10-18-2012

Public Speaking Catch Phrase: Reinforcing good public speaking skills through an interactive in-class gaming experience

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GIFTS: Public Speaking Catch Phrase: Reinforcing good public speaking skills through an interactive in-class gaming experience

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Public Speaking Catch Phrase is an interactive in-classroom game derived from the word guessing party game, *Catch Phrase. Public Speaking Catch Phrase* intends to make students aware of their communication habits and to develop and reinforce good public speaking skills. Speakers, or "clue-givers," from two teams alternate turns and deliver clues to get their team to say the words displayed on the electronic game device. However, students must follow "rules" promoting good public speaking practices in order to receive points. This includes maximizing metaphors and punctuation with gestures, and minimizing non-words (e.g., "um," "uh," "er") and fluency disruptions (e.g., stammering, slurred articulation). This activity challenges students to focus, think quickly, and build a speaker-audience relationship in an interactive, fun, and energetic way.

Goal

The goal of *Public Speaking Catch Phrase* is to make students aware of their communication habits and to develop and reinforce good public speaking skills. This includes the development of the following:

• Clear and logical expression of ideas

• Impromptu speechmaking

• Meaningful gestures

• Minimization of non-words ("um," "uh", "er")

• Dynamic volume and delivery

• Varied word selection and competency

• Comfort and control in front of a large audience

• Active listening skills

• Speaker-audience relationship

Rationale

By introducing and reinforcing public speaking skills through a "game" format, students become motivated to learn, participate, and interact with their classmates. The team-based structure immediately encourages them to connect, collaborate, and grow familiar with each other's speaking styles. As a result, the classroom environment becomes a positive, creative, and comfortable space conducive for learning and easing the anxiety of nervous speakers.

Oftentimes, students are passive learners sitting in a lecture with no vested interest in the presented information (Kumar & Lightner, 2007). However, *Public Speaking Catch Phrase* promotes active learning and simultaneously presents students with a short-term goal (winning with the most points) that results in achieving a fundamental long-term skill (comfort in front of a large group of strangers). Students become energetically involved in key concepts, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation.

Directions

Players/Roles

Public Speaking Catch Phrase is played with at least one speaker or "clue-giver" from each team (two total "clue-givers"), unlimited students or "guessers," one score keeper, and the moderator/instructor. As an option, six to eight "clue-givers" that alternate turns make for a very competitive, high-energy game.

Required Materials

The following materials are needed: *Catch Phrase* game (electronic version), chalk & chalkboard or large paper & marker to keep score, buzzer (like the one included with the board game *Taboo*), and a bell.

Duration

15 minutes is the suggested playtime, but can be longer depending on how many rounds of play the instructor would like to have.

Play

The class is split into two teams. About 3-4 members from each team come up to the front of the class. These students ("clue-givers") will take turns trying to get their team to say the words displayed on the device. A coin flip will determine who will go first and what category from which the clues derive. Some categories

include Food, Sports, Technology, People, and Entertainment. The instructor will decide how long or how many rounds the students will play.

A timer begins when the first team presses start on the device. If a team guesses the word correctly, the instructor rings the bell and the device is passed to the other team. If a team skips a turn, the instructor sounds the buzzer and the device is passed to the other team. Points are rewarded or deducted for demonstration of good or poor public speaking practices. The instructor rings the bell for point additions and sounds the buzzer for point deductions. The device passes back and forth from one team to the other until the timer runs out. The team with the most points after all the rounds or set time duration wins!

How to get points?

- *Correct guess* – The clue-giver's team receives a point each time they correctly guess the word displayed on the device.

- *Meaningful gestures* – The instructor will assign points for meaningful gestures.

- *Time expired* – The team not holding the device when the timer expires receives a point.

How to lose points?

- *Buzzer sounds* – Each time the buzzer sounds a point will be deducted.

- *Uses of non-words/sentence fragments* – Points are deducted for each time clue-giver says non-word or sentence fragment.

- *Pass* – Points deducted for each passed turn.

- *Rule violation* – Clue-givers may not rhyme or say the number of syllables or part the word. For example, they may not say "day" if the displayed word is "daylight."

Expected Outcomes

- *Practice good public speaking skills* – While a clue-giver delivers clues, team members will simultaneously shout out guesses. This forces clue-givers to articulate loudly and clearly. They naturally increase their volume, maintain eye contact with members of their team, and are aware of their word choice and sentence structures.

- *Peer regulation* – Oftentimes, when a clue-giver is struggling or not articulating, the guessing team members will comment, coach, and ask questions of the speaker (e.g., "Can you speak louder?" "Can you say it another

way?" "What do you mean by that?"). In this way, clue-givers receive feedback from their peers for their delivery and guessers become active listeners, evaluators, and engage in the speakers' train of thought.

- *Awareness* – Through this exercise, students become aware of their speaking habits. The "buzzing" heard every time a clue-giver says a non-word is an audible trigger for poor word choices and delivery. Eventually, the buzzing will become excessive and the speaker will slow down and use pauses instead of non-words. The "buzzing" helps the students become aware of the problem and replace disfluencies with good public speaking practices (e.g., pauses, comprehendible sentences) and deliver strong messages. Likewise, the bell ring will be a sound positively associated with points for the team and good public speaking skills. This cultivates confidence and a sense of accomplishment in one's speech delivery.

References

Kumar, R. & Lightner, R. (2007). Games as an interactive classroom technique: Perceptions of corporate trainers, college instructors and students. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 19* (1), 53-63.