible to examine any relationships between improvements in student results and the public speaking training program.

Lecturer Self-Evaluation and Student Evaluation of Lecturing Technique

Lecturer questionnaires were assessed using a Likert scale for which scores were totaled and averaged to give an overall picture of the lecturers' self-perceptions of their lecturing skills and the way they had changed over the term (As a lecturer you: [Pre-program]1. Encourage students to participate in class / [Post-program]1. Focus *more* on encouraging students to participate in class).

Students were also required to complete questionnaires. They were given two sets of questionnaires so as to compare student pre-program perceptions of lecture quality with post-program perceptions. These questionnaires were composed of essentially the same questions each time with the follow-up questionnaire asking whether students believed that some improvement had been made (e.g. [Pre-program] 1. Encourages us to participate in class / [Post-program] 1. Encourages us to participate in class *more* than at the start of the term). This provided a collective student viewpoint regarding the standard of the lectures they attended and also indicated whether or not they believed their lecturers had improved in lecture delivery skills throughout the term.

Lecturer Interviews

Lecturers were asked the following seven questions and their answers were considered collectively to analyse the lecturers' valuation of the Public Speaking Program.

- i. What do you try to accomplish when you are lecturing?
- ii. In your opinion, how do you feel students respond to your lectures?
- ii. What techniques do you use to keep students involved and interested?
- iv. What do feel you do especially well in your lectures?

- v. What do you believe is your greatest weakness?
- vi. Did the recent training program make any difference to the way you lecture?
- vii. If you believe the program led to a change in your lecturing style, what change/s did it produce?

Student Term Results

Final student results for the newly trained lecturers were compared to the previous short term results for each lecturer. The same was done for lecturers who had not been involved in the program to identify any significant differences in results between the student cohorts. The number of students for each subject receiving grades of A-F were compared for the two terms and the percentage of students earning a credit or higher recorded.

Public Speaking for Lecturers Program

The program commenced with an analysis of the ethical considerations of the proposed study. Participants were assured that they would not in any way be penalized for participating in the public speaking training program. Lecturers were given a course outline and a rationale for the program and were given the choice of being involved or not. The university administration consented to staff attending the program during working hours. If more staff wished to attend than could be accommodated by the allocated fifteen places, it was decided that positions would be assigned to effect a gender and faculty balance. Priority was given to staff who were certain that they could complete the program. Results were kept so as not to identify the individuals involved,

even so participants were given full access to all relevant data and thus could see that personal information was kept confidential.

At the commencement of the program lecturers were asked to complete a questionnaire about the strengths and weaknesses of their lecturing style. At the beginning of the second week of the new term students were asked to complete a similar questionnaire regarding their perception of their lecturer's method of delivery. The Public Speaking for Lecturers program commenced on the first Friday of the new term. Participants attended for two hours each Friday for six weeks during which time a brief demonstration of different public speaking skills was given by the researcher. Participants were then given a theme and asked to give a short presentation demonstrating the skill focused on during that session. These presentations were then critiqued by the presenter/researcher so that each participant could see the good points of what had been presented. This was done in a non-threatening and relaxed manner.

The program followed the structure shown below, some sessions revolved around two topics, others focused on only one.

Week One

1. Clearly presented speech

- Words are spoken clearly
- Correct pronunciation is used
- Fluent delivery

2. Correct emphasis

- Appropriate pausing
- Correct word stress
- Main ideas are emphasized

Week 2

3. Good delivery

- Suitable volume
- Enthusiasm
- Good use of modulation

4. Visual effect

- Gestures
- Personal appearance
- Visual contact
- Effective use of visual aids

Week 3

5. Presentation skills

- Poise
- Use of microphones
- Choice of words
- Interest shown in your audience

6. Putting it together

- Using an outline rather than notes
- Logical development of material
- Reasoning manner

Week 4

7. Be natural

- Extemporaneous delivery
- Conversational manner
- Voice quality

8. Making the point

- Ideas expressed with conviction
- Repetition for emphasis
- Development of theme

Week 5

9. Capture attention

- Main points stand out
- Interest-arousing introduction
- Effective conclusion

Week 6

10. Help your audience

- Informative and understandable
- Effective use of questions
- Accurately timed and properly proportioned

The material used for the program (Appendix E) was adapted from a number of standard formats. At the conclusion of the program the participating lecturers' students completed another questionnaire regarding their lecturer's technique. Lecturers were also interviewed by the researcher and their opinions sought about their strengths, weaknesses and the overall value of the program.

Data collected from student questionnaires were used to indicate student perceptions of lecturing style. The lecturers' self-assessments, provided through questionnaires and interviews, were used to evaluate the program's effectiveness in developing basic public speaking skills, the lecturers' use of visual aids and level of student interaction. Changes to student information retention were assessed based upon a comparison of the final results for the term compared to previous results for the same

subject (but only if presented by the same lecturer). The researcher informally observed the participants' lecture both before and after completion of the training program so as to determine the greatest weaknesses in the techniques of the lecturers (pre-program) and to allow the giving of feedback regarding improvements made (post-program). An analysis was made to establish whether or not there is a correlation between student satisfaction and the lecturer development program, as well as students' retention and comprehension (as demonstrated by final results). The relationships between lecturer satisfaction and perceptions, and student satisfaction, were also examined.

The participant lecturers were trained in public speaking skills that focus on audience contact and interaction, as well as skills in extemporaneous speech and working from an outline rather than word-for-word notes. Ongoing observation of the lecturers in their teaching role, with check-list style records being kept, helped to detect developing and existing trends and resulted in giving specific direction to program content according to the participants' needs. For example, a particular area of focus was that of audience contact skills, helping lecturers to better engage their students and encourage a higher level of cognitive processing through using questions and explaining scenarios relating to practical applications.

Ethical issues

It was necessary to question students regarding the teaching technique of their lecturers in order to establish whether there was a perceived need for improvement in lecture quality. Gregory (2003) questioned whether it is ethically correct to ask students about the performance of their own lecturers. His final conclusion was that it is the best way to get useful information which can lead to making educational improvements. Student responses would make it possible to answer the first research question, 'How is

the lecturing skills program associated with student evaluation of their lecturer?' To circumvent any ill feeling from the collection of data from this study, only lecturers who were willing to be involved in the program were included and they were informed of the entire process in advance. Lecturers were directly involved themselves in delivering the questionnaires to students and always had full access to the results. At the conclusion of the program, both lecturer and student perceptions of the changes to lecturing style produced by the program were analysed. These results were then shared with the program participants.

Chapter Four:

Results

This study examines a program for improving lecture quality at a private university in East Malaysia. Eleven lecturers participated in the Public Speaking for Lecturers program. The lecturers came from a variety of disciplines, including education, business administration, management and hospitality. Evidence of changes to lecturing style and their subsequent effects were analysed based on the following three research questions:

1. How is the lecturing skills program associated with student evaluation of their lecturer?
2. Do lecturers view the training program as beneficial to them?
3. How is the lecturing skills program associated with changes in student outcomes?

Question one was addressed through the use of student questionnaires both at the start and at the conclusion of the short, mid-year teaching term. To answer the second question, participating lecturers were initially given questionnaires to set a base line for their self assessment and then asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire at the end of the program. Participants were also interviewed at the conclusion of the Public Speaking for Lecturers program. The third question was addressed by comparing overall student results for the term with results for the same courses from the previous short term, twelve months earlier, conducted by the same lecturers.

Student Evaluations of Lecturers' Techniques

Prior to commencing the Public Speaking for Lecturers program, participating lecturers were asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire (see Appendix A). This pre-program questionnaire served as a baseline for comparing lecturers' self-assessments with students' assessments of their lecturing skills. For example, are the lecturers' self-assessments relatively similar to the students' assessments of their lecturing skills, or are there large differences? The pre-program self-assessment questionnaire also served as a baseline for addressing Research Question 2, discussed in the next section.

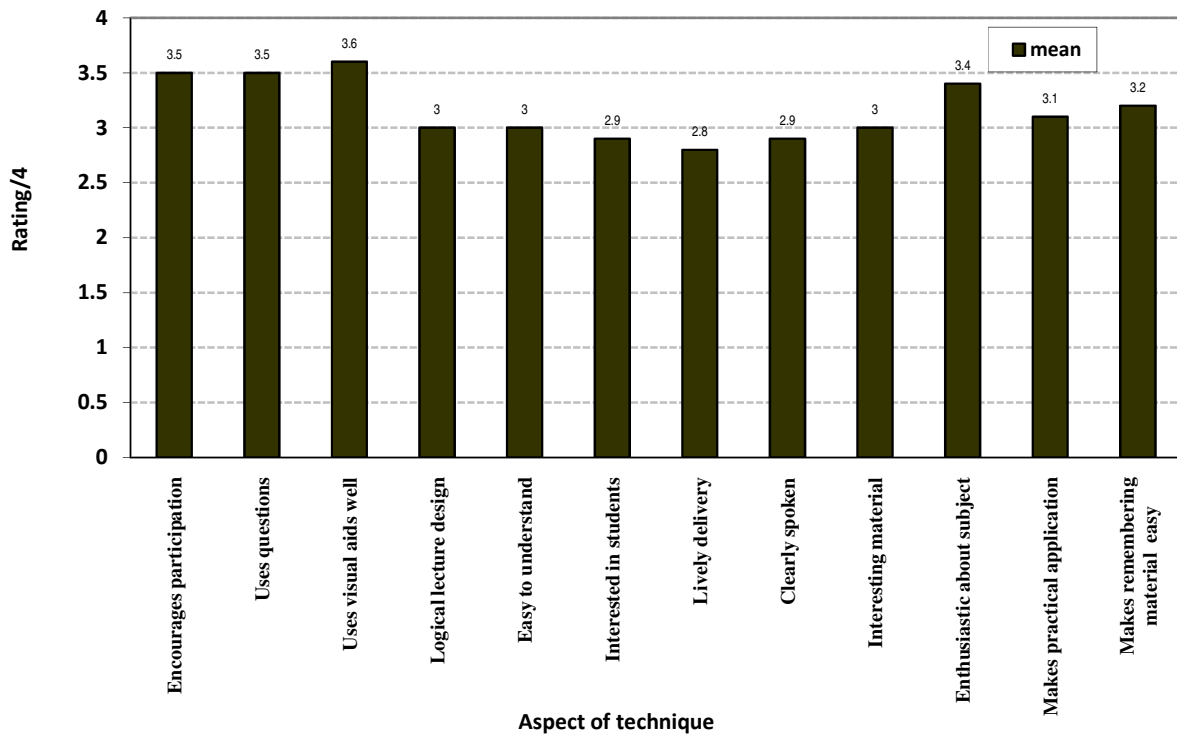
The questionnaire gave participants five choices, with one of those options being 'Unable to rate' so as to avoid participants taking a middle-of-the-road position in any of their answers. It is possible that this design pushed respondents to proclaim a more positive perception of themselves than would have been revealed if there was a neutral option to choose, but it is also essential to keep in mind that the Likert scale is not an interval scale. Hence the differences between each response are not equal in distance (Jamieson, 2004; Clason & Dormody, 1994; Hall, 2010). In this study, it tells us that the lecturers with higher-numbered responses are generally positive in the self-appraisal of their lecturing skills.

The following graph indicates that the average score for the lecturers' view of their abilities was 3.2 out of a possible maximum of 4 (3.2 /4) with a score of 3 representing 'Agree' to the stated comments about their lecturing skills and 4, 'Strongly agree'. Writers such as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) state that it is more accurate to compare the mode of the Likert results rather than the mean, however in this particular study the mean and mode are very close to one another and the fractional

difference typical of the means allows for greater clarity of contrast than the whole numbers of the mode, especially in the graphic display.

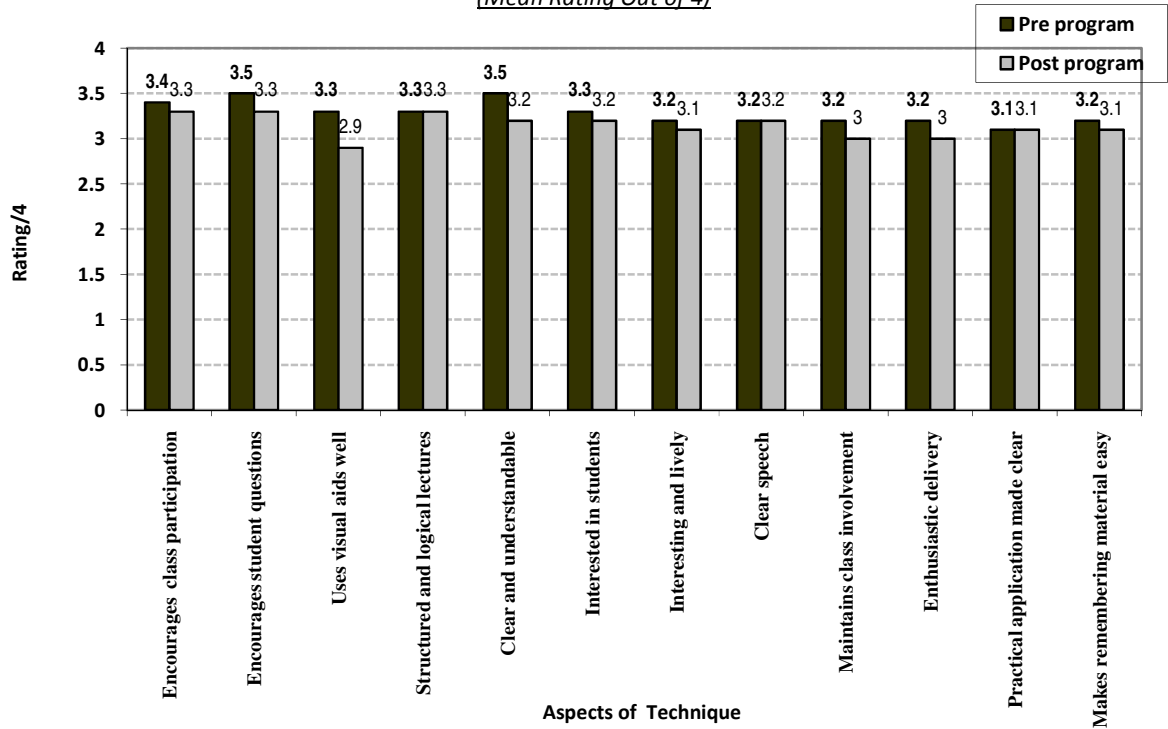
Figure 1 indicates that the lecturers' greatest self-perceived weakness at the beginning of the program was that their lecture delivery lacked liveliness. Their greatest confidence was in the use of visual aids, encouragement for students to participate and the use of questions.

Figure 1. Lecturer Self-assessment of Technique



The students also completed a questionnaire similar to the one submitted by the lecturers, adjusted to suit their perspective (see Appendix C). In contrast to the lecturer's view of their own lectures, the students felt that the greatest weakness was the use of visual aids (especially PowerPoint slide shows, according to anecdotal comments). All other features of the lecturers' techniques were rated at an average score of 3.2 out of a possible 4 (see figure 2).

*Figure 2. Student Evaluation of Lecturing Technique Pre and Post Program
(Mean Rating Out of 4)*



The same questionnaire regarding lecturers' skills was administered to students at the end of the term (see Appendix D). Interestingly, the end of term ratings by students were actually significantly lower (using two-tailed t-test, statistically significant at $p=0.002$) than prior to the lecturers undertaking the Public Speaking Training Program. These results are inconsistent with comments made informally to the participant lecturers by a cross-section of students. According to some of the lecturers, students commended them for their teaching innovations and change of lecturing style. These comments were reiterated by the lecturers during their interviews but there was no evidence in the questionnaire results that students had an improved overall view of their lecturers' skills. There is a possibility that the questionnaires were not presented with sufficient explanation to ensure carefully measured responses. Students gave very similar responses both before and after the training program (to look at the result graphs one may have assumed that there was no real difference, however, according to

statistical analysis there was a significant difference) and were possibly not truly candid in their original ratings.

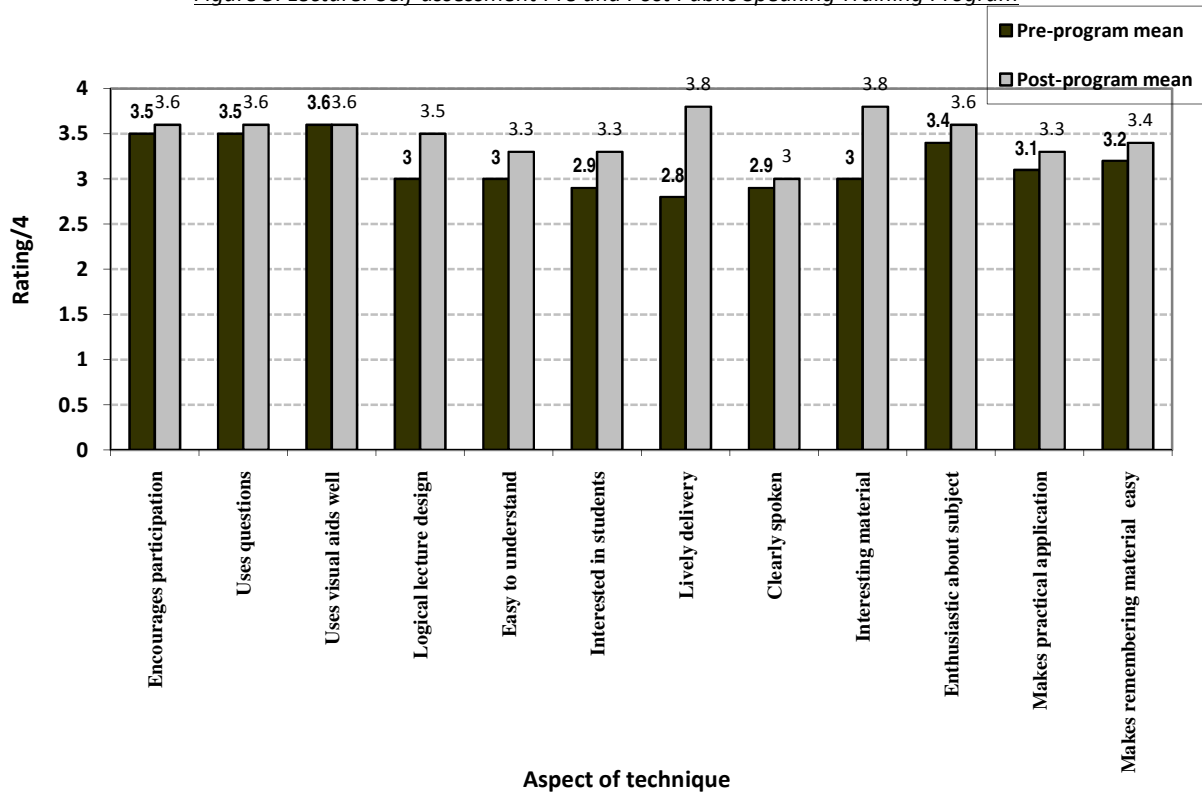
Based on the data collected from the student questionnaires it must be stated that the first research question is not positively supported. The answer to the question, ‘How is the lecturing skills program associated with student evaluation of their lecturer?’ is that the students’ rating of their lecturers had dropped marginally by the end of the term during which the public speaking program was conducted, as shown in Figure 2. Hence the students’ evaluation of their lecturers decreased, despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary (based on results of student questionnaire, Appendix D). Although anecdotal evidence contradicts these results they were not part of the formal study and are not considered sufficient evidence of an overall student perception of a change in lecturing style.

Do lecturers view the training program as beneficial to them?

The second research question examines participating lecturers’ perspectives of the Public Speaking Training program. As discussed previously, a follow-up questionnaire was completed by the participants at the conclusion of the program (see Appendix B). As Figure 3 indicates, there was improvement in the way lecturers rated their own skills after the program.

The most noticeable difference from pre- to post-program was that lecturers rated both their liveliness in delivering material (increased from 2.8 to 3.8 out of a possible 4) and the interest level of their material (increased from 3 to 3.8 out of 4) as having improved since the commencement of the program. One aspect which showed no increase, however, was ‘uses visual aids well’ regarding which skill they already felt very confident.

Figure 3. Lecturer Self-assessment Pre and Post Public Speaking Training Program



Semi-structured interviews comprising seven questions were also used to answer the second research question. The interviews were conducted after the public speaking program had been completed. The first five questions sought to gain a picture of the lecturers' overall perceptions of themselves and their development as lecturers. The last two items were asked specifically to examine the lecturers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program. In this section I provide a summary of the eleven participating lecturers' responses to the seven interview questions.

1. What do you try to accomplish when you are lecturing?

Response summary: Eight of the respondents noted that their first priority was to help students understand and to make application of the unit material (e.g., "I strive to achieve course objectives, bring out key points clearly and make application of the material presented"). They felt this was a major part of their job description and as such

of primary importance. The other three lecturers put the need to develop learning skills in first place (e.g., “I aim for the students to understand techniques and applications”).

2. In your opinion, how do students respond to your lectures?

Response summary: Five lecturers reported positive statements about student responses (e.g., “I feel that students are interested in my lectures”), four lecturers reported neutral responses, (e.g., “They seem to be paying good attention”) and two lecturers reported negative responses (e.g., “Sometimes I don’t think they are interested in my subject”). The negative responses were made by the least experienced lecturers (one or two year’s experience) who stated that they still had a lot of skill development ahead of them.

3. What techniques do you use to keep students involved and interested?

Response summary: The majority of lecturers noted that they now use questions liberally. For instance one lecturer said, “I ask my students to answer questions, calling on them by name.” Three lecturers noted that they now apply concepts to a personal or local situation (e.g., “Simple examples are useful, especially local, real-to-life ones”), and two lecturers specifically mentioned that they use humour to engage students (“I use humour to try to keep students engaged”, “I use two-way discussions and some humorous interaction”).

“Small group activities, question and answer sessions and presentations are all useful” as one lecturer pointed out. These techniques are widely recommended by public speaking experts to keep an audience interested and involved in any public forum.

4. What do you feel you do especially well in your lectures?

Response summary: Four of the lecturers specifically mentioned their explanation of real-life application of material, which is an excellent skill to develop as a public speaker and teacher (e.g., “I use local experiences, refer to local events and make local application”). All other respondents had positive views of their lectures and relationships with their students but were unable to identify specific skills or techniques that they felt they used proficiently (e.g., “I am helpful and never condemnatory; I especially like to work with small groups”).

5. What do you believe is your greatest weakness?

Response summary: Five lecturers stated that their English was too limited for them to feel satisfied with the quality of their lectures. As English is not their native language they find their English vocabulary insufficient to really explain or describe things as fully as they would like. Three lecturers were primarily concerned with issues about class management, “Sometimes you look at the class and three or four of them are busy using their phones or talking to the person next to them, not listening to me at all”. Three of the lecturers expressed concern about their lack of patience with students who did not quickly understand the material being presented (e.g., “I find it frustrating when you repeat a formula two or even three times and there are still some students who do not understand it”). All of these issues are ones that were not specifically addressed by the public speaking program.

6. Did the recent training program make any difference to the way you lecture?

Response summary: Ten of the eleven lecturers perceived their lecturing to be noticeably benefited by the course. Comments were made about greater confidence, new techniques and increased effort to engage students. As lecturer comments and

anecdotal feedback from students indicate (“After just two training sessions a number of students thanked me for the way I was teaching them, they said it was an enjoyable change”), the program did help them to change the way they lecture. Their responses included the following comments:

- “I learnt new techniques for lecturing, how to deal with different situations, stimulate student interest and how to vary my speech and keep the students interested by varying the pace, pitch and power of my speaking.”
- “I am now more confident before the class and feel happier in my role as a lecturer.”
- “The ideas in the program have given me so many new ways to deliver my material.”

Ten of the eleven lecturers directly applied the points that they had learned, and one of those ten was still actively reviewing the program notes so as to more effectively use the information. Although in attendance at five out of the six sessions, one lecturer had little face to face contact time with students throughout the term and stated that it was “a waste of effort to try to make any changes to lecturing style during this term.” It is worth noting, however, that this lecturer, despite his initial intention not to pursue application of the material presented in the program, stated after his interview that he had introduced some changes in how he spoke to the class and had seen a subsequent improvement in student engagement.

7. If you believe the program led to a change in your lecturing style, what change/s did it cause?

Response summary: The majority of lecturers worked at having more contact with their students by interacting with them during their lectures and felt they were

subsequently engaging students more successfully in the subject being taught. As one lecturer commented, “Students are actually answering my questions now, before they would just look at me waiting for me to answer my own question”. The lecturers generally felt more confident in their role after the training program and believed that the students did respond better to their lectures and were much more attentive after the training program. One lecturer commented, “The students seem much more attentive, if their phone rings they actually apologise, turn it off, and put it away, before I attended the program they would always answer the call right there in class.”

One lecturer commented that she had noticed that her style of lecturing had changed. She had become more confident and felt more knowledgeable in terms of subject delivery. Another mentioned that he had developed a tendency to establish more contact with the students and subsequently recognised an increase in attention levels amongst them. Still another summarized a changed lecturing style by stating, “I am much more inclined towards reinforcing the points that I have covered, I avoid direct reading and speak much more conversationally.” One other comment summarized the changes typical of the participants, “I have made many small changes, I attempt to have the concept in mind that I want to talk about and then talk conversationally on this topic. I also try to change the pace of the session every fifteen minutes or so.” All lecturers were able to make some positive comment/s about the adjustments they had made to their lecturing style. All stated they had increased both their confidence level and improved their in-class contact with their students.

After six two hour sessions of the Public Speaking for Lecturers program, all eleven lecturers noted that their relationships with students improved as they applied advice on establishing contact with their audience and involving students in discussions. The participant lecturers also felt that students seemed generally more engaged with the material, as indicated by increased participation, attentiveness and a reduction in class

control issues. Only one lecturer failed to express with certainty when interviewed that student engagement had improved. However this lecturer commented two weeks after the interview that he had seen some changes in student engagement but had not noticed the change until the interview prompted him to consider it.

It can be stated that the answer to the research question, ‘Do lecturers view the training program as beneficial to them?’ is ‘yes’. All eleven lecturers stated that learning public speaking skills had helped them become better lecturers, and ten of the eleven participants felt that they made successful, and valuable, adjustments to their lecturing techniques as indicated by their comments above.

How is the lecturing skills program associated with changes in student outcomes?

The third and final research question addressed in this study was ‘How is the lecturing skills program associated with changes in student outcomes?’ This question was addressed by comparing the students’ final grades from both before and after the lecturing skills program. As the program was conducted during the university’s short, seven week term, the method chosen to compare previous results was to refer to the preceding year’s results for the same term. If the comparison was drawn between this seven week short term and the preceding fourteen week term we would be unable to make an accurate contrast as the teaching and learning conditions are very different. During the fourteen week term students have more time to take in information and process what they learn, as well as to participate in practical activities that are not available during the condensed programs conducted during the short term. Typically the results in the seven week term are slightly lower than in the longer 14 week term.

There were a limited number of courses that could be compared between the 2008 and 2009 short terms as lecturers do not always teach the same classes from year

to year. Consequently there were only nine courses that met the criteria for direct comparison, namely that the one lecturer had to conduct the same course for the two consecutive short terms, commencing May 2008 and May 2009 respectively. Eleven lecturers could have been used in the comparison but only nine could be included in the final comparison of student results. One was excluded as seventy percent of students from that class postponed their course and subsequently a full set of comparative results could not be provided. Another was excluded as they did not conduct the same course for the two consecutive short terms. For this study it was essential that a comparison could be made between lecturers teaching the same course content over a term of the same length. Based on these criteria, a comparison of results could be made for only 9 of the 11 participating lecturers. The comparison includes 139 students from nine courses in May 2008, before the lecturers participated in the lecturing skills program, and 184 students from the same nine courses in May 2009, after the lecturing skills program was completed.

Obviously different groups of students, as well as different examination papers, will not produce results that can be easily compared. It is also true that the participant lecturers could have, through their own efforts, improved their lecturing since the preceding year. It is quite conceivable that these or any number of factors unrelated to their participation in the public speaking program could have affected results, and using a different cohort of students for the comparison certainly creates more difficulties for contrasting the final results. To help address the use of completely different student cohorts, results from the 2008 and 2009 classes of lecturers who did not participate in the program have also been included in this analysis (Tables 5 and 6). This can help to give us some indication as to the difference between student cohorts from one year to the next. Even so, as there are so many potential variables involved, this study does not allow a direct causal relationship to be established. In other words, we cannot state

categorically that a change in student results between the two years was caused by the lecturing skills program alone. To help analyse the effect of the training program cohorts of students belonging to participant and non-participant lecturers were compared in more than one way.

Student results were compared by using: 1) a comparison of the average scaled score and 2) a comparison of the percentage of students achieving different grades, or achievement levels. When making comparisons, it was decided to focus on the number of students scoring merit and distinction, as universities generally aim for students to score at the highest possible level (California Department of Education, 2010; Goodwin, 2000). Table 1 shows the grading system used by the participating university.

Table 1. UNITAR Grading System

Marks Range	Alphabetical Grade	Standing
90-100	A+	Distinction
80-89	A	Distinction
75-79	A-	Distinction
70-74	B+	Merit
65-69	B	Merit
60-64	B-	Merit
55-59	C+	Satisfactory
50-54	C	Satisfactory
45-49	C-	Pass
40-44	D	Redeemable Pass
35-39	E	Fail
0-34	F	Fail
-	I	Incomplete
-	X	Absent from final exam (with permission-course postponed)
-	P	In progress

The following analysis is based upon the percentage of students receiving a ‘B-’ grade (merit) or higher (distinction) in the 2008 short term (pre- program) compared to the 2009 short term (post-program). Table 2 presents a summary of the percentage of students who received a ‘Merit’ or ‘Distinction’ in the term prior to the lecturers participating in the ‘Public Speaking for Lecturers’ program and also for the term after

the program. The final result includes both course work and final examination results. Final results were substantially higher in seven of the nine courses, ranging from a 22% increase to a 56% increase. The two courses that experienced an overall drop in Merit or higher results, according to the relevant lecturers, included a number of students who failed to submit assigned work, hence causing a decline in the overall course marks. The average improvement for the other seven courses in the number of merits, or distinctions, was more than thirty five percent (35.2%).

Table 2. Percentage of Students Who Received a 'Merit' or Higher Before and After Lecturers Participated in the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' Program

Subject Number	Subject category	Percentage of students earning Merit+ pre-program (2008)	Percentage of students earning Merit+ post-program (2009)	Overall increase/decrease +/-
1.	Management N=10	25.9%	70%	+44.1%
2.	Accounting N=5	28.6%	60%	+31.4%
3.	Accounting N=24	89.3% (35.7 % 'A' scores)	79.2% (45.8% 'A' scores)	-10.1%
4.	Accounting N=13	0%	38.5%	+38.5%
5.	Information technology N=76	29.6%	85.5%	+55.9%
6.	Information technology N=17	27.3%	76.5%	+49.2%
7.	Language N=14	66.7%	57.1%	-9.6%
8.	Business N=13	18.2%	23.1%	+4.9%
9.	Management N=11	50%	72.7%	+22.7%

The following tables (Tables 3 and 4) provide more detailed results for each term by subject (1-9). The top row reveals the grade achieved and the bottom total shows the number of students from the nine assessed courses that achieved the score. Individual subject results, in the majority of cases, reveal the same general pattern with a greater

number of higher scores achieved across the range of all nine courses in the term following the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' program. It is also noteworthy that the overall grade point average was 1.9 in 2008 but increased to 2.6 in 2009 after the training program.

Table 3. May 2008. Results from Students of Participating Lecturers Pre-Program (Percentage of Students Achieving Each Grade)

Subject/ Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	F	I	X	Grade Point Average	Total Students
1 Management	0	3.7	0	7.4	14.8	7.4	48	11	0	0	0	0	7.4	0	0	2.0	27
2 Accounting	0	0	7.4	14.3	7.4	0	28.6	7.4	0	0	0	14.3	14.3	0	0	1.55	14
3 Accounting	17.9	17.9	14.3	21.4	17.9	7.1	3.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.2	28
4 Accounting	0	0	0	0	0	0	14.3	28.6	0	14.3	0	14.3	28.6	0	0	0.9	7
5 Information Technology	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.4	0	18.5	18.5	7.4	0	7.4	0	14.8	3.7	0	0	2.0	27
6 Information Technology	0	0	0	18.2	9.1	18.2	18.2	9.1	0	9.1	0	18.2	0	0	0	1.8	11
7 Language	0	0	16.7	16.7	33.3	16.7	0	0	0	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	1.8	6
8 Business	0	0	0	0	18.2	9.1	18.2	27.3	0	18.2	0	9.1	0	0	0	1.7	11
9 Management	0	0	12.5	12.5	25	25	12.5	12.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	8
N=	7	8	9	16	17	15	29	13	0	7	0	11	7	0	0	Average GPA 1.9	139
Total % of students	5	5.7	6.5	11.5	12.2	10.8	21	9.3	0	5	0	8	5	0	0		100%

Note: 41% of these students scored a 'merit' or higher.

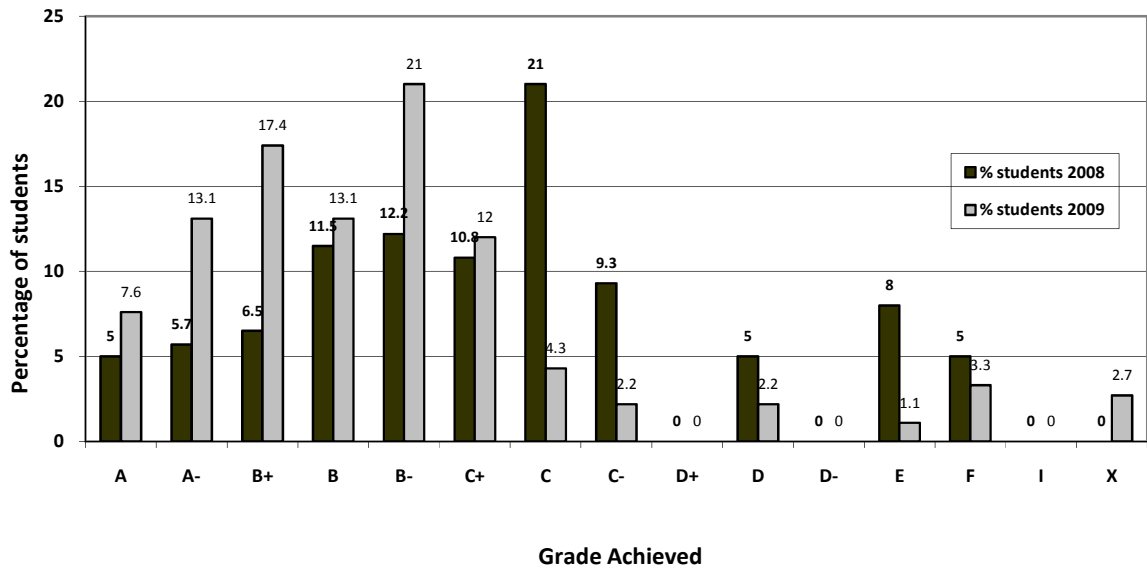
Table 4. May 2009 Results from Students of Participating Lecturers Post-Program. Percentage of Students Achieving Each Grade

Subject/ Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	F	I	X	Grade Point Average	Total students
1 Management	0	20	10	10	40	10	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.8	10
2 Accounting	0	20	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	20	1.9	5
3 Accounting	8.3	16.7	16.7	8.3	8.3	4.2	0	8.3	0	0	0	4.2	4.2	0	0	3	24
4 Accounting	15.4	0	15.4	0	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	0	7.7	0	7.7	15.4	0	7.7	2	13
5 Information Technology	3.9	14.5	22.4	15.8	29	10.5	1.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.6	3	76
6 Information Technology	5.9	17.6	17.6	29.4	5.9	5.9	5.9	0	0	0	0	0	5.9	0	5.9	2.9	17
7 Language	7.1	7.1	7.1	14.3	21.4	28.6	14.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.7	14
8 Business	0	7.7	0	0	15.4	30.8	23	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	2.1	13
9 Management	0	9.1	36.4	9.1	27.3	9.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.1	0	0	2.8	11
N=	14	24	32	24	39	22	8	4	0	4	0	2	6	0	5	Average GPA 2.6	184
Total %age of students	7.6	13.1	17.4	13.1	21	12	4.3	2.2	0	2.2	0	1.1	3.3	0	2.7		100%

Note: 74% of these students scored a 'merit' or higher.

In the following graph, Figure 4, the 2008 term results are indicated as dark columns whereas the 2009 results are indicated by light coloured columns showing a difference between the two term results. Grade 'A' increased from 5% to 7.6%, 'A-' increased from 5.7% to 13.1% and 'B+' increased from 6.5% to 17.4%. There was also an increase in 'B' grades from 11.5% to 13.1% and 'B-' grades increased from 12.2% to 21%. Lower grades are progressively less common after the Public Speaking for Lecturers Program, with 8.6% fewer 'failure' grades ('E' and 'F' grades). Note that in 2009 there was an increase in 'X' grades which indicates that more students deferred the course and does not reflect a drop in final grades.

Figure 4. Student Results May Term 2008 and 2009 (Participant Lecturers)



To compare the results of different cohorts of students, Tables 5 and 6 show the results from seven non-participant lecturers' classes (i.e., the same subject was taught during the short term in both 2008 and 2009 by the same lecturer). The areas studied were similar to those conducted by the program participants with classes from the Business, Marketing, Information Technology, Accounting and Language areas. In 2008, 59.5% of students from these classes achieved 'Merit' or higher. In 2009, 52.9% received a 'Merit' or higher. Grade 'A' decreased from 8.5% to 7.9%, 'A-' decreased from 17.9% to 7.9% whereas 'B+' increased from 9.2% to 13.8%. There was also an increase in 'B' grades from 6.4% to 10% whilst 'B-' grades decreased from 17.7% to 13.6%. Lower grades increased from 30.5% to 37.7% whereas 'failure' grades ('E' and 'F' grades) reduced from 10% to 9.3%. The average grade point average in 2008 was 2.4. The 2009 grade point average dropped slightly to 2.3. Unlike the grades of classes of the participant lecturers the overall student performance of classes of non-participant lecturers was slightly lower in 2009 than it had been in 2008.

Table 5. May 2008 Non-participant Lecturers' Class Results (shown by percentage of students)

Subject/ Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	F	I	X	Grade Point Average	Total students in Class
1Information Technology	0	8.3	8.3	0	25	8.3	8.3	8.3	0	16.7	0	16.7	0	0	0	2.0	12
2 Marketing	11.8	11.8	17.6	5.9	11.8	5.9	11.8	5.9	0	5.9	0	5.9	5.9	0	0	2.5	17
3 Business	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	0	4.8	9.5	19	0	23.8	0	9.5	14.3	0	0	1.4	21
4Language	9	16	9	6.8	29.5	6.8	9	6.8	0	2.3	0	2.3	2.3	0	0	2.7	44
5Accounting	4	40	16	12	20	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	3.2	25
6 Business	36.4	36.4	0	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	3.3	11
7Business	0	0	0	0	18.2	9.1	18.2	27.3	0	18.2	0	9.1	0	0	0	1.7	11
Total N=	12	25	13	9	25	9	11	12	0	11	0	8	6	0	0	Average GPA 2.4	141
Total %age of Students	8.5	17.7	9.2	6.4	17.7	6.4	7.8	8.5	0	7.8	0	5.7	4.3	0	0		100%

Note: 59.5% of these 2008 students achieved a 'Merit' or higher.

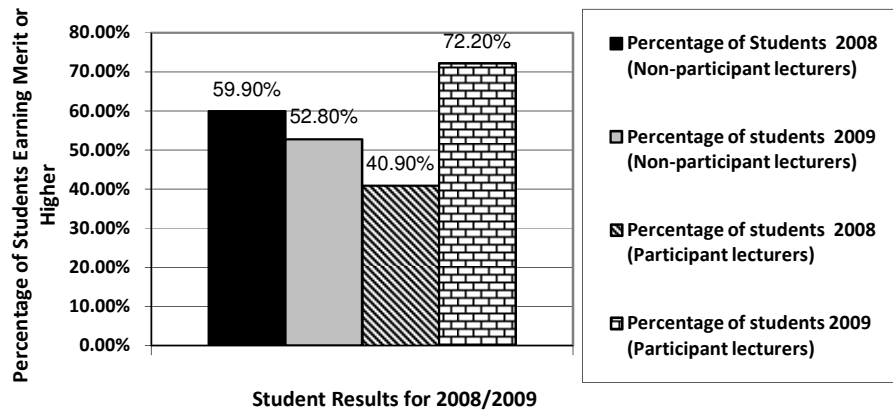
Table 6. May 2009 Non-participant Lecturers' Class Results (shown by percentage of students).

Subject/ Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	F	I	X	Grade Point Average	Total Students in Class
1Information Technology	0	0	0	0	25	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	1.8	4
2Marketing	11.1	0	0	0	22.2	22.2	33.3	0	0	11.1	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	9
3Business	0	0	0	10.5	15.8	31.6	31.6	0	0	0	0	0	10.5	0	0	2.1	19
4Language	13.1	11.5	26.2	9.8	8.2	8.2	9.8	0	0	0	0	11.5	1.6	0	0	2.8	61
5Accounting	8.3	12.4	12.4	25	25	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	8.3	0	0	2.8	24
6 Business	0	0	0	0	18.2	9.1	27.3	45.5	0	18.20	0	0	0	0	0	2.0	11
7Business	0	8.3	0	0	8.3	33.3	25	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	2.0	12
Total N=	11	11	19	14	19	24	23	0	0	6	0	7	6	0	0	Average GPA 2.3	140
Total %age of Students	7.9	7.9	13.6	10	13.6	17	16.4	0	0	4.3	0	5	4.3	0	0		100%

Note: 52.9% of these 2009 students achieved a 'Merit' or higher.

It is interesting to note that the results for the participant lecturers prior to their training were typically much lower than the non-participants. After the program, however, the participant group had the highest amount of 'merit' or higher scores (see Figure 5). Figure 5 shows the overall number of students earning grades at the 'Merit' level or higher. The first two columns show the percentage of students earning 'Merit' or higher in the 2008 and 2009 short term in classes conducted by lecturers who were not involved in the Public Speaking for Lecturers program. The second two columns show the same details for lecturers who were involved in the program.

Figure 5. Comparison of Student Results for Participant and Non-Participant Lecturers



What statistical significance can be placed upon this apparent difference?

Through use of the Chi-square analysis it is possible to establish the accuracy of the assumption that these differences are not due to chance variations. A Chi-square test compares the observed data to the results that would be expected if the changes were simply a result of chance variations. This determines whether or not there is any significant difference caused by changes brought about by the study (Gay & Airasian, 2003). This test is appropriate for this study as it is designed to be used in situations where the data is recorded in whole numbers and involves two mutually exclusive categories. The Chi-square value increases as the difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies increases. The actual significance of the Chi-square value is then determined by referring to a Chi-square table.

The first analysis comprised a comparison of results belonging to the students of the non-participant lecturers from 2008 and 2009. With the alpha set at 0.05 the Chi-square analysis revealed no significant difference in the results between the results for these two years ($\chi^2(2, N = 281) = 1.81, p = 0.4$). Any difference may have been simply due to chance. The difference in the two sets of results (2008/2009) for the participant

group of lecturers, however, was significant and not what would be expected by chance ($\chi^2(2, N = 308) = 32.06, p < 0.0001$).

A Chi-square analysis was also carried out between the 2008 participant (pre-program) results and 2008 non-participant results which again revealed no statistically significant difference at the outset of the study, although in this case the participant group did give evidence of *lower* results than the non-participants ($\chi^2(2, N = 279) = 4.04, p = 0.13$). Another analysis was made between the 2009 Participant results and 2009 Non-Participant results. This time, a significant difference was revealed, with the participant lecturers' class results now being higher than those of the non-participant group ($\chi^2(2, N = 310) = 6.819, p = 0.032$). The actual and expected results are indicated in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. Expected and Actual Results for 2008 and 2009 Classes Conducted by Non-Participant Lecturers (Number of Students Achieving Each Grade)

Grades	2008 Non-Participant		2009 Non-Participant	
	Expected	Actual	Expected	Actual
A&B	80.91	84	80.34	74
C&D	47.40	43	47.06	53
E&F	12.69	14	12.60	12
Total	141	141	140	140

Note: ($\chi^2(2, N = 281) = 1.81, p = 0.4$)

Table 8. Expected and Actual Results for 2008 and 2009 Classes Conducted by Participant

Lecturers (Number of Students Achieving Each Grade)

Grades	2008 Participant -Pre-program		2009 Participant-Post-program	
	Expected	Actual	Expected	Actual
A&B	79.77	57	96.98	123
C&D	46.73	64	56.81	38
E&F	12.51	14	15.21	8
Total	139	139	169	169

Note: (χ^2 (2, $N = 308$) = 32.06, $p < 0.0001$).

Finally, then, the research question ‘*How is the lecturing skills program associated with student outcomes?*’ must be answered by stating that student outcomes were greatly improved. There is a significant improvement in the overall final grades when compared to the previous short term before the ‘Public Speaking for Lecturers’ program was initiated.

Summary

In summary the results of the analysis of the three research questions are:

1. How is the lecturing skills program associated with student ratings of their lecturer?

Student participants did not indicate any improvement in their perceptions of their lecturers’ skills. The mean post-program rating is high (3.14 out of 4), but lower than the student evaluations at the beginning of the term (3.28 out of 4). Despite positive

anecdotal evidence the statistical answer to this question must be that the program had no positive effect upon the students' rating of their lecturers.

2. Do lecturers view the training program as beneficial to them?

All lecturers involved in the program expressed satisfaction with the program and felt that they now had a new set of lecturing skills and the ability to better present material to their students.

3. How is the lecturing skills program associated with student outcomes?

Seven of the nine examined courses gave evidence of an improvement in their final grades, ranging from a 5% through to a 56 % increase in the number of students gaining a 'merit' result. One course dropped in the overall 'B- and higher' range but increased by 10% in the 'A' range. By contrast, lecturers who did not participate in the program showed a decrease in student results between 2008 and 2009, even though this group of lecturers was working with students across a range of similar disciplines. Although it is necessary to consider the possibility of other factors influencing these results it is conceivable that the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' program improved student outcomes.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The goal of higher education, ultimately, is to successfully inform and train students so that they become adaptable learners who will make learning a life-long experience (Barnett, 2003). Despite the best of intentions, though, many students who graduate from institutions of higher education still fail to attain these goals (European Commission, 2006; Strohschneider, 2002). Often students only grasp the most basic sense of the information presented to them and are ill equipped to extend their knowledge through their own efforts.

In order to improve the extent to which university students develop their skills as learners, it has been suggested that lecturers need to make a vast transformation in the way they communicate information (Brady, 2008). There should be a greater focus on conceptual understanding rather than on the precise, detailed content of the material being delivered. If students are helped to comprehend the concepts and foundation of the material that is presented, rather than simply memorizing an endless list of details, they are better prepared to apply critical learning skills and succeed in processing and effectively using their new knowledge (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Goess, 2009).

Often, lecturers believe that by simply supplying copious amounts of information, perhaps along with printed notes, PowerPoint slides, web sites or recordings, students will be able to develop a deep and complete knowledge of the topic under consideration. Merzenich (2007) argued that this was no solution to improving learning skills. If the brain is not required to work, to figure things out for itself, it becomes complacent and ineffectual in dealing with new things. The brain also becomes less capable of developing new pathways if it can accomplish a task with little or no effort (Kandel, 2000). So if a lecturer is going to be a valuable teacher, methods of instruction must be used that make students both pay attention and apply what they are learning.

Today's demands upon the education process are more complex than in any previous generation, both lecturers and students have ever higher demands being made of them. Access to electronic media of all types creates both benefits and problems for the educator (Dale, 2008). Although there is an almost inexhaustible amount of information immediately available through computer libraries, videos and the internet, there are at least as many electronic services to distract students from pursuing their educational goals. Services such as Facebook continue to grow in number and popularity. Students worldwide spend multiple hours a day in online communication with an ever-widening circle of friends. SMS messages call for the students' attention at any time of the day or night to the extent that there are now concerns that cell phone addiction has become a pathological condition amongst many young people (Markman, 2009). Added to these things are the huge varieties of television shows, movies and video games that can distract students from focusing on their education. It is against this backdrop that lecturers have to teach and deal with the challenge of captivating their students' interest.

Of course suggestions about how to compensate for the change in lifestyles and learning techniques of today's students have often been made. Many would like to see the lecture replaced by small group work as they feel this enables students to personalise new knowledge in a more interactive and potentially stimulating environment (Leonard, 2000; Wyckoff, 2001), while others recommend the intensive use of new technologies within the classroom (Wilen-Daugenti, Grace and McKee, 2008). Despite these challenges to the traditional lecture, the majority of institutions of higher learning around the world continue to utilize the lecture technique as the most efficient means of disseminating course content.

The need for the traditional lecture continues into the present day due to issues with large class sizes, availability of resources and more effective evaluation of learning

through the comparison of larger groups of students. The lecture is also a valuable means of passing on information as it allows the lecturer to communicate enthusiasm for their field of specialization and thus motivate students to commit to their studies. Lecturers can add a personal touch to their interpretation of the most up-to-date research, even unpublished material, and effectively give ‘the human touch’ to their area of study (Walker, 2002).

For these benefits of lectures to be realized, however, the lecturer must promote interest in the material, give examples of practical applications and relate personal experiences that will help students to see the topic within the context of their life. The lecturer also needs to involve students in the material so as to make them use their thinking abilities and not, as Goess (2009) puts it, to become passive learners. If a lecturer expects students to sit and listen then they are not really assisting students to reach their potential (Son, 2008). If a lecturer’s method of delivery is ineffectual in bringing any real benefit to their students then this would indicate that changes in lecturing style are essential.

A study performed by Deniz and Harwood (2007) examined students’ lack of involvement with lecture material and came to the conclusion that the typical lecture was too information heavy and could be improved by reducing the focus on content and focusing more on teaching new concepts. Researchers have shown that the way the information is provided can greatly affect the value of a lecture (Cannatella, 2004, Exley & Dennick, 2004; Fry, Ketteridge & Marshal, 2003; Healey, 2005). As emphasized by Ackoff & Greenberg (2008) the most obvious weakness in the lecture system is the fact that it is completely dependent on the way the instruction is provided. If the emphasis is on the lecturer providing output, rather than students’ learning, then a lecture will not be truly effective.

When lecturers do not present well they fail to capitalize on the potential of lecturing as a method of teaching. Students will fail to engage with the material if lecturers do not make the necessary adaptations to suit the needs of their students. Students need to be able to understand and retain the presented material (this happens when effective transfer has taken place), but simply focusing on specific points that need to be memorized (retention only) is not the best way to make this happen. Retention is the ability to remember material in much the same way that it was presented initially. Retention simply requires that students remember what they have learned, whereas transfer requires students not only remembering but also making sense of what they have learned (Haskell, 2001). How can lecturers be helped to reach their potential and learn to deliver their material so that students are able to remember, understand, and use what they have learned? A study by Dehkordi and Heydarnejad (2008 a.) analysed six thousand high school student results and found that those involved in an interactive learning environment did far better than those taught under a system of passive instruction. Another study conducted by the same researchers (Dehkordi & Heydarnejad, 2008 b.) using second year nursing students compared results between a traditional lecture and a problem-based learning arrangement and again found the traditional lecture system to be less effective. Cooperative and collaborative learning also gives evidence of creating an environment that is much more conducive towards understanding and retaining information (Walker, Cotner, Baepler & Decker, 2008).

If lecturers are able to integrate these aspects of teaching into their lessons then students should become more fully engaged with the material being presented. Heightened engagement can help students to better retain what they are hearing and relate what they learn to practical, real life applications. Westberg (2008) wrote about

the need to modify a lecturer's style of delivery so as to motivate students to be successful learners. Is there evidence that it is possible to do this effectively?

The focus of this thesis is on a program that was used to teach public speaking skills to practicing university lecturers. The aim of the study was to see if teaching public speaking skills to lecturers would develop their lecturing skills and improve levels of student engagement without taking either an exorbitant amount of time or financial expense to implement. This paper reports on the effect of involving a group of eleven lecturers in a program to instruct them in the skills of public speaking. The rationale behind doing this was based upon an analysis of what students need for successful learning as well as an understanding of the strong links between these needs and the focus of public speaking, namely to reach and motivate an audience (Boyce, Alber-Morgan, & Riley, 2007; Cooper, 1985; Griffin, 2008). The lecturers involved were all volunteers from a private university in Malaysia with lecturing experience ranging from one to ten years. The program was conducted over a period of six weeks with one two-hour session each week.

An essential part of the research to study the effect of the Public Speaking for Lecturers program was the preliminary questionnaire for both lecturers and students (see Appendices A and C). This was intended to establish a base line so as to provide a method of measuring any change in attitudes or perceptions of the lecturers' skills. The lecturers and the students were again asked to complete questionnaires at the conclusion of the program (see appendices B and D). The lecturers were also interviewed. A total of one hundred and forty seven questionnaires were received from students whose lecturers were involved in the program.

In the case of research question 1, 'How is the lecturing skills program associated with student evaluation of their lecturer?' it was found that there was no statistical evidence that the program caused students to feel any more positively about

their lecturers (according to the questionnaire results). However, the participating lecturers noted during the interviews that their students had noticed a change in their lecturing style and had expressed positive anecdotal comments regarding the change. The general ratings given to the lecturers through the questionnaire were high at the outset, which may have made it difficult to go any higher at the end of the term. The initial very high ratings may have resulted from the fact that Malaysian students typically show respect and loyalty to their teachers and lecturers and are unlikely to directly criticize their teaching abilities, even on an anonymous questionnaire. Especially as the lecturers had access to the overall results of the questionnaires, students may have felt that they should provide a positive assessment and may not have been entirely honest when rating their lecturers' skills. This especially seems likely as the researcher had direct verbal confirmation from a cross-section of students that they were often unimpressed with the efforts of their lecturers prior to the program.

A more detailed questionnaire could have produced clearer information about the way students rated their lecturers. Questions that required a personal response may have been much more revealing, for example: Since the beginning of this course, have you noticed any change in the way your lecturer teaches? If you noticed a change, did you think the change was good? If you answered yes, what change/s did you notice?

A questionnaire including such questions as these would have more clearly revealed student perceptions and would also have forced students to think more carefully about their responses, producing clearer and more valuable results.

At the end of the term a slight drop in ratings was apparent across the range of assessed lecturer abilities. It may be that this drop in ratings resulted from a general attitude change caused by the fact that the final questionnaire was being conducted during the last week of a very stressful and intense term (seven weeks for a full course that is normally taught over a period of fourteen weeks). Students may have been

mentally and emotionally drained and generally unenthusiastic towards anything to do with the program, it could also be that students were more honest in their follow-up appraisal than in their original assessment of their lecturers. A subsequent questionnaire at the beginning of the following term may have provided a different picture of the students' views of their lecturer's performance. Based on the available information, however, the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' program did not produce an improvement in the students' perception of their lecturers.

The second research question, 'Do lecturers view the training program as beneficial to them?' could, however, be answered positively. Lecturers were quite outspoken in stating that they felt the program had a very positive influence on their teaching. One lecturer stated during the interview, "I was surprised that a public speaking program could actually help so much", another stated, "I was amazed I could learn so much in such a short time". The participant lecturers had benefited from the program and had consequently adjusted the way they presented material to their students. They claimed to have feelings of greater self confidence in front of the class and were better able to involve students in discussions and capture interest in the topic they were covering. One lecturer's comments sum up this view quite well, "I now feel confident to move around and interact more with the students, and I have a lot more personal contact now. It all helps to keep the students more involved and attentive."

The participant lecturers may have given primarily positive feedback out of a sense of obligation similar to that normally detected amongst the students. It is worth noting, however, that administration staff reported to me that non-participant lecturers made comments about the value of the training the participant lecturers had received. Their statements were based upon what their fellow lecturers had told them when I was not present, indicating the genuine value participants had placed upon the training program. Keeping in mind that this program was only conducted for six, two hour

sessions, the fact that lecturers felt they had benefited to this extent indicates that the program had a positive impact on the participant lecturers.

However, perhaps the most interesting outcome of the study can be found after comparing student results for the term. In answer to the third research question, 'How is the lecturing skills program associated with changes in student outcomes?' the final results were, in most cases, positive. Particularly when we consider that the major portion of student results are assessed by anonymous markers in another part of the country it is clear that the improved results were associated with students returning better results than the classes held before the lecturers were involved in the program. When looking at the overall level of improvement for all subjects we can see that Grade 'A' increased from 5% to 7.6%, 'A-' increased from 5.7% to 13.1% and 'B+' increased from 6.5% to 17.4%. There was also an increase in 'B' grades from 11.5% to 13.1% and 'B-' grades increased from 12.2% to 21%. Lower grades are progressively less common after the Public Speaking for Lecturers Program, with 8.6% fewer 'failure' grades ('E' and 'F' grades). All grades below this 'Merit' level showed a significant reduction in frequency after the program with only the 'X' and 'P' ratings showing an increase (these are not grades but indicate a change in administrative status reflecting factors not related to this study). These results show that there was an obvious and significant improvement in the final student results for the term following the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' program.

Of course it is possible that other variables could have affected the results. The overall impression, however, is that the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' program is associated with increased term results. On average there was more than a twenty five percent (25.25%) increase in the number of 'Merit' or higher results achieved by the classes of participant lecturers in the term following the program compared to the 2008 term involving the same courses, lecturers and lesson duration. It is important, though,

to comment on the two courses that showed a decrease in the number of students earning a merit or above between 2008 and 2009. Course 3 did not show any improvement in the overall number of students gaining Merit grades, however there is an improvement in the number earning a Distinction grade. According to the lecturer for this course, the overall average result was reduced by two students who failed the unit. This was caused by failure to submit course work rather than examination failure (occasionally part-time students fail to submit vital assignments but still attend exams hoping that they will pass). The course 7 lecturer made a similar comment, noting that two students performed poorly in their coursework as they were part-time students working full-time throughout the term. Their submitted work was of poor standard and caused the overall results to drop. The average improvement for the other seven courses in the number of Merits, or Distinctions attained, was more than thirty five percent (35.28%).

Of course it could be argued that this was just a set of accidental results (e.g., the cohort of students may be of a higher calibre, the exams may have been easier or lecturers may have marked assignments differently) and thus there is no direct proof that the program really caused the variation in results. To provide a contrast to the results from classes where the lecturers were involved in the program, student results from non-participating lecturers were also compared. There was a 7% drop in the number of 'Merit' or 'Distinction' results in classes for students of lecturers who did not participate in the program between 2008 and 2009 (compared to the 35% increase for students of participant lecturers). The 2009 failure rate for students of non-participant lecturers dropped by 1% from 2008, in contrast the participant group failure rate dropped by 10% in 2009.

One could have expected the results for the two groups to follow the same trend if the program had little or no effect. Student results from the participating lecturers

would have remained static, or even dropped, as did the results of the non-participating lecturers. However, the participant lecturers, who originally had students with lower overall scores, produced results that surpassed the non-participants in regard to the number of students earning 'Merit' or higher. Of course it is not possible, as discussed previously, to insist that the improved results were directly due to the 'Public Speaking for Lecturers' program as many other factors could have affected the lecturers' performance from one year to the next, including a different cohort of students. These statistically significant differences do indicate, however, that it is worthwhile continuing to further examine the effect of public speaking training upon lecturers.

Limitations

A number of issues experienced during the study may have limited the final results to some extent. Initially a larger number of lecturers voiced their interest in being involved in the training program but time-tabled classes or other activities (e.g., trainee teacher supervision) precluded their involvement. Some of the participants also failed to attend one of the six sessions of the program, hence missing valuable instruction. In each case there were valid reasons for missing the sessions but emphasizing the importance of each session in advance to both participants and university administrators may have reduced this issue.

The analysis of results both before and after the training program has provided an intriguing contrast. However as the UNITAR schedule only allowed the program to run during a seven week term it is not possible to know whether or not the results may have been different if the training program had run for more than the six sessions used in this study.

Results provided directly by students may also have been made more valuable. The use of questionnaires to establish a base line and subsequent follow-up of staff and

student attitudes was also found to put limitations on the information available for analysis. When using a Likert style questionnaire respondents are locked into a small number of responses and, although this may be a time and cost effective method of data collection, the interview process reveals much more about participants' attitudes and responses to the public speaking program. Interviewing a cross-section of students, as well as the participating lecturers, at the beginning and the end of the training program (perhaps in conjunction with the use of questionnaires or surveys) could have produced more valuable data.

Student questionnaire results may also have been more useful if they had been administered by the researcher rather than the lecturers so that the purpose of the study could have been thoroughly explained to the students. In this way the data may have been more honest and not influenced by a bias towards putting their lecturers in a positive light based on their desire to give a favourable impression of their lecturers.

Finally it should be pointed out that a larger selection of courses (unfortunately this was not available at the time this study was conducted) would have provided more results that would help to evaluate whether the public speaking skills training program was successful in improving the quality of the lectures being provided, as well as student comprehension and retention.

Implications of this Research

When lectures are not presented well students fail to benefit fully from the material, and lectures that are lengthy and full of facts do not necessarily convey a lot of information (Wenzel, 1999). Consequently many suggestions have been made about a range of techniques that can be used to improve comprehension and knowledge retention. Frequently lecturers are invited to use active learning strategies to involve

students in the topic and enhance engagement with the material (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). This is certainly one way of increasing student engagement (Walker et al., 2008), but the fact remains that students will not continue to be engaged with the topic if they cannot see a reason to do so (Kuh, 2004). It still takes an effective lecturer to capture the interest of a group of students and make them want to be involved with the material (Held & McKimm, 2008; Hogan & Kwiakowski, 2004). There is a substantial amount of literature indicating that successful lecturing requires many of the elements of good public speaking.

In 2008 The Centre for Teaching Excellence located at the University of Waterloo, Canada, produced a guideline to assist lecturers to improve their method of delivery. The paper offers guidelines focused around five points (Structuring the Lecture Clearly, Keeping Students Engaged, Avoid Writing out a Complete Lecture Script, Delivering the Lecture, Using Visual Aids) to help lecturers address their audience. Similarly, Becker and Schneider (2004) published a list of recommendations to help lecturers of a 'tough' subject make their subject more palatable to their students and thus maintain student engagement with the subject. Their focus was on use of repetition for emphasis, use of visual aids, logic, in-class activities, real-life application, understandable vocabulary, treating students with respect and always demanding high standards. It is interesting to note that nearly all of these points are typically included in public speaking courses.

This lecturer training program, Public Speaking for Lecturers, conducted over a period of six, two hour sessions, appears to have helped lecturers develop the way they approach and present material to their students. After the first session some lecturers were receiving positive comments from their students, while others received positive feedback after three sessions had been completed. The final results for the term suggest

that students may have learnt more effectively from lecturers who utilize public speaking skills.

Courses in public speaking could be offered as in-service courses for existing educators or as part of the pre-teaching training programs being offered by universities and colleges (Grollman & Rauner, 2007). Improving lecturing skills through the development of public speaking skills may be an effective way to improve education internationally, with potential for improvement in student topic retention and learning standards (Felder & Brent, 1999; Andrews, 2006).

Future Research

With the potential to help lecturers develop their teaching skills it is certainly worth repeating studies similar to this one in both smaller and larger institutions of higher learning. This would provide further information about the value of public speaking training for lecturers. UNITAR lecturers who completed the Public Speaking for Educators program stated that they felt much more confident when lecturing. Added to this benefit the potential to bring educational advantages to students would indicate that training in public speaking could be of value to most educational institutions. It is surmised that better teaching practice should also result in more satisfied students (Bain, 2004). Although this study did not reveal an improvement in student evaluations of lecturers, further research could explore the relationship between student satisfaction and lecturer skills. In particular, studies that are conducted over a longer trial period or with a different method of data collection may find a positive relationship between student satisfaction and lecturing skills. As this study was only conducted in one country, Malaysia, it would also be of great value to repeat the analysis in other countries, and perhaps at different levels of educational institutions (colleges or

schools), to see whether the development of public speaking skills also has benefits in other cultural and educational settings.

Conclusion

Worldwide there are many ongoing debates about the quality of education and these debates may be just as common whether involving centres of higher learning, primary or secondary schools. Universities and individual writers are prolific in the amount of material they produce to give advice on how to improve lecturing and teaching skills in general (Becker and Schneider, 2004; Driscoll, 2000), but very little empirical research has been conducted to analyse the effects of applying the suggested techniques. This study was conducted to document the effects of training lecturers in the use of public speaking skills and to analyse the results brought about by applying the newly learnt skills in their lectures. The results have been documented and submitted as evidence that public speaking training has the potential to improve lecturer effectiveness.

This study was conducted in a private university in Malaysia where students generally are instructed under the typical Malaysian education system which is teacher-centric and effectively encourages students to be non-interactive listeners (Liu & Littlewood, 1997; TimeAsia, 2006). The Malaysian government, however, is interested in improving its country's education programs and the standard of delivery. The Sabah Campus of University Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) was willing to allow this study to be carried out using eleven of their lecturers as volunteer participants (although only nine courses finally met the criteria for analysis of results). The program succeeded in encouraging lecturers to be more interactive with their students and to focus on involving the students more fully in the learning process (Zhenhui, 2001).

The overall results showed that lecturers increased in their confidence as presenters and although the students' questionnaire results did not reveal that they felt significantly more positively about their lecturers, some students commented informally that they were happy with the changes that their lecturers had made. It could be hoped that further training would result in an increase in lecturing standards to the point where most students would perceive an improvement in lecturing technique. The overall improvement of final grades for the term was indicative of results being influenced by factors other than chance. The term results following the training program improved by an average of more than twenty five percent in 'Merit' grades (25.25%) and produced a fifty five percent (55%) drop in failures from the previous short term.

These results indicate that there is value in pursuing research into the advantages of public speaking training for lecturers. Such a program is relatively easy to implement and has the potential to improve lecture quality, and subsequently student results, in many settings. Both experienced and relatively new lecturers expressed appreciation for the public speaking program that was the focus of this thesis. All participant lecturers felt that they had made improvements in the way they lecture after completing the six sessions of the program.

It would seem likely that programs such as this can be used to improve educational results, not just in the Malaysian setting, but also elsewhere. By providing a public speaking course such as this one for new lecturers they will be quickly able to develop teaching skills and self-confidence. Even experienced lecturers can be benefitted by such a training program, reinvigorating their presentation, or possibly even completely changing the way they lecture. A verifiable improvement in educational outcomes through improving the quality of face to face teaching by developing the public speaking skills of lecturers may be attainable by educational

institutions internationally. Educational institutions in general could be benefitted by engaging qualified trainers to teach these skills to their lecturers.

Appendix A

Lecturer's Personal Assessment Questionnaire

Course:

Please CIRCLE the number you feel best describes your opinion about your teaching technique.

NB This research is intended to help lecturers improve their teaching technique. Honest answers will help everyone in your university to benefit.

As a lecturer you:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unable to Rate
1. Encourage students to participate in class.	4	3	2	1	0
2. Give students opportunities to ask questions.	4	3	2	1	0
3. Use visual aids effectively.	4	3	2	1	0
4. Give structured and logical lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
5. Teach so that all students can understand.	4	3	2	1	0
6. Show interest in <i>individual</i> student learning.	4	3	2	1	0
7. Give lively lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
8. Do not speak clearly.	4	3	2	1	0
9. Keep students interested throughout lectures	4	3	2	1	0
10. Show enthusiasm for your subject.	4	3	2	1	0
11. Demonstrate the practical value of your material.	4	3	2	1	0
12. Make it easy for students to remember points.	4	3	2	1	0

NB This research is intended to help lecturers improve their teaching technique. Honest answers will help everyone in your university to benefit.

Appendix B

Lecturer's Post Course Personal Assessment Questionnaire

Course:

Please CIRCLE the number you feel best describes your opinion about your teaching technique.

As a lecturer you now:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unable to Rate
1. Focus <i>more</i> on encouraging students to participate in class.	4	3	2	1	0
2. Give students <i>more</i> opportunities to ask questions.	4	3	2	1	0
3. Use visual aids <i>more</i> effectively.	4	3	2	1	0
4. Give <i>more</i> structured and logical lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
5. Teach even <i>more</i> clearly than previously.	4	3	2	1	0
6. Show <i>more</i> interest in individual student learning.	4	3	2	1	0
7. Give <i>livelier</i> lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
8. Fail to speak clearly.	4	3	2	1	0
9. Keep students <i>more</i> focused and interested throughout lectures	4	3	2	1	0
10. Show <i>greater</i> enthusiasm for your subject.	4	3	2	1	0
11. <i>Try harder</i> to demonstrate the practical value of your material.	4	3	2	1	0
12. <i>Aim</i> to make it easy for students to remember points.	4	3	2	1	0

NB This research is intended to help lecturers improve their teaching technique. Honest answers will help everyone in your university to benefit.

Appendix C

Lecturer's Technique Questionnaire for Students

Course:

Term:

Year: 20 _ _

Your age

Male Female (Tick one)

Please CIRCLE the number you feel best describes your opinion about your lecturer's teaching technique.

The Lecturer:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unable to Rate
1. Encourages us to participate in class.	4	3	2	1	0
2. Gives us opportunities to ask questions.	4	3	2	1	0
3. Uses visual aids appropriately.	4	3	2	1	0
4. Gives structured and logical lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
5. Teaches so we can understand.	4	3	2	1	0
6. Shows interest in our learning.	4	3	2	1	0
7. Gives lively lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
8. Does not speak clearly.	4	3	2	1	0
9. Keeps us interested during lectures	4	3	2	1	0
10. Shows enthusiasm for the subject.	4	3	2	1	0
11. Demonstrates practical value of material.	4	3	2	1	0
12. Makes it easy to remember points.	4	3	2	1	0

NB This research is intended to help lecturers improve their teaching technique. Honest answers will help everyone in your university to benefit.

Appendix D

Has Your Lecturer's Teaching Style Changed During This Term?

Course:

Term:

Year: 20 _ _

Your age

Male Female (Tick one)

Please CIRCLE the number you feel best describes your opinion about your lecturer's teaching technique.

The Lecturer:	Strongly Agree	Agree (improved)	Disagree (no change)	Strongly Disagree	Unable to Rate
1. Encourages us to participate in class <i>more</i> than at the start of the term.	4	3	2	1	0
2. Gives us <i>more</i> opportunities to ask questions than before.	4	3	2	1	0
3. Uses visual aids <i>better than before</i> .	4	3	2	1	0
4. Gives <i>more</i> structured and logical lectures.	4	3	2	1	0
5. Teaches so we can understand <i>more easily than at the start of the term</i> .	4	3	2	1	0
6. Shows <i>more</i> interest in our learning.	4	3	2	1	0
7. Lectures are <i>more</i> lively than at the beginning of the term.	4	3	2	1	0
8. Speaks <i>more</i> clearly.	4	3	2	1	0
9. Makes lectures <i>more</i> interesting than at the start of the term	4	3	2	1	0
10. Shows <i>more</i> enthusiasm for the subject.	4	3	2	1	0
11. <i>better</i> emphasizes the practical value of material.	4	3	2	1	0
12. Makes it even <i>easier</i> to remember points than at the start of the term.	4	3	2	1	0

NB This research is intended to help lecturers improve their teaching technique. Honest answers will help everyone in your university to benefit.

Public Speaking for Lecturers, Course Outline.

Words Clearly Spoken

What do you need to do?

Express words so that they can easily be understood by your audience. This involves (1) proper use of the speech organs and (2) understanding of the structure of words.

Why is it important?

When you enunciate carefully, others can understand what you say. Words that are clearly spoken are likely to be taken seriously. In order to communicate effectively, you must speak clearly. What you want to say may be interesting, even important, but much of it will be lost if your words are not easily understood.

People are not motivated by speech that they do not really understand. Even though a person has a strong voice and can readily be heard, if his words are slurred, they will not move others to action.

What Makes Speech Indistinct?

It may be failure to open the mouth sufficiently. Jaw muscles that are rigid and lips that scarcely move may contribute to muffled speech. Speaking too rapidly may also result in speech that is difficult to grasp. That is like playing a recording of speech faster than it was designed to run. The words are there, but much of the benefit is lost. In some cases, indistinct speech is related to a structural defect in the speech organs. But even those who must cope with such a problem can do much to improve by applying the suggestions in this study.

Frequently, however, indistinct speech results from a slurring of words—running them together so that they are difficult to understand. The problem may involve skipping syllables or significant letters or dropping word endings. When a person indiscriminately runs words together, his hearers may catch some ideas and phrases but they have to guess at others. Failure to enunciate clearly can impair the effectiveness of a person's teaching.

How to Speak Clearly

One of the keys to saying words clearly is understanding the makeup of words in your language. In most languages, words are made up of syllables. Syllables are made up of one or more letters that are uttered as a single unit. In such languages, each syllable would normally be sounded when you speak, though not all with the same degree of emphasis. If you want to improve the clarity of your speech, slow down and do your best to express each syllable. At first this may sound overly precise, but as you practice, you will gradually resume a smooth flow of speech. For the sake of fluency, you will no doubt run certain words together, but this should be avoided if there is any danger of obscuring the sense of the words.

A note of caution: To cultivate your enunciation, you may practice speaking and reading in an overly precise manner. But do not allow that to become your regular manner of speaking. It would sound affected and unnatural.

Learning to release tension can also improve your speech. It is well-known that tension in the facial muscles or in those controlling your breathing can have an adverse effect on the speech mechanism. Such tension interferes with the harmonious coordination that should exist between your mind, vocal organs, and breath control—an operation that should be smooth and natural.

The jaw muscles need to be relaxed in order to respond readily to direction from the brain. The lips must also be relaxed. They have to be ready to expand and contract rapidly so as to put the finishing touches to many sounds that originate in the mouth and the throat. If the jaw and the lips are tense, the mouth will not open properly, and sound will be forced through the teeth. This will result in gruff, muffled, indistinct speech. Relaxing the jaw and the lips, however, does not mean becoming lazy in speech habits. This needs to be balanced with the habit of forming sounds so that enunciation is clear.

Do you have a speech impediment? Practice opening your mouth a little more than you have in the past, and try enunciating even more carefully. Fill your lungs when you take a breath, and speak slowly. Doing this has enabled many with speech impediments to speak with improved clarity. If you lisp, pull your tongue away from your front teeth when uttering the *s* and *z* sounds in words.

Factors to Consider

No one set of rules of pronunciation applies to all languages. Many languages are written in alphabetic letters. In addition to the Latin alphabet, there are such alphabets as Arabic, Cyrillic, Greek, and Hebrew. Instead of an alphabet, written Chinese uses characters that may be made up of a number of elements. These characters usually stand for a word or part of a word. Although Japanese and Korean borrow from Chinese, the characters may be used to represent very different sounds and may not carry the same meaning.

In alphabetic languages, proper pronunciation requires using the right sound for each letter or combination of letters. When such a language follows consistent rules, as is true of Greek, Spanish, and Zulu, the task is not so difficult. However, foreign influences on a language may result in pronunciations that reflect the origin of the words. As a result, a specific letter or group of letters may be pronounced in more than

one way or, at times, may not be pronounced at all. You may need to memorize the exceptions and then use them often in your speech. In Chinese, proper pronunciation requires memorization of thousands of characters. In some languages the meaning of a word changes when the tone is altered. Failure to give adequate attention to this aspect of a language can result in conveying wrong ideas.

If the words of a language are made up of syllables, it is important to place the primary stress on the correct syllable. Many languages that use such a structure have a fairly regular pattern of oral stress. Where there are exceptions to that pattern, an accent mark may be part of the written word. This helps to make proper pronunciation relatively easy. However, if the pattern is not consistent, the problem is more difficult. Dealing with it successfully requires much memorization.

In some languages, diacritics are a major factor to consider. These include marks shown above and below certain letters of the alphabet, such as: è, é, ô, ñ, õ, ŭ, č, ö, ç. The diacritical marks may be written, or the reader may be expected to supply them on the basis of the context in which a word appears. In the latter case, careful preparation will likely be needed when you are assigned to read publicly.

With regard to pronunciation, there are some pitfalls to avoid. Being overly precise can give the impression of affectation, even snobbishness. The same can be said of pronunciation that is no longer in general use. The only effect will be to draw attention to the speaker. On the other hand, it is good to avoid the opposite extreme of using slovenly speech and pronunciation. Acceptable pronunciation of the words of a language may differ from one country to another, even from one part of a country to another part of the same country. A person from another country may speak the local language with a distinctive accent. Dictionaries may list more than one acceptable pronunciation for a word.

Practices to Avoid

Many people have the mannerism of inserting such expressions as “and-uh” when they speak. Others frequently start a thought with “now,” or they tack a phrase, such as “you know” or “you see,” on to whatever they are saying. Perhaps you are unaware of the frequency with which you use such expressions. You might try a practice session in which someone listens to you and repeats these expressions each time you say them. You may be surprised.

Some people read and speak with numerous regressions. That is, they begin a sentence and then interrupt themselves midway and repeat at least a portion of what they already said. Still others speak rapidly enough, but they start with one line of thought and then, mid-sentence, shift to something else. Though words flow freely, abrupt changes in thought impair fluency.

How to Improve

If your problem is that you often grope for the right word, you need to make a concerted effort to build up your vocabulary. Take special note of words that are unfamiliar to you in publications that you may be reading. Look these up in a dictionary, check their pronunciation and their meaning, and add some of these words to your vocabulary. If no dictionary is available to you, ask for help from someone who speaks the language well.

Making it a practice to read aloud regularly will contribute to improvement. Take note of difficult words, and say these aloud several times.

In order to read fluently, it is necessary to understand how words work together in a sentence. Usually words need to be read in groups in order to convey the thought being expressed by the writer. Take special note of these word groupings. If it will help you, mark them. Your objective is not merely to read words correctly but also to convey

thoughts clearly. After you analyse one sentence, go on to the next until you have studied the entire paragraph. Become familiar with the flow of thought. Then practice reading aloud. Read the paragraph repeatedly until you can do it without stumbling and without pausing in the wrong places. Then go on to other paragraphs.

Next, increase your pace. If you have come to appreciate how words within a sentence work together, you will be able to see more than one word at a time and to anticipate what should come next. This will contribute much to the effectiveness of your reading. In conversation, fluency requires that you think before you speak. Make that a practice in your everyday activity. Decide what ideas you want to convey and the order in which you are going to state them; then start speaking. Do not rush. Endeavor to express a complete thought without stopping or changing ideas in midstream. You may find it helpful to use short, simple sentences.

Words should come naturally if you know exactly what you want to say. Generally speaking, it is not necessary to select the words that you will use. In fact, for the sake of practice, it is better just to make certain that the idea is clear in your mind and then to think of the words as you go. If you do and if you keep your mind on the idea rather than on the words that you are speaking, the words will come more or less automatically, and your thoughts will be expressed as you really feel them. But as soon as you begin to think of *words* rather than *ideas*, your speech may become halting. With practice, you can succeed in developing fluency, an important quality in effective speaking and reading.

Appropriate Pausing

What do you need to do?

Make complete stops at appropriate stages of your delivery. At times, you may pause very briefly or simply allow the voice to fade momentarily. The pause is appropriate if it serves a worthwhile purpose.

Why is it important?

Proper use of pausing is an important factor in speech that can readily be understood. Pausing also makes important points stand out. In speech, properly placed pauses are important. This is true whether you are delivering a discourse or speaking with an individual. Without such pauses, what is said may sound like babble instead of clear expression of thought. Appropriate pausing helps to impart clarity to your speech. It can also be used in such a way that your main points will make a lasting impression.

How can you determine when you should pause? How long should pauses be?

Pause to Punctuate

Punctuation has become an important part of written language. It may indicate the end of a statement or a question. In some languages it is used to set off quotations. Some punctuation indicates the relationship of one part of a sentence to other parts. A person who reads to himself can see the punctuation marks. But when he reads aloud for the benefit of others, his voice must convey the meaning of whatever punctuation appears in the written material. Failure to pause when required by punctuation may make it difficult for others to understand what you read or may even result in distorting the meaning of the text.

In addition to punctuation, the way thoughts are expressed within a sentence has a bearing on where pauses are appropriate. A famous musician once said: "The notes I

handle no better than many pianists. But the pauses between the notes, ah, that is where the art resides.” It is similar with speaking. Appropriate use of pausing will add beauty and meaning to your well-prepared material.

In preparing to read publicly, you may find it helpful to mark the printed material from which you will read. Draw a small vertical line where a brief pause, perhaps just a hesitation, is to be inserted. Use two closely spaced vertical lines for a longer pause. If you find that certain wording is awkward for you and you repeatedly pause in the wrong place, make pencil marks to tie together all the words that make up the difficult phrase. Then read the phrase from beginning to end. Many experienced speakers do this.

Pausing in everyday speech usually does not present a problem because you know the ideas that you want to convey. However, if you have the mannerism of pausing at regular intervals regardless of what the thought requires, your speech will lack force and clarity.

Pause for Change of Thought

When you are making a transition from one main point to another, a pause can give your audience an opportunity to reflect, to adjust, to recognize the change in direction, and to grasp more clearly the next thought presented. It is just as important for you to pause when changing from one idea to another as it is for you to slow down when turning the corner from one street into another.

One reason why some speakers rush from one idea to the next without pausing is that they try to cover too much material. For some, the habit reflects their everyday speech pattern. Perhaps everyone around them speaks in the same manner. But that does not result in effective teaching. If you have something to say that is worth hearing and

worth remembering, then take enough time to make the idea stand out clearly.

Recognize that pauses are essential to speech that conveys ideas clearly.

If you are going to give a presentation from an outline, your material should be organized in such a way that it is obvious where to pause between main points. If you will be reading a manuscript, mark the places where there is a change from one main point to the next. Pauses for change of thought are usually longer than pauses for punctuation-however, not so long that they make the delivery drag. If they are too long, they give the impression that you are ill-prepared and are trying to determine what to say next.

Pause for Emphasis

A pause for emphasis is often a dramatic one, that is, one that precedes or follows a statement or a question delivered with a measure of intensity. Such a pause gives the audience opportunity to reflect on what has just been said, or it creates expectancy for what is to follow. These are not the same. Decide which is the appropriate method to use. But keep in mind that pauses for emphasis should be limited to truly significant statements. Otherwise, the value of those statements will be lost.

Pause When Circumstances Require It

Interruptions may also occasionally require that you pause in your speech. If a disturbance is not too severe, you may be able to raise your volume and continue. But if the disturbance is loud and prolonged, you must pause. Your audience will not be listening anyway. So use pausing effectively, with a view to helping your audience get the full benefit of the good things that you want to tell them.

Pause to Allow for Response

Although you may be giving a presentation with no provision for formal audience participation, it is important to allow the audience to respond, not audibly, but

mentally. If you pose questions that should make your audience think but then you fail to pause sufficiently, much of the value of those questions will be lost.

A pause is a moment of silence, and it has truthfully been said that silence punctuates, it emphasizes, it commands attention, and it refreshes the ear. When pauses are used effectively, ideas are more clearly conveyed and are often lastingly remembered.

Proper Sense Stress

When you speak or read aloud, it is important not only that you say individual words correctly but also that you emphasize key words and thought-containing expressions in a way that conveys ideas clearly.

Proper sense stress involves more than giving added emphasis to a few words or even too many. The *right* words must be emphasized. If the wrong words are stressed, the meaning of what you say may be unclear to your audience, who, in turn, may let their thoughts drift to other things. Even though the material may be good, a delivery having poor sense stress will be less effective in motivating the audience.

Added emphasis can be conveyed by various means, frequently used in combination: by greater volume, by more intensity of feeling, by slow and deliberate expression, by pausing before or after a statement (or both), and by gestures and facial expressions. In some languages, emphasis can also be conveyed by lowering the tone or raising the pitch. Take into account the material and the circumstances to determine what would be most appropriate.

When deciding what to emphasize, consider the following. (1) Within any sentence, the words that should be given added stress are determined not only by the rest of the sentence but also by the context. (2) Sense stress may be used to emphasize

the beginning of a new thought, whether a main point or simply a change in the line of reasoning. It might also draw attention to the conclusion of a line of reasoning. (3) A speaker may employ sense stress to show how he feels about a matter. (4) Proper sense stress can also be used to highlight the main points of a presentation.

In order to use sense stress in these ways, a speaker or a public reader must clearly understand his material and earnestly want his audience to absorb it

What May Cause a Problem

Most people are able to make their meaning clear in normal, everyday conversation. However, when they read material that was written by someone else, determining which words or expressions to stress may present a challenge. The key lies in clearly understanding the material. That requires careful study of what was written.

Some people use what might be termed “periodic stress” instead of sense stress. They emphasize words at fairly specific intervals, whether such emphasis is meaningful or not. Others emphasize function words, perhaps putting exaggerated stress on prepositions and conjunctions. When the emphasis does not contribute to clarity of thought, it easily becomes a distracting mannerism.

Principal Ideas Emphasized

An effective reader looks beyond the individual sentence, even beyond the paragraph in which it appears. When he reads, he has in mind the principal ideas in the entire body of material that he is presenting. This influences his placement of emphasis. If this process is not followed, there will be no peaks in the delivery. Nothing will stand out clearly. When the presentation is concluded, it may be difficult to remember anything as being outstanding.

There are various ways in which a speaker can convey the emphasis needed to help the audience identify the main points. He might use heightened enthusiasm, a change of pace, depth of feeling, or appropriate gestures, to mention a few.

Suitable Volume

If a public speaker lacks needed volume, some in the audience may begin to doze. On the other hand, if a speaker increases his volume at the wrong time, the audience may become uncomfortable—even annoyed.

Consider Your Audience

How can you tell whether the volume that you are using is suitable in a given situation? Audience reaction is one of the best barometers. If you notice that some in the audience are straining to hear, you should endeavor to adjust your volume.

It is always wise to consider who make up the audience. If someone is hard of hearing, you may need to raise your voice. But shouting will not endear you to people who may simply react a little slower because of advanced age. It may even be considered a sign of rudeness. In some cultures, too much volume is viewed as evidence that a person is angry or impatient.

Consider Distracting Noises

In the middle of a speech, something might happen that calls for either a pause until the disturbance subsides or an increase in volume. For example in a structure with a tin roof, a sudden downpour may make it almost impossible for the audience to hear the speaker. A crying child or a disturbance caused by late arrivals will surely present a challenge. Learn to compensate for the distractions so that your audience can benefit fully from the information you are presenting.

Sound-amplifying equipment will be helpful if it is available, but it does not eliminate the need for increased volume on the part of the speaker when the situation calls for it. In some places where power outages are frequent, speakers are obliged to continue their presentation without the aid of a microphone.

Consider the Material Being Discussed

The nature of the material in your presentation also has a bearing on the volume needed. If the subject calls for strength, do not weaken the presentation by speaking too softly.

Consider Your Objective

If you want to stimulate your audience to act, you may need to use somewhat stronger volume. If you want to change their thinking, do not drive them away by using too much volume. If you are endeavoring to elicit an emotional response, a softer voice is usually better.

How to Improve Your Volume

For some, more than the usual effort is required to learn how to use suitable volume. A person may speak with insufficient volume because of having a weak voice. However, with effort, improvement may be possible, though he may still be soft-spoken. Give attention to breathing and posture. Practice sitting and standing erect. Push back your shoulders, and breathe deeply. Be sure that you are filling the lower part of your lungs. It is this air supply, properly regulated, that makes it possible for you to control your volume when speaking.

Modulation

Lack of modulation may give the impression that you have no real interest in your subject. Your use of simple sense stress helps an audience to understand what you say. But when you make good use of *variety* in volume, pace, and pitch, your presentation can be much more enjoyable to listen to. More than that, it may tell your audience how you feel about what you are saying. *Your* attitude toward the material can influence how *they* feel about it.

The human voice is a marvelous instrument, capable of great variety. Properly used, it can give life to a presentation, touch the heart, stir emotions, and motivate to action. However, this cannot be achieved by simply marking your notes to indicate where to adjust the volume, change the pace, or vary the pitch. Modulation in response to such cues will sound artificial. Instead of imparting life and color to your delivery, it may make your audience feel uncomfortable. Proper use of modulation springs from the heart.

Adjust the Volume

One way to vary your vocal expression is to adjust your volume. But this should not be simply a routine increase or decrease in volume with monotonous regularity. That would distort the sense of what you are saying. If you raise the volume too often, the impression will be unpleasant.

Consider, too, your objective. Do you want to motivate your audience to action? Do you want to make the main points of your presentation stand out? Greater volume, used with discretion, helps to accomplish these objectives. When used with discernment, a drop in volume can stir up anticipation. But that usually requires greater intensity of tone immediately afterward. Lower volume coupled with increased intensity can be used to convey anxiety or fear. Reduced volume may also be used to indicate

that what is being said is of secondary importance in comparison with what surrounds it. If your volume is always low, however, this may convey uncertainty or lack of conviction on your part or lack of real interest in your subject. Obviously, very soft tones need to be used with discretion.

Change Your Pace

In everyday speech, words flow spontaneously as we express our thoughts. When we are excited, we tend to speak rapidly. When we want others to remember exactly what we say, the pace of our speech becomes more deliberate.

However, few speakers who are new to the public platform vary their pace. Why? They prepare their wording too carefully. It may all be written down. Even if the presentation is not delivered from a script, the words may be virtually memorized. As a result, everything is delivered in a measured pace. Learning to speak from an outline will help to correct this weakness.

To achieve variety in your pace, do not simply speed up and slow down at regular intervals. Rather than enhancing the material you are presenting, that style of delivery will detract from it. Changes of pace should be geared to what you are saying, the emotions you want to convey, and your objective. Deliver your presentation at a moderate pace. To convey excitement, speak more rapidly, just as you would in everyday life. This is also appropriate when stating points of lesser importance or when narrating events in which details are not vital. This will add variety and help to keep your presentation from sounding too heavy. On the other hand, weightier arguments, main points, and climaxes in delivery usually call for a slower pace.

Vary Your Pitch

Imagine someone playing a musical instrument for an hour or so. During all that time, he sounds just one note—first loudly, then softly, at times quickly, then slowly.

There is variation in volume and in pace, but with no variation of pitch, the “music” is not very appealing. Similarly, without variety in pitch, our voice will not be pleasant to the ears.

It must be noted that changes in pitch do not have the same effect in all languages. In a tonal language, such as Chinese, changing the pitch may change the meaning of a word. Nevertheless, even in such a language, there are things that a person can do to add greater variety to his vocal expressions. He can work at improving the range of his voice while retaining the same relative values for the various tones. Thus he can make the high tones higher and the low tones lower.

Even in languages that are not tonal, a change in pitch may convey a variety of ideas. For example, a slight raising of the pitch accompanied by a comparable increase in volume may be used for sense stress. Or a change in pitch may be a means of indicating size or distance. A rising inflection at the end of a sentence may indicate that a question is being asked. Some languages may require a falling inflection.

Excitement and enthusiasm may be expressed with a higher pitch. (In a tonal language, that may call for a wider range of the voice.) Sorrow and anxiety may call for a lower pitch. (Or in a tonal language, a narrower voice range.) When you want to express emotions, do not simply *say* the words. Use your voice in a way that shows that you also *feel* them.

Laying a Foundation

Where, then, does modulation begin? With the selection of your material. If you include nothing but argumentation or nothing but information, you will have little opportunity for variety in your delivery. So analyse your outline, and make sure that you have the ingredients needed for a colorful, informative presentation.

Suppose that in the middle of your presentation, you feel the need for greater variety because your presentation is dragging. What then? Change the nature of your material. How? One way is to convert some statement into a question, adding a pause for emphasis. Insert a simple illustration. These are techniques used by experienced speakers. But regardless of the extent of your experience, you can use the same ideas when preparing your material.

It can be said that modulation is the spice in a presentation. If the right kind is used and in the right amount, it will draw out the full flavor of your material and make it a delight to your audience.

Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm helps give life to a presentation. While it is important to have informative material, it is a lively, enthusiastic delivery that will help capture the attention of an audience. Regardless of your cultural background or personality, you can cultivate enthusiasm.

Think About Your Audience

An important factor in manifesting enthusiasm is having the conviction that your audience needs to hear what you have to say. Work on your material until you have something that you feel excited about. It need not be new, but your approach to the subject can be fresh.

Show Enthusiasm by Animated Delivery

Enthusiasm is most clearly manifested by animation in your delivery. This should be evident in your facial expression. You must sound convinced but balance is needed. Some may be inclined to get excited about everything. They may need to be helped to realize that when a person becomes bombastic or overly emotional, his

audience will be thinking about him rather than about the message. On the other hand, those who are shy need encouragement to be more expressive.

Enthusiasm is contagious. If you have good audience contact and are enthusiastic about your presentation, your audience will pick up that enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm Appropriate to Material

Take care not to carry your enthusiasm on such a high plane throughout your entire presentation that your audience becomes exhausted. Any exhortation that you give to act on what is being discussed will fall on weary ears. This emphasizes the need to prepare material that allows for variety in your delivery. Try not to lapse into a style that reflects indifference. If you choose your material carefully, you will be keenly interested in it. But some points naturally call for more enthusiasm in delivery than others, and these should be skillfully interwoven throughout your presentation.

Main points particularly should be presented enthusiastically. Your presentation must have peaks, climaxes to which you build. Since these are the high points of your presentation, they will usually be the points designed to motivate your audience. Having convinced your audience, you need to stimulate them, to show them the benefits of applying what has been discussed. Your enthusiasm will help you reach the hearts of your listeners. Animated delivery should never be forced.

Gestures and Facial Expressions

People of some cultures gesture more freely than those from other backgrounds. Yet, practically everyone talks with changes of facial expression and some form of gesturing. This is true both in personal conversation and in public speaking. Ideas and feelings are communicated not only with the voice but also by means of gestures and facial expressions. Failure to use these well may convey an impression of indifference

on the part of the one speaking. But when these means of communication are tastefully blended, the effectiveness of speech is greatly enhanced. Your gestures and your facial expressions should not be taken from a book. You never had to study how to laugh or how to be indignant. Gestures should also express feelings that are within you. The more spontaneous your gestures, the better.

Gestures fall into two general categories: descriptive and emphatic. *Descriptive* gestures express action or show dimension and location. Try to gesture in a natural way throughout your presentation. If you are having difficulty in doing this, you may find it helpful to look for words that show direction, distance, size, location, or relative positions. In many cases, however, all that you need to do is to get absorbed in your presentation, not worrying about the impression you are making, but saying and doing things as you would in daily life. When a person is relaxed, gestures come naturally.

Emphatic gestures express feeling and conviction. They punctuate, vitalize, and reinforce ideas. Emphatic gestures are important but can easily become mannerisms. If you use the same gesture again and again, it may begin to draw attention to itself instead of enhancing your presentation. In determining the extent to which you should use emphatic gestures and the sort of gestures that are appropriate, consider the feelings of those to whom you are speaking. Pointing at the audience may make them feel uncomfortable. If a male in some cultures were to make certain gestures, such as putting his hand over his mouth to express surprise, this would be viewed as effeminate. In some parts of the world, it is considered immodest for women to gesture freely with the hands. And before a small group, sweeping gestures may be viewed as comical in almost any part of the world.

As you gain experience and become more at ease in speaking, any emphatic gestures that you do use will express your inner feelings naturally, demonstrating your conviction and sincerity. They will add meaning to your speech.

The Expression on Your Face

More than any other bodily feature, your face often expresses how you really feel. Your eyes, the shape of your mouth, the inclination of your head all play a part. Without a word being spoken, your face can convey indifference, disgust, perplexity, amazement, or delight. When such facial expressions accompany the spoken word, they add visual and emotional impact. Nearly half of these come into play when you smile. Your smile can help people to relax and to be more receptive to what you say.

Visual Contact

Where it is not offensive, looking an individual in the eye when making an important statement can add emphasis to what is said. It may be viewed as evidence of conviction on the part of the speaker. If shyness makes visual contact difficult for you at first, do not give up. With practice, appropriate visual contact will become natural, and it may add to your effectiveness in communicating with others.

During your presentation, look at the audience. Do not merely look at the group as a whole. Endeavor to look at individuals in it. In almost every culture, some degree of eye contact is expected on the part of a public speaker.

Looking at your audience means more than simply making a rhythmic eye movement from one side to the other. Make respectful visual contact with someone in the audience, and if appropriate, say a full sentence to that individual. Then look at another, and say a sentence or two to that person. Do not look at anyone so long that he becomes uncomfortable, and do not concentrate on only a few people in the entire audience. Continue to move your eyes through the audience in this way, but as you

Speak to a person, really talk to that one and notice his reaction before you pass on to another.

If it is necessary to move your entire head to see your notes, audience contact will suffer. Consideration should be given both to how often you look at your notes and to when you do so. If you are looking at your notes while you are reaching a climax in the presentation, not only will you fail to see your audience's reaction but your delivery will lose some of its force. Likewise, if you are constantly consulting your notes, you will lose audience contact.

When you throw a ball to someone, you look to see if it is caught. Each thought in your presentation is a separate "throw" to the audience. A "catch" may be indicated by their response—a nod, a smile, an attentive look. If you maintain good visual contact, this can help you to make sure that your ideas are being "caught."

Naturalness

Expressing yourself in a natural manner helps you win the confidence of others. Would you put your confidence in something said by someone who spoke to you from behind a mask? Would it make a difference if the face on the mask was more handsome than the speaker's own face? Not likely. So rather than using a disguise, be yourself.

Naturalness should not be confused with carelessness. Poor grammar, wrong pronunciation, and muffled speech are not appropriate. Slang should also be avoided. We always want to manifest appropriate dignity, both in our speech and in our bearing. Someone who manifests such naturalness is neither overly formal nor overly concerned about impressing others.

When you speak to a group, a natural, conversational style of delivery is usually best. Of course, when the audience is large, you need greater voice projection. If you try

to memorize your presentation or if your notes are too detailed, you are probably overly concerned about wording things precisely. Appropriate wording is important, but when it is given too much attention, delivery becomes stiff and formal. Naturalness is lost. Your ideas should be carefully thought out in advance, but give most of your attention to the ideas, not the exact wording.

Even desirable speech qualities taken to an extreme may strike an audience as being unnatural. For example, you should speak distinctly and use proper pronunciation but not to the extent that your speech sounds stiff or artificial. Emphatic or descriptive gestures, when done well, can enliven your presentation, but gestures that are stiff or grandiose will detract from what you are saying. Use ample volume, but try not to be excessively loud. It is good occasionally to put fire into your delivery, but you should avoid being bombastic. Modulation, enthusiasm, and feeling should all be used in a manner that does not draw attention to yourself or make your audience feel uncomfortable.

Good Personal Appearance

Your personal appearance says much about you. When you are clean and well-groomed, others will likely conclude that you have self-respect, and they will be more inclined to listen to you.

Posture

Good personal appearance also involves proper posture. Of course, we do not all carry ourselves in the same way, and we do not endeavor to conform to a certain pattern. For those who are able to do so, standing reasonably erect when speaking to others is recommended so as not to convey an indifferent or apologetic attitude. Likewise, while it is not wrong for a speaker occasionally to rest his hands on the

speaker's stand, a more positive impression is generally conveyed to the audience if he does not lean on the stand.

Poise

It is not unusual for a speaker to feel nervous when he gets up to speak, especially if he does not do so frequently. A poised speaker is one who is composed. This composure is evident in his physical bearing. His posture is natural and appropriate to the occasion. Movement of his hands is meaningful. His voice is expressive and controlled.

Even though you may feel that this description of a poised person does not fit you, you can improve. How? Let us consider why a speaker feels nervous and lacks poise. The cause may be physical. When you are faced with a challenge and want to do well but are not sure that you will, you feel anxiety. As a result, the brain signals the body to produce more adrenaline. The resulting surge may cause a more rapid heartbeat, a change in breathing rate, increased perspiration, or even shakiness in the hands and knees as well as trembling of the voice. Your body is endeavoring to help you deal with your situation by increasing your energy level. The challenge is to channel the surge of energy into constructive thinking and enthusiastic delivery.

How to Reduce Anxiety

Remember that it is normal to feel some anxiety. To maintain poise, however, you need to be able to reduce the level of anxiety and deal with your situation in a calm and dignified manner. How can you accomplish this?

Prepare thoroughly. Invest time in the preparation of your presentation. Make sure that you clearly understand your subject. If your presentation is one in which you select the points to cover, take into account what your audience already knows about the subject and what you hope to accomplish. This will help you to select material that is most

worthwhile. If at first you find that difficult, discuss the problem with an experienced speaker. He can help you make a constructive analysis of your material and of the audience. When you are sure that you have material that will benefit your audience and you have it clearly in mind, your desire to share it will begin to overshadow the anxiety that you may feel about the delivery.

Give special attention to your introduction. Know how you are going to start. Once your presentation is under way, your nervousness will likely subside.

Practice your delivery aloud. Such practice will give you confidence that you can put your thoughts into words. As you practice, you build up memory patterns that can readily be activated when you give your presentation. Make your practice session realistic. Visualize your audience.

After you have taken the steps outlined above, you will find it beneficial to examine the symptoms that point unmistakably to lack of composure. Identifying the symptoms and learning how to cope with these will help you speak with poise. The symptoms may be physical or vocal.

Physical Symptoms

Your poise, or lack of it, is shown by your physical bearing and the way that you use your hands. Consider first the hands. Hands clasped behind the back, held rigidly at the sides, or tightly clutching the speaker's stand; hands repeatedly in and out of pockets, buttoning and unbuttoning the jacket, aimlessly moving to the cheek, the nose, the eyeglasses; hands toying with a watch, a pencil, a ring, or notes; hand gestures that are jerky or incomplete—all of these demonstrate a lack of poise.

Lack of confidence may also be indicated by constantly shuffling the feet, swaying the body from side to side, standing with posture that is overly rigid, slouching,

frequently moistening the lips, repeatedly swallowing, and breathing in a rapid and shallow manner.

With conscious effort these manifestations of nervousness can be controlled. Work on just one at a time. Identify the problem, and consider in advance what you need to do to prevent it. If you make that effort, you will give evidence of poise in your physical bearing.

Vocal Symptoms

Vocal evidences of nervousness may include an abnormally high-pitched or trembling voice. Perhaps you repeatedly clear the throat or speak too rapidly. These problems and mannerisms can be conquered by diligent effort to bring the voice under control.

If you feel nervous, pause to take a few deep breaths before you go to the platform. Endeavor to relax your entire body. Instead of thinking about your nervousness, concentrate on why you want to share with your audience the things you have prepared. Before beginning to speak, take a moment to look at your audience, pick out a friendly face, and smile. Speak slowly in the introduction, and then get immersed in your presentation.

What to Expect

Do not expect all feelings of nervousness to disappear. If you make a sincere effort to eliminate the outward manifestations of nervousness, your audience will view you as a poised speaker. You may still feel nervous, but they may not be aware of that at all.

Remember, the surge of adrenaline that causes symptoms of nervousness also brings increased energy. Use it to speak with feeling.

Respect Shown to Others

When we accord people dignity, this engenders an atmosphere in which an interchange of ideas is more readily possible.

Expressed With Conviction

When a person speaks with conviction, others see that he firmly believes what he is saying. Expressing conviction is not the same as being opinionated, dogmatic, or arrogant. Often people notice your manner as much as your message. They sense how you really feel about what you say. Your conviction can convey, more powerfully than words alone, that you have something of great value to share.

Conviction may also be shown by the earnestness and the intensity of your expression. Your facial expressions, your gestures, and your body language all contribute to this, though these may vary somewhat from person to person. Even if you are shy or soft-spoken by nature, when you are fully persuaded that what you are saying is the truth and that others need to hear it, your conviction will be evident.

Of course, any expressions of conviction that we make must be genuine. If people sense that we are pretending rather than speaking from the heart, they will likely conclude that our message lacks substance. Therefore, above all, be yourself. Depending on the size of your audience, you may need to speak with greater volume than usual and with more intensity. But your aim should be to express yourself sincerely and naturally.

Aids to Expressing Conviction

Since your conviction involves your feelings about your material, good preparation is the key. Simply copying material from a publication and then reciting it

are not sufficient. You need to understand the material clearly and to be able to express it in your own words. This means that when preparing your presentation, you take into account their circumstances as well as what they may already know about the subject or how they may feel about it.

It is easier for others to sense our conviction when our delivery is fluent. Therefore, in addition to preparing good material, work hard on your delivery. Give special attention to the portions of your material that call for greater emphasis so that you can deliver them without being tied to your notes.

Repetition for Emphasis

Effective teaching includes the use of repetition. When an important point is stated more than once, those in attendance are more likely to remember it. If the idea is restated in a slightly different way, they may even be able to understand it more clearly.

If your listeners do not remember what you say, your words will not influence them. They will probably continue thinking about points to which you give special emphasis.

To make use of repetition, you might first outline your main points in the *introduction*. Do that with short statements that provide a broad overview of what you will cover, with questions, or with brief examples that pose problems to be resolved. You might state how many main points there are and list them by number. Then develop each of those points in the body of your presentation. Emphasis can be reinforced in the *body* of your presentation by restating each main point before going on to the next one. Or it can be accomplished by using an example that involves application of the main point. Further emphasis can be given to your main points by

using a *conclusion* that restates them, highlights them by using contrasts, answers the questions that were raised, or briefly sets out solutions to the problems that were posed.

In addition to the above, an experienced speaker observes carefully the individuals who make up his audience. If some of them find a certain idea difficult to grasp, the speaker is aware of it. If the point is important, it is covered again. However, repeating the same words may not accomplish the speaker's purpose. There is more to teaching than that. A presenter must be adaptable. It may be necessary to make impromptu additions to the presentation. Your learning to cope with the needs of the audience in this way will determine to a great extent your effectiveness as a teacher.

Theme Developed

Experienced speakers know the value of having a theme. When they are preparing a presentation, the theme helps them to focus attention on a narrower field of information and to think more deeply about it. The result is that instead of superficially touching on many points, they develop their material in a way that is more beneficial to their audience. When each of the main points is directly connected to the theme and helps to develop it, the audience is also helped to remember those points and to appreciate their significance.

Although it can be said that your theme is the *subject* on which you speak, you will find that the quality of your presentation will improve if you take the position that your theme is the particular *viewpoint* from which you develop your subject.

How to Emphasize the Theme

In order to give proper emphasis to the theme, you must lay the foundation when selecting and organizing your material. If you use only what supports your theme

and if you follow principles involved in preparing a good outline, you will almost automatically emphasize the theme.

Repetition can help to reinforce the theme. In classical music, a theme is a melody repeated often enough to characterize the entire composition. The melody does not always reappear in the same form. Sometimes only a phrase or two occur, occasionally a variation on the theme is used, but in one way or another, the composer skillfully weaves his melody in and out of the composition until it permeates the whole. That is the way it should be with the theme of a presentation. Repetition of key words from the theme is like the recurring melody of a musical composition. Synonyms of these words or the theme rephrased serves as a variation on the theme. Use of such means will cause the theme to be the main thought your audience carries away.

Main Points Made to Stand Out

What are the main points of a presentation? These are not simply interesting aspects that are briefly stated in passing. They are important ideas that are developed at length. They are the ideas that are crucial to achieving your objective.

A key to making the main points stand out is your selecting and organizing of material wisely. Research for a presentation frequently yields more information than can be used. How can you determine what to use?

First, consider your audience. Second, be sure that you have clearly in mind your objective in speaking to that audience on the subject you plan to use. Using these two guidelines, evaluate the material and retain only what really fits.

If you have been given a basic outline with a theme and main points, you should adhere to it. However, the value of what you present will be greatly enhanced if you keep in mind the above factors when developing each main point. When you have your

main points clearly in mind and have organized the details under these, it will be easier for you to give the presentation. Likely, your audience will also get more out of it.

Not Too Many Main Points

There are only a few essentials in developing any theme. In the majority of cases, these can be numbered on one hand. This is true whether you will be speaking for 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 30 minutes, or longer. Do not try to make too many points stand out. Your audience can reasonably grasp only a few different ideas from one presentation. And the longer the presentation, the stronger and more sharply defined the key points must be.

Regardless of how many main points you use, be sure to develop each one sufficiently. Allow the audience enough time to examine each main point so that it becomes firmly impressed on their minds.

Your presentation should give an impression of simplicity. This does not always depend on the amount of material presented. If your thoughts are clearly grouped under just a few main headings and you develop these one at a time, the presentation will be easy to follow and hard to forget.

Make Your Main Points Stand Out

If your material is properly organized, it will not be difficult to reinforce the significance of your main points by means of your delivery. The principal way to make a main point stand out is to present points of proof in such a manner that these focus attention on the main idea and amplify it. All secondary points should clarify, prove, or amplify the main point. Do not add irrelevant ideas just because they are interesting. As you develop secondary points, show clearly their connection with the main point that they support. Do not leave it to the audience to figure out. The connection can be shown

by repeating key words that express the main thought or by repeating the gist of the main point itself from time to time.

Some speakers highlight the main points by numbering them. While that is one way to highlight main points, it should not replace careful selection and logical development of the material itself.

You may choose simply to state your main point up front before you present the supporting argument. This will help the audience to appreciate the value of what follows, and it will also emphasize that main point. You might reinforce the point by summarizing it after it has been fully developed.

Interest-Arousing Introduction

The introduction is a crucial part of any presentation. If you really arouse the interest of your audience, they will be more inclined to listen intently to what follows.

When preparing your introduction, have in mind the following objectives: (1) getting the attention of your audience, (2) clearly identifying your subject, and (3) showing why the subject is important to your audience. In some instances, these three objectives may be attained almost simultaneously. At times, however, they may be given attention separately, and the order may vary.

How to Get the Attention of Your Audience

The fact that people have gathered to hear a speech does not mean that they are ready to give the subject their undivided attention. Why not? Their lives are filled with many things that clamor for their attention. The challenge facing you as the speaker is to capture and hold the attention of the audience. There is more than one way that you can do it.

Questions can be used effectively to arouse interest, but they must be of the right sort. If your questions indicate that you are simply going to talk about things that the audience has heard before, interest may quickly wane. Do not ask questions that embarrass your audience or that put them in a bad light. Rather, endeavor to phrase your questions in a manner that will stimulate thinking. Pause briefly after each question so that your listeners have time to formulate a mental answer. When they feel that they are engaging in a mental dialogue with you, you have their attention.

Use of a real-life experience is another good way to capture attention. But simply telling a story may defeat your purpose if the experience is embarrassing to someone in your audience. If your story is remembered but the instruction that goes with it is forgotten, you have missed the mark. When an experience is used in the introduction, it should lay the groundwork for some significant aspect of the body of your discussion. While some details may be needed in order to make the narrative live, be careful not to make experiences needlessly long.

The Way You Present It

What you say in your introduction is of primary importance, but *how* you say it can also arouse interest. For this reason your preparation ought to involve not only what you are going to say but also how you are going to say it.

Word choice is important in accomplishing your objective, so you might find it advantageous to prepare the first two or three sentences quite carefully. Short, simple sentences are usually best. Delivering an effective introduction in an unhurried manner can help you to gain the composure needed to give the rest of your presentation.

Effective Conclusion

You may have carefully researched and organized the material for the body of your presentation. You may also have prepared an interest-arousing introduction. Still, one more thing is needed—an effective conclusion. Do not minimize its importance. What you say last is often remembered longest. If the conclusion is weak, even what went before it may lose much of its effectiveness.

Points to Keep in Mind

What you state in your conclusion should be directly related to the theme of your presentation. It should follow as a logical conclusion to the main points you have developed. Although you may want to include some key words from your theme, direct restating of it is optional.

Keep in mind that the presentation is concluding. What you say should indicate that. Your pace should also be appropriate. Do not speak rapidly right up to the finish and then stop abruptly. On the other hand, do not let your voice simply fade. Your volume should be sufficient but not excessive. *Your last few sentences should have a note of finality.* When preparing your delivery, do not fail to practice your conclusion.

How long should the conclusion be? That is not something to be determined solely by the clock. The conclusion should not drag. *The appropriateness of its length can be determined by its effect on the audience.* A simple, direct, positive conclusion is always appreciated. A somewhat longer one that embodies a brief illustration can also be effective if it is carefully planned.

Understandable

Simple Words, Simplicity of Style

Simple words and short sentences are powerful tools of communication. Even when you deal with deep material, simplicity of style can help make it easier to understand. How can simplicity be achieved? Do not overwhelm your audience with unnecessary details. Organize your material so that it complements your main points. Do not bury a good thought in a multitude of words.

In order to present material in a simple manner, good preparation is needed. You must clearly understand your subject yourself if you are going to make it understandable to others. When you really understand something, you are able to give reasons why it is so. You are also able to express it in your own words.

Explain Unfamiliar Terms

Sometimes making things understandable requires that you explain the meaning of terms that are unfamiliar to your audience. Do not overestimate the knowledge of your audience, but do not underestimate their intelligence.

Informative to Your Audience

What Your Audience Knows

Ask yourself, 'What does the audience know about the subject?' That should determine your starting point. Adjust the pace of your delivery according to what your audience knows. If you include some details that are likely familiar to most, cover these fairly quickly. But slow down when presenting ideas that may be new to the majority of your listeners so that they can grasp these clearly.

Effective Use of Questions

Because questions call for a response—either oral or mental—they help to get your listeners involved. Questions can help you to start conversations and to enjoy a stimulating exchange of thoughts. As a speaker and a teacher, you may use questions to arouse interest, to help someone reason on a subject, or to add emphasis to what you say. When you make good use of questions, you encourage others to think actively instead of listening passively. Have an objective in mind, and ask your questions in a manner that will help to achieve it.

Effective Use of Visual Aids

Why employ visual aids in your teaching? Because doing so can make your teaching more effective. When visual aids are coupled with the spoken word, information is received through two senses. This may help to hold the attention of your audience and to strengthen the impression made.

Using Visual Aids for Larger Groups

When well prepared and capably presented, visual aids can be effective teaching aids for larger groups.

When a visual aid is used, it should give visual reinforcement to ideas that deserve special emphasis. Such aids serve a useful purpose when they help to clarify the spoken word, making it easier to understand, or when they provide strong evidence of the validity of what is said. Properly used, an apt visual aid may make such a deep impression that both the visual aid and the point of instruction are remembered for many years.

The ability to hear and the sense of sight both play important roles in learning.

Sound Arguments Given

When you make a statement, your listeners are fully justified in asking: “Why is that true? What is the proof that what the speaker is saying should be accepted?” As a teacher, you have the obligation either to answer such questions or to help your listeners find the answers. If the point is crucial to your argument, make sure that you give your listeners strong reasons to accept it. This will contribute to making your presentation persuasive.

Accurately Timed, Properly Proportioned

While principal emphasis should be placed on the quality of your teaching, the timing of your presentations also deserves attention.

Achieving Good Timing

Preparation is the key. Usually, speakers who have difficulty with timing have failed to prepare sufficiently. They may be overconfident. Or they may simply put off preparation until the last minute. Good timing starts with a willingness to prepare well.

Will you be speaking from notes? It is not necessary to make your notes very extensive—virtually a manuscript—to ensure proper timing. Keep in mind these five points: (1) Prepare good material, but not too much. (2) Have the main ideas clearly in mind, but do not memorize whole sentences. (3) Mark on your outline how much time you plan to use for each part of your presentation or how much time should have elapsed when you reach certain points. (4) When preparing, consider which details might be dropped if you find yourself running behind schedule. (5) Practice your delivery.

Rehearsing is important. As you rehearse, watch the timing of each section of your presentation. Go over your presentation again and again until your entire presentation fits within the assigned time. Do not try to squeeze in too much material.

Allow yourself some leeway because delivering your presentation before an audience may take a little longer than when practicing in private.

Proportioning the Parts

Good timing is closely related to the proper proportioning of the parts of a presentation. Most of the time should be spent in delivering the body. That is where the main points of instruction are. The introduction and conclusion should be timed appropriately as mentioned previously.

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