Describing Confidence: Student-Identified Signals of Presenter Confidence

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While there are many measures of anxiety, there are few measures or descriptions of confidence. This study considers students' perceptions of what it means to be or to look confident during undergraduate presentations. Findings show students placed high value on effective posture as the most common behavior that was causally connected to a presenter's confidence, as well as ensuring that their vocal delivery is audible and includes minimal pauses.

Helping students develop effective oral communication skills is not an easy task, yet employers consistently indicate the essential nature of these skills (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2018). Fear of public speaking is common (Dale & Wolf, 2006; Leary & Kowalski, 1995); in fact, Public Speaking Anxiety (PSA) is the most common social phobia (American Psychiatric Association, 2016). This fear has a real and profound impact; researchers have long recognized that fear of public speaking can lead to poor performance on presentations and speeches (Adler, 1980; Hancock, Stone, Brundage, & Zeigler, 2008; Robinson, 1997). In other words, the more anxious students are about giving a presentation, the worse they will perform.

One goal of many university-level public speaking courses, therefore, is to make students less fearful of speaking in front of others—and, by doing so, make them more effective speakers and presenters. Many published tools, called anxiety inventories, exist to help teachers and students recognize and measure the many ways that PSA can manifest itself in undergraduate students. Examples include McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (Hamilton & Kroll, 2018) and the Speech Anxiety Thoughts Inventory (Cho, Smits, & Telch, 2004), among others. Changes in student scores on these measures over time allow instructors and students to determine if instructional methods are helping to achieve the goal of reducing PSA.

Reducing anxiety is often assumed by researchers and instructors alike to have a corollary effect: an increase in students' confidence as they face and participate in public speaking situations. In much of the research surrounding student presentation competence, *confidence* is presented as one of the positive characteristics of a competent and effective speaker (Blaszczynski & Green, 2010; Quinn & Goody, 2019). Often, confidence is simply portrayed as the opposite of fear and anxiety; if anxiety and fear go down (as indicated on one or the other of the anxiety measures), teachers and scholars assume that confidence has increased. The relationship between anxiety and confidence is not clear, however, in part because confidence is rarely defined or described in any detail (Blaszczynski & Green, 2010; Khalifa Tailab & Marsh, 2020; Mundy, Oviedo, Rameriz, Taylor, & Flores, 2014; Speiler & Miltenberger, 2017). Thus, the trend in existing research seems to suggest that confidence is simply what is left when anxiety fades. Yet, without more defined explanations of confidence and perceptions of confidence, researchers, instructors, and students are left without a vocabulary to name the manifestations of confidence in themselves and others, which perhaps encourages the focus on other aspects that may or may not directly lead to confidence development.

Better understanding the signals of confidence would give our students something to work toward, not simply something to eliminate. This study considers students' perceptions of what it means to be or to look confident during four presentations delivered throughout a 15-week semester. We analyzed students' written self-reflections and responses to their peers to identify the presentation aspects that students connect to confidence. In the following sections, we review existing research on reducing PSA and communication signals for dimensions that may be related to confidence, like social power. Then, through a summary and discussion of our analysis results, we offer a set of potential delivery aspects that students may focus on to develop their confidence and to signal confidence to the audience.

Measurements for and Signals of Confidence

There are several tools for measuring anxiety, including but not limited to McCroskey's Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (Hamilton & Kroll, 2018), Speech Anxiety Thoughts Inventory (Cho et al., 2018), Communication Anxiety Inventory (Booth-Butterfield & Gould, 1986), Audience Anxiousness Scale (Leary, 1983), and the Public Speaking Anxiety Scale (Bartholomay & Houlihan, 2016). Researchers suggest various approaches to help students reduce their PSA. Studies using pre- and post-test measures of anxiety show that completing one or more presentations in an academic course can reduce PSA levels (LeFebvre, LeFebvre, Allen, Buckner, & Griffin, 2020; Plant & Slippers, 2015; Sander & Sanders, 2005). Students who use a practice lab before completing their presentations also report feeling more prepared for their graded presentations (Mundy et al., 2014). Other common

interventions include peer feedback (Saidalvi & Samad, 2019) and self-assessment assignments (Khalifa Tailab & Marsh, 2020), which are often facilitated with video-recordings (Smith & Sodano, 2011; Speiler & Miltenberger, 2017). Even innovative assignments like poetry recitations in business courses are reported as effective (Hoger, 2012).

While anxiety measures and studies of anxiety-reducing strategies are useful, they do not necessarily offer concrete details about students' confidence, typically treating it as a result of PSA reduction. When confidence is addressed more specifically, researchers often use G.L. Paul's (1966) Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker (PRCS), a 30-item, true-false assessment that includes statements referring to fear and confidence, or Hook, Smith, and Valentiner (2008) revised PRCS-12 that uses 12 prompts, all of which reference anxiety (in effect, making it more of an anxiety measure). Alternatively, some researchers develop their own survey instrument that asks students to simply indicate whether they felt more confident after the study's intervention (Plant & Slippers, 2015).

The other theory that is often addressed alongside confidence is *self-efficacy*. Most researchers define self-efficacy as one's belief in their ability to successfully complete a task and achieve desired outcomes (e.g., LeFebvre et al., 2020; Tucker & McCarthy, 2001). LeFebvre et al. (2020) draw on Bandura (1986) and Schunk and Pajares (2005) to claim that self-confidence is typically seen as a result of self-efficacy, and self-efficacy is developed at least partially through competence development that is achieved through repeated practice at various difficulty levels. Correspondingly, extensive practice is commonly advised by practitioners (Gallo, 2020; Nawaz, 2020), instructors (LeFebvre et al., 2020; Mundy et al., 2014), and even students (Quinn & Goody, 2019; Smith & Sodano, 2011). Thus, extensive practice may be one of the only concrete strategies that researchers and students report in the research on improving presenters' confidence.

Still, in-depth investigations of students' self-perceptions and attitudes toward their presentation performance tend to focus on self-efficacy, anxiety, and fear. Fewer studies have analyzed what aspects build confidence and signal confidence to an audience member. Instead, studies have tended to investigate the relationships between social power, status, self-esteem, audience perceptions, and a speaker's delivery. Generally, aspects of nonverbal expression and vocal delivery seem to have been studied the most.

In Carney's (2020) review of nonverbal behaviors, they noted that people with higher power, stature, and dominance and presenters with larger social networks tend to use gestures more often. However, frequent speech dysfluencies (like "umms" and "ahs") signal that the presenter is less powerful (Carney, Hall, Smith LeBeau, & 2005). LeFebvre, LeFebvre, & Allen (2018) found that vocal disfluencies and ineffective nonverbal delivery were common public speaking fears that came up often in their study, and Smith and Soldano (2011) found that the most common student dissatisfaction with their presentation was their nonverbal communication and nervousness. According to Van Zant and Berger (2019), nonverbals were perceived to be most effective and made presenters seem confident when they spoke more loudly and used more vocal variability.

To improve these skills, Dunbar, Brooks, & Kubicka-Miller (2006) suggested instructors should focus more on teaching their students about verbal (Speiler & Miltenberger, 2017; Van Zant & Berger, 2019) and nonverbal methods of delivery (Carney et al., 2005; Hall, Coats, & Smith LeBeau, 2005). Recent researchers strongly suggest that using recorded video student presentations can help students improve both verbal and nonverbal delivery (LeFebvre, 2017; LeFebvre, LeFebvre, & Allen, 2016; LeFebvre, LeFebvre, Blackburn, & Boyd, 2015).

Overall, existing research provides insight into topics that seem related to confidence: reducing PSA, improving self-efficacy, and the influence of delivery aspects on perceived social power and status. Yet, questions remain about what actions, perhaps other than practicing, can help students feel confident about presenting and when presenting. Also, questions remain about which aspects of a presentation or a presenter's delivery signal the presenter's confidence to the audience. Carney et al. (2005) argued that studies about perceptions and beliefs are important because they increase our knowledge of how students think about nonverbal behavior. To begin answering these questions, we analyzed students' written reflections, peer feedback, and short-answer survey responses. Unlike Likert-scale based instruments, written responses provide insight into the presentations aspects that the students connected to and perceived as signals of confidence in other presenters.

Methods

This IRB-approved study was conducted in a Fall 2018 sophomore-level business communication course that focused on the development and delivery of business presentations in one-to-few and one-to-many contexts. The 59 participating students represented 13 majors, including general business (10), criminal justice (7), marketing (7), management (6), finance (6), accounting (7), agricultural business (2), graphic design (2), liberal studies (1), biomedical sciences (1), economics (1), psychology (1), and Spanish (1). The students' average overall GPA was 2.71 and average course GPA was 2.80.

As part of the course, the students submitted four rounds of self-reflections and peer feedback to 2-3 group members. The first three rounds were submitted one week after a major presentation, and the fourth round was part of the final exam and reflected on progress throughout the course. The prompts for the self-reflections and peer feedback were guided but open-ended, asking students to discuss strengths, improvement opportunities, and specific suggestions they may have for themselves and others. Also, as part of the final exam, students answered three short-answer questions about confidence, which are provided in the results section.

Students' written self-reflections, peer feedback, and survey answers were analyzed using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). This general methodology is used frequently to allow researchers to understand student feedback by analyzing trends that emerge from student data. Students described various presentation strengths and weaknesses in their reflections and feedback (see a full discussion in Smith, Schieber, & Austin, 2020). One trend that emerged with increasing frequency in each round was the idea of confidence. The percentage of "confidence" comments in the original study's coding by round was 11%, 13%, 18%, and 24% respectively. Although there were fewer total comments in each round (535, 540, 457, 389), the percentages showed that students increasingly addressed confidence. Therefore, we conducted a second round of grounded analysis on only the confidence-trend comments. We used the following research questions to guide our investigation:

1. How do students describe their perceptions of others' confidence?

2. How do students describe their own confidence?

In our original coding, the number of comments about confidence was higher than the number of comments ultimately included in this analysis because some of the original confidence-coded comments were vague, such as "you looked confident" without further explanation. These general comments were excluded from this analysis. The grounded analysis showed that students' comments associated presentation aspects to confidence using either correlated or causally connected phrasing. Correlated phrasing connected the aspect and confidence using a word like *and*, for example, "You were very confident in what you were saying and you had a wonderful informative tone." Causally connected phrasing created a clearer relationship between the presentation aspect and confidence, such as, "My strength is my confident stance." Some coded comments specified aspects of confidence using negative phrasing, like, "My eyes wandered around the room, and this also made me seem less confident."

In the following sections, we describe the analysis findings regarding students' perceptions of what it means to be confident while giving a presentation. Then, implications for instructors and students are discussed.

Findings

The open-ended prompts for the self-reflection, peer response, and end-of-semester survey resulted in ten or more aspects connected to confidence in the students' writing for each data set. The following discussion presents aspects that appeared in 10% or more of the coded comments in each data set.

Confidence Correlation and Causation in the Self-Reflections and Peer Responses

There were 66 comments in the self-reflections and 134 comments in the peer responses that offered specific details about the presenter's confidence or perceived confidence. There are more comments in the peer responses because there were more peer responses than self-reflections since, per round, students wrote only one self-reflection and wrote 2-3 peer responses. Table 1 shows the aspects most frequently connected in any way to confidence in the students' self-reflections and peer responses. Table 2 shows the aspects that were most often correlated and causally connected to confidence in the self-reflections and peer responses.

Looking, Feeling, and Seeing Confidence: Trends in the Survey Responses

The end-of-course short-answer survey asked students to directly discuss their confidence-related behaviors and perceptions of confidence using the following three questions.

- Q1: When you want to appear more confident to another person, what kinds of things do you do? Please offer at least 3 examples.
- Q2: What makes you feel more confident in front of others?
- Q3: When you say that someone "looks confident," what do you mean? What is that person doing that makes him/her "look confident" to you?

Forty-four students completed the survey, resulting in 262 comments with specific details. Students made 117 comments identifying 26 specific actions they take to appear confident (Question 1). There were 68 comments that identified 22 actions or aspects that make students feel more confident (Question 2). For Question 3, students offered 77 specific comments identifying 12 actions or aspects that make them perceive others as confident. Table 3 identifies the aspects and actions

Table 1
Top Trends in Self-Reflections and Peer Responses: All Confidence-Related Comments Combined*

Trends	Self-Reflections (*n*=66)	Peer Responses (*n*=134)
Content Knowledge and Preparation	30%	18%
Audible Vocal Delivery	15%	23%
Effective Posture / Stance	10%	17%
Effective Eye Contact	13%	12%
Effective Gestures	–	10%

*Trends account for 10% or more of comments in the identified data set.

Table 2
Top Trends in Self-Reflections and Peer Responses: Divided by Correlated and Causally Connected Comments*

Trends	Self-Reflections		Peer Responses	
	Correlation	Causation	Correlation	Causation
Content Knowledge and Preparation	10%	49%	15%	22%
Audible Vocal Delivery	29%	–	32%	–
Effective Eye Contact	16%	11%	14%	–
Effective Posture / Stance	–	14%	–	37%
Effective Gestures	–	–	–	14%
Presented with a Partner	13%	–	–	–
Effective Tone	–	–	–	10%

*Trends account for 10% or more of comments in the identified data set.

Table 3
Top Trends in Survey Responses by Questions*

Trends	Survey Questions		
	Q1 (*n*=117)	Q2 (*n*=68)	Q3 (*n*=77)
Content Knowledge and Preparation	–	32%	10%
Effective Posture / Stance	15%	–	17%
Audible Vocal Delivery	10%	–	10%
Smooth Vocal Delivery	–	–	18%
Effective Eye Contact	18%	–	–
Positive Audience Response	–	12%	–
Smiling	12%	–	–

*Trends account for 10% or more of comments in the identified data set.

identified from the students' survey responses.

Comments coded as "Audible Vocal Delivery" focused on the student's ability to hear and understand the presenter. In contrast, "Smooth Vocal Delivery" included comments that discussed the manner of the vocal delivery, often noting the frequency of pauses or verbal fillers.

Indicators of Nervousness

We also identified comments about what makes a person feel (self-reflections) or look nervous (peer responses). Although nervousness and confidence are not mutually exclusive, students often contrasted the two feelings in the same or sequential sentences. There were 95 comments that identified specific aspects that signaled nervousness across the self-reflections and peer responses, with 62 and 33 comments in the self-reflections and peer responses, respectively. Table 4 shows the aspects that were mentioned most often in the comments discussing the presenter's nervousness.

When considered as a whole, these trend results provide some useful considerations for instructors and students about (a) how students perceive confidence in others and (b) the strategies students use to build their confidence in preparation for or during a presentation.

Table 4
Top Nervousness Indicators in Self-Reflections and Peer Responses*

Nervousness Indicators	Self-Reflections (*n*=62)	Peer Responses (*n*=33)	Combined (*n*=95)
Ineffective Posture / Stance	19%	30%	23%
Using Verbal Fillers	21%	24%	22%
Ineffective Gestures	19%	24%	21%
Ineffective Speaking Speed	15%	–	12%

*Trends account for 10% or more of comments in the identified data set.

Implications

Perceptions and Signals of Confidence in the Audience's Eyes

Two data sub-sets offer insight into aspects that signal confidence to audience members: (a) the students' feedback to their peers and (b) their answers to the third survey question about what makes presenters "look confident." Also, students' comments about what made their peers look nervous during a presentation can suggest which aspects signal a presenter's confidence, since many of the nervousness behaviors these students identified seem to be the inverse of the identified confidence signals. Across these sub-sets, the most mentioned aspects connected to confidence are voice-related aspects, physical behaviors, and signals about the presenter's preparation.

All the students' commentary about how they perceived others' confidence included a voice-related aspect as one of the most frequent confidence signals. An overall smooth verbal delivery was the most frequently identified presenter behavior exhibited confidence, accounting for 18% of the behaviors mentioned in response to the third survey question. Within the smooth verbal delivery category, students included details like minimal long pauses, no verbal fillers, and minimal misspoken phrasing. Other aspects of effective vocal delivery were identified, also. Using an audible voice was associated with high levels of confidence, as it was the most frequent behavior correlated with confidence in the students' responses to their peers (32%) and the fourth most common behavior (10%) listed in response to the third survey question. Students also identified effective tone as a sign of a presenter's confidence, accounting for 10% of the causally connected comments in the peer responses. In contrast, the use of verbal fillers (e.g., "uh," "um") was the second most common behavior (24%) connected to nervousness in the peer feedback. These trends show that effective vocal delivery aspects are essential signals of confidence, reinforcing similar findings from Speiler and Miltenberger (2017) and Van Zant and Berger (2019).

While eye contact and gestures were common in certain sub-sets of the data, effective posture or stance was the second most prevalent confidence-signaling behavior mentioned in the students' peer feedback and survey responses. Aspects of posture or stance appeared in 17% of the students' survey answers about what makes a presenter look confident. Students' high value on effective posture in their survey responses is matched in their peer feedback commentary, where effective posture was the most common behavior (37%) that was causally connected to a presenter's confidence. Students' descriptions of confident posture included standing up straight or tall and standing with one's "head held high." The positive connection between effective posture and confidence is reflected in the students' comments about what makes presenters look nervous. Ineffective posture, like leaning or swaying, was the most common nervousness indicator (30%) in the peer feedback, corroborating the findings of Hall et al. (2005) and Carney et al. (2005).

In their peer feedback and survey responses, students identified the presenter's content knowledge and preparation as a positive signal of a presenter's confidence. Content knowledge and preparation accounted for 15% of the comments about aspects correlated to confidence and 22% of the aspects causally connected to confidence in the peer responses and as the third most common signal (10%) of a presenter's confidence in the survey responses. In their comments, students often connected the presenter's familiarity with or knowledge of the topic with the presenter's level of preparation. As an example, one student wrote, "Knowing your topic very well made you seem confident in what you were saying" in a peer response; in the survey answers, students wrote things like, "being knowledgeable about their topic" and seeming like "it [the presentation] was rehearsed before" made the presenter seem confident. Preparation is commonly recommended (Gallo, 2020; LeFebvre et al., 2020; Nawaz, 2020; Quinn & Goody, 2019), but these preparation behaviors are not typically seen by an audience member since they occur before the presentation. Thus, while students frequently identified preparation as a strong, positive signal of a presenter's confidence, they were unclear about the specific behaviors that signaled the presenter's preparation level.

To appear confident, these findings suggest that a presenter should focus on refining at least two aspects of their delivery. First, ensure that their vocal delivery is audible and includes minimal pauses. Second, use a straight posture with minimal leaning or swaying. While demonstrating one's content knowledge and preparation is a strong signal for showing confidence, it is less clear from this data what specific behaviors indicate one's knowledge and preparation level.

How Presenters Build Confidence

Based on their self-reflections and survey answers about what they do to appear confident and build confidence, students' confidence seems to be reliant on their level of preparation and physical delivery aspects. Some other voice-related and external aspects are also connected to students' perceptions of their confidence.

Preparation and strong familiarity with the content topic was the most frequently identified cause of the student's confidence. Preparation was the most common cause students mentioned for their confidence in their self-reflections, accounting for 49% of the mentioned causes, while it accounted for 32% of the causes listed in response to the second survey question about what makes them feel confident. These students' strong connection between preparation and confidence reinforces theorists' claims that practice builds confidence through the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986, 1994; LeFebvre et al., 2020; Schunk & Parajes, 2005). Yet, details about what specifically made the presenter look prepared were missing. Therefore, while these results and previous studies strongly suggest that practice builds confidence, it remains unclear which behaviors presenters can incorporate to look prepared. Still, like other students (Quinn & Goody, 2019; Smith & Sodano, 2011), these students are aware of the powerful influence that such preparation can have.

However, in survey answers about what they do to appear confident, preparing or practicing was only mentioned four times. Students' seeming resistance to preparing and practicing may be related to a general resistance to doing homework, or it may be influenced by features of the course design. For example, students may be unsure of how to practice for an impromptu "presentation," or students may not feel they have enough time to adequately prepare. These results suggest that students may benefit from more explicit conversations in class about how to practice, such as using similar questions, or instructors might add practice requirements to the assignment.

Three physical delivery aspects were commonly connected to students' confidence levels in their self-reflections and survey answers: eye contact, posture, and smiling. Making consistent eye contact was the action named most frequently (18%) as a strategy for appearing

confident in the survey answers. Effective eye contact was also commonly connected to confidence in the students' self-reflections, accounting for 16% of correlated comments and 11% of the causally connected comments, which may be related to high eye contact expectations in Western culture (Uono & Hietanen, 2015).

Using a straight and controlled posture was the second most common strategy students included in the survey responses (15%), and it was mentioned as a cause of students' confidence in 14% of the causally connected comments in the self-reflections. The high value placed on upright posture corresponds with the audience's perceptions of posture being a strong signal for a presenter's confidence, as previously discussed (Carney et al., 2005).

Students listed smiling as the third most common strategy (12%) that they use to appear confident to others, but this signal was not mentioned in relation to confidence in any of the other data sub-sets. In other words, while smiling is a strategy that students use to communicate confidence when they are presenting, it is not a behavior that students identified as signaling confidence when they are an audience member. One reason for this contrast may be that while smiling is an immediacy behavior that has been shown as effective for making a generally positive impression on others (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009), some studies show that too much smiling during employment interviews can undermine impressions of one's business-like demeanor (Ruben, Hall, & Mast, 2015).

Students also connected an audible voice with confidence. Like in the peer feedback, an audible voice was the most frequent aspect that was correlated with confidence in the self-reflections, accounting for 29% of the comments with correlated aspects. Using an audible voice was also the fourth most common (10%) strategy for appearing confident to others in the survey responses. Being "loud enough" was causally connected to confidence in only one self-reflection comment, and it was not mentioned as something that makes the presenter feel confident in the survey. These results show that students recognize that using an audible voice is important in signaling confidence to others, but it seems to have less influence on students' self-assessment of their confidence and is not used as a strategy for feeling confident.

Students connected two other aspects to feeling confident. In their self-reflections, presenting with a partner or in a group was connected to being confident in 13% of the correlated comments. For example, one student wrote, "I felt much more confident in this presentation than others, and I feel that it was because I had other people with me." Students also noted that positive audience reactions during a presentation helped them to feel confident. Positive audience feedback, like

laughing at the presenter's jokes or making eye contact with the presenter, was the second most common aspect mentioned in response to the second survey question, accounting for 12% of the aspects provided in the answers, and it was the only other aspect of the 22 that was provided to reach the 10% or more threshold. Although partner presentations and positive audience feedback were mentioned with less frequency than preparation, eye contact, posture, and audible delivery, these two aspects suggest strategies instructors can use to help build students' confidence. As recommended by Blaszcynski and Green (2010), group presentations could be assigned before individual presentations to improve students' comfort level before tackling more intimidating individual presentations. The significance of positive audience feedback may also be mentioned by instructors to motivate student audience members to be attentive and engaged.

In sum, the aspects that seem to most strongly signal confidence to the audience are using an audible voice, using effective posture, and signaling one's preparation for the presentation. On the other side of the "stage," the aspect that seems to influence one's self-perceptions of confidence and that helps build confidence is preparation, as it appears with much more frequency than even the other common aspects students identified in their self-reflections and surveys. Still, using effective eye contact, posture, and an audible voice also have a strong influence on self-perceptions of one's confidence and attempts to build confidence. The participants made strong connections between audible vocal delivery, straight posture, preparation, and confidence in both self and peer feedback.

Conclusion

Anxiety measures can spark useful discussion of students' apprehension, but such measures tend to present apprehension as a problem to be resolved. Feelings of apprehension and confidence regarding a presentation can coexist. Focusing on presentation aspects that can build and/or signal a presenter's confidence provides an opportunity to set an achievable goal.

Initially, we were investigating which presentation aspects students would discuss in self-reflections and peer feedback and how they would discuss those aspects, with attention to potential changes during the course (Smith et al., 2020). We expected students to write about delivery skills and presentation content, but we did not predict that students would give noticeable attention to confidence. As a result, our study was not designed to elicit detailed descriptions of confidence. Nevertheless, we were able to identify initial details about which aspects students associate with presentation confidence. Yet, some aspects, namely "preparation," were not fully

described in the students' writing. Thus, these results provide a starting point for more structured investigations into how a presenter could build confidence and how they could appear confident to the audience.

These findings suggest that feeling confident and looking confident can be treated as separate, though related, aspects. Distinguishing between feeling and looking confident can be useful for presenters who do not yet feel confident. While these presenters are gaining practice presenting, they can hone the skills that make them look confident to the audience. Over time, the practice should lead to stronger feelings of confidence (Bandura, 1986, 1994; LeFebvre et al., 2020). The findings presented here can also be used to initiate a discussion with students about which aspects they should focus on to strengthen their confidence. Instructors might also develop lessons and activities that would strengthen students' ability to use an audible voice, effective posture, and purposeful movement since these were the strongest signals of confidence to the audience. Instructors may consider how they can facilitate students' thorough preparation to build feelings of confidence, such as required or incentivized practice sessions, student selection of presentation topics, scaffolding of assignments, or more time between explanation of the assignment requirements and the students' presentation delivery. In these ways and more, instructors can help students stay more focused on a positive goal than on "fixing" their anxiety.

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