

Speaking Successfully

SOME STUDIES HAVE APPARENTLY FOUND THAT

many people fear public speaking more than they do death. This led Jerry Seinfeld to conclude famously that at a funeral, there are those who would rather be the person in the coffin than the one giving the eulogy.

As a career and technical educator, you are accustomed to speaking to a classroom full of students or even to your entire school. But taking on a leadership role means you may find yourself speaking to business groups, corporate leaders, community meetings or even state legislatures. You could find yourself far outside of your usual comfort zone.

Perhaps you have a gift for public speaking, but there are others at your school who do not share the ability. When a talent comes so naturally to you, it may not be an easy to explain to someone without that natural ability how it is done. Picturing the audience in their underwear



is one of the suggestions often made to someone who fears public speaking, but

“LEADERSHIP CANNOT BE LEARNED IN A DAY. IT TAKES PRACTICE.”
—TOASTMASTERS INTERNATIONAL

perhaps this is not the best advice.

For those who struggle with speaking in public, those who may wish to help someone else who has difficulty, or those who may simply want to improve their techniques, a few tips from the experts

might help. One organization that offers such help is Toastmasters International.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit organization that has been in existence since 1924. The organization estimates that more than three million people around the world have benefited from its training.

Courtesy of Toastmasters International, here are their “10 Tips for Successful Public Speaking.”

- 1 Know your material.** Pick a topic you are interested in. Know more about it than you include in your speech. Use personal stories and conversational language—that way you won’t easily forget

Open Technologies Web Site for School Leaders

THE CONSORTIUM FOR SCHOOL NETWORKING

(CoSN) has launched a new Web site as part of its K–12 Open Technologies Leadership Initiative to help raise awareness among K–12 education technology decision makers about the use of open technologies. According to CoSN, “open technologies” include source software, open standards and hardware that are available with fewer licensing restrictions than proprietary sources. That means educators can download resources such as server and

desktop programs, databases, text, photos and lesson plans at low or no cost.

“This site is a tool for education leaders, decision and policy makers to help them better understand how open technologies can be implemented to make a positive impact on students’ learning, increase efficiency and potential cost savings for school districts,” says Shaun Taylor, project director for CoSN’s Open Technology Initiative.

The new site features articles such as, “Five questions you should ask before

adopting open technologies,” and “The Real Cost of Open Source Software.” CoSN plans to focus initially on the fundamentals of the open technologies movement in education, then progress into more sophisticated content.

The new Web site is at www.k12opentech.org. For more information about the Consortium for School Networking, visit www.cosn.org. 

what to say.

- 2 Practice. Practice. Practice!** Rehearse out loud with all the equipment you plan on using. Revise as necessary.
- 3 Know the audience.** Greet some of the audience members as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers.
- 4 Know the room.** Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and practice using the microphone and any visual aids.
- 5 Relax.** Ease tension by doing exercises. Transform nervous energy into enthusiasm.
- 6 Visualize yourself giving your speech.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear and confident. Visualize the audience clapping—it will boost your confidence.
- 7 Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative and entertaining. They don't want you to fail.

- 8 Don't apologize for any nervousness or problem.** The audience probably never noticed it.
- 9 Concentrate on the message—not the medium.** Focus your attention away from your own anxieties and concentrate on your message and your audience.
- 10 Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the experience in a safe and friendly environment.

You will note that nowhere in those 10 tips do you find, "Picture the audience in their underwear."

A number of career and technical educators have already discovered how organizations such as Toastmasters can help them make public speaking less intimidating and more successful. To learn more about the organization or to find a club in your area, visit www.toastmasters.org. **IT**

Principals Say Communication with Families is Key

The first Principals' Partnership Poll surveyed public high school principals attending the fifth annual Summer Leadership Institute held in July. The principals were asked about the most important actions a family should take to assure success for high school students. According to the Principals' Partnership, family communication with teachers, principals and counselors was identified by the principals as the most essential element in supporting student success.

Other important things families can do to help students succeed that were cited by the principals surveyed include talking with the student about school activities and friends, establishing a time and place for homework, and having a positive attitude about education along with high expectations for the school.

For more information, and to read the July 15 feature article about the Principals' Partnership Poll, visit www.principalspartnership.com. **IT**