

Twain Associates, Inc.

Effective Speaking Teacher's Guide

A nagging question. Schools create plenty of competent scientists, doctors, and lawyers, but fail miserably when it comes to teaching kids how to become good (or even acceptable) public speakers. Why? "Wait," you say, "we teach speech." Yeah, but is Speech 101 any good?

Numerous surveys will tell you adults rate public speaking as something they dread. Seriously. Worse than heights, snakes, or surgery. Most executives would face them all before volunteering to make a presentation. And when they do present, they're lousy at it--even though well prepared and well organized, they are still dull, boring, unconvincing, nervous wrecks.

Why are there at least 10 business speech consultants in any major city? As one of them, I knock down good money, year after year, teaching executives something very different from Speech 101. What I teach is not even a kissing cousin to high school or college speech.

What I **don't** teach, or even touch, are topics like deductive or inductive logic or rhetoric. I'm not saying these things aren't important, but let's keep our perspective. Suppose that sixth graders have to give a speech on what they did over the summer. They worry about it and often practice in front of their parents. Yet in the school yard they've already given the presentation to their friends. And it went well. They weren't nervous and they didn't worry about how to organize it. One on one, it just flowed.

But when the same children speak in front of the class, they rarely can claim similar success. Why? Surely, you'll agree it isn't logic. Neither logic nor preparation is the culprit. The blame? If you want to finger point, the guilty party is the human body--the **nervousness**, the reaction to seeing more than one set of eyeballs.

So, if you want to help that adult learner, that student, that graduate, you, as the teacher, must offer solutions to nervousness. Neither preparation nor deep breathing will suppress nervousness. **Nothing, absolutely nothing can stop nervousness.** But you can teach your participants to channel nervousness so it works for them instead of playing havoc with their guts, confidence, and ability.

This teacher's guide will show you how to conduct the physical exercises that channel nervousness. Think of teaching speech in the same way as a pro teaches tennis. Both presenting and playing tennis are physical activities. Therefore, both must teach physical skills if improvement is to occur. Practice makes perfect only if you practice **the correct techniques.**