

Course
ENG-5108-1
Public Speaking Skills

English Language Arts



Introduction

Many of us will be required to make a public speech or presentation at some point in our lives. We may be asked to introduce ourselves or a guest speaker, make a toast, launch a campaign, give an acceptance speech or deliver a verbal communiqué at work. In these and many other common situations, effective public speaking skills enable us to communicate our thoughts, emotions and opinions to small and large audiences. The benefits of improving our public-speaking skills include a greater ability to think on our feet when explaining or defending our ideas and an overall boost in self confidence, all of which are invaluable assets in many areas of life. When we feel confident as speakers, we are far more likely to seize opportunities to publicly express our views on issues that matter to us, which means we are far more likely to influence and even inspire our listeners.

In this 25-hour course, the second of three courses in Secondary V (for which adult learners earn credits in elective subjects), adult learners participate in a variety of learning situations and activities to develop their ability to analyze, discuss and produce a variety of formal oral texts such as oral briefings, speeches of introduction, speeches for ceremonial occasions and campaign speeches. These texts may fall under different text genres, and they may also combine two or more text genres. For example, an oral briefing fits into the Informative category, although it may also contain elements of the Narrative, Persuasive and Explanatory genres. (See the explanation on social functions and their corresponding genres in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.)

By examining a variety of speeches and crafting and delivering some of their own, adult learners hone their rhetorical skills, expand their vocabularies, develop a stronger grasp of organizational techniques and develop their ideas on subjects about which they are passionate. They learn how to tailor their “talk” to suit audience needs and to establish a rapport that helps ensure their message is well-received and remembered. They also discover that when they speak in a knowledgeable, understandable and expressive manner, the chance that the audience will hear their message greatly increases.

This course helps adult learners broaden their knowledge of the communication conventions used in formal public discourse. By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to apply this knowledge when they present several types of public speeches.

Subject-Specific Competencies

Competencies are developed and demonstrated through the mobilization and effective use of various resources. Among these resources are language processes, strategies and textual and linguistic knowledge. The subject-specific competencies targeted in the course *Public Speaking Skills* are shaded in the table below.

Competencies	Key Features		
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)	Develops resources for communicating orally and for learning	Interacts with others in different contexts	Interprets how speakers shape an oral message to create a relationship with the audience
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)	Develops resources to make sense of various written, spoken and media texts	Extends understanding of various written, spoken and media texts	Interprets his/her relationship to the text and the context
Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)	Develops resources to produce written and media texts	Follows a process to produce written and media texts	Creates a relationship with his/her audience suitable to the text and context

Although only C1 and C2 are targeted in this course, C3 is implicit as writing activities complement the learning situations.

For more information on the subject-specific competencies, refer to the following sections:

- *Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.2
- *Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.3
- *Produces texts for personal and social purposes (C3)*, Chapter 3, Section 3.4

Processes and Strategies

Language processes are series of actions or operations that support competency development. In other words, they are important resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers, viewers, writers or producers of texts. In all, there are four language processes (Research, Reading, Writing and Production). The process suggested for this course is illustrated in the table below.

Process	Phases
Research	Planning task at hand Mobilizing resources (Production) Reflecting on the resources employed to achieve the task

Communication and learning strategies are actions, behaviours, steps and techniques that enable adult learners to overcome obstacles, attain goals and achieve success. They are additional resources that adult learners may use to become more effective speakers, listeners, readers,

viewers, writers or producers of texts. The communication and learning strategies suggested for this course are illustrated in the table below.

Strategies	
Communication	Verbal and nonverbal Rhetorical Organizational
Learning	Cognitive Activating prior knowledge Meaning-making Listening Reading/viewing Information-gathering Interpretation Note-taking
	Socioaffective Feedback
	Metacognitive Feedback Self-evaluation

Additional information on processes and strategies is provided in the following sections:

- Chapter 3, Section 3.5
- Appendix (Inventory of Strategies)

Cross-Curricular Competencies

The cross-curricular competencies are generic skills that can be developed and applied outside the school setting. They are developed in tandem with subject-specific competencies. Given the nature of the course *Public Speaking Skills*, the shaded cross-curricular competencies listed horizontally could easily be developed simultaneously with the shaded subject-specific competencies listed vertically. Since teachers have the option of choosing learning situations other than the ones suggested in this program, they may decide to develop cross-curricular competencies other than those shaded in the table below.

Cross-Curricular Competencies →									
↓ Subject-Specific Competencies	Uses information	Solves problems	Exercises critical judgment	Uses creativity	Adopts effective work methods	Uses ICT	Cooperates with others	Achieves his/her potential	Communicates appropriately
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn	■		■	■	■				■
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts	■		■		■				■

For more information on the key features and manifestations of the cross-curricular competencies, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Subject-Specific Content

The subject-specific content includes knowledge and cultural references.

Knowledge

The prescribed textual and linguistic elements, necessary for the development of the competencies targeted in this course, are listed below in alphabetical order.

<p>Textual Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ audience and communication context ✓ coherence, cohesion and conciseness ✓ consistency or logical presentation of ideas ✓ emotional and intellectual appeal of ideas ✓ facts, statistics, opinions and quotations ✓ main and supporting ideas ✓ methods of organization (e.g. analogy, cause/effect, chronological order, comparison/contrast, example, explanation, listing of ideas) ✓ relevant vs. irrelevant details ✓ social function(s) of text ✓ sufficient vs. insufficient development of ideas
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Linguistic Elements

- ✓ adjective and adverbs
- ✓ agreement (of person, subject and verb, verb tenses, pronoun and antecedent)
- ✓ body language (eye contact and expressive gestures/movements/facial expressions)
- ✓ language (neutral, connotative, descriptive, aesthetic, colloquial)
- ✓ idiomatic expressions
- ✓ language devices (e.g. alliteration, assonance, metaphor, simile, satire, allegory, allusion, anecdote, irony, hyperbole, understatement, slang, sarcasm, humour, repetition)
- ✓ language functions (contextualizing, summarizing, paraphrasing, asking rhetorical questions)
- ✓ language tone and register (style/level of language suitable to the context)
- ✓ opening and closing remarks
- ✓ oral communication features (voice tone, speed, volume, expression, emphasis, enunciation, pronunciation; use of silences, pauses, etc.)
- ✓ parallel structure (of words, phrases, clauses)
- ✓ reported speech
- ✓ transition expressions (of time, sequence, space, causality, comparison, contrast, etc.)
- ✓ word order

Cultural References

In this course, teachers may decide to have adult learners explore the sociolinguistic aspect of the culture by focusing on the differences in the language used in various types of public speeches. Adult learners discover that effective speakers adjust their language and rhetorical strategies according to the purpose of the oral discourse. For example, when speakers intend to inform or explain a subject to their audience, they use clear, concise, neutral language. Conversely, when speakers intend to persuade, move or entertain an audience, they are far more apt to use connotative or emotional language. They may also use humorous anecdotes and colloquial language when the occasion is more informal and the speech more personal (e.g. a toast to the bride and groom at a small wedding). In addition, they may use vocal inflections and gestures to reinforce the persuasive or affective impact of their speech or its entertainment value. On the other hand, speakers who want to gain credibility with an educated or professional audience usually avoid the use of slang, profanity and clichés and their use of humour is far more modulated.

Through the choice of specific words, speakers reveal their position on or attitude towards a subject. For example, speakers who consistently employ the male pronoun for an unidentified person signify their general acceptance of a patriarchal society. Speakers who use expressions such as “male nurse” convey their belief that this is a surprising combination of ideas, while speakers who direct comments such as “Take your wife, sir...” to an unknown man in their audience demonstrate their assumption that he is a married heterosexual. In short, speakers may reveal their sexist, heterosexist and racist attitudes in the language they use.

By considering how the differences in formality, tone and content are connected to the roles various public speeches play in our society, adult learners learn to be far more attuned to the impact of the language used by speakers and the attitudes and intentions their language may reveal.

Alternatively, teachers may decide to focus on the aesthetic or the sociolinguistic aspect of culture. (See Chapter 4 for additional information on the three cultural aspects.)

Families of Learning Situations

The term “families of learning situations” refers to groupings of learning situations that vary in style and complexity but share some common characteristics. The families of learning situations targeted in this course are shaded in the table below.

Families of Learning Situations	
	Exploring and creating literary diversity
▶	Seeking and imparting information
▶	Developing and supporting a stance

Seeking is associated with the communication purposes of gathering and understanding or interpreting information from a variety of public speeches containing informative, explanatory, narrative, persuasive and argumentative elements. **Imparting** is associated with the communication purposes of explaining and analyzing the information contained in various types of public speeches.

Developing is associated with the communication purposes of formulating a central message upon which the balance of a speech rests. **Supporting** is associated with the communication purpose of providing evidence that reinforces the central message of the speech.

Broad Areas of Learning

The table below illustrates the broad areas of learning. These five areas are selected on the basis of their importance to society. Each comprises an educational aim and focuses of development that help teachers delineate the knowledge that can be explored in specific learning situations.

Broad Areas of Learning → Subject-Specific Competencies ↓	Health and Well-Being	Career Planning and Entrepreneurship	Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities	Media Literacy	Citizenship and Community Life
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn	■	■			■
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts	■	■			■

As demonstrated in the chart above and the examples of learning situations below, Health and Well-Being, Career Planning and Entrepreneurship, and Citizenship and Community Life are three broad areas of learning well suited to this course.

When adult learners focus on Health and Well-Being, they may develop:

- self-awareness and awareness of basic needs (e.g. the need for recognition and fulfillment, the need to express feelings)

When adult learners focus on Career Planning and Entrepreneurship, they may develop:

- familiarity with the world of work, social roles and occupations and trades (e.g. knowledge of work methods in certain contexts [factory, business, company, home])

When adult learners focus on Citizenship and Community Life, they may develop:

- promotion of the rules of social conduct and democratic institutions (e.g. critical thinking regarding various ideologies and forms of political organization)

For more information on the broad areas of learning, their educational aim and focuses of development, refer to the Diversified Basic Education Program.

Examples of Learning Situations

Quickie Burger

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

You have recently been promoted to assistant manager at the fast food restaurant where you have worked part-time for the past ten years. You are excited at the prospect of regular staff meetings, where one of your new responsibilities will be to deliver oral briefings to colleagues on a weekly

basis. One of your first tasks is to speak to staff about the new recycling policy mandated by the national office. The guidelines are strict and must be conveyed clearly and succinctly, yet in a way that will also encourage compliance. You prepare a two-minute speech outlining the new policy and emphasizing its importance.

Community Speech

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

You are a recent adult education graduate and have been asked to speak to members of a local community centre about the value of continuing their education. You are enthusiastic about the idea of sharing your success with others by telling your story. You prepare a three- to four-minute speech that outlines the challenges you have overcome in your life. In addition, you include statistics about the correlation between graduation and success in the working world. You also mention some of the vocational programs of study that are available to students with a secondary school diploma. Finally, you describe what you are currently doing. You leave a powerful impression about how Continuing Education can change lives.

Campaign for School President

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

The school you attend has recently decided to implement a student council. Nominations for president of the council are being solicited. You have very strong ideas about how your centre can create a more positive learning environment and about how your school can be more connected to the surrounding community and less wasteful. You decide that the only way to create change is to take on the challenge and run for president. You create a three- to four-minute persuasive speech outlining the changes you would like to see and prepare to deliver the talk at a school-wide assembly.

Eulogy

In this learning situation, adult learners are presented with the following scenario:

You are devastated by the news of a dear friend's passing. You are asked to commemorate his/her life by making a short speech at the funeral. Despite your grief, you find the strength to compose a three- to four-minute speech celebrating your friend's spirit and accomplishments. You focus on his/her unique qualities, include anecdotes about his/her life and identify obstacles that he/she overcame. You plan to deliver the speech in such a convincing way that other mourners will be inspired to change their lives for the better.

End-of-Course Outcomes

By the end of the course, adult learners will be able to:

Discuss and analyze

- **oral briefings** (e.g. on policies/conditions/regulations/procedures in the workplace or an educational institution)
- **introduction speeches** (e.g. to introduce oneself or a guest speaker)
- **speeches for ceremonial occasions** (e.g. eulogies, weddings, retirement parties)
- **campaign speeches** (e.g. to run for president of the student council or leader of a lobby group for healthier food in the adult centre)

When adult learners discuss and analyze an oral briefing, they understand that its predominant purpose is to provide information on a single subject. They identify evidence of research in the briefing and the method(s) of organization used (e.g. analogy, cause/effect, chronological order, comparison/contrast, example, explanation, listing of ideas). They discuss the use of formal, neutral and concise language and analyze the reasons for its use. They also identify some of the language devices used (e.g. repetition) and analyze the suitability or effectiveness of these devices. They identify any facts, statistics or opinions that are mentioned and evaluate how complete and understandable the information is overall.

When adult learners discuss and analyze speeches where people introduce themselves or others, they discuss the speaker's main message and the impression he/she creates. They discuss the effectiveness of the speaker's opening remarks and the supporting details he/she provides. They evaluate the overall interest or appeal of the speech and identify some language devices (e.g. anecdotes, metaphors, humour) or language features (e.g. expressive vocabulary and body language) that make the speech interesting or appealing. They evaluate the text's informative and/or explanatory elements and identify any narrative or persuasive elements that may be present. In the case of speeches that introduce a guest speaker, adult learners also evaluate the research involved.

When adult learners discuss and analyze speeches for various ceremonial occasions such as weddings, funerals, graduations and retirements, they discuss each speaker's opening remarks and the contextualizing remarks he/she provides. They identify the central message of each text. They consider how the text's informative, narrative and persuasive elements are combined to create a lasting impression on the listener. Adult learners evaluate the different sorts of information provided by the speaker (personal anecdotes, facts, quotations, etc.) to establish credibility with the audience. They also discuss the language devices used (e.g. humour, hyperbole, irony, sarcasm and repetition) and analyze how the suitability of these devices is connected to the specific nature of the social ceremony.

When adult learners discuss and analyze a campaign speech (e.g. an infomercial, an election or social action speech), they examine the communication techniques the speaker uses to persuade the audience. They discuss the way the speaker establishes credibility by providing pertinent examples, facts and possibly statistics. They identify the methods of organization used in the speech. They discuss any quotations or rhetorical questions used and the impact of these questions. They analyze the logic and persuasiveness of the arguments presented. They analyze the speaker's use of emotional language and language devices such as repetition, hyperbole and sarcasm. They analyze the effectiveness of the language and language devices and evaluate the emotional and/or intellectual appeal of the speech.

In addition, when adult learners examine each type of public speech previously listed, they analyze the impact of the speaker's body language (e.g. posture, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions) and the effectiveness of the oral communication features the speaker uses (e.g. clear enunciation, deliberate pauses, changes in pitch, pace, tone). They identify the features that add clarity, coherence, conviction or style to the speech. They also identify the textual structure of the speech: the opening remarks, which state the central message of the text; the body, which develops the main ideas; the supporting details; the linking transition expressions (e.g. of time, sequence, space, causality, comparison, contrast); and the summarizing remarks. Adult learners analyze how the speaker establishes a rapport with the members of the audience and maintains their attention until the speech reaches its conclusion.

Present orally

- **a briefing**

When adult learners present an oral briefing, they begin by identifying the topic and/or purpose of the briefing (e.g. a work or school policy/procedure). They then contextualize the topic by providing any necessary background information that may be of importance to the audience (e.g. colleagues or fellow students). They elaborate on the issue by providing a sufficient number of relevant details. They connect these details in a logical fashion. They conclude their speech by summarizing the situation and/or offering a recommendation of some kind.

Text length: 2-3 minutes

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; formal or informal tone and register suitable to the text type and target audience

Present orally

- **an introduction speech to introduce themselves or a guest speaker**

When adult learners introduce themselves or guest speakers to an audience, they elaborate on some of the following: defining or distinctive experiences, circumstances, challenges, credentials, achievements, goals, values, interests, hobbies or personality traits. Adult learners provide enough information or supporting details to create interest. They use a method of organization such as

analogy, cause/effect, comparison/contrast and chronological order to develop their ideas. They may use humorous, colourful or interesting anecdotes and expressive vocabulary and body language to engage their audience. They may also use various language devices such as metaphor, simile, humour, hyperbole and irony. They speak clearly and expressively and at an appropriate speed and volume.

Text Length: 1-2 minutes

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; informal or formal tone and register suitable to text type and target audience

Present orally

- **a speech for a ceremonial occasion**

When adult learners present a speech for an occasion such as a wedding, funeral or a graduation/retirement/awards ceremony, their text has a central message. They include some pertinent informative details, as well as some colourful/touching anecdotes and stories to create interest in their subject and to pay tribute of some kind. They use emotional language to produce an affective response and they may include a quotation that ties in with their message. Their intention is to entertain, persuade and/or move their audience. They speak clearly and with suitable expression.

Text length: 3-4 minutes

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; formal or informal tone and register suitable to the text type and target audience

Present orally

- **a campaign speech**

When adult learners give a campaign speech, they develop a few central points and provide convincing supporting details such as facts and statistics to establish credibility with their audience. In addition, they appeal to the emotions and reason of their audience by using emotional language and logical arguments that are clearly outlined and connected.

They thus combine elements of the narrative, informative, explanatory and persuasive and argumentative text genres. They deliver their speech at an appropriate speed and volume and speak clearly and forcefully. They use appropriate and expressive body language.

Text length: 3-4 minutes

Communication context: familiar or unfamiliar audience; formal or informal tone and register suitable to the text type and target audience

Teachers need to ensure that adult learners use planning tools such as brainstorming, lists, outlines, storyboards, discussions and rehearsing as they begin creating their texts. Teachers also need to ensure that adult learners actively reflect on what they learned and how well they communicated in the texts they created. For example, adult learners may use self-evaluation checklists or participate in feedback discussions to appraise how clearly they conveyed their ideas in their speeches, as well as to identify the learning and communication strategies they used and to appraise their effectiveness as public speakers. Learners may use the same type of evaluation tools to reflect on what they learned as a result of discussing and creating these texts.

Evaluation Criteria for the Competencies Targeted by the Course

Competencies	Evaluation Criteria
Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn (C1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of ideas • Effective communication for learning • Appropriate use of language conventions
Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts (C2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent construction of meaning from texts • Demonstration of understanding contextual connections • Thorough comprehension of structures and features of texts • Critical interpretation of texts