Lesson 24

LEARNING SKILLS

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Overview: Speaking Essentials is a learning activity that helps the learners to understand the elements that will help them to be more effective speakers. The lesson focuses on attributes of a speaker, factors that effect platform behavior, and basic rules for becoming a good speaker. Learners begin to see how effective speaking helps them to know what they need “in order to carry out their roles and responsibilities as workers, parents, family members, and community members.”

Educational Goal: The goal of this lesson is for learners to (1) Comprehend the essentials of speaking and (2) Respond positively to the importance of effective speaking as it applies to their goals and everyday lives.

Objectives:
Cognitive: — Define the elements of effective speaking.
— Explain the elements of effective speaking.
— Explain what speaking effectively means to the learner.
Affective: — Discuss the importance of speaking and doing it well.

Skills Connections: This lesson has a connection to the Tennessee KSA – Talking With Respect and the EFF Standard – Speak So Others Can Understand. (Appendix II)

Teaching Strategy: Learners bring their prior knowledge and previous experiences to the lesson and class. Some have spoken in front of a group, while others have never presented information to an audience. Learners have been writing about their topics for the past three weeks. They have been involved in classroom discussions and some have facilitated discussions. This has encouraged them to become more comfortable when speaking in front of others. This lesson prepares learners to speak effectively to their audience. Learners begin to see the connection between writing and speaking and how it can help them to achieve their overall goals.

Speaking Essentials prepare the learners for their graduation day. Learners begin to see the importance of speaking effectively. This is the time to make learners aware of the importance of the day and of what they have to say. They begin to understand that what they have to say is important.
They see that they will be the person communicating. They will be the teacher. Learners begin to comprehend that they need to pass that information on in a clear and professional way in order to teach others. They also begin to realize that their presentation should not only be clear, but also interesting and motivating. The most significant part of this lesson is that the learners begin to realize that they have the motivation and confidence to do it. It instills the “I can!” attitude in their educational journey.

Present learners with the goal and objectives of the lesson and let them know what they need to be able to do after the lesson is over. Use the EFF Standard and review each component of the standard with them.

Begin the lesson by asking learners how they feel about speaking in front of the class on graduation day. This will lead the learners into a discussion about their prior knowledge and feelings about the day. The key is to get them motivated about giving their presentation. Many learners aren’t sure that they can stand in front of a group of people and speak. During the discussion, lead them into the importance of doing a good job. Learners should be aware that their presentation should be “professional” and clear. They become the teacher for those few minutes and their message can be received only if they understand the elements of effective speaking. The lesson should be outlined on the board. Learners will take notes from the board while their thoughts are recorded on the board. Their thoughts will lead the discussion to the overall goal and objective. The class should actively participate in the discussion while the main points are being discussed. This will ensure learner knowledge and input. Remember to teach a point (knowledge), and get their input (understanding). End lesson with learners practicing their presentations in front of the class with positive comments or tips from learners and teacher.
Lesson Plan

Introduction

**Question:** How do you feel about giving your presentation?

**Motivation:** This lesson will help you to feel better about giving your presentation. By the end of this lesson I want you to be able to explain the speaking essentials and how they will help you during graduation and for your future.

**Question:** Why are we asking you to speak in front of the group?

**Overview:** This lesson on speaking essentials is going to help you to feel more comfortable about giving your presentation. You will begin to see how these main points connect to anything that you want to achieve. You may be asked to speak in front of a group for several reasons. Sometimes people are asked to speak for work, or maybe you will be asked to speak at church or even for your community or child’s school. The exciting thing about speaking to an audience is that you have the opportunity to share your thoughts and what you have learned with others. Having a voice is important to all of us. You become the teacher. You have the opportunity to not only teach others but to inspire others.

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1. The Effective Speaker Has Four Attributes.

There are four attributes that will help you to do a good job while you are giving a presentation. They are the key ingredients. We will go over each one and discuss what they mean.

The first attribute that will help you is:

1. **Integrity – Be honest and sincere.** A good speaker believes in what they are talking about. They want to pass information on in a truthful and helpful way. Most audiences want a speaker to be sincere and passionate. Be excited about your topic and allow the audience to feel good about what you are saying. Honesty will also help you stay focused on your subject and not yourself.

2. **Knowledge – In order to deliver a subject effectively the speaker must know the subject and then know a little more.** A speaker can have
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integrity but must also have the knowledge and understanding of the topic that she is speaking about. The speaker is the teacher and knowing your subject is very important. Most people are asked to give a presentation because of their knowledge level on a particular topic. Usually, it is also important for the speaker to know more about the subject than their audience. The listeners are there to learn.

3. Skill – Skill is obtained through practice, practice, and more practice. This will help to correct bad habits and to develop good skills and habits. The more time that you put into practicing what you have to say, the better your presentation will go. Skill is not innate. That means that it must be learned. A person can have the natural ability or aptitude to speak, but without practice a person will not improve. Nervousness is a common feeling while speaking but if you have worked hard, practiced in front of others, timed your presentation, etc., things will go much easier. Your audience will learn more if you not only know your subject but have had experience in speaking about it.

4. Self-Confidence – Self-confidence is having a firm belief in one’s own abilities and traits. Having natural movement, direct eye contact, and erect posture will not only help you to feel more comfortable but will convince your audience that you are sure, alert, and ready to pass on information.

Main Point 2. Three Factors Affecting Platform Behavior

1. What is platform behavior? Platform behavior is our physical behavior while on stage or speaking before a group.

Question: What happens when you speak in front of an audience?

Most people get stage fright. Speaking in front of others can be one of the biggest phobias that people have. It is not uncommon for people to become nervous or be afraid of making a mistake. Butterflies are a natural feeling. Just accept the nervousness and then put it aside. Stage fright is so common that the audience understands what you are going through. They will want you to do well. Remember that the focus should not and is not on you but on what you are speaking about.

We are going to discuss some things that will help you to get over the problems that come with platform behavior and how to ease the nerves.

Teaching Tip

Remember to gain input from learners after each element. This can be accomplished through guided questions and response from the learners.

Teaching Tips

Refer to the EFF Standard page. Have learners look at component number 2. Have they organized their speech? Do they know their audience? What is the purpose of the speech? Continue to refer to the Standard page when needed.

Continue to refer to the next components, 3 and 4 of the Standard page.
A. Preparation – Being prepared is the best thing that you can do to ease the nervousness. It is easier to be successful when a person is prepared. Be sure to have a plan and follow through with it.

Make sure that your material is organized and clear. Try to memorize key words or most of what you have to say. Review the material and practice. We will practice in front of the group today.

B. Poise – Try to have composure. Be professional and dignified. Control your nervousness and “become” the leader. Leadership is key. Take control of your time in front of the audience, own it and feel confident about it.

C. Mental Attitude – The way you feel can affect how you do. Make sure that you have a positive attitude. Feel good about what you are doing. This will help you to be more successful. Don’t concern yourself with failure. Concentrate on the subject and audience and focus on the goal—to inform others.

D. Experience – The more that you speak, the more you will become confident. Practice will also help you to become a more skillful speaker. Allow yourself time as a speaker. Look for opportunities to speak again. This will increase your experience.

E. Physical Control – One of the most important things to do is breathe deeply. Remember to breathe slow and relaxing breathes. Force yourself to relax and avoid becoming a stiff robot. Try to stay loose but remember to control your body movements like shaking and muscle tension. Remember to be yourself. Sixty-five percent of a communicated message is nonverbal. Don’t allow the audience to focus on your physical being. The focus should remain with the subject that you are speaking about.

1. Eye Contact – This will help the audience to listen more effectively and at the same time let them know that they exist. It also creates a friendly feeling by being direct and respectful to the group. Eye contact will also help you to read your listeners’ nonverbal messages to you. Non-verbal messages from the group or individuals can help you to know if you need to adapt what you are saying or how you are saying it.

2. Body Actions – Body actions can be helpful to work off nervous energy. It also can help to keep the group interested in what you are saying, but try not to move around too much as this can be a distraction. Point 4 on the EFF Standard page says that you, the speaker, can monitor the effectiveness of your message by watching the body language or gestures of your audience.

Teaching Tip

At this point, continue to allow for learner input. Be sure to connect motivation and self-confidence. They are not only giving a presentation for others but for themselves. They need to feel good enough about themselves. Ask learners to define the four attributes without looking at their notes or handouts. Ask them to explain each attribute. If learners comprehend the four attributes, then continue to the next main point; if not then re-teach the four attributes.

This is a good time to bring in the key concept of the Shewhart Cycle. Review its steps and how it would work for presenting information to an audience. Refer back to the EFF Standard page.
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Teaching Tips

Refer to component number 3 of the EFF standard. It is always a good idea to use bad examples of speaking during this lesson. Verbal examples help learners to know what not to do during a presentation. Examples: Speak in a very monotone voice, speak too fast or too slow, etc. These kinds of examples help the group “get it.”

Teaching Tip

Ask learners to explain what each element is and why it is important. Allow for discussion. This will help to summarize the lesson and the objective.

Pump learners up and then allow time for practice in front of the class. Allow learners to positively comment and support the speaker and to give them effective feedback about their presentation. Inform the learners when they have used some of the elements of the lesson. This activity can be somewhat stressful for some learners. Let them know that it is required of them that they practice. Again, the feedback should be kept light and not too critical. You want to build their esteem, not diminish it.

3. Gestures – Facial expressions and hand gestures add a great deal to a presentation. Gestures assist in letting your audience know the importance of the topic and how you feel about it.

F. Verbal Delivery.

1. Voice – The voice shows a person’s attitude and motivation about a particular topic. It should usually be upbeat and friendly and yet concerned.

2. Pitch – Pitch is the variety of high and low sounds in your voice. Using the same pitch can often become dull to an audience. It is best to vary your pitch depending on what point you are trying to make. Keep it flexible. Example: Light-hearted Point = Higher, relaxed pitch. Important point = Lower pitch.

3. Rate – Rate is the speed of what we say. The number of words that a person usually speaks is about 140-160 in one minute. When giving a presentation, try to: Slow down that number to about 100 words per minute. This will ensure that the audience receives your message more clearly. Pausing during main ideas can also help to create time for your listeners to gain information while allowing you to organize your thoughts.

4. Force – Force is the loudness or softness of the words that a person says. Be sure to adjust the level of your voice in case of barriers (noises) and to emphasize key concepts.

5. Articulation – always speak clearly and distinctly. This will help others to hear and understand you. Pronounce the words correctly.

Conclusion

Summary: Now that we have discussed all of the elements of the Speaking Essentials, let’s go back and review them. Three basic rules for becoming a good speaker are: always have something important to say; care about what you talking about; and keep it simple, but effective.

Re-Motivation:

Question: How do you feel now that we have discussed some important points that will help you to give your presentation?

Remember to practice your presentation at home while using the Speaking Essentials.

Close: Now we will work together by practicing our presentations. One at a time, you will present your topic to the class as a whole. We will spend the next half hour giving one another positive feedback. We will also try to give some encouraging tips on how to improve if needed.