Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills

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Abstract

Public speaking is one of the essential skills that young people need to develop, particularly to enhance soft skills such as self-confidence and effective communication. Many students still experience fear and anxiety when speaking in public, which often leads to passive participation in classroom learning. In response to this issue, this community service activity aimed to improve students' public speaking abilities through practice-based training. The program was conducted at Tarsisius I Junior High School in Jakarta and involved 8th and 9th-grade students. The implementation method included the delivery of material through interactive presentations using PowerPoint, followed by practical public speaking exercises in front of an audience. The program was evaluated through direct observation and the distribution of questionnaires to participants. The results showed that the majority of participants found the training to be both engaging and valuable. This activity demonstrates that public speaking training can serve as a strategic effort to enhance the quality of human resources and foster personal development among students.

Keywords: communication skills, public speaking, self-confidence, soft skill training

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.

27

Introduction

Learning within the school environment should not be solely oriented toward academic achievement but must also accommodate the development of life skills, including soft skills that play a crucial role in shaping students' character and social competence (Harahap et al., 2024). One such increasingly relevant and essential skill in the digital communication era is public speaking. This ability is not only valuable in classroom learning contexts but also serves as an important asset in students' social, academic, and professional lives. Therefore, fostering public speaking skills among students has become a critical necessity for building self-confidence and effective communication abilities (Adara & Haqiyyah, 2021; Asriandhini et al., 2020).

Public speaking is a skill that involves the ability to think critically, organize messages systematically, and deliver them confidently to an audience. According to Jamaludin et al. (2023), this skill requires not only mastery of the subject matter being presented but also self-confidence and emotional intelligence. It can be gradually developed through direct experience, both in group interactions and within broader social contexts (Tamelab et al., 2021). Through structured and continuous public speaking education, students gain numerous benefits, including increased self-confidence, enhanced logical thinking, improved argumentation skills, and the ability to work collaboratively in teams.

However, in reality, many students still face challenges in verbal communication. A lack of public speaking skills often hinders students from expressing their opinions, actively participating in class, and articulating themselves appropriately (Nengtias, 2022). The fear of speaking in public (glossophobia) also contributes to low self-confidence and limited student participation in both classroom learning and school organizational activities (Salma et al., 2023).

Public speaking activities are considered essential to be introduced to students as early as junior high school. A study by Kuntoro et al. (2022) found that approximately 61% of junior high school students experience significant fear and anxiety when speaking in front of the class. Furthermore, research by Adzani (2018) revealed that junior high school students tend to be passive during classroom learning activities, indicating suboptimal verbal communication skills. This inability to communicate effectively can lead to psychological pressure when

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation
Skills | Soelaiman et al.

28

required to speak in public, ultimately having a negative impact on their social and academic development. Therefore, there is a need for educational activities in the form of public speaking training that are tailored to the developmental needs of adolescents.

In response to these issues, this community service program was designed to provide public speaking training to students at SMP Tarsisius I. This school is one of the educational institutions that recognizes the importance of developing students' soft skills. Through structured training, students are expected to build the confidence to speak in public, enhance their self-esteem, and refine their ability to express ideas clearly, systematically, and engagingly.

By developing public speaking skills from an early age, students will not only become more active participants in the learning process but will also establish a strong communication foundation to face various future challenges. Mastery of this skill positively influences both academic and non-academic achievements and contributes to shaping a communicative, confident younger generation prepared to become leaders within the school and broader community (Ulthari & Sunarti, 2020). This initiative is also expected to foster a more interactive and participatory learning environment, representing a tangible contribution from the education sector in enhancing human resource quality through an educational approach grounded in community service.

Methods

This community service initiative was carried out in response to an official invitation from the Principal of SMP Tarsisius I, Central Jakarta. The program was part of the school's broader efforts to support student development, particularly in enhancing communication and public presentation skills.

At the initial stage, a preliminary discussion was held with the school to align the objectives of the program. Based on the outcome of this observation, it was found that SMP Tarsisius I employs a learning approach that encourages students to actively present their assignments. Therefore, it was concluded that confidence and public speaking skills are essential needs for students in addressing the demands of today's learning curriculum.

The program was designed to be delivered in two separate sessions to ensure optimal implementation, create a more conducive learning atmosphere, and provide sufficient space for active student participation. Since the target participants were Grade VIII and IX students, the team planned to deliver materials covering effective communication techniques, strategies for managing nervousness, and tips for creating impactful presentations using a game-based learning approach.

The activity in class was implemented using the following stages:

1. Delivery of Public Speaking Material

    In the initial stage, students were provided with basic public speaking material, including effective communication techniques, proper presentation structure, and strategies for managing nervousness when speaking in front of an audience. The material was delivered using visually engaging PowerPoint slides designed with a game-based learning approach, like elements, images, and familiar terminology.

2. Preparation of Presentation Scripts or Key Points

    In the next stage, students were guided to prepare key points for the material they would present. They were asked to organize their ideas into simple written notes to help structure their message and reduce anxiety when speaking in front of an audience. The topic selected for this public speaking training was a business idea.

3. Public Speaking Practice

    In the final stage, students were given the opportunity to deliver their presentations in front of an audience. This activity aimed to build students' confidence and courage in expressing their ideas.

This training method was considered appropriate for the participants because it was designed to align with their learning characteristics. The use of game-based presentation materials was intentionally implemented to suit junior high school students, who tend to respond more positively to interactive and playful learning environments. This step-by-step approach allowed students to gradually build confidence and apply public speaking techniques in a meaningful and enjoyable way.
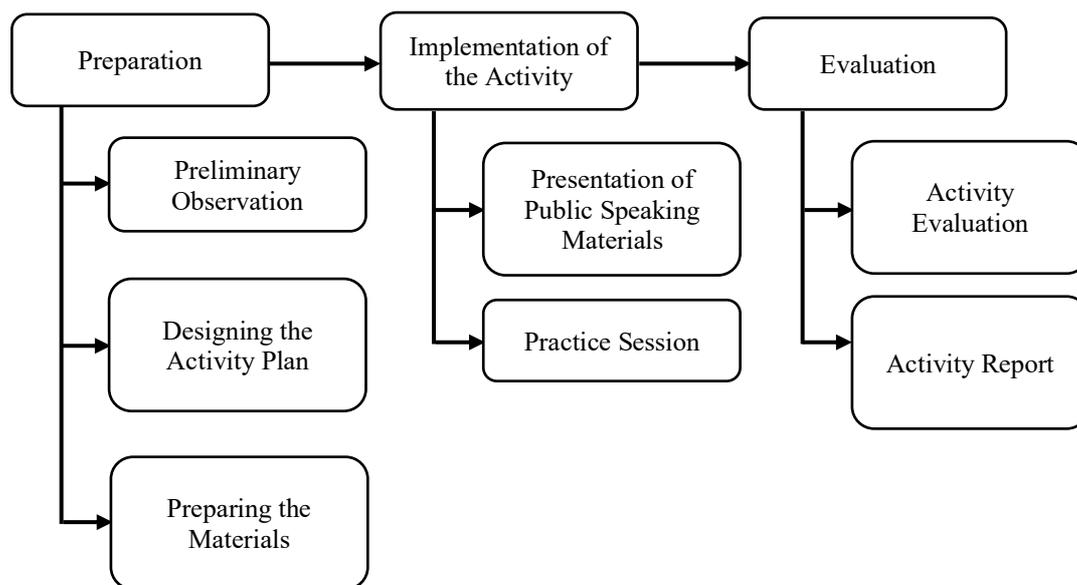
Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.

30

Fig. 1. Methods utilized in community service program

Results and Discussions

The public speaking activity carried the theme "Public Speaking for Life." The program was conducted in two separate sessions: the first session took place in May 2025 with the participation of 33 Grade IX students, and the second session was held in June 2025, involving 42 Grade VIII students. The activity was also attended and supported by the school principal and some teachers.

Each workshop session lasted approximately 90 minutes and began with an ice-breaking activity aimed at creating a relaxed atmosphere and building rapport between the students and the community service team. This was followed by the delivery of fundamental public speaking material, in which students were introduced to the key components of public speaking: message clarity, delivery technique, and audience connection. The facilitator also shared practical tips for managing public speaking anxiety, such as taking deep breaths, focusing on the core message, and imagining the audience as a supportive group.

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.

31

Fig. 2. Presentation public speaking materials

The presentation material was delivered interactively using both communicative and visual approaches, combined with a learning-through-play method to make it easier for junior high school students to understand. Figure 2 shows students actively participating by responding to questions and engaging with the material presented by the facilitator.

To further support this interactive atmosphere, the instructional media were intentionally designed to align with students' interests and learning preferences. The PowerPoint slides were designed to be as engaging as possible, incorporating images and terminology commonly found in online games, as shown in Figure 3, to make the material more relatable and engaging for students. This approach successfully sparked greater enthusiasm and engagement from the students throughout the session.
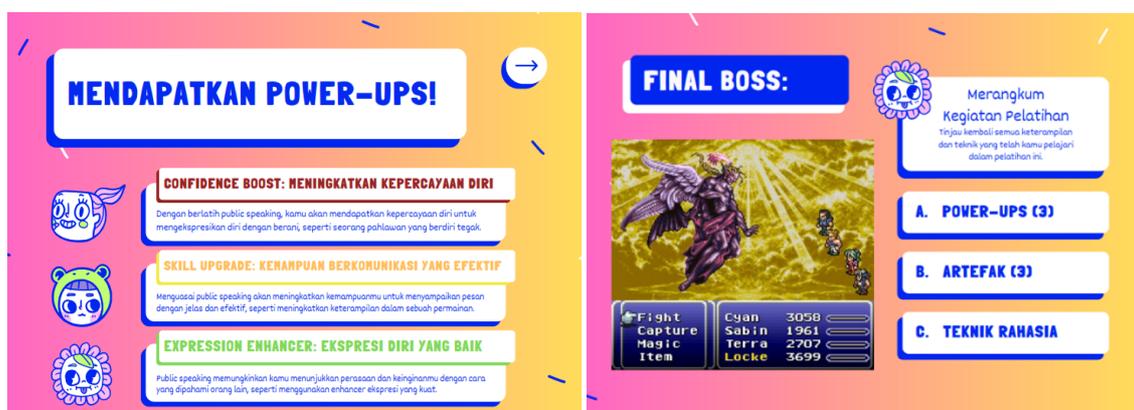

Fig. 3. Public speaking material

The highlight of this community service activity was the practice session, where each student was given the opportunity to speak directly in front of an audience. Each participant was

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.

32

assigned a topic on a business idea and was asked to prepare their presentation material in advance. This topic was chosen to encourage students to think creatively and innovatively, while also building their confidence in presenting personal and original ideas. Prior to the presentation, students were asked to illustrate their business ideas in a simple visual format on a sheet of paper, as shown in Figure 4. This activity helped students organize their thoughts and structure their ideas more clearly before delivering the presentation.

Fig. 4. Student activity prior to delivering the presentation

During the presentation session, participants took turns presenting their business ideas in front of the audience, covering aspects such as the background of the idea, the benefits offered, and the intended target market, as shown in Figure 5. The entire process was conducted using language appropriate to the students' level of understanding, while still emphasizing a systematic communication structure. Throughout the presentations, the facilitator team provided guidance and feedback to help students improve their presentation practice.

Fig. 5. Public speaking practice session

This activity served as a significant moment for students to directly apply the public speaking techniques they had previously learned. Their energy showed that the approach helped them feel more comfortable and capable when speaking in public. This kind of training may seem simple, but it plays an important role in helping students become more expressive, self-assured, and ready to communicate their thoughts clearly in both school and beyond. This positive learning experience is reflected in the group photo of students and facilitators at the end of the activity, as shown in Figure 6.

Fig. 6. Group photo at the end of the public speaking workshop

An evaluation of the activity was conducted through a questionnaire completed by the participating students after the entire workshop series had concluded. The purpose of this evaluation was to obtain direct feedback on the effectiveness of the program, the perceived usefulness of the materials presented, and the students' interest in participating in similar programs in the future. The evaluation also served as a reflective tool for the community service team to improve future methods, approaches, and content.

Overall, the evaluation results indicated that the community service activity had a positive impact on the students. The complete evaluation data were processed and presented in the form of a pie chart to visualize the distribution of student responses regarding their satisfaction with the activity. This chart provides a quantitative representation of participant perceptions and will be further discussed in the subsequent section.

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.
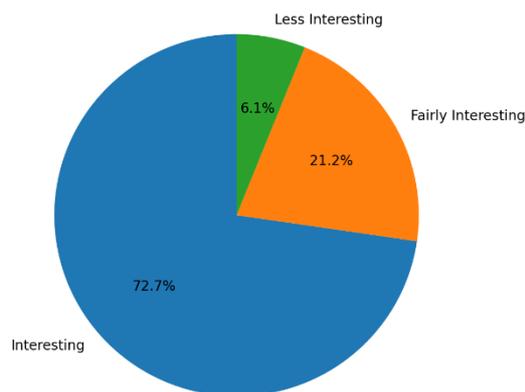
34

Fig. 7. Level of engagement with the workshop in its entirety

Figure 7 shows that a total of 72.7% of participants stated that the overall workshop was engaging, followed by 21.2% who found the activity moderately interesting. Overall, these figures indicate that the majority of participants appreciated the event, both in terms of content and delivery. The interactive learning approach, combined with hands-on practice and a pleasant atmosphere, successfully fostered positive student engagement. However, the 6.1% of participants who found the activity less engaging serve as valuable input for the community service team to continuously evaluate and diversify instructional methods to better align with student characteristics.
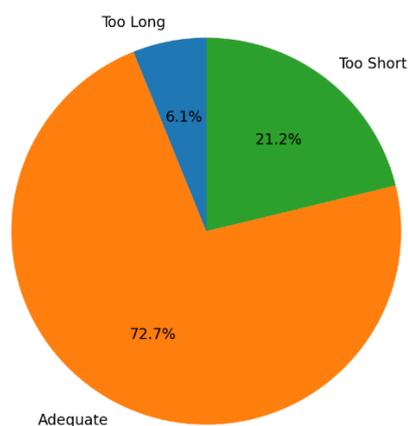

Fig. 8. Time efficiency in the implementation of the workshop activities

Regarding time efficiency, Figure 8 shows 72.7% of respondents stated that the duration of the workshop was sufficient, indicating that the allocation of time for both material delivery and presentation practice was considered balanced and adequate by most participants. However, 21.2% of participants felt that the time allotted was too short, suggesting a need for more practice time to explore the material in greater depth. This was also reflected in responses to

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.

35

the open-ended questions, where several participants suggested that future activities should provide an opportunity for all students to present in front of an audience.
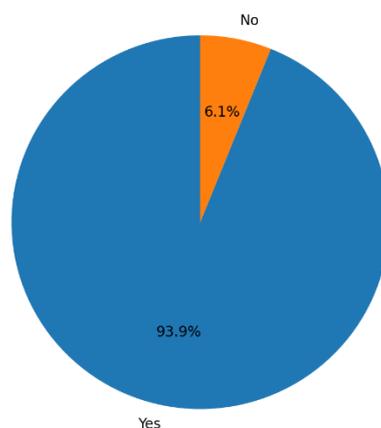

Fig. 9. Usefulness of the workshop

In terms of usefulness, as shown in Figure 9, the evaluation results were highly encouraging, with 93.9% of participants stating that the activity was beneficial. This indicates that the materials delivered were relevant to their needs and effectively enhanced their understanding and skills in public speaking. This aligns with the core objective of the program—to provide students with practical tools to improve their communication skills.

As a follow-up action, future activities may include evaluating changes in students' behavior during the learning process, particularly in terms of their confidence and participation in classroom presentations. Teachers can be involved in observing students' willingness to express ideas and engage in discussions during regular learning activities to support the continuous development of students' communication skills.

Conclusion

The community service activity themed "Public Speaking for Life" was successfully implemented in alignment with its intended objectives. This initiative aimed to introduce and train students in applying effective communication techniques, particularly in the context of public speaking. Through this program, students gained an understanding of the fundamentals of public speaking, strategies for structuring presentations, and methods for managing public-speaking anxiety.

Implementation of a Public Speaking Program to Enhance Self-Confidence and Presentation Skills | Soelaiman et al.

36

Evaluation results indicated that the majority of participants responded positively to the activity. Most students found the program engaging and beneficial, and expressed a strong interest in participating in similar initiatives in the future. Furthermore, the workshop successfully fostered students' enthusiasm and confidence to speak in public. Accordingly, this type of community service activity should be continuously implemented as a part of character and soft skill development efforts at the secondary education level.

Based on the implementation and evaluation outcomes, it is recommended that greater involvement of teachers as active facilitators be encouraged. This would help ensure the sustainability of skill transfer through regular classroom learning activities.

Acknowledgements

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