



**HOLCOMBE INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING EXCELLENCE
CLASSROOM RESEARCH AWARD EVALUATION**

Human Resources – Holcombe Institute • 225 East Las Olas Boulevard • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • 954-201-7339

Please complete this form for the research project that you conducted for the Classroom Research Award. This information will be reviewed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of your research. Your evaluation and supporting documentation will be posted on the HI Website. Use additional paper where necessary.

Note: Please submit this form and supporting documentation within 30 days of the completion of your project to Office of Professional Development & Training, B31 - R605, WHC. In addition, you will need to attach an electronic copy of the evaluation to an EMAIL and forward to ProfDevTrng@broward.edu.

MUST BE WORD PROCESSED

Name:	Jamonica Rolle	Date:	May 28, 2009
Signature:			
Title of Research Project:	<i>Problem Based Learning: Re-establishing the “Public” and Increasing Learning Gains in Public Speaking</i>		
Project Completion Date:	May 2009		

1. State the problem to be researched.

Several studies suggest the need for communication pedagogy research as the current instructional models used to teach public speaking are thought to be outdated and have removed the basic concept of “the public sphere” from most classrooms. Most communication curriculums offer public speaking chiefly as a device for individual improvement and business success. In this manner, students view public speaking as singular and self-serving. This seemingly diminishes the role of speech in the preservation of society and as a vehicle to create social change (Sproule, 1991; 2002).

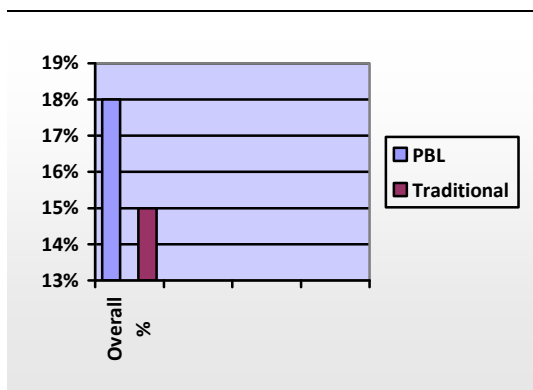
Additionally, scholars suggest that traditional approaches to teaching public speaking fail to provide students with necessary skills to succeed in real world situations. In its present form, public speaking students complain about not being challenged and cite concerns about the relevance of the content to their lives. Public speaking instructors also complain about the level of student engagement and the effort put into speeches (Sellnow & Ahlfeldt, 2005). To address these concerns, I proposed a research study which implemented Problem Based Learning (PBL) and relevant social issues as the pedagogical framework. Students were placed into cooperative groups and given relevant social problems to explore. Their goal was to use public speaking as the means to bring awareness to and/ or solve their social problems.

My study addressed the following questions: 1) Does using Problem Based Learning increase student learning in the basic public speaking course, and 2) Can using Problem Based Learning help to re-establish the role of public speaking as an important force in creating social change?

2. Summarize the research findings/results. If applicable, attach copies of evaluation forms and a summary of those forms.

The study supported the theory that socially focused Problem Based Learning is a more effective framework for teaching public speaking than traditional approaches. Quantitative data revealed greater acquisition of skill and overall student growth.

Cross comparisons of student pre and post test scores revealed greater increases in overall content knowledge (details attached). Students in the experimental group (Class A) increased an average 18% from pre to post test; while the control group (Class B) only increased 15% [fig 1.].

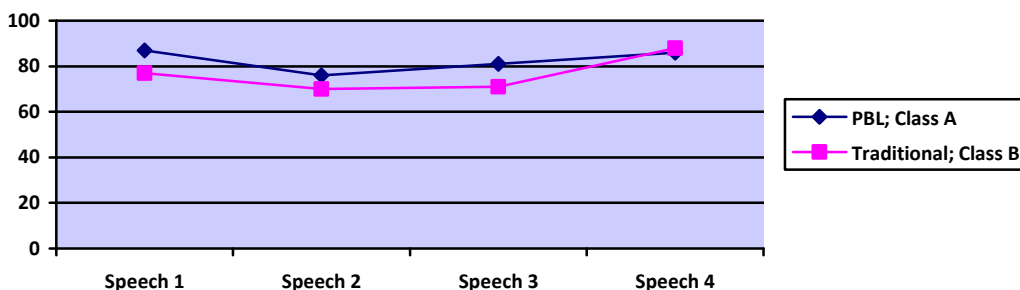


[Fig. 1]

Acquisition of public speaking skills were also analyzed by comparing student speech scores. Students in Class A averaged higher scores on 3 out of 4 major speeches [fig. 2 & 3].

Average Student Speech Score		
	Class A- Experimental group PBL Approach	Class B- Control group Traditional Approach
Informative Speech	87%	77%
Demonstration Speech	76%	70%
Persuasive Speech	81%	71%
Group Presentation	86%	88%

[Fig. 2]



[Fig. 3]

Questionnaire answers did not reveal significant differences in student perceptions about the role of public speaking as an important force in the preservation of society or as a vehicle for creating social changes. In both classes, students reported that they learned technical public speaking skills such as: “preparing speech outlines”, “developing speaking confidence” and “learning the different types of speeches.” Additionally, most students cited future uses for the course as self-serving: “for business purposes”, “future classes”, and “everyday life.”

One notable difference is that students in Class A did report that they “liked working in groups” and that this format “helped to relate the class to the real world.” It can be inferred that their success working in groups was a natural consequence of learning how to work together. Instructor observations also revealed a greater sense of student engagement and overall participation among group members. During presentations, several students made oral commitments to continue working toward bringing awareness to their individual social problems as well as some of the other problems they had been exposed to throughout the semester. This suggests that students did get sense that public speaking can be used as an effective tool to make social changes.

Topic selection appeared as a distinguishable theme among students in Class B. While most suggested that they liked “choosing their own topics,” one student comment may lend support for the project’s original hypothesis that students must be challenged to speak about more substantive topics. When asked about other issues that should be taught, the student wrote, “[Students should be taught] to go above and beyond when choosing topics. I thought they often stayed with simple topics that they liked...choose topics that make a difference even if only to them. It would be harder but I think more beneficial.”

Students in both classes seemed to dislike the chapter tests and textbook layout and content.

3. Describe the methods you used to evaluate the effectiveness of your project. Include quantitative and/or qualitative evidence.

- Students were given pre and post tests to ensure class comparability and assess learning gains. Scores were compared and analyzed to determine which pedagogical approach showed greater increases (attached).
- Scores on the 4 major speeches were compared and analyzed for skill acquisition (attached).
- Students were given open-ended questionnaires to ascertain their perceptions about the course and the role of public speaking. Responses were coded and analyzed for themes and inferences about the impact of each pedagogical approach (attached).
- Instructor observations were noted throughout the semester to reveal clues about student engagement and participation.

5. If applicable, identify what prevented you from achieving your original, expected findings.

I am pleased with the results of my research and will continue using PBL pedagogy to teach public speaking.

6. Explain in detail how you intend to share the results of this research with the Broward College community.

Details of my results will be shared with the Broward College community at the next Professional Development Day and on the Holcombe Institute website. Additionally, I plan to submit the project as an academic paper in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, and/ or at a communication conference.

7. Describe ways in which faculty from other disciplines could apply your research and its results in classroom practices, in future studies, and/or for student success?

This study proved that Problem Based Learning can be used as an effective approach for increasing student engagement and learning. This hands-on approach to learning can be a useful pedagogical approach for instructors as Broward College moves toward becoming more learning centered. Moreover, finding ways to enhance curriculum with relevant local and global social issues can increase student awareness for issues outside of the traditional course content.

Submit this evaluation via EMAIL to ProfDevTrng@broward.edu

AND

Send the ORIGINAL (HARD COPY with signatures) to

Holcombe Institute for Teaching & Learning Excellence: HR - Office of Professional Development & Training - Bldg. 31/605 WHC - Phone 954-201-7339