

The Economic Impact of Public Speaking Training for Underprivileged Youth: A Literature-Based Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The absence of public speaking education in underserved schools produces a significant knowledge gap because this subject receives minimal attention in these institutions. Students who lack training in clear speaking face challenges during interviews and classroom discussions and struggle to pursue opportunities. The research investigates how public speaking communication training affects long-term economic results for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The paper demonstrates through economic data and case studies that this essential skill functions as a silent yet effective tool for social advancement.

Keywords: public speaking, economic mobility, workforce development, human capital, underprivileged youth

1. Introduction

The discussion about economic inequality remains prevalent but the question of who receives opportunities to be heard remains unaddressed. Students from low-income backgrounds typically finish their education without receiving instruction on self-expression through speech. The effects of this deficiency result in students missing scholarship opportunities and failing interviews while preventing them from taking on leadership roles. Public speaking serves as a protective economic tool which extends beyond its status as a skill. Public speaking needs greater recognition as a fundamental tool for achieving educational and economic equality.

2. Literature Review

According to James Heckman and Tim Kautz (2012) non-cognitive abilities such as communication skills play a greater role in achieving long-term success than traditional

academic grades. Their research confirms what employers have been stating for multiple years. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (2019) indicates that oral communication remains one of the essential qualities employers look for in job candidates.

Debate and speech programs also correlate with better outcomes in college admissions, job placement, and civic leadership (Miller et al., 2017). Short-term educational workshops lasting six weeks in low-income schools have proven effective at boosting student confidence while simultaneously improving academic results and classroom conduct.

Social capital emerged as a success factor according to Coleman (1988). Students develop their social capital through public speaking because it enables them to establish relationships and work together while gaining access to new opportunities they would not have otherwise encountered.

3. Economic Analysis

The most important transformation I have observed in students who complete a speaking program extends beyond their enhanced speaking abilities. Students who participate in speaking programs develop a new mindset which drives them to pursue opportunities they previously avoided.

Let's talk numbers. Public speaking programs aren't expensive. Most programs require only a classroom space together with a guide and regular consistency to operate. No tech. No fancy curriculum. Just space to try, fail, and try again.

According to Holzer (2015) soft-skill training produces significant employment benefits which I strongly endorse. A student revealed to me that he used to avoid job interviews completely before joining the program. The customer-facing position he now holds has taught him to maintain eye contact and speak without becoming frozen.

These aren't isolated wins. They're patterns. Students who improve their speaking abilities develop greater self-assurance. Their increased confidence leads them to set their sights on higher goals. The long-term consequences of this development include better income levels and improved job stability together with increased leadership aspirations.

4. Case Example and Perspective

During my work with a local organization, I organized a public speaking program for high school students. A shy student who avoided self-introductions at first became confident enough to address the school board during the six-week program. She applied for leadership positions and internships shortly after completing the program.

Another student used a speech we wrote together during a scholarship interview. He didn't just get the scholarship—he became the student representative for an entire school district. These aren't exceptions. They're the result of consistent, targeted communication training.

5. Conclusion

Public speaking builds more than confidence — it builds opportunity. When youth from underserved communities learn how to speak clearly and with purpose, they gain more control over their future. They become better advocates, stronger applicants, and more likely to pursue leadership roles. If we want to prepare the next generation for success, public speaking should be treated as a core skill, not a bonus.

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