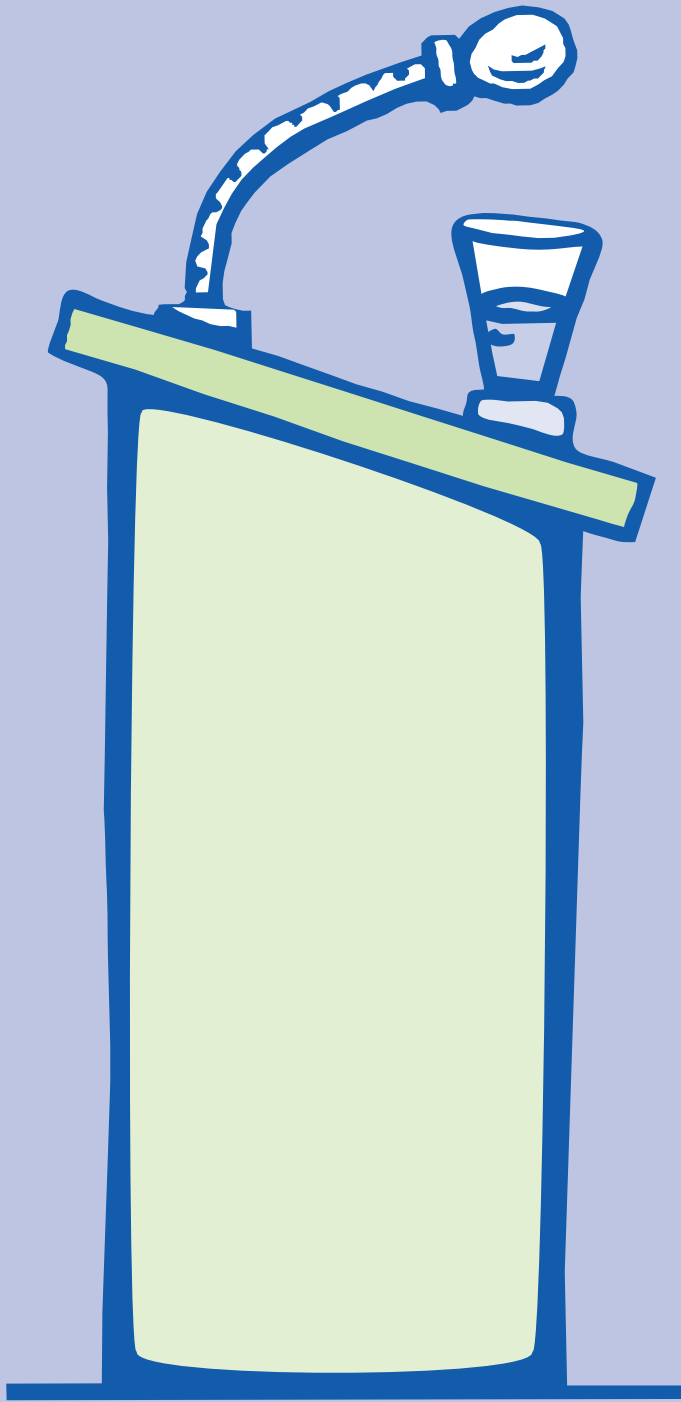


# Let the Experts Do the Talking!



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**A Manual for  
Literacy Organizations  
Starting a Learner  
Speaker Program**

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*by*  
**Patricia Brady**  
*and*  
**Tracey Mollins**

**OVLC**  
**Ontario Literacy Coalition**

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# Introduction

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*Let the experts do the talking!*

## Who is this manual for?

*“Hello, is this the Rotary Club. We are looking for a speaker who can talk about the experience of having literacy challenges.”*

*“Hello, is this the Southport Regional Literacy Organization? International Literacy Day is next week and we would like to invite a panel of people to come and talk to our group about issues facing adult learners.”*

Have you ever had calls like these from community partners? Does it send you into a flurry of activity as you try to find learners who are willing to speak about their experiences and are available when you need them? Do you find yourself asking, “Why don’t we keep a list of people who are willing to speak about the program?” And then answering yourself, “Oh no, not another database to develop, not another project to co-ordinate — where will I find the time?” If this sounds familiar, then this manual is for you.

Literacy programs or network organizations often want to speak for literacy. They want to raise concerns at town hall meetings, discuss issues with partners, funders and policy makers, or address local community associations and businesses. Many literacy programs and organizations host or participate in fundraising, promotional and public education events. All of these situations require people who are comfortable with public speaking.

## Why start a speaker program?

*Speaker program* in this manual refers to a public speaking program where adult literacy learners are the speakers.

Literacy practitioners are *used* to speaking on behalf of literacy and can provide a wealth of information and insight. However, presentations can be more meaningful, powerful and memorable when learners share their experiences and ideas. Adult learners are the natural champions of literacy and can be the literacy movement's most effective spokespeople.

A speaker program can help to:

- promote awareness of literacy issues in the larger community
- encourage potential funders, partners and stakeholders to get involved and show support for literacy
- encourage potential adult learners to join a literacy program
- provide awareness and information at training sessions for instructors and tutors

## The purpose of this manual

The purpose of this manual is to help literacy organizations build and maintain a speaker program. It is a collection of ideas and tools that will make it easier to include former and current adult learners in literacy advocacy, public education, promotion and outreach.

## How to use this manual

The diversity among literacy programs, organizations and learners means that various parts of the manual will be relevant and useful to different programs and learners. Use the portions that are best for your organization. Modify the tools in order to meet your needs.



## Focus of the manual

This manual focuses on working with learners as public speakers. There may be other participants in your literacy program or organization who want to speak for literacy or for your organization. Many of the tools in this manual can be easily adapted for use with staff, volunteers, tutors, board and committee members.

This manual focuses on:

- recruiting speakers
- selecting speakers
- training and supporting speakers
- co-ordinating the program
- compensating speakers
- marketing and promoting the program

You will find that in the chapters on recruitment, selection and training, one decision leads to another. The decisions you make about why your literacy program or organization wants to prepare learners as public speakers will determine how you recruit and select those speakers. The things you learn through the selection process will help you decide what training and support you need to provide.

Chapters include introductory remarks, ideas and resources, and some sample forms. The forms are listed at the beginning of each chapter. You can find these forms at the end of each chapter.

## Forms

Many of the forms require learner input and **some learners may need help filling them out**. Some of the forms have been developed for use by literacy programs or organizations. There are also forms that will help speakers keep track of their commitments. Both the speaker and the literacy program can keep copies of these forms so everyone will know what everyone else is doing.

# C h a p t e r

# 1

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## Thinking About Recruitment

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### Identify the purpose of your speaker program

It is a good idea to start by developing the purpose of your speaker program. This will provide the foundation for an effective recruitment plan. Begin by thinking about why your organization wants learners as public speakers. This will differ from organization to organization. You may want to set up a committee to make these decisions or you may have an existing committee that can help.

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[Speaker Sign-up Form](#)

### Why does your organization want learners as public speakers?

In order to identify the purpose of your program, you might ask yourself what events you need speakers for. For example, do you need people who are able to speak to:

- large groups of strangers at a community meeting?
- people who are familiar with adult literacy, such as funders or board members?
- people who are not familiar with adult literacy?
- one or two people at a time at a booth at a community event?
- a community radio or television program audience?
- a community newspaper reporter?

- politicians?
- small groups at a tutor development workshop?
- new tutors at initial tutor-training sessions?

Do you need people who are able to speak on topics such as:

- their own personal experiences?
- their ideas for how to become an effective learner?
- their ideas on how to improve your literacy program or organization?
- their ideas on how to improve opportunities for adult literacy learning?
- their ideas for how to become an effective tutor?
- why people should become literacy learners?
- why people should become literacy tutors?
- why individuals, organizations and governments should support adult literacy learning?
- how individuals, organizations and governments can support adult literacy learning?

You may want to start with just a few scenarios and expand the speaker program from there. Decide on the priorities for your organization and start with those.

## How to recruit speakers

Once you have determined your priorities, you can start thinking about who in your organization might want to participate in the speaker program. Different audiences and topics may require people with different skills and experiences. Some people are more comfortable and more effective before large groups. Others work better in more intimate environments. Some people are more comfortable and more effective speaking about their own experiences. Others are better able to address “big picture” topics or relate their own

*Thinking About Recruitment*

experiences to that big picture. Some people will be able to work well in a wider variety of situations as they gain experience in this field.

**Teachers, tutors and learners can help**

The teachers and tutors who work with learners every day will be a big help in identifying potential candidates. Their support can help make recruitment a success. The teachers and tutors can encourage those who show talent and interest in public speaking.

Learners who have experience speaking can also help recruit new speakers. The prospect of standing up and talking to a crowd does not seem so intimidating if you know someone else, just like you, who can do it.

**Reach out to potential speakers**

Try to cast a wide net so you do not leave out any potential speakers. Try to include former as well as current learners in any outreach efforts. People never forget what it is like to participate in a literacy program. You may decide to recruit only from within your literacy program. If you are working in an infrastructure organization like a regional or sectoral network or umbrella group, and have limited daily contact with learners, you may decide to recruit speakers from literacy programs. In this case, one of the most important parts of recruitment is getting the word out to potential speakers.

Word of mouth among learner groups is one good way of getting the word out. As well, information can be made available in the form of posters, pamphlets, and sign-up sheets. The pamphlets and faxes could include easy fax-back forms that contain all pertinent information, including instructions for use. Information and sign-up forms could also be hot-linked to your web site.

Please see *Speaker Sign-up Form* at the end of this chapter.

**Calendar of events**

You might want to keep a calendar of events where you can recruit potential speakers. The events may be any occasion where learners and members of the literacy community come together, such as

seminars, workshops, special events, conferences or annual general meetings.

### **Distribution of information packages**

Putting together an easy-to-read package of information is an important component of speaker recruitment. An organization could:

- include information related to speaker recruitment in its own or other literacy organizations' newsletters
- send information packages to all of the literacy organizations in its area; then do follow-up calls with them (if an infrastructure organization)
- talk to local co-ordinators and practitioners to make sure that they have seen the information — ask for their input about learners who might want to take on this role
- visit adult literacy programs and ask to speak to learners about becoming speakers for the speaker program

## **Some considerations**

When you develop your speaker program, there are some considerations to think about with respect to:

- the speakers
- potential audiences
- your organization

These considerations centre on the fact that most adult learners will not be professional speakers and may not have the experience to handle all situations. The co-ordinator of the speaker program will want to ensure a safe and positive environment for both the speakers and the audiences. The co-ordinator will want to make sure that speakers are well prepared so that they are able to represent your organization in a positive way.

In terms of ensuring that audiences feel safe, you may want to include or require anti-discrimination/anti-oppression sessions as part of the

*Thinking About Recruitment*

training for speakers. This training may include discussions of choosing inclusive and anti-discriminatory language. You may want to also include strategies for dealing with discriminatory or offensive remarks that are directed at speakers.

In terms of ensuring that speakers are safe, you will want to thoroughly research the groups they are speaking to and ensure that there is a suitable match between the speaker and the group.

Speakers should be prepared for the fact that discussing certain issues can trigger a negative reaction in some audience members. This does not mean that learners should not discuss these issues or that these audiences should not hear about them. It does mean that the speakers should be prepared for the possibility of difficult responses and have strategies for dealing with this type of situation. For certain events, you may decide to have a moderator or facilitator present. This will depend on the nature of the speaking engagement and the comfort level and experience of the speaker.

## Speaker Sign-up Form

Name:	Date:	
Address:		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:

What is the best way to contact you? <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Mail <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Other

How did you hear about the speaker program?
Why do you want to be a public speaker for literacy?
Do you have previous public speaking experience? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please provide details)
How long have you been involved in literacy activities?
What literacy programs have you been involved with?
What are some of your special interests?
Are there any times that you are not available? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please provide details)
Are you willing to take part in training activities? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Is there anything else that might make it difficult for you to come to public speaking events (such as family responsibilities, work hours, etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please provide details)

# C h a p t e r

# 2

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## The Selection Process

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### The purpose of the selection process

Now that you have decided on the purpose of the speaker program and have recruited interested people, the selection process will help develop a roster of potential speakers. The selection process is an opportunity to learn more about a candidate's abilities, beliefs and background. It is a time to discover something about the candidate's experience, interests and reasons for wanting to get involved in public speaking.

It is important to let potential speakers know about the selection process as soon as they express interest in being a speaker. It should be made very clear that the selection process is designed for the *position*, not the *person*. The selection process is a way to make sure everything will work smoothly and the environment will be safe for both the audience and the speaker. This chapter includes steps for selecting speakers, and tips for interviewing potential speakers.

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Developing a Position  
Description: Public Speaker

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Sample Interview Template

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Presentation Topic Sheet

**21**

Reference Sheet

### Designing the selection process

The selection process is a way to assess candidates' strengths. The information you gather during the selection process can help ensure that speakers' experience success in a positive learning environment. It is important to make the selection



process itself a positive learning experience. You might want to consider including self-evaluation as part of the selection process. The selection process will also be a way to assess what training and support speakers in your program will need to be successful.

A clear process will make things fair and will reduce confusion. Just because the process is clear does not mean that it has to be formal or intimidating. Nor does it have to be conducted in exactly the same way for everybody. Design the process in such a way that all candidates will feel comfortable disclosing the information you require in order to make decisions. Literacy workers who conduct intake and assessment interviews understand this and have experience adapting to a new learner's comfort level. It may mean that you build some flexibility into the process. It may also mean that you have to experiment a little until you find a process that works for your program.

### **Some things to keep in mind throughout the selection process**

We suggest keeping in mind some questions ahead of time. These questions will assist you in developing a job description for the speaker, questions for the interview process, and an assessment of the suitability of different candidates.

- Do the speakers need supports or will they be able to handle events on their own?
- If they need support, how much and what kind do they need?
- Do they understand the difference between speaking for themselves and speaking for a program, an organization or for a group?
- Do they understand that different ways of communicating can be more effective depending on the audience?
- Are they best at telling their own story and reflecting on their own experiences or can they examine larger issues and ideas?
- Will they be able to answer questions from the audience? From the media?

## Steps in the selection process

This section outlines the critical steps to consider in the selection process.

### Write a clear description of the role

Review the decisions you made as part of the recruitment plan and determine the criteria for speakers in your program.

Once you have a list of criteria, you can develop a speaker job description that includes items such as:

- a summary of the responsibilities and expectations
- qualifications/experience required
- the time commitment expected
- benefits of participating
- the training that will be offered

See *Developing a Position Description: Public Speaker* at the end of this chapter.

### Develop interview questions

The next thing to do is develop a set of interview questions. The idea will be to tailor them to what you are looking for in a speaker. It's best to start slowly with non-threatening questions, and then move in to the more substantive ones. Your final questions should reflect a move to closure and clarity about next steps. It is a good idea to prepare the kinds of responses you would like to see for each question. See a sample interview template at the end of this chapter for some ideas.

### Review candidates' sign-up sheet and schedule interviews

Now is the time to review the sign-up sheets you have received and decide which individuals you will interview. This may be an ongoing process or a situation where you interview several people in one period of time. It will be helpful to review the sign-up sheets for topics you want to follow up on with candidates you will interview.

### **Interview the candidate**

Use the questions you have developed to interview the candidates you have selected. See below for tips on interviewing. The *Presentation Topic Sheet* found at the end of this chapter can help you analyze the results of the interviews.

### **Follow up on references**

Call the candidate's references. This step is less important if the learner is well known to the program. If you are going to perform any kind of reference check, make sure you have the permission of the learner. Please see the *Reference Sheet* at the end of this chapter for guidance with respect to what questions to ask.

### **Advise candidates of the results of the selection process**

After you have conducted interviews with candidates and checked references, let people know the outcome of selection process. Be open and honest in your feedback as to why the candidate did or did not get the position.

## **Interviewing potential speakers**

This section outlines some key points to consider when deciding how to organize and conduct interviews. Like all stages of the selection process, it is important to be consistent. This means establishing procedures for what questions to ask, what order to ask them in, any necessary explanations for the questions and who will conduct the interviews and where they will take place.

### **Getting ready for the interview**

- Review the description of the public speaking role and consider the skills and knowledge required.
- List what you know about the candidate. Include the reasons you think they might be a good speaker and any concerns or questions you have about their suitability.
- Review your questions before the interview.

*The Selection Process*

- Make sure the candidate has been provided with enough information about the position and the process to be prepared for a discussion about expectations and to ask and answer questions.
- Bring a description of the position and the candidate's sign-up form.
- Bring resources for public speakers so the candidate can start looking them over.

Learners who have experience in public speaking may be willing to talk to potential speakers about their experiences. If available, give the names and contact numbers of these speakers to the candidate.

Be sure to conduct the interview in a location where the candidate is comfortable. It should take place in a private area in your organization's offices.

**Starting the interview**

Here are some pointers for starting the interview on the right track:

- Start with the assumption that most people have a great deal to offer.
- State the purpose of the interview.
- Explain the selection process in detail. Clarify the fact that all candidates go through these steps to assess their skills and training needs.
- Break the ice before beginning formal questions. This can tell you as much about a candidate as planned questions. It will also help relax both you and the candidate.
- Make sure the candidates understand that they may discontinue the interview at any time.

**During the interview**

The following pointers will help make the interview a success:

- Be prepared with a set of questions but be flexible enough to follow the natural course of a conversation.
- Use open-ended questions rather than those with yes or no answers.

- Give lots of supportive feedback throughout the interview.
- Make sure to ask if there is any group the speaker would not feel comfortable with or any situation that would cause them anxiety or stress.
- Look out for prejudice towards certain groups of people, a tendency to use inappropriate language in conversation, avoidance of questions, etc.
- As you progress through the interview, ask yourself if you can picture this person in a public speaking role. If you are unsure, try to identify the cause of your uncertainty, and see if you can resolve those concerns by gathering further information.

### **Concluding the interview**

Consider the following suggestions for concluding the interview:

- Ask if the candidate has any questions they would like to ask you. This can be a good time to address any concerns the candidate may have.
- Take opportunities to clarify misunderstandings about the role.
- Conclude by thanking the candidate and explaining the next steps of the process.

## **Selection process questions and answers**

### *What happens when I feel I have to turn somebody away?*

Consider all potential speakers until you have found out all relevant information. If they signed up for speaking, they are looking for a more active way to take part in literacy. Think of other ways learners can be involved with your program, and keep a list of ideas close at hand so learners won't leave feeling rejected. Possibilities for other activities include mentoring new learners, helping with orientation activities, recruitment, or anything else your program might already have in place. Perhaps the learner would like to participate in training and apply again later.

*The Selection Process*

It is also possible to have a learner start by doing public speaking within your literacy program or organization. Sometimes people are more comfortable speaking to small, familiar groups and this can be a way to practice in a safe environment. Learners can build skills and confidence by:

- speaking to their classes
- participating in discussions at committee or board meetings
- introducing and thanking a guest speaker at meeting
- announcing “housekeeping” items at conferences
- making announcements at program events

***What if a learner feels like they are not trusted because of the steps in the selection process?***

Explain that it is essential to make sure that both the speaker and the audience will feel safe. Let learners know that they have a right to find out the results of any part of the selection process. Potential speakers should also be encouraged to question any step of the selection process if they are unsure why it is necessary. Let the candidate know who will have access to this information. If someone feels uncomfortable about any part of the selection process, tell the person how the information will be used and who will have access to it.

***Should groups requiring speakers know anything about the selection process?***

The group requesting a speaker has the right to expect that that person has been properly selected. Let the group know about the selection process you use and the training and support you provide to speakers.

## Developing a Position Description: Public Speaker

Position Summary:
Qualifications and Experience Required:
Responsibilities and Expectations:
Benefits of Position to Potential Speaker:
Training and Support Provided:
Time Commitment Needed:
Term:

## Sample Interview Template

### Introduction and warm up questions

Interviewer thanks candidate for applying for the speaker position at Agency X. Interviewer outlines the position and gives the candidate a written description. Interviewer asks if there are any questions and then starts with warm up questions.

1. How did you hear about the speaker program?
2. Can you start by telling me why you are interested in speaking on behalf of literacy?

### Core interview questions

1. Have you done public speaking before? If you have, can you tell me about your experience?
2. What things do you love doing—your special interests?
3. What is your experience with literacy and literacy learning?
4. We are looking for speakers to present at community events and our tutor training program right now. How comfortable would you be in these situations?
5. What topics are you comfortable speaking about?
6. What would you like to learn more about to help you in public speaking?
7. When are you available?
8. What kind of support and training do you need to feel comfortable speaking?
9. What kind of support do you need or special needs do you have that would need to be accommodated at the speaking events?

### Closure

Thank candidate for the interview and comment on positive and interesting aspects of the candidate's responses. Ask if there are any other questions. You could also ask the candidate how they feel about how the interview was handled. At this point, it will be important to explain the next steps — that you will review the interview and get back to the person by a certain date.



## Presentation Topic Sheet

### Is the speaker comfortable talking about:

- your literacy program's history, mandate and activities?

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- literacy issues in general?

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- personal experiences with literacy challenges?

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- how to work with adult learners?

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## Reference Sheet

Name of Reference:		Date:
Organization:		
Address:		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:
Name of candidate for speaker program:		

How do you know the learner?
How long have you known the learner?
Why do you think this learner would make a good public speaker?
Does this learner have any previous public speaking experience? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> don't know If so, where?
Do you know of any of the learner's special interests, or areas of involvement?
General Comments:

# C h a p t e r

# 3

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## Training and Supporting Speakers

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A combination of training, mentoring and ongoing support for speakers is central to a successful program. This support will need to be tailored to the unique needs of each speaker.

### F O R M S

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Evaluation Form: Speaker  
Training Program

### Designing a training program

Training programs are ideally an extension of the selection process. If selection is about discovering learners' strengths and weaknesses in terms of public speaking, training is about building on those strengths and addressing development needs. Training for public speakers should not necessarily be the same for every learner who comes through the door. Well-designed training programs will help each speaker according to specific needs and goals.

As you do with other learning opportunities in your organization, design the speaker training according to principles of good adult learning:

- learning starts with what the learner knows
- learners set their own goals, determine their own measure of success and their own pace
- independent learning and critical thinking are encouraged and facilitated
- planning allows for the flexibility necessary to respond to individual learner needs and learning styles

The training activities might be different for different speakers, but there should still be standard policies and procedures for developing a training program. Having these in place will ensure that every speaker gets the training they need and want. Policies can clarify who will do the training, length of time for training, what activities are included, where it will take place as well as follow-up support provided.

Depending on the size of your program or organization, you may be restricted as to what training you can reasonably provide. If you have volunteers working for your program, they may be able to help with some of the training activities for the speakers.

Make sure that speakers understand the nature and purpose of the training and what will be expected of them. Make sure the speakers always know where they can turn for additional support or help.

## Setting goals for training

The training should begin with an orientation to the public speaking program. In addition, each speaker should identify goals for the training. Find out what activities the learner is particularly interested in. Speakers might want to work on things such as:

- improving confidence
- conducting research
- planning and writing speeches
- training around sensitivity to specific issues
- practising speaking in front of smaller groups
- answering questions
- learning to speak from key notes as opposed to reading verbatim
- keeping within time limits
- working with the media

Think about what type of events speakers will be attending. Do they need to practise telling personal stories, increase their awareness about literacy issues, or talk to potential learners? Identify what skills are

most important for the speaking engagements. Decide whether they really need to know how to talk to the media or whether it would be more important for them to practise speaking slowly and clearly. It may be best to start with the basics.

If speakers are willing and able to discuss issues outside of their own personal experiences, include training geared specifically to this goal. You can provide speakers with a basic history or background of your organization or support their understanding of literacy issues in general.

For speakers who will be answering questions from the audience, make sure the training covers such issues as what to do when they do not know an answer or if they do not want to answer the question.

## Anti-oppression training

Discussions about using inclusive, non-discriminatory language can be just as important as practising speeches. As discussed earlier, you may want to include anti-discrimination or anti-oppression sessions in the training.

## Using the language of empowerment

Using the language of empowerment in speeches means that people speak about the past from the perspective of where they are now. They speak about the barriers they have faced in a framework that uses personal and local experiences to examine and understand literacy as an issue that is societal, systemic and global. Speakers may have to practise talking about the past without reliving it.

It is important to help speakers understand how to use the language of empowerment when speaking about difficulties they have faced. People who may have survived abuse, held down jobs, raised children, faced discrimination, cared for ageing or sick relatives, and managed households have demonstrated strength and skill. In literacy programs, people have had their experience acknowledged and are considered to be the experts on their own lives. They have been able to make

decisions about what, when and where they are going to learn. Some people have found participating in literacy programs to be an empowering experience. They have built confidence and skills and they have found a place where they are treated with fairness and compassion.

Make sure to get feedback about the training from the speakers after they have done some public speaking. Find out which parts of the training were most relevant and which parts need improvement. A sample evaluation form is available at the end of this chapter.

## How to support speakers on an ongoing basis

### **Organize a speakers' club**

The program staff, volunteers, learners or an outside organization can run a speakers' club for learners who have been selected for the program. A speakers' club allows speakers an opportunity to talk to each other about what works and what does not. It provides a safe place to practise and get feedback from peers.

### **Make links with other organizations in your community**

There are probably organizations in your area that are already interested in public speaking, such as Kiwanis, Toastmasters or public relations groups. Find out if they have training programs that might work for the speakers or if they can provide you with resources to help you design your own training plans. Community colleges and school boards may also have training opportunities. Some of these resources are listed at the end of this chapter.

### **Organize a speakers' exchange**

You can organize a speakers' exchange with other literacy organizations in your area. This will introduce your program to a broader range of skills and stories.

## Media training

If speakers are going to be dealing directly with media, think about how you can prepare them for this interaction. Speakers can learn about answering questions and controlling the message, dealing with requests for further interviews and having photos taken. People should understand that they can refuse any media request if they are not comfortable. If there is a chance that speakers are going to talk to media, it may be important to have a support person present. The support person can help the speaker respond to questions, or decline difficult questions.

## Practise for speaking

It may be helpful to have a few sample speeches prepared ahead of time to give speakers a model for their own speeches. Learners can use these model speeches to practise timing and increase their comfort level.

Have people tape and listen to their speeches. This will help speakers evaluate what things worked well and what areas need to be worked on. With permission, other speakers can listen to these tapes and learn from them also.

## Mentoring

Mentors can be learners, staff, volunteers or other interested people who have knowledge or expertise in literacy and/or public speaking. Experienced speakers can act as mentors for those who are less experienced. Mentors help with training, management and other support for the speakers. If you are using mentors, they should be trained and supported. A workshop on mentoring could be included in training activities.

Mentors can:

- help learners write and develop their speeches
- help speakers practise their speeches
- give feedback on presentations
- assist speakers with schedules
- help speakers understand different protocols such as appropriate dress, introductions, etc.
- attend speaking engagements for support, and be prepared to prompt a speaker with information about literacy or the program
- assist in answering questions from the audience
- help speakers reflect on the experience to identify what worked well and what needs improvement



## Evaluation Form: Speaker Training Program

Name:
What training were you provided with to help you with public speaking? _____ _____ _____
What worked well about the training? _____ _____ _____
What did you learn that has helped you in your role as a speaker? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
How could the training be improved? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
What else do you want to work on to improve your public speaking? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

# C h a p t e r

# 4

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## Co-ordination of the Speaker Program

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In this chapter you will find tips for keeping on top of your public speaking program and ideas for co-ordinating the program. You may find that sharing insights and experiences, and perhaps some of the work with other literacy organizations, can be helpful.

### Who is going to do the co-ordination?

It is a good idea to appoint somebody to co-ordinate the speaker program. We have outlined two functions for the co-ordinator: 1) **management** and 2) **learner support**. You can have one person fulfill both functions or you can divide the tasks among two or more people.

The **manager** co-ordinates speaking activities such as:

- recruitment and selection
- promotion of the speaker program
- scheduling (both for the learners and the program)
- event co-ordination and follow up
- financial accountability

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Speaker Personal Evaluation Form

Managers don't necessarily do all the tasks themselves, but they co-ordinate and delegate the work and make sure that everything gets done.

The **speaker liaison** is responsible for learner support. This person looks after:

- training
- mentoring
- ongoing support

The speaker liaison can be a member of the staff, a volunteer, or anybody the learners know and feel comfortable with. The speaker liaison should be somebody with an understanding of the needs of both learners and local literacy groups.

## Matching speakers to groups

Keep in mind the audiences you will be reaching. For example, you may find it best to match younger speakers to a younger audience or have women speak to women's groups. Get to know the group. Find out as much as you can about why they want a speaker before the event. For questions to ask organizations requesting speakers see *Questionnaire for Organizations Requesting Speakers* at the end of this chapter. Ask for information about the audience and the type of event they want a speaker for. Find out what the group is looking for in a speaker. This way you can help the speaker know what to expect.

Place speakers in situations that will be comfortable for them. Try to match them with events that capitalize on their strengths and areas of confidence. Some learners will want to develop skills and areas of confidence through their participation in the speaker program.

It is okay to send such learners to events where they are going to be pushed if:

- it is in an area that they want to work on
- they are going to be pushed within a limit that they can handle

*Co-ordination of the Speaker Program*

- they are prepared beforehand and are ready with strategies in case things do not go perfectly
- they are well supported during the event
- if they know that it is okay not to be perfect as they develop a new skill or area of strength
- they have an opportunity to debrief the experience with someone who will help them to assess what went well, what they still need to work on and how they are going to work on those things

In some cases, it may be best to say no to a speaking engagement if there are no speakers available that are suitable to the group or event. It may not be appropriate to send speakers to speak to certain organizations for any number of reasons. It is up to the co-ordinator to make the best decisions for the program, speaker and organization requesting a speaker.

## Keeping track of speakers and events

Keep a roster of speakers with information about where they have spoken, what their speech was about, what their strengths and skills are and what areas they are interested in developing. Having recorded answers to the following questions will help you prepare for future speaking events:

- Can speakers talk about different experiences?
- Are they available for long or short time periods?
- Do they prefer speaking to large or small groups?
- Can they understand and work with the concepts of advocacy, public relations, etc.? See *Presentation Topic Form* at the end of Chapter 2. This form may have been completed as part of the selection process.
- What supports do they need? Are there any barriers that could prevent them from attending certain events?

Distribute speaking engagements as fairly as possible among speakers. People will lose interest if they can't contribute and practise their skills.

## Keeping on top of things

To stay on top of things, keep a record of all the information you collect and the decisions you make. A checklist of everything you need to get done before a speaking event is also something to consider. Here are some planning tips to help you think through public speaking engagements:

- Keep a calendar of all events so you can see what is coming up.
- Be sure you get as much information as possible about the needs of the organization requesting a speaker. See *Questionnaire for Organizations Requesting Speakers* at the end of the chapter.
- For each event, keep a record of the speaker, time, directions, and any other important instructions or information in one place for easy reference. See *Event Information Form* at the end of this chapter.
- Be sure to make arrangements and accommodations for any special needs of the speaker before the event. This means finding out what the speaker needs and talking to the group about meeting those needs.
- Remember to write confirmation and thank-you letters to both the speaker and the group.
- After each event, get feedback from the speaker and the requesting organization.
- Make sure others know where the records are kept to ensure that the transition to a new or replacement co-ordinator will be smooth and that no information will be lost.

## Questionnaire for Organizations Requesting Speakers

Please fill out this questionnaire to provide us with some basic information about your upcoming event and what you expect from our speaker so that we can be sure to provide you with someone who is well matched with your organization's needs and interests.

<b>Name of Organization:</b>		
<b>Name of Contact Person:</b>		
<b>Phone:</b> (    )	<b>Fax:</b> (    )	<b>E-mail:</b>
<b>Event:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>		

Is this location wheelchair accessible? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Does the location include accessible washrooms? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Please provide us with basic information about your expected audience in terms of age, gender, educational background, number of people expected. _____ _____ _____
What is your group's interest in literacy? _____ _____ _____
What would you like the presentation to focus on? _____ _____ _____
What time will the presentation start and how much time is available? _____ _____ _____

## Event Information Form

Date:	Time:
Event:	
Length of Speech:	
Brief Description of Event:	
Estimated Size of Event:	

Group Information
Name of Organization:
Brief Description of Organization:
Contact Person:
Contact Phone Number: (    )
Contact Fax: (    )
Contact E-mail:

Location of Event
Address:
Directions:
Directions within Building (e.g., room number, floor, where elevators are, etc.)

Speaker Information
Name:
Phone Number: (    )
Interests/ why the speaker was chosen for this event:
Special Needs/ Requests:
_____
_____

## Speaker Event Day Planner

Date (When is the speech?) _____ _____
Event (What event are you speaking at?) _____ _____
Group (Who are you speaking to?) _____ _____
What is some basic information about the group? _____ _____
What time does the event start and end? _____
When are you speaking? How long? _____
Address of location: _____
Directions to the location: _____ _____
What room is it in? How do you get there? _____ _____
What are you talking about? Is there anything special you need to know? _____ _____ _____



## Sample Confirmation Letter

April 7, 2003

Ms. June Summer  
1234 Non Profit Way  
Volunteer, Ontario  
A9B 8C7

Dear Ms. Summer:

I would like to confirm that Bob Winter will be speaking at the Annual General Meeting of your organization on Wednesday, May 5, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

Bob will need about twenty (20) minutes for his speech and will focus on how literacy training has affected his life. He will give examples of how people in the community can become involved in literacy. Bob will also include a few minutes for questions at the end of his speech.

As per our discussions, Bob will need to have some of his expenses covered in order to attend the meeting. As he will be driving to the meeting from out of town, he will require that his mileage be paid at a rate of 30 cents per kilometer.

Thank you for your interest in literacy,

Sincerely,  
Paula Free  
County Literacy Program

## Organization Feedback Form

This form is to be filled out by the organization requesting the speaker. It can be kept for future reference to see what worked and how well the presentation was suited to the event.

Name:		Date:
Organization:		
Address:		
City:	Province:	Postal Code:
Phone:	Fax:	E-mail:

What was the event?

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What was the speech about?

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How well did the presentation meet your needs as set out in your original request?

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What worked well about the speech?

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---

What could be improved?

---

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Additional comments

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## Speaker Evaluation of Speaking Event

This form can be kept for reference if the group requests a speaker again. This information will help evaluate the group's co-operation and sensitivity to the needs of a speaker and make it easier to find a good fit with speakers at future events.

Name:
Event:
Organization:
1. Was the group helpful and friendly to you? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Did you need any special arrangements to be part of the event? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. If yes, was the group helpful in meeting these needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Did you have the right amount of time to give your speech? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No, I needed more time <input type="checkbox"/> No, I had too much time
5. Did anyone from the group give you feedback about your speech? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
6. If Yes, what were the comments? _____ _____
7. Would you recommend this group as a good place to speak for other learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Do you have any other comments about the group? _____ _____ _____ _____

## Speaker Personal Evaluation Form

This form is for the speaker to fill out and serves as a journal of his or her experience. This information can help the program make sure that speakers are having positive experiences and are feeling well supported.

Name:
Event:
Organization:
What worked well about your speech?
How did the audience react to your speech?
Did you feel ready to give your speech? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain.
Did you enjoy speaking at the event? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Did you feel comfortable answering questions from the audience? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain.
If you had somebody for support, were they helpful? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, please explain.
What could your support person have done better?
What other kinds of support would have made the event easier for you?
What did you like best about giving your speech?
What do you think needs to be worked on?
Do you have any other comments? (Use back of page if necessary)

# C h a p t e r

# 5

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## Compensating Speakers

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### Developing a compensation policy

#### Why develop a compensation policy

Some adult literacy learners are professionally and financially vulnerable and this can make it difficult for them to volunteer. Speaking requires time and money — time off work, babysitting fees, transportation, etc. This can prevent a learner from participating. It may make your speaker program more inclusive if you can make sure people are compensated for their expenses. Depending on whether the engagement is internal to your organization or external, expenses should be reimbursed by your organization or the outside organization requesting a speaker.

Ensure your policies address covering expenses for childcare, transportation, accommodation, and meals whether it be by your organization or an outside one.

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#### F O R M S

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[Claiming Expenses](#)

#### Honoraria

##### *External events*

Some organizations requesting outside speakers will provide an honorarium for a speaker and others will not. It will depend on the nature of the organization and their policies. If the organization does provide an honorarium, this can be seen as a welcome bonus, rather than an expectation.

If your program has a policy about receiving honoraria from other organizations for work on behalf of the program, you may think about extending that policy to cover speakers. In some programs, all honoraria go to the program. In others, individuals may keep the honoraria under certain circumstances.

### ***Internal events***

If your program gives honoraria for speakers that come to your program, you may think about extending that policy to cover your speakers. At the same time, it should be clear that volunteering as a speaker is a welcome contribution. If the speaker wishes, they may donate the honoraria back to the program.

## Things to consider

Compensating learners for their public speaking engagements is not always a simple thing to do.

For network organizations, it can be straightforward to compensate learners for public speaking. Speakers' relationships with the network organization may centre around the function of public speaking. If this is the case, these organizations can maintain a professional relationship with speakers.

For literacy programs where learners come for instruction, complications can arise. Many learners are active in the literacy programs they attend. If your program decides to pay people for some activities and not others, misunderstandings may occur. People may feel that some ways of participating in the literacy program are valued above others and the program will feel less inclusive to them. If people feel that certain ways of participating are valued above others, they may be less enthusiastic about participating at all. People may also feel that certain learners are being favoured over others.

Policies on what the program pays for and why need to be clearly stated. If you plan to compensate speakers beyond just their expenses, you should develop policies to determine how they will be paid. Negotiations will be much smoother if there are policies in place that you can refer to if there is any confusion.

## Claiming Expenses

Please print your name at the top of each receipt.

### Travel

If you are travelling by bus, train or airplane, please book your travel with \_\_\_\_\_.

Travel arrangements must be made in advance to save money.

### Mileage and Parking

You will be reimbursed \_\_\_\_\_ per kilometre.

All parking claims must have an original receipt attached.

### Childcare

You can be reimbursed for childcare expenses at a rate of \_\_\_\_\_ per hour for a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ per day. If you need to stay overnight, there will be a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ per night. You will not be reimbursed for childcare provided by a member of your immediate family. You must have a receipt signed by the caregiver.

### Meals

You will be reimbursed for meals as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_ breakfast

\_\_\_\_\_ lunch

\_\_\_\_\_ dinner

You do not need a receipt.

### Telephone Calls

You can be reimbursed for telephone calls related to the event or your speech. You must arrange to have your phone calls approved for payment before you make them.

# C h a p t e r

# 6

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## Marketing Your Speaker Program

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### Designing a marketing plan

Literacy concerns affect people all across society. Speakers can be one of the best ways to raise awareness and share information about literacy. There are many groups in your community who would like to hear from an adult literacy learner. Marketing your speaker program is a great outreach opportunity.

Review the decisions you made in the recruitment plan about why your literacy program or organization wants learners as public speakers, who you want to speak to and what you want them to speak about. Those decisions will help determine your audience and who you should be targeting in your marketing plan.

Through the selection and training processes, you have come to know the skills, abilities and interests of the speakers in your program. The next step of your plan is how to distribute this information to the community.

### Who is your audience?

Think about audiences that might be interested in hearing a learner speak about literacy issues — other organizations in the literacy field, non-profit or community groups, corporations or any level of government — municipal, provincial or federal.

If you find it easier to promote the speaker program within literacy circles, that is a great place to start. Eventually you might want to include organizations outside literacy in your promotion and outreach.



**Non-profit and community groups** often find that literacy issues overlap or underlie the issues that they deal with in their organizations. It may be that people in their programs are having trouble accessing services because printed material is a barrier for them. Alternatively, staff from these organizations may be interested in creating more inclusive programming and want to understand how to communicate with people who have difficulty with printed material. Promoting speakers at special events and meetings held by these groups might lead to new partnerships.

**Governments** are excellent targets for promoting adult literacy speakers for much the same reasons. Government representatives may also be open to learning about the importance of continued public funding for adult education to both the community and to individual learners and their families. Speakers can be included in everything from small group meetings with politicians or officials to government caucus meetings.

In a more **public** sphere, events such as International and Family Literacy Day and Adult Learners Week are perfect opportunities to promote speakers.

The **business community** is often looking for worthy causes to support. Promoting the speakers for meetings and events can be the perfect way to draw corporate attention to literacy.

## Letting people know about the speaking program

When calls come in to your organization requesting information or talks from staff, suggest speakers as an alternative. When possible, include the speakers in meetings with representatives from these groups. Use your own organization's events to promote the speakers. Take information to any fundraising or advocacy events and invite some of the speakers to come. Send memos and notices to other organizations, put up posters, hand out flyers and always have posters and flyers up around your program. You can include information about the speaker program with other mailings that your organization does.

*Marketing Your Speaker Program*

Marketing can happen during and after an event as well. A good presentation is always a good marketing tool. If the group and speaker are well matched, the event will go well and you may create opportunities for more speaking engagements in the future. If a group has positive feedback about the speaker, ask them to provide you with a testimonial letter that you can use to promote the program at other events. (For more ideas, check out the recruitment chapter.)

## Using the media to get the word out

The media are a great way to let people know about the speakers. You can include a piece about your speaker program in your media package. The media package could combine general information about literacy and your program as well as the availability of speakers.

## Conclusion

We hope that *Let the Experts Do the Talking* serves as a useful tool for your organization and will help you set up and co-ordinate a speaker program that meets your needs. We hope that your speaker program empowers learners to take their expertise into the community to raise awareness of literacy issues and promote literacy programs to funders, partners and stakeholders.

An effective speaker program can be good for your organization, your learners, and your community. Remember — literacy touches everything.

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# Training Resources

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Here are some manuals that are recommended as companions to this guide.

## Manuals and Kits

Hayes, Judith. *Speak Up! Speak Out!: Tips for Facilitating an Adult Literacy Learners Speakers' Bureau*. Winnipeg: Literacy Partners of Manitoba, 2000.

Kurushima, Susan. *Learners Speak Out*. Victoria: Project Literacy Victoria, 1995.

Melling, Patricia. *Speak Easy Resource Kit: A Guide to Speaking Activities for the Adult Literacy Learner*. Kingston: Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, 1996.

These books provide information that is invaluable to organizations trying to develop a speaker program. *Speak Up! Speak Out!* and *Learners Speak Out* are especially useful training resources. *Learners Speak Out* has been designed for use by adult learners.

You can borrow them from the Centre AlphaPlus Centre (<http://alphaplus.windnetcs.com>).

2040 Yonge Street, 3rd Floor  
Toronto ON M4S 1Z9

Tel: 416-322-1012 or 1-800-788-1120

TTY: 416-322-5751 or 1-800-788-1912

Fax: 416-322-0780 or 1-800-788-1417

E-mail: [info@alphaplus.ca](mailto:info@alphaplus.ca)

## Training Video

The Alberta Association for Adult Literacy (AAAL) has produced a video for learners interested in public speaking. It is called *Public Speaking? It's a BLAST*. The producer/director of the video is Wayne Little of Diamond River Productions, Calgary, Alberta.

You can order the video from the AAAL at:

#605 – 332 6th Avenue, SE  
Calgary, Alberta T2G 4S6  
403-297-4994

## Training Courses

There are some relatively low cost courses and workshops offered by the continuing education departments of some colleges and school boards. If the budget of your organization allows, some of these courses may serve as training for either the speakers or the facilitators of the training you provide. If you choose to send learners to these courses, make sure that they will be able to work with any print material required by the course.

The list below is by no means exhaustive. It provides a few examples of non-credit courses. Please note that these courses were available at the time of writing of this manual. The titles, availability and fees may change.

### Centennial College

Centennial College in Scarborough (Toronto) has a tuition-free course called *Public Speaking Without Pain* (course code CESS-883).

It is a three-hour workshop that introduces participants to the mechanics of how to stand up and speak in front of others.

It is held at the Centre For Continuing Education at the Progress Campus, Room C2-02. The Progress Campus is at 941 Progress Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario (east of Markham Road and just south of Highway 401).

The telephone number is 416-289-5207.

The college web site is at [www.centennialcollege.ca](http://www.centennialcollege.ca).

### Humber College

Humber College in Etobicoke (Toronto) has a course called *Effective Speaking* (course code COM.002) which is designed to help participants overcome the fear of speaking in front of an audience and learn how to identify their strengths in presentation skills, how to deliver an organized speech and how to apply presentation skills to daily activities. The course is offered in the evenings.

The course is held at the North Campus at 205 Humber College Blvd., Toronto, Ontario. You can telephone the registration department at 416-675-5005 or e-mail [enquiry@humberc.ca](mailto:enquiry@humberc.ca).

The college web site is at [www.humberc.on.ca](http://www.humberc.on.ca).

### **George Brown College**

George Brown College in downtown Toronto has a series of courses in their Communications program. In *Speaking with Confidence I* (course code GHUM 1114) students learn the basics in speech design and presentation.

The course is held in the evenings.

For more information, call 416-415-5000, ext. 2092 or e-mail [cequest@gbrownc.on.ca](mailto:cequest@gbrownc.on.ca).

The course is held at the St. James Campus, 200 King Street East, Toronto, Ontario.

The college web site is at [www.gbrownc.on.ca](http://www.gbrownc.on.ca).

### **Fanshawe College**

Fanshawe College in London offers *The Art Of Public Speaking* (course code COMM259 – 01). Participants learn to appreciate public speaking as an art form and as a practical tool. There are eight evening sessions.

The course is held at the main campus at Room A1021, 1460 Oxford Street East, London, Ontario.

You can telephone them at 519-452-4439 or e-mail [ce@fanshawec.ca](mailto:ce@fanshawec.ca).

The college web site is at [www.fanshawec.on.ca](http://www.fanshawec.on.ca).

### **Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology**

Sault College of Applied Arts & Technology has a course called *Public Speaking* (course code CED1279) where participants learn simple ways to present themselves to an audience.

There are two sessions.

The course is held at 443 Northern Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

For Program, Registration & Admissions Information, telephone 1-800-461-2260 or 705-759-6700

The college web site is at [www.saultc.on.ca](http://www.saultc.on.ca).