

## **27. Need of Public Speaking (or) Public Speaking: A tool to Improve Teaching Practices in India**

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In India the education system we follow is more theoretical in nature and needs self-learning or imagination skills in order to understand the same. Majorly the teaching done in India is more of a one-way communication as almost all the schools/colleges fail to introduce their students with the power questioning in the early stage of teaching itself. Doing so the learner will develop questioning skills that will help both for the lecturer/tutor as well as the learner/student in order to give feedback to the learner with respect to his understanding (Hall, 2007). This skill needs to be imbibed in a student right from his childhood by encouraging students to ask questions in order to remove the fear of being judged. Public Speaking can be used as an important tool in developing this questioning skill in young learners.

Introducing public speaking right from a young age is the ideal way of removing the fear of being judged in public. Dr. David Carbonell had stated that “Fear of public speaking is the most common of all phobias”. This fear grows stronger as the learner’s belief system on this fear becomes stronger with

growing age. Finally, this fear will affect the way a student chooses college coursework such that public speaking is not required, at work out of mere fear of public speaking professionals pass up assignments and promotions that would require speaking in public (Carbonell, 2010).

Similar to a doctor diagnosing a patient with fever by finding the roots (how the fever was acquired/developed) one needs to identify the source of the fear before overcoming it. In an effort to find the root cause of this speaking fear, psychologists refer to a term called “Evolutionary Psychology”; the prime objective of evolutionary psychology is to research on the design of a human brain. In other words, evolutionary psychology is a part of psychology which uses the principles and information acquired through evolutionary biology. Evolutionary psychology is not an area of study whereas it may be defined as a way of thinking about human psychology that can be used in applying to any topic. 30 years later after Darwin’s “Origin of Species”, William James an American philosopher and psychologists had emphasized more on “instincts” which are referred to as dedicated neural circuit that are found common in each member of a species and are the results of that species’ history of evolution. These specialized circuits taken together constitute to the term “human nature” (James, 1890).

With reference to the basic principles derived from biology, principle 2 states that “Our neural circuits were designed by natural selection to solve problems that our

ancestors faced during our species' evolutionary history" and due to which we have some inbuilt reflex or call it human nature to react to a particular problem whereas if we consider principle 5 it states that "Our modern skulls house a stone age mind". Principle 5 tries to explain the common instincts which we have been passing it through our gene's generation after generations right from stone age.

Now, let us see how this is related to the common human phobia: "The fear of public speaking".

Generation after generations for more than ten million years human brain has been sculpted slowly by accepting the circuitry (instinct) to solve the day to day problems of our hunter-gatherer ancestors. In the stone age era, our ancestors were successful in fighting carnivorous creatures, natural calamities, extreme climatic conditions, etc., together forming groups or teams. On the other hand, if a human is alone he is weak and chances of falling prey to a carnivorous was very high. In those days in order for a human to be a part of the group needed him to be a good speaker in order for him to showcase what he can offer or serve by being part of that group. The ones who fail to portray or present their skills may be removed from the group cause of lack of contribution to the group and finally leading them to be left alone. Hence, this fear of being separated (left alone) from a group led to the fear of death in the minds of our ancestors. Even though humans have evolved from creating communities to civilization to villages to gram panchayat to a modern urban world, this fear of speaking and that it may result

to death otherwise has been passed through our genes (Tooby, 1997).

With the advancement in science and technology we are lucky that in today's world we neither have to deal with encountering a carnivorous animal on your street nor do we have to worry about extreme climatic conditions and living alone will not lead to death which was not the same in the stone age era. The term called "stage fear" is something which is similar to any fear and mostly associated with the fear of death. For Instance, if you happen to see a deadly snake, you will fear death considering the possibility of being bit by its poison whereas while experiencing stage fear we tend to feel and fear death as it is being imbibed inside our heads. One may even debate that some people do overcome the public speaking fear right in their first speech itself but in reality there have been born speakers who would have got a modified genetics considering their parent, grandparent had overcome their public speaking fear by practice or other public speaking techniques which would have led into this genetic evolution. Apart from the above possibility it is common to have this fear and at time even the greatest of speakers when interviewed say they do fear for the initial 30-40 seconds while facing a mixed audience and the fear is suppressed as they start speaking and getting to know their audience.

This research allows one to understand the root cause of the fear to speak in public and by practice this can be eradicated not only from one's mind but will also help in modifying the

genetics of his future children and grandchildren. I would like to conclude this research letter by insisting that Public Speaking should be made as a mandatory part while learning languages (any language subject). Public speaking should be taught and graded during schooling itself since this skill not only overcomes one's fear but also helps in building social connections, career growth, inspiring others, to speak your mind, etc.,

## References

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