

The Speech Anxiety Program at UTK: A Class for Students with High Public Speaking Anxiety

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An ever increasing body of literature in Speech Communication points to a group of students who experience difficulty with the act of communication.¹ We have begun to be concerned about understanding a broad range of phenomena frequently referred to as communication apprehension, reticence, shyness, unwillingness to communicate, and speech anxiety. We have also raised the issues of what can be done about them and whether, when, and how we should undertake to facilitate change in the patterns of communication avoidance and negative attitudes which some of our students hold toward communication.² This latter force allows us to focus the power of our research tools on human actualization rather than viewing "communication apprehension," "reticence," or "shyness" as some kind of illness which must be treated by an "expert." It tends to place the responsibility for one's attitudes and behaviors back on oneself, and as such make the avoidance of communication and negative attitudes about communication problems more amenable to classroom consideration, especially the classroom in which the degree of positive achievement is rewarded rather than the distance from a theoretical norm being punished.

Results of a 1982 survey by Foss³ demonstrate the existence of a substantial number of special programs for helping communication avoidant persons at U.S. colleges and universities, even though the percentage of schools having such special communication programs is only around 10%. Some of these programs are noncredit activities which may or may not support a specific communication class, while other programs integrate the special training into either an elective course or a special section of a required communication course. While the survey does not clearly specify, it implies strongly that the focus of most of these programs is on communication apprehension or communication avoidance at the *interpersonal* level rather than the *public speaking* level.

This focus of concern on the interpersonal level probably reflects the fact that many departments tend to have a basic course that is more general in nature, including communication phenomena from interpersonal to public communication. There are, however, schools where the communication course required for most students is basic public speaking. This is the case at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and I suspect this may be true for other Tennessee colleges and universities. The public speaking orientation of the basic course has led to several differences in the special program for communication avoidant students at UTK as compared to programs at schools where the basic course is more oriented toward communication as applied to a variety of contexts. For that reason, I want to describe the context and development of the Speech Anxiety Program at the University of Tennessee. Included herein will also be discussion of the methods we have found helpful and a general discussion of the perceived effectiveness of the program.

History of the Program

"Speech Anxiety Program" is the label we have used to designate the efforts made by a handful of faculty members and graduate students from the Department of Speech and Theatre, the Department of Educational Psychology, and the UT Counseling Services Center to assist highly speech anxious students to feel more comfortable about giving a speech, and attain requisite skills for the presentation of a speech. The program primarily supports the speech communication course most commonly required by UTK students, namely the public speaking course (Speech 2311). While the program has grown from an interdisciplinary base, the primary responsibility for its direction is currently placed upon the Department of Speech and Theatre, where a special section of the public speaking class for speech anxious students is offered every quarter except during the summer. The size of the class varies, but usually ranges between 20 and 30 students, which is roughly 5% of the total enrollment in the regular sections of the speech classes.

In the past, the special section class had the same course number as the regular public speaking class (Speech 2312), even though the course title is the same (Public Speaking). The change in the school's General Catalog has not yet reflected the change, but in the revision for 1985-1986, Speech 2312 will follow Speech 2311 in the listing of Speech courses offered by the Department. The regular public speaking course will be described as "Basic principles of speech preparation and delivery," while the description for Speech 2312 will indicate that it covers the same material as Speech 2311 "with additional work on methods for coping with anxiety." Both descriptions will indicate that credit for only one of the two courses can be counted toward graduation. The description of Speech 2312 will indicate that the student needs the permission of the instructor to enroll. This change in course numbering and description was made in order to make the special section class more visible to advisors and students in departments which require a basic speech course.

The main activity of the Speech Anxiety Program has not always been the offering of a special section of our basic course. When we began the program nine years ago in the Summer of 1973, students enrolled in the regular public speaking classes who scored high on the PRCA-C (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-College Form)⁴ were given the opportunity to participate in a noncredit six hour workshop which was designed to help the student reduce anxiety about

giving a speech. The workshops were taught by Counseling Center staff, Speech Department faculty, or graduate students, and provided training in systematic desensitization as applied to the public speaking situation. Such workshops were our primary medium for helping highly speech anxious students until the Spring of 1977. At that time we offered the first special section of public speaking for speech anxious students. We reasoned that it would be more cost-efficient to integrate the training into the curriculum, and we thought that the training might be more effective if the instructor were more directly associated with the special kinds of training. Pre-post measures using the PRCA-C had indicated that the workshop training had been effective in reducing the participants' anxiety⁵, but several difficulties bothered us. One was the time required to schedule the special workshop times and notify the participants. A great amount of time was spent trying to accommodate the class schedules of 15 to 30 students in order to find free time to assign them to 4 or 5 groups for meetings twice weekly. A second difficulty was while the systematic desensitization training employed in the workshop was effective in reducing the anxiety of those completing the workshop, our dropout rate from the first to the second meeting was fairly high. We theorized at least part of this effect was a motivational problem. Given the press of other class activities and extracurricular concerns, many students will choose not to take on additional noncredit training unless it is very clear the training is providing some immediate and directly needed improvement. The relaxation training offered in the workshops is the type of skill that requires consistent practice over a period of time. My experience with teaching systematic desensitization indicates while an initial session of relaxation can be very rewarding, it can also be difficult for the student to see how lying on a carpeted floor with a pillow behind the head, and how doing relaxation exercises can be effective in getting one to feel more comfortable giving a speech. This takes an act of faith that students who lack confidence in their ability to negotiate effectively the public speaking situation is sometimes not willing to make, regardless of how credible the facilitator may appear. In short, we felt that some other kind of motivation which could be mediated by the classroom environment would help to keep the students in the systematic desensitization training long enough for them to begin to experience the potentially positive effects.

Identification: Who Should Be in the Class?

A critical question for any program providing communication training for anxious students is how to identify and select students for the program. Our primary means for identifying students involves a high degree of self selection. The Timetable of Classes, which the students use for preregistration and registration, identifies the special section of the public speaking class by a message which indicates that this particular section is for "speech anxious" students only. It further indicates that enrollment requires the permission of the instructor, whose name, office, and phone number are listed. I have been the instructor of the special section class since we started teaching it. In that sense, our program is very much like the majority of programs for communication avoidant students in that it is staffed by one person.⁶, even though a number of people from our Counseling Center and from our graduate and undergraduate students have provided support to it in the past. We have also been fortunate to have a graduate student assigned to help with the class during the last two academic years. During preregistration, the computer treats the class as if the limit for enrollment is one person, such that all students, but one, who attempt to enroll receive a computer feedback that the class is closed. If the students do as recommended, and contact me for permission to enroll, and if it appears that the course would be appropriate for them, then I take their names and relevant information. I alert them to the message which will probably tell them that the class is closed, and I emphasize the importance of showing up for the first day of class so that I can add them to the official roll.

In selecting among those students who request entry into the class, I have two basic concerns: (1) That the students understand what the class is about, and (2) That the students indicate verbally that they experience an above average amount of anxiety about giving a speech. At this time, I do not ask students to complete a paper and pencil test, and I do not extensively interview them. A reason for this is that I believe the students know more about their experiences than I, and I want us to decide jointly about whether the class seems to be the kind of experience that would benefit them. Second reason for the nature of the preregistration procedure is to control the number requesting the class in order to maintain manageable class size.

A second step to identify students for the special section of the class occurs during the first week of class. While 60 to 75% of the enrollment for the special section class is determined during the preregistration period (which is usually the fifth or sixth week of the quarter preceding the one in which the students will take the class), we also recognize that some students who are required to take the class, but who are especially nervous about giving speeches will not notice during preregistration the announcement of the special section in the Timetable. Consequently, during the first day of class, the instructors of the regular public speaking classes will announce the special section class and/or administer a self-scoring instrument designed to measure a person's anxiety about giving a speech, usually the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)⁷. Students who take the PRPSA are told that if they have higher scores (one standard deviation or more above the mean) they may consider taking the special section of the public speaking class for speech anxious students, and that they must get the permission of the instructor of that section if they wish to enroll. We emphasize that the scores are only a general indicator of whether the students would find the special section helpful, and we encourage anybody who has doubts about the appropriateness of the class to speak with me. At this point in the enrollment process I exercise more selectivity than previously, because although I will allow a total of 25 students into the class, the demand often exceeds that number. The primary question I ask myself is: How much does this student need to get the public speaking course this particular quarter? This, of course, gives priority to upperclassmen, and it also gives priority to students who would have a number of required oral presentations in upcoming required courses. Students who cannot get into the course are advised to

preregister for the course in a subsequent quarter. If they determine to attempt the regular section of the class in which they are enrolled, we offer to provide the noncredit training in relaxation training or behavioral rehearsal using videotape, if they are interested. There are usually some students who score high on the PRPSA who stay in the regular section of the class and complete it successfully without any visible negative effects. I do not think this indicates that the special section is unnecessary. I see it as a tribute to good teaching and to applying common sense and directed effort in relating to students' needs.

The Class: How is it Different?

While the essential goals of teaching students to understand better and to apply the principles of public speaking are common for all our public speaking classes, the special section speech class differs from the regular public speaking classes in several ways. The main differences are determined by the greater emphasis the special section places on helping students cope more effectively with anxiety about speaking. Consequently, the first few weeks of the course are spent trying to develop a more positive attitude about communicating. This has been partially accomplished by systematic desensitization (or a related form of relaxation called cue controlled relaxation), a rough form of cognitive restructuring⁸, a graduated series of progressively more complicated and more anxiety provoking communication exercises (partially achieved by gradually increasing the size of the audience), and training in specific skills necessary for an effective presentation (especially delivery skills such as how to prepare an effective set of usable notes). The strategy followed early in the course is to help students feel more positive about approaching the communication situation by teaching skills for coping with feelings as well as skills which will allow them to present a speech more effectively. At this point, my concern is as much with the students' attitude as it is with the actual performance, because attitude and performance are especially transactive with speech anxious students. A positive attitude is more likely to encourage students to attempt a speech, thus allowing them to be able to say 'I can do it.' With appropriate skills, instruction, and rehearsal, performance can lead to a more positive attitude toward communication. Ultimately, the concern of our program is with performance, but one aspect of performance is whether a person continues to approach or chooses to avoid future speaking opportunities after finishing the course, and because attitude plays such an important part in the students' approach-avoidance tendencies, we cannot avoid dealing with their attitudes about communicating.

About the third or fourth week of the course, all students in the class are asked to deliver a two to three minute speech in which they define a term or phrase. The speech is delivered to a lab group of eight to ten students with whom they have previously engaged in several interpersonal or small group exercises. These speeches are videotaped and in the subsequent lab period are played back to the students and to the other members of the lab group to whom the students delivered the speeches. My purpose in playing back the speeches is to give the students a basis for measuring improvement in specific speech skills. I attempt to motivate them by assigning a portion of their course grade (approximately a fifth) to how much improvement they make on specific delivery skills. The goal analysis procedure, which has been used in the Penn State reticence program⁹, is adapted to specific speech delivery skills such as looking at the audience more, using gestures to emphasize main points, and pausing between sentences without using articulated pauses. Consequently, the group viewing of the students' previously videotaped definition speeches allows the students to begin to see specific delivery skills which need improvement. It also gets students used to seeing themselves on videotape, which can be intimidating. During the group viewing, we stop between speeches and ask all students to respond to seeing themselves. We encourage other students in the group to identify aspects they liked about each speech. In general, we encourage the groups viewing the speeches to be realistic, but positive, and the instructor attempts to do the same. Very rarely will we discuss specific goals on which the students want to improve during the group videotape viewing, and then usually only at the participants' request. This function is performed later in a conference with the instructor. After seeing their definition speeches in the lab group setting, the students set a conference time with the instructor. At this conference each student must state two or three goals for self-improvement. Together with the instructor, students again view the videotape of their definition speeches, and students and teacher negotiate what specific delivery goals they will attempt to achieve. During the conference, the instructor points out possible areas for improvement they may not have observed, confirms or helps to modify the statement of goals the students have initially selected, suggests specific ways of determining whether the goals have been met, and suggests special strategies for working on the goals. After the conference, the students complete and turn in a goal analysis form, much like the one used in the Penn State program.¹⁰ On this form the students state the goals in behavioral terms, indicate what specific performances will have to take place to say that the goals have been achieved, and outline the strategies for attempting to accomplish the goals. Finally, the students are asked to evaluate their goal achievement following each of the three graded speeches in the class (these speeches begin two or three weeks after the videotaping of the definition speeches). The students observe videotapes of the graded speeches and write an analysis in which they compare their actual performance to the standards set in the goal analysis procedure completed earlier.

While the goal analysis procedure described here makes it appear that our primary concern in teaching/learning is with speech delivery, this is not the case. The course deals with other aspects of speech preparation, including the development of effective supporting material, organization of the speech, and audience analysis. As previously noted, the goal analysis procedure counts only 20% of the students' overall course grade, and the instructor attempts to make delivery considerations a minor part of the evaluation of the three graded speeches. The inclusion, however, of the goal analysis procedure that focuses on delivery makes the course different from our regular sections of the public speaking class.

The special section places slightly more emphasis on delivery. Our reason for this comes from the assumption that speech

anxious students are more concerned about personal appearance and lack confidence in ability to deliver a speech (more so than for speech preparation skills). In addition, we have observed that many of the people who come through the class have an unrealistic view concerning how they come across to an audience. We view the use of the videotaping and the correspondent goal analysis procedure as a means of helping students develop a more realistic, positive, and coping view toward communicating in the public speaking setting.

One of the other techniques we use in the speech anxiety class is a generalized use of modeling. Before each of the graded speeches, we show the students example speeches of the type they are required to deliver. The example speeches were delivered by former students in the class and appear to the instructor to be successful achievements of that particular assignment. In addition, students are encouraged to listen critically to their classmates to identify qualities they like about their classmates' speaking so they may emulate those qualities. The instructor of the class also attempts to provide a model. As an example of this, early in the quarter, just prior to the videotaped definition speech, the instructor gives a lecture on the effective use of note cards. In this case, I choose to "give a speech" in which I define some term the students need to understand, i.e., "extemporaneous speaking." I use a note card to assist me, and we videotape my presentation. Then we play back the videotape of the speech, and the students are given a mimeographed copy of the note card I used to deliver the speech. Then we talk through why I prepared my notes as I did, with an effort made to encourage the practice of the concept I have just defined, "extemporaneous speaking." In this particular case I choose the topic, "how to effectively use note cards," partly because I believe this is a critical skill for speech anxious students.

My own experience tells me that many of the students who are nervous about giving a speech are overly concerned about saying what they have to say "the right way." They attempt to memorize their speech from a manuscript. Consequently, I believe that it is necessary to spend more time encouraging "extemporaneous" speaking for speech anxious students than for the average student in the regular public speaking class.

Evaluation of Course

With these descriptions about our special section of public speaking for speech anxiety, let me now turn to some evaluational data of the program. I will begin by reporting which aspects of the class students report they have found most and least useful.

At the end of almost every quarter, we ask students to rate or comment on the elements of the special section class which have been especially helpful or not helpful to them. Our purpose is to give us another perspective for improving the class, and the results have been instructive. By far, the most commonly mentioned helpful aspect of the course is the "graduated approach" to giving a speech. As explained earlier, this consists of starting students speaking in small informal groups requiring uncomplicated goals and gradually moving them to speaking before larger groups and making the assignments incrementally more difficult. Thus, students in the special speech class give more speeches than students in the regular speech class, though none of the first few speeches are difficult. This is an application of the underlying principle of systematic desensitization to the real situation (or *in vivo* desensitization). It is my belief that this is not only the element of the class that students report as being singularly most helpful, but it is also the element most responsible for allowing the students to reduce their anxiety about giving a speech so they can focus on things to improve their communication effectiveness.

Other aspects of the course students report as being helpful include receiving videotape feedback of their speeches, seeing sample speeches delivered in previous quarters, emphasis on using note cards appropriately, and the use of the goal analysis procedure to identify areas for improvement and to chart the improvement. The use of cognitive restructuring is listed as helpful to some students, but is listed by the overall group as lower in helpfulness than the previously listed items. Interestingly, the systematic desensitization and cue controlled relaxation, which were the basis of the training in the workshop stage of development of our overall program, are ranked similarly with the cognitive restructuring. The relaxation training appears to be helpful to some people, but others found it of little use. This has led us to consider this part of the course as optional. Instead of requiring all the students in the class to participate in the cue controlled relaxation sessions, we now tell them about the procedure at the beginning of the class. We indicate the personal characteristics of the people we think would be most likely to benefit from it, and offer the relaxation training outside the class on a voluntary basis in a noncredit workshop as we did before we started the special section of the class. Usually, not more than one-fourth of the students in the class will elect to be in the cue controlled relaxation group. This probably is a more efficient way of using the cue control training because the students have increased involvement created by personal choice in the matter. If we find speech anxious students in a regular speech class but who cannot take the special section during a given quarter, we attempt to place them in the out of class cue control relaxation group set up for the students in the speech anxious class. There are other aspects of the special section class which students report as being particularly helpful, but the ones mentioned above are the main ones.

Besides student evaluations, we administer a verbal report of public speaking anxiety (PRPSA)¹¹ both at the beginning and at the end of the class. The PRPSA is a 34 item questionnaire which requires students to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 different aspects of how they feel about giving a speech, such that overall scores on the test can range from 34 to 170 with the larger scores representing greater intensity of public speaking anxiety.¹² A theoretically "average" score on the instrument would be 102 (a neutral or '3' response on all 34 items). The mean obtained from surveying all sections of the public speaking class has ranged from 104 to 109 at the beginning of the class. In contrast, the mean on the PRPSA for

students beginning the special section class has ranged between 130 and 143 for the classes we have taught to date. That number is at least one full standard deviation above the average for all sections combined. It should be noted that students in the special section class (with the exception of those who come into the class through the regular sections where they are administered the PRPSA during the first day of class) do not complete the PRPSA until they have been admitted to the class. They have, therefore, no reason to inflate their scores to be admitted. The post course mean for the special section class ranges between 102 and 117 on the PRPSA, and the average decline in anxiety is 30 points or about one and a half standard deviations. Thus, the students' report about how they feel about giving a speech indicates that the special section class accomplishes its goal of reducing anxiety about speaking.

One might question whether training in public speaking in other sections of the class does not accomplish the same thing which the special section class does. We have data on decreases on the PRPSA for all sections of the public speaking class during the Spring quarter of 1976, and the decline was only 13 points, from 109 to 96. While the special section of public speaking had not yet begun in 1976, nine of the students taking the class that quarter had volunteered to go through the systematic desensitization noncredit workshop. Their drops on the PRPSA from the beginning of the course to the end were 20 points greater than matched students who had comparably high PRPSA scores at the beginning of the course, but who had not gone through the systematic desensitization training.

A second piece of information also suggests that the special section for speech anxious students is effective in helping those students better cope with the public speaking situation. In December of 1978, students completing the public speaking class (Fall, 1978) were surveyed as to the degree to which they thought they had accomplished a number of different goals which a course in public speaking might set, i.e., organizing a speech, finding supporting material, relating to an audience, etc. One of the goals listed on the survey was "Feeling more comfortable or relaxed about giving a speech." On a 3 point scale (3=Learned nothing and 1=Learned a lot), students in the special section class averaged 1.29 on the degree to which they had learned to relax or to feel comfortable about giving a speech. Students in the other sections averaged 1.50 on the same item. This indicates that the students in the special section speech class thought they had learned more about relaxing while giving a speech than did the students in the regular sections of speech.

Finally, anonymous student evaluations done at the end of the special speech class indicate a greater positive change toward the class than occurred in the regular speech classes. During the 1978-1979 school year, the instructor of the special section class administered a post course anonymous questionnaire for each of the classes (Fall, Winter, and Spring). The questionnaire was a modification of the one developed by the Learning Resource Center at UTK (SRI-2) for course evaluation. The questionnaire was scored by the instructor after the grades had been turned in. It asks two questions which deal with the student's attitude toward the class, both before and after the class. The results on this question indicated that students substantially improved their attitudes toward the class. The average on the before class item was 3.30 (n=44) and the average on the after class attitude was 1.84 (n=44) (scores could range from 1-exceptional to 5-poor). The instructor of the class then examined previous evaluations of public speaking classes he had taught, and in which he had administered the SRI-2. These were regular sections of the public speaking class. In those classes, the students averaged a 3.04 on the pre-class attitude and 2.56 for the post-class attitude. This indicates that the special section seems to be starting with students who are less positive toward the public speaking class and leads to more positive attitudes.

The special section of the public speaking class for speech anxious students is, therefore, the main activity within the overall Speech Anxiety Program at UTK. The program, because of its focus on helping students who are highly anxious about giving speeches and who are also required to take a basic public speaking course, differs in many ways from other programs designed to assist students who are avoidant of communication or who have negative attitudes toward communication. Our departmental focus on public speaking limits us in some ways, and there are plans to extend our training to the interpersonal communication classes. We believe, however, that the program has been moderately successful in accomplishing its goals, and that it can serve as a base for relating to other communication difficulties.

NOTES

¹William Work, "On Communication Apprehension: Everything You've Wanted to Know But Have Been Afraid to Ask," *Communication Education*, 31 (1982) 248-257.

²See for example Gerald M. Phillips (ed.), "The Practical Teachers' Symposium on Shyness, Communication Apprehension, Reticence, and a Variety of Other Common Problems," *Communication Education*, 29 (1980) 213-263, and Gerald M. Phillips (ed.), "Coming of Age in the Academy: A Symposium," *Communication Education*, 31 (1982) 177-223.

³Karen A. Foss, "Communication Apprehension: Resources for the Instructor," *Communication Education*, 31 (1982) 195-203.

⁴James C. McCroskey, "Measures of Communication Bound Anxiety," *Speech Monographs*, 37 (1970) 269-277.

⁵The results of the workshop stage of the Speech Anxiety Program are discussed by Richard Nash and John Edgerly, "Accountability Efforts Which Have Worked (?) and Not Worked (?)," Paper presented at the Annual Conference of University and College Counseling Center Directors, Snowbird, Utah, 1976.

⁶Jan Hoffman and Jo Sprague, "A Survey of Reticence and Communication Apprehension Treatment Programs at U.S. Colleges and Universities," *Communication Education*, 31 (1982) 187.

⁷McCroskey, 1970, 276-277.

⁸As a technique, cognitive restructuring is based on the idea that what we say to ourselves affects the way we feel and how we behave. Thus, people who are highly nervous about speaking are quite often saying things to themselves that enhance their anxiety and thus decrease the chance they will be able to do an effective presentation. For a description of applying this technique, see William J. Fremouw and Michael D. Scott, "Cognitive Restructuring: An Alternative Method for the Treatment of Communication Apprehension," *Communication Education*, 28 (1979) 129-133. A very similar perspective but with a different twist can be found in rational-emotive therapy, which is described in Albert Ellis and Robert A. Harper, *A New Guide to Rational Living* (North Hollywood, CA: Wilshire Book Co., 1975). This technique has been carefully applied to the reduction of anxiety about speaking in Arden K. Watson, *Handbook with Activities for Confidence in Speaking* (Bowling Green, KY: Barnard Press, 1980), which is an instructional text for special speech classes for communication apprehensive students. The September, 1984 issue of the *Communication Apprehension and Avoidance Newsletter*, which is an in house publication of the SCA Commission on Communication Apprehension and Avoidance, indicates that a revised and expanded edition of Watson's Handbook with a separate teacher's guide is now available. I highly recommend both the Newsletter and the Handbook. For information about either, you should write: Dr. Arden Watson, Department of Speech Communication, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881-0801.

⁹Herman Cohen, "Teaching Reticent Students in a Required Course," *Communication Education*, 29 (1980) 222-228.

¹⁰Cohen, 1980, 227.

¹¹The data that follows is based on results from 1977 to 1982. In the Fall of 1982, we began using another measuring instrument, the PRCA-24, to assess initial anxiety and anxiety reduction during the time of the course. The PRCA-24 is a 24 item instrument, developed initially to offset the bias of the PRCA-C toward public speaking items, which measures the anxiety experienced by a person across several different contexts, public speaking, group interaction, meetings, and two person interactions. Like the PRPSA, each of the items on the test have rating values of from 1 (strongly agree with the statement presented) to 5 (strongly disagree). Thus, overall scores can vary from 24 as a low to 120 as a high for the overall test. In addition, each of the four contexts mentioned above, public speaking, groups, meetings, and dyadic communication, is represented by six of the items on the overall scale, and so apprehension scores for each of the contexts can be determined. The model on which the PRCA-24 is based, as well as initial data on means, standard deviations, and reliability figures are presented by James C. McCroskey, "Oral Communication Apprehension: Reconceptualization and a New Look at Measurement," Paper presented at the Central States Speech Association Convention, Chicago, April, 1981. Pre-post measures on the PRCA-24 for the special section class between Fall, 1982, and Winter, 1985, reflect similar results to those using the PRPSA in the sense that beginning scores on the instrument are reduced by one to one and a half standard deviations between the beginning and the end of the course. In addition, though, the results also show that the greatest decline is for public speaking anxiety as opposed to anxiety about communicating in groups, meetings, and dyads. Initial scores for students in the class show that the public speaking anxiety is relatively higher for those who are selected for the class than is their anxiety about communicating in other situations. This is probably reflective of the nature of the course.

¹²McCroskey, 1970, 275-276.