

Running head: EXAMINING COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Let's Communicate:  
Examining Communication Apprehension, its Observable Cues,  
and Management Techniques  
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### Abstract

Communication apprehension can be detrimental to all aspects of life—from interpersonal relationships, education and professional dealings. Despite its prevalence, communication apprehension remains to be unidentified and unaddressed. Research suggests communication apprehension within the realm of public speaking is a significant issue to be dealt with and managed. This paper will examine communication apprehension (CA), as well as provide a conceptual definition of the construct within the context of public speaking. Furthermore, this paper will identify observable cues, discuss potential causes, and propose a typology of frequently used methods for the management and reduction of communication apprehension. Lastly, this paper will discuss potential sources for societal integration.

### Common Yet Potentially Detrimental

As competition within the job market has increased extensively throughout this past decade, the ability to be effectively and competently articulate has become a staple within the career interviewing process. “The capacity to use speech to communicate is fundamental to interpersonal relationships, occupational success, and quality of life” (Iverach, O’Brian, Jones, Block, Lincoln, Harrison, Hewat, Menzies, Packman & Onslow, 2009, p. 928). In fact, the objective of creating more communication competent professionals has been put into place by various organizations. Research within this area has been conducted through various systematic and scientific investigations specifically for educators to help individuals reduce and manage their fear of public speaking (Work, 1982). More and more business professionals have been encouraged to decrease their anxiety toward public speaking through formal programs offered by leadership and education institutes and public relations firms, as well as other groups such as Toastmasters International. Furthermore, universities have integrated courses that instill public speaking skills within the undergraduate general education curricula in order to initiate communication skills and theory to students (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). Despite the importance of managing communication apprehension, the construct remains to be exceedingly prevalent.

It is a common phenomenon for most people to experience “butterflies” or “gitters” prior to engaging in an action associated with public speaking. Andersen (2008) describes CA as a debilitating trait that “afflicts fifty million Americans and is arguably one of the most prevalent social or psychological problems in our society” (p. 172). Due to communication apprehension being such a common setback, research has been prompted from various fields, such as