Just Imagine Them In Their Underwear: Public Speaking In Primary Grades

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Abstract

Public speaking is a lifelong skill. With this in mind, I noticed many of the students became shy when speaking to the class. In an attempt to have students feel more comfortable speaking in front of their peers and to begin instilling this valuable skill in them, I began implementing different interventions for students to speak in front of the class more. I wondered to what impact having students share poems, nursery rhymes, books, and various topics would have on their confidence level when speaking in front of the class.

Description of Teaching Context

During the 2010-2011 school year, I am serving as a Professional Development School Intern in a first grade classroom in the State College Area School District. My first grade classroom is located within the cluster of classrooms in Panorama Village Elementary School. The cluster is a section of the school that houses five self-contained classrooms and the Title One classroom with students’ coat closets in the middle of the cluster. The six rooms do not have doors and are constructed with collapsible wall partitions, which often proves to be a noisy and distracting learning environment.

There are 24 students, including 10 boys and 14 girls in my classroom. Of the twenty-four students, one student is from Saudi Arabia and is an English Language Learner while the rest of the class identifies as Caucasian. One student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). One student requires vision assistance and needs an adaptation with a camera.

Only one student in the class is below average in his reading level and receives instruction in the English as a second language classroom. Eight students are average in their reading levels. There are sixteen above average students for reading level; out of those, eight are significantly higher than the rest of the class.
The one challenge in our classroom is that the students all get along so well that they are very talkative with each other. The students work well together and help one another to be their best but have trouble when it comes to doing silent, independent work. Each week we select students’ names from the Good Deed Bag, which is where students put other students’ name that they saw do a good deed. The students are respectful and polite to those who get selected by clapping and congratulating each other. They have built a strong classroom community throughout the year and are friends with everyone in the class.

The students have done an excellent job so far this year and are progressing at a rapid pace. When the school year began, we learned about planting the seeds of friendship, where pizza comes from and how to run a pizza shop. In our next unit, we built our own neighborhood and learned about how we can go green in our school and community. In the final unit, we will be designing a playground for our community. State College Area School District puts a big emphasis on Language Arts and Math. Language Arts includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In our classroom, we do reading and writing every day, but do not do much with speaking. Once a week, a student shares a poster about himself or herself to the class, and occasionally, students will share a piece of writing.

**Rationale**

Throughout my internship experience in the State College Area School District, my eyes have been opened to the importance of Language Arts in the curriculum. After learning about the Language Arts curriculum, I learned that it is not only reading and writing but also speaking and listening. In my classroom, we do Language Arts stations every day. The students go to five different stations, which are guided reading, Words Their Way, writing, independent reading, and an independent word station.
Every week a student prepares a poster and presents information about himself/herself to the class as student of the week. The students also share their written work to their classmates about once a month during Writer’s Workshop. Throughout the school year, I have noticed that when students spoke in front of the class they tended to hold their paper near their face, stare at their poster or talk very quietly. Most of the time when we are sharing, it is about the student or is something that he or she wrote, so the student should not need to continually be looking at his or her paper the whole time. These are natural habits that people do when speaking publicly.

I remember in first grade being able to read a book to my classmates and how much I enjoyed it. I wondered if there was a way that I could include that in my classroom. Then I thought maybe if students were encouraged to speak and read in front of their classmates more often that it could ease their nerves and help them become more confident public speakers. Public speaking is a lifelong skill that can help these students become more effective speakers and more confident individuals. I want to help instill these skills into students early in their lives and help them overcome the fear of public speaking.

**Wonderings**

Main Wondering:

My main inquiry question focuses on including more sharing of poems, books, and nursery rhymes and how that helps students’ self-confidence when speaking in front of others.

To what impact does sharing poems, nursery rhymes, books, and various topics have on the confidence level of primary students when speaking in front of their peers?

Sub-Wonderings:

- How do students feel when they speak in front of their peers?
• How do different techniques and strategies promote student confidence in public speaking?
• How does public speaking improve oral language development?

**Data Collection**

I collected a variety of data before, during, and after implementing strategies that aimed to improve students’ confidence while speaking in front of the class. These methods of data collection came in the form of student surveys, anecdotal notes, video-recordings, and a parent survey. Throughout my inquiry process, I used this data to assess the effectiveness of my interventions.

**Before**

Prior to implementing any interventions, I conducted a student survey (Appendix F). I chose to administer a student survey before carrying out any interventions, because I wanted to be aware of how students felt and what they were interested in doing in front of the class. We completed the survey together as a large-group. Students sat at their desks and responded to the questions as I read them aloud. The survey asked six questions. Of the six questions, five of them used smiley faces to gauge students’ feelings. The sixth question was subjective and asked for students to explain how they felt when speaking in front of the class and a reason why they may feel this way. I also sent a parent letter home before I began my intervention explaining my inquiry and asking them to help their child practice each week.

**During**

During my intervention, my data consists of observational and anecdotal notes, a survey, and video recordings. The first and last time that all students spoke in front of the class I videotaped them to see how they improved or worsened. While students were sharing their
pieces during the first week of my inquiry, I videotaped each one and collected data on a grid to
determine the students’ strengths and the areas in which they needed to improve. During the last
week of my inquiry, I videotaped students again to see if they had improved in the area that was
their weakest and if they were still doing well in other areas. I assessed students on whether they
were speaking loud and clear, standing or sitting appropriately without fidgeting, making eye
contact, and evidence of practicing. On the grid, I had students’ names and the date for each
week.

In addition, I gave the students a survey halfway through my inquiry that was similar to
the one that I had given before I began my intervention but with one question being different
(Appendix G). I took out the question that asked students how they felt about performing a play
in front of students and parents and replaced this with a question asking students to identify what
they liked and what they did not like about speaking in front of the class. I wanted to see if we
could change what students were not enjoying in the final weeks. This survey had six questions
with four of the questions being smiley face answers and the last two questions being subjective.

Each time a student spoke I recorded notes on a grid that explained what they were doing
well or what they needed to work on (Appendix L). These anecdotal notes were used for my
notes to see the progress each student was making. Also after each student went, I had a rubric
that was evaluating if they were speaking loud and clear, standing or sitting without fidgeting,
making eye contact, and showing evidence of practice. The students were given a super job,
good job, and needs more practice in each of the categories. I used this as feedback for the
parents and students for them to know what the student was doing well and what they may need
to practice.

After
After students finished presenting, I gave them another survey asking their feelings towards speaking in front of the class after doing it for over a month (Appendix H). The survey asked questions based on students feelings towards speaking in front of the class and whether they would be interested in continuing speaking in front of the class. Out of those six questions, only one was a smiley face response while the others were subjective, and students had to write a response to the question.

I also sent home a survey asking parents about what they noticed at home from their children (Appendix I). I wanted to see how students were reacting to practicing and what they were telling their parents. Since parents were involved in this project, I wanted to get their feedback on whether it took too much time or effort on their part, and if they felt this was a valuable skill to be learning in school.

Data Analysis

Analysis of Student Surveys-(Appendix J)

My surveys gave me insight into how students felt before, during, and after speaking in front of the class several times. Looking at the surveys in Appendix D, E and F, one can see that the surveys have slightly different questions, but concentrate on the same topics of how students felt and what they liked and disliked about speaking in front of the class. I changed the survey because the first one had more questions about what students might be interested in doing in front of others; whereas, the second and final survey had questions directed towards students’ feelings about speaking in front of the class and what they were enjoying and not enjoying. Also, I wanted to find out if students would want to continue speaking in front of the class on a more informal basis so I asked that in my final survey to see what their feelings were on continuing to do this. Although some questions were different, I kept two questions the same on all three
surveys. To analyze my surveys, I chose to tally the results of the questions and was then able to track patterns throughout my inquiry.

*Analysis of Anecdotal Notes and Video Recording*—(*Appendix L*)

The video recordings and anecdotal notes go hand and hand because both were able to tell me whether students had improved from the beginning. Using a flip camera, I was able to record students during their first and last times speaking in front of the class. My intention for taking notes after students spoke each week was because to see how students were doing from week to week. These notes consisted of what they were doing good and what they needed to work on as well. I used my video recordings as evidence that most students improved from the beginning to the end of my intervention. I was also able to use them to clarify and double check my anecdotal notes. I did not show the students these videos but want to use them of evidence that the more practice the students had with sharing, the better they became at speaking in front of the class.

From both of these data collections, I have noticed drastic improvements in most students when speaking in front of the class. Most students took what I wrote on their rubric and practiced improving in these different areas.

*Analysis of Parent Survey*—(*Appendix K*)

To analyze my parent survey, I went question-by-question and tallied up the responses. I looked for similar responses among the surveys that were sent back. I did not receive all of the survey results back but from the ones that I did receive, the parents all had very similar responses. After I tallied the responses from the parents, I found patterns and trends among the parent responses.
Explaination of Findings

After analyzing my data shown above, I was able to make the following four claims that support my main wondering of how students sharing poems, nursery rhymes, and books can impact the confidence level of students in primary grades when speaking in front of others. These claims show the positive impact that having students share has on their confidence level.

Claim 1: Students felt more comfortable speaking in front of the class the more they did it.

nervous” or “I don’t think I like this.” Of course, it is natural for anyone to feel that way when they are told that they will need to speak in front of a group on a weekly basis, but I assured the students that this would be something fun, and they would not receive a grade.

When starting to analyze the surveys, I chose to tally the results of the questions. In the first survey, I found that 50% of students were happy to speak in front of the class and 50% felt nervous. Each week students chose a book, poem, or nursery rhyme to read to the class. I sent home a copy and notice to parents of when they would be speaking to give them time to practice at home. After students spoke several times, I asked the same question, which I found 81% of students now felt happy when speaking in front of the class and 19% felt nervous. I surveyed students after their final time speaking and found 91% of students now were happy to speak in front of the class while only 9% still were nervous doing it. (Survey Results-Appendix J)

Also, I asked the parents how their child felt at the beginning and if they have seen any changes in their child. I found that most students told their parents they were nervous at the beginning, but no longer feel nervous and have become more comfortable after sharing many times. From the student and parent survey’s, it is evident that students become more comfortable the more they share in front of the class. By giving students the choice in what to do and time to
practice, it gave students the opportunity to be excited about sharing and become more comfortable doing it.

**Claim 2: Parents feel that public speaking is a valuable skill that students should be taught at an early age in school.**

From my parent survey, I have found that all of the parents feel that public speaking is a worthwhile skill that should be taught at an early age in school. Public speaking is a skill that everyone will be involved in at some point in his or her life. Although my students did not necessarily know that they were learning a lifelong skill, it began to help them overcome their fears of speaking in front of the whole class.

Many parents responded that this is a critical skill that children will need throughout their school years as well as in their careers. One parent wrote, “I wish I had been taught public speaking at a young age. It builds their self-confidence and their speaking abilities.” While another parent commented even peers she shared it with said they wish they would have had it when they were young. Even having students speak just one week “can be a stepping stone to being able to express their own opinions clearly when they are older,” as one parent wrote in her survey.

From this inquiry, I have learned that we need to incorporate speaking into our curriculum. Although it is part of the language arts standards, most teachers take it as participating in small or large group settings, but we need to include more specific or deliberate with students and speaking in front of their peers. It is important that we help students feel comfortable speaking in front of class when they are in the primary grades because it is something they will need to do throughout their life.
Claim 3: Students’ speaking skills improved the more they spoke in front of the class.

When students first began speaking in front of the class, many students were very quiet and did not look at their peers. After reviewing my anecdotal notes and videotapes from the first and last times, I saw significant improvement in almost all of my students. Whether it was more eye contact, not moving, or speaking louder, students took what I wrote on the rubric and tried to really work on becoming a better speaker (See Appendix K). On my final survey, I asked students what they had learned from speaking, and I received a variety of answers. Each student learned something, which is important. Many of the students learned that they needed to be louder and make eye contact with their audience. Also, many students wrote that they learned that this is a skill and the more they practice the better they will become at it. I think this shows that students know they are improving and will continue to improve the more they practice and speak in front of others.

From my anecdotal notes, one can see that students E and U (Appendix L) have shown drastic improvements in how loud they speak in front of the class. From the first video recordings, you can hear many students asking both of these students to talk louder because they could not hear them. During their final speech, students did not ask either of these two to speak louder, and both had much more eye contact and confidence when speaking. Overall, students’ speaking skills improved the more they spoke in front of the class.

Claim 4: Students are more willing to speak in front of the class now.

In my final survey (Appendix H), I asked students if they would want to continue sharing in front of the class. All of the students except for one who answered the question on the survey said they would enjoy continuing to share in front of the class. Many students said they like
being the center of attention and that it was fun. They also said they enjoyed picking out and
listening to the different poems that the students read each week.

Also, the student from Saudi Arabia who is an English Language Learner was
apprehensive when I first told him he would need to read a book to the class. I had him choose a
small book from a stack of beginning reader books for the first few weeks. The last two weeks he
felt confident enough to choose a book from our class library and a nursery rhyme for the final
week. During the final week, he was eager to share his nursery rhyme and asked everyday if it
was his day. After speaking for several weeks, he was more willing to share and can tell that he
was much more comfortable now then when I first began my inquiry. This demonstrates that
once students became more comfortable with standing and speaking in front of their class after
doing it several times.

**Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**

Getting students to feel comfortable talking in front of peers can happen at any grade
level. If we continue to share poems in my class, I will give students more choice and variety of
poems because those were their favorite. The students really enjoyed hearing each other’s poems
and were always asking to see the pictures that went with it. If we continue this year with
students sharing, I think it will be a more on an informal basis where I have students select a
poem that day and read it to the class. I will not be copying poems and sending home notices of
when students will be sharing. It can be time consuming to copy and get the notices home to
parents on time.

When I have my own classroom, I will absolutely have students share. I will begin this at
the beginning of the year and allow students to choose something from home or at school. Also, I
will send home a monthly calendar telling parents when each child would be speaking. I will set
up small mini lessons that correspond to public speaking. Also, I will give students a new topic or speech to share each month in order to give them more of a variety and choice into what they will be sharing.

One important note to discuss is the fact that nothing needed to be eliminated from our daily routines. We were still able to have Morning Meeting and fit everything into our day. It fit in with our routine. Students were able to present either first thing in the morning before Morning Meeting or at the end of the day waiting for buses. Students were eager to present each day.

I think this is an absolutely necessary skill to be teaching today’s youth because someday they will be the leaders of our world and will need to know how to speak to and in front of other people.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Inquiry Brief

Context

During the 2010-2011 school year, I am serving as a Professional Development School Intern in a first grade classroom in the State College Area School District. My first grade classroom is located within the cluster of classrooms in Panorama Village Elementary School. The cluster is a section of the school that houses five self-contained classrooms and the Title One classroom with students’ coat closets in the middle of the cluster. The six rooms do not have doors and are constructed with collapsible wall partitions, which often proves to be a noisy and distracting learning environment.

There are 24 students, including 10 boys and 14 girls in my classroom. Of the twenty-four students, one student is from Saudi Arabia and is an English Language Learner while the rest of the class identifies as Caucasian. One student has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). One student requires vision assistance and needs an adaptation with a camera. Also, one student wears leg braces due to a disability that has recently been corrected through surgery.

Only one student in the class is below average in his reading level and leaves the classroom for instruction in the English as a second language classroom. Eight students are average in their reading levels. There are sixteen above average students for reading level; out of those, eight are significantly higher than the rest of the class.

The one challenge in our classroom is that the students all get along so well that they are very talkative with each other. The students work well together and help one another to be their best but have trouble when it comes to doing silent, independent work. Each week we select students’ names from the Good Deed Bag, which is where students put other students’ name who they saw do a good deed. The students are respectful and polite to those who get selected by clapping and congratulating each other. They have built a strong classroom community throughout the year and are friends with everyone in the class.

The students have done an excellent job so far this year and are progressing at a rapid pace. When the school year began, we learned about planting the seeds of friendship,
where pizza comes from and how to run a pizza shop. In our next unit, we built our own neighborhood and learned about how we can go green in our school and community. We will start the final unit in a few weeks, which we will be designing a playground for our community. State College Area School District puts a big emphasis on Language Arts and Math. Language Arts includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. In our classroom, we do reading and writing every day, but do not do much with speaking. Once a week, a student shares a poster about himself or herself to the class, and occasionally, students will share a piece of writing.

**Rationale**

Throughout my internship experience in the State College Area School District, my eyes have been opened to the importance of Language Arts in the curriculum. After learning about the Language Arts curriculum, I learned that it is not only reading and writing but also speaking and listening. In my classroom, we do Language Arts stations every day. The students go to five different stations, which are guided reading, Words Their Way, writing, independent reading, and independent word station.

Every week a student prepares a poster and presents information about themselves to the class for student of the week. The students also share their written work to their classmates about once a month during Writer’s Workshop. Throughout the school year, I have noticed that when students speak in front of the class they tend to hold their paper near their face, stare at their poster or talk very quietly. Most of the time when we are sharing, it is about the student or is something that he or she wrote, so the student should not need to continually be looking at his or her paper the whole time. These are natural habits that people do when public speaking.

I remember in first grade being able to read a book to my classmates and how much I enjoyed it. I thought about if there was a way that I could include that in my classroom. Then I thought maybe if students were encouraged to speak and read in front of their classmates more that it could ease their nerves and help them become more confident public speakers. Public speaking is a lifelong skill that can help these students become great speakers and more confident individuals. I want to help instill these skills into students early in their lives and help them overcome the fear of public speaking.
Wonderings

Main Wondering: **To what impact do student read alouds, plays, and sharing have on the confidence level of primary students when speaking in front of their peers?**

Sub-Wonderings:
- How do students feel when they speak in front of their peers?
- How does public speaking affect participation?
- How do different techniques and strategies promote student confidence in public speaking?
- How does public speaking improve oral language development?

Data Collection Ideas

1. **Survey**- I will survey my entire first grade class to see how they feel about speaking in front of the class. I want to know their feelings about speaking in front of the class and reasons why they may feel this way. I also think it will be beneficial to see how they would feel about reading to the class, putting on a play, or sharing written work to classmates. I would like to do this before I introduce my inquiry and after we have completed several weeks of presentations to see if students’ feelings have changed at all. I will also do a final survey to conclude my inquiry. Surveying students before and after will see if having the students speak in front of the class more has changed their feelings about speaking in front of their classmates.

2. **Video Evidence**- I will videotape each student the first time they present in front of the class. After each student presents, I will watch the video and see what improvements they could make for the next time they present. I will talk to the student about their presentation and give them feedback on ways they could improve. Also, if the student wants to watch how they did, this will give them the opportunity to see how they did and to see what they need to work on for next time. I will be watching it with the student.

3. **Anecdotal Notes**- Each time a student presents I will be taking notes on his or her eye contact, volume of their voice, and evidence of practicing. These notes will help me to see what areas we may need to work on as a whole class or individually. I can also see each student’s progress from keeping notes and what he or she presented each time. The anecdotal notes will include a small rubric for the presentations.

4. **Interviews**- I plan to interview about 4 students before we begin, in the middle, and then at the end to see how their feelings have changed throughout my inquiry. I
want to see if students are becoming more comfortable and confident in front of the classmates. These interviews can help me make claims about the feelings of students and how they may change or may not change throughout the process.

**Timeline**

**February**
- **14th-18th**
  - Develop student surveys and parent letter
  - Prepare introduction presentation for students
  - Give student survey
  - Introduce to students
- **21st-25th**
  - Make schedule of when students will present
  - Send parent letter home
  - Collect data on student participation
  - Students choose what to do first
  - Send home parent notices about what students have chosen and what day they will be going
  - Make rubric
- **28th-March 4th**
  - Begin student presentations (5 everyday)
  - Students choose for week after spring break
  - Send home parent notices for week after spring break

**March**
- **7th-11th**
  - Spring Break
  - Work on schedule and parent notices
- **14th-18th**
  - Second round of student presentations
  - Students choose what to present next
  - Make survey
  - Send home parent notices for 3rd week
- **21st-25th**
  - Give student survey
  - Collect data on student participation
  - Third round of student presentations
  - Students choose what to present next
  - Send home parent notices for 4th week
- **28th-April 1st**
  - Fourth round of student presentations
  - Students choose what to present next
  - Send home parent notices for 5th week
Talking museum for job fair

April
- 3rd-9th
  - Fifth round of student presentations
  - Students choose what to present next
  - Send home parent notices for 6th week
  - Inquiry paper draft due April 8th
- 11th-16th
  - Sixth round of student presentations
  - Students choose what to present next
  - Send home parent notices for 7th week
  - Create final survey for students and parents' letter
  - Ask parents if interested to come to Inquiry conference
  - Revise paper
- 17th-23rd
  - Seventh round of student presentations
  - Students choose what to present next
  - Send home parent notices for 8th week
  - Final survey of students
  - Hold final presentation with each student sharing (videotape)
  - Revise paper
  - Begin working on presentation
- 24th- May 1st
  - Finalize paper
  - Continue working on presentation
  - Inquiry Conference on April 30th
  - Final paper due May 1st
Appendix B

Annotated Bibliography


In this section, the U.S Department of Education emphasizes that children should have many opportunities to talk because they will gain language skills that are valuable for reading and writing. It not only gives what is important for students to do but also what is important for teachers to do. They put an emphasis on teacher talk and how the questions we asked should be open-ended as to carry on a conversation with the students. I thought this was valuable information because I only thought about what the students should do and not necessarily what I should be doing as well. I plan to use the teacher talk examples that they used in this article to expand students’ speaking skills. By really thinking about questions I ask, I think students will be able to carry on discussions with each other better.


This journal informs readers how crucial oral language is to literacy development and “is a key indicator of children’s reading abilities (395).” Kirkland and Patterson explain how we need to examine our own classroom environments, literacy materials, activities, and curriculum to ensure we are immersing students in as much oral language as we can. The journal also offers a list of books to promote oral language development that can be used in literacy centers or as a reader’s theatre. I plan to use this book by taking some of the books they have listed and incorporate them into our classroom through doing reader’s theatres. I also want to incorporate wordless picture books and have students add the dialogue to the stories. This will not only help with their oral language but it will help them with their creativity as well.

In this article, Niedermeyer and Oliver performed a study in kindergarten and first grade classes that compared classes who had instruction on different speaking skills and those who did not to see if it had an effect on their speaking. Half of the teachers were given twenty lessons to which they were supposed to teach their students four different skills. In the end, the study showed that the instruction did promote and increase students’ dramatic and speaking skills. Although I do not plan on having much instruction, I thought this article was interesting, and it made me think that I should add some instruction into my inquiry. I also liked this article because towards the end of the inquiry, both first grade classrooms will be putting on a job fair where parents and other classes can listen to the students speak about various jobs they have chosen. The other first grade class is not having students speak more in front of the classroom so I want to see if the students in my classroom are more comfortable and confident speaking in front of others.


In the chapter, Donna Norton emphasizes the importance of developing a language arts program that provides many opportunities for oral language interaction. It discusses assessment of oral language along with the social functions of language. Norton also says that for oral language development to happen that there must be ample opportunities for children to practice. Students need time to be able to develop these communication skills and show their competence in speaking. I found this information valuable because she says that we need to include more oral opportunities for students during language arts. Not only does she give activities to include in whole group instruction but also provides different activities to use with small groups that I plan on implementing into the centers of my classroom.

Public speaking skills | TeachingEnglish | British Council | BBC. (n.d.). TeachingEnglish

http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/public-speaking-skills

This article focuses on what is public speaking and how you can help intermediate level students overcome the difficulties of it. It discusses the techniques that we can teach students such as ideas and content generation, structure, body language, and chunking. Also, the author gives ways to give and encourage feedback. Feedback is an important part of public speaking and can take three general forms: peer, teacher, and videotape playback. By encouraging students to practice speaking in front of others can help increase students’ overall confidence and fluency. Although this article is for intermediate level, I found this article useful because it talks about different techniques we should teach the students to help them with their public speaking. I also hadn’t thought of doing peer feedback before reading this article, and I may do that as some point, but it could be tough with primary students.

In this book, Resnick and Snow give three reasons why it is important for young children to master their native language. First, speaking and listening are the groundwork for reading and writing. Also, speaking and listening make children smarter. Finally, speaking and listening are academic, social, and life skills that are valued in school and the world. I am focusing on more of the last point in my inquiry because I think teaching students the skills to get up and talk in front of people is valuable to learn. Not only will this inquiry help students be more comfortable talking in front of people, but it will also teach them social etiquette such as not interrupting others when they are speaking. At times this year, that has been a struggle for students in our class to not interrupt others so I think it would be good to teach them about social etiquette as well.


In this book, Jodene Smith provides teachers with ideas of how to practice and assess speaking skills in the primary classroom. The book includes four sections: oral language activities, sharing, nursery rhymes, and formal speeches. Oral language activities are activities that can be used with the classroom schedule to generate discussions. The sharing section describes a variety of ways students can share in the classroom. Nursery rhymes can be used to transition students from informal speaking to more formal. The book concludes with ten different formal speeches can be used with primary students. I plan to use this book to incorporate different activities into my classroom. I want to use the sharing ideas and formal speech topics to have students choose what they would like to speak to the class about. I also plan to use this book to generate more discussion in my class because the students cannot hold a discussion without questions from the teacher. I hope to liven up the discussions in my classroom and get students more confident speaking in front of the class using activities from this book.

In this article, Joanna Sugden discusses how children are struggling to meet the basic language skills because they are not being talked to or read to as much anymore. Students are entering school with less language skills and less vocabulary because they are spending more time in front of screens playing video games or watching television than they are being read to and talked to at home. One person she interview says that language and communication are crucial to every child to get the most out of school and life. I agree with this article that children are coming into schools now with less language skills because they spend entirely too much time playing video games and watching television. Families are no longer sitting down talking about each other’s day. This article put into perspective how much technology has impacted our lives and is affecting the way we communicate with each other.


In this article, Betty Wagner provides a rationale for an integrated language arts curriculum, which she defines as a curriculum that provides “natural learning situations in which reading, writing, speaking and listening can be developed together for real purposes and real audiences.” Students should have oral interaction with reading and writing because it can maintain focus and interest. While reading this article, it made me think how I could integrate more speaking and listening into my Language Arts program.


In this chapter of the book, Sue Wortham discusses how students become true readers and writers during the ages of five to eight. She mentions how it is crucial that language development continues and should not stop once students reach school-age years. Wortham says that children need to be engaged in activities that allow them to talk first hand about their experiences and will lead to literacy. She also gives a variety of ways to include language development in the classroom such as group discussions, class projects, dramatic productions, and children’s literature. I plan to incorporate the activities she has included such as putting on a dramatic production with my class. I think this information is valuable because it provides information that we should not neglect the speaking part of Language Arts, and that it can help increase literacy in younger children.
Dear Room A-6 Families,

Public speaking can be difficult for most people and is a skill that takes much practice. I think it is important to instill this lifelong skill early in a child’s life and want all of Room A-6 to be great speakers! I wanted to inform you that we will be starting something new in our class, and it will require some help from home. I am working on a project for student teaching to teach students’ public speaking skills and to boost their confidence while speaking in front of their classmates.

Each day five students will present and talk in front of the class. Our sharing will take place in the morning, after lunch, and at the end of the day. Your child has a choice of: his or her guided reading book, a poem, a nursery rhyme, a topic they have chosen with me, or a piece of his or her own writing. Each student will choose what he or she wants to do a week beforehand. I will send home a notice letting you know what your child has chosen along with a copy of it and the day he or she will be going.

When students are speaking in front of the class, I will be looking to see if they are making eye contact, speaking loudly and clearly, and showing evidence of practicing. This is where you come in! It would be great if you could help your child prepare for when they will be speaking to the class by having him or her practice it at home. I will also be practicing with them at school as well to make sure they are prepared.

I also want to let you know that your child will be videotaped while he or she is speaking. This is strictly for my project. If you do not feel comfortable with your child being videotaped, please send a note to school with your child. If you have any questions or comments, please email me at jmc33@scasd.org. I look forward to this exciting project that your child is about to begin and hope that they learn a lifelong skill!

Thank you,

Miss Cascino
Appendix D

Dear Parents,

____________________________ has chosen to __________________________ and will speak on _________________ of next week. I have attached what he or she will be doing. Please remember to have them practice. When they are practicing, make sure they have good eye contact, speak loudly and clearly, and are standing or sitting nicely. Your child may memorize it but it is not necessary. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to help your child learn a lifelong skill!

Thank You,

Miss Cascino

Appendix E

Student’s Name ________________________ Date______________
Sharing ________________________________

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Appendix F

This is a survey to see how you feel about speaking in front of the class. You are to circle the smiley face that goes with the way you feel about the question. At the end of the survey, I want you to answer why you feel the way you do about speaking in front of the class.

1. How does it make you feel when you have to speak in front of the class?

2. How comfortable do you feel answering questions in class?

3. How would you feel about reading a book or poem to classmates?

4. How would you feel about performing a play for other classes and parents?

5. How do you feel about sharing a piece of your work in front of the class?

6. Explain how you feel when speaking in front of others. Give a reason. (Use the back of the paper if you need to)

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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Appendix G

Name______________________________

This is a survey to see how you feel about speaking in front of the class. You are to circle the smiley face that goes with the way you feel about the question. At the end of the survey, I want you to answer why you feel the way you do about speaking in front of the class.

1. How does it make you feel when you have to speak in front of the class?

2. How comfortable do you feel answering questions in class?

3. How would you feel about reading a book or poem to classmates?

4. How do you feel about sharing a piece of your work in front of the class?

5. Explain how you feel when speaking in front of others. Give a reason. (Use the back of the paper if you need to)

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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6. What have you liked about speaking in front of the class? What have you not liked?

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Appendix H

Name__________________________________________

This is a survey to see how you feel about speaking in front of the class. You are to circle the smiley face that goes with the way you feel about the question. The other questions you will need to write down your answer.

7. How does it make you feel when you are speaking in front of the class?

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8. What have you learned from speaking in front of the class?

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9. After speaking more in front of the class, do you feel more or less comfortable?

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10. Explain how you feel when speaking in front of others. Give a reason.

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11. What have you liked about speaking in front of the class? What have you not liked?

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6. Would you like to continue speaking in front of the class? Why or why not?

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Appendix I

Name ________________________________

Child’s Name __________________________

I am conducting a survey to see what you have noticed about your child since beginning to speak in front of the class and your feelings toward this. This week will be the last week that students will be formally presenting. If you could answer the questions and return this with your child to school by Friday, April 15, it would be greatly appreciated.

1. How did your child feel when he or she began speaking in front of the class?

2. Have you seen a change in your child’s feelings since beginning to speak in front of the class?

3. Did your child become excited or sad when having to practice?

4. What did your child like best and least about speaking in front of the class?

5. Did it take away too much time or effort on your part?

6. Do you feel this is a worthwhile skill to be teaching the students?

Please include any comments that you feel would help me as I explore the best ways to help students improve their speaking skills on the back of the paper.
### Appendix J

**Before Survey Results**

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*Public Speaking 32*
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#### Question 6

- nervous/scared - l3
- happy/like it - 11

**During Survey**

### Question 1

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#### Question 6

- nervous/scared - l3
- happy/like it - 11

**During Survey**

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#### Question 6

- nervous/scared - l3
- happy/like it - 11

**During Survey**

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![Smiley Emoticons]
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### Question 5

- nervous/not happy- 2
- happy/like it- 14
- no response- 5

### Question 6

- likes speaking to class- 11
  - doesn't like it- 3
  - doesn't like people calling out- 1
  - no response- 5
After Survey

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Question 2
- Learned it is a skill
- Speak louder x 2
- It is not scary to talk in front of other people.
  - I shouldn’t be shy
- That you have to practice to get it perfect
- To not be afraid and to do your best x 2
  - That it is easy
  - How fun it was
  - I shouldn’t feel nervous
- To speak loudly and make good eye contact
  - That it is good
    - Just try
- I learned to speak in front of a crowd
  - To read
- I learned it makes me a little nervous

Question 3
- Feel comfortable- ☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺☺
  - Yes- ☺☺
  - No- ☺
  - Well a little- ☻
Question 4
• It makes me more comfortable
  • good- llll
  • I felt kind of shy at first but now I feel ok with it.
  • I feel great when I talk in front of the class
  • It is fun
  • Pretty happy
  • It makes me feel well because I like others happy
  • I really feel happy. I don’t like to read books.
    • It makes me so proud.
    • great
    • It’s very comparable
  • Since I’ve spoke in front of my class, I feel comfortable.
    • I feel kind of weird.
    • I feel okay speaking in front of the class.

Question 5
• I have liked all of it. There is nothing I have not liked.
  • I do not like that there is lots of people.
  • I like that when I read a poem someone wanted to hear it again./I didn’t like when I had to speak in front of the class.
  • I don’t like when people talk when I’m talking.
    • I like how people clap for me.
    • I liked it and I don’t like people talking.
      • I liked everything.
  • I like having people happy./ I don’t like when people talk.
    • I like speaking in front of the class.
  • I like that you pick what you get to do. I do not like that you stand.
    • I like that I know no one will laugh
      • I liked everything
    • I like standing and reading a poem.
      • I liked the poems.
  • I liked that you get to learn. I do not like to you complain to go first or last.

Question 6
• Yes- llllllllllllllll
• No answer- lll
  • No- l
Appendix K

Parent Survey Results

1. How did your child feel when he or she began speaking in front of the class?
   • nervous- lllllll
   • excited-l
   • shy/hesitant- l
   • never expressed apprehension- l

2. Have you seen a change in your child’s feelings since beginning to speak in front of the class?
   • no longer nervous- lllll
   • continues to be positive- l
   • more comfortable- l
   • none- l
   • remained enthusiastic-l
   • more confident-l

3. Did your child become excited or sad when having to practice?
   • enjoyed practicing- lllllllll
   • neither- l

4. What did your child like best and least about speaking in front of the class?
   • best
     o looking at peers-
     o standing in front of class-
     o chance to act and present
     o liked the poems
     o likes attention
     o getting to learn how to read in front of class
     o reading
     o sharing poems
     o adding expression
     o it was fun
     o Scorecard- took pride in
     o class clapped and gave compliments
     o fun and hearing the different poems
     o liked reading for class and the selections
   • least
     o others talking while speaking- l
     o overcoming fear of making mistakes
     o being watched while reading
     o standing
     o sitting still listening to others
     o speaking in front of the class
     o eye contact
o nervous at first

5. Did it take away too much time or effort on your part?
   • entertainment for family- ll
   • no-llllllllll

6. Do you feel this is a worthwhile skill to be teaching the students?
   • yes- peers wished they had it when they were younger- ll
   • yes- presentation skills are critical in school and work -llll
   • yes-llll
   • yes- thrilled this is being taught at young age –lifelong skill
   • yes- became proud of himself and more confident- l
   • yes- I liked they were given memorization/reading as an option- stepping stone to
   being able to express your own opinions clearly when older
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<td>T</td>
<td>Good pronunciation</td>
<td>Louder</td>
<td>Louder-no paper</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Louder</td>
<td>Louder/good eye contact</td>
<td>Getting louder</td>
<td>Good and louder</td>
<td>Much louder</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
<td>Louder</td>
<td>Louder/good eye contact</td>
<td>Getting louder</td>
<td>Good and louder</td>
<td>Much louder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Eye contact good</td>
<td>Eye contact and loud</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Louder</td>
<td>Nice and loud</td>
<td>Loud/eye contact</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Not moving</td>
<td>Loud/eye contact</td>
<td>Loud/eye contact</td>
<td>Don’t fiddle with shirt</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>