



Public speaking is the cure for future economic growth

Last year The Communication Trust announced a 58 per cent rise over the past five years in the number of young school children with speech, language and communication difficulties. The CBI also released a report last year revealing poor communication is a major complaint employers have against employees, indirectly holding back our economic growth.

In an age of high tech communication where young people often spend more time typing messages with deliberate spelling mistakes than listening, reasoning and developing their persuasive speaking abilities, it is understandable that these revelations are a major concern that could worsen in years to come; further damaging the UK and US economies as an appropriately skilled workforce becomes increasingly difficult to find.

One concerned parent is applying his entrepreneurial spirit and taking matters into his own hands to help not only his own offspring but other parents' children too.

Andries Smit has set up a number of businesses in recent years and is now launching **Publicspeakingforkids.org** a website which provides tips and guidance on how parents and teachers can encourage their children and pupils to take up this skill and develop it in fun ways to benefit their children, throughout their lives.

Originally launched in South Africa, the business became phenomenally successful and Smit believes the time is right to introduce the concept to a much wider audience.

Little time is put into teaching soft skills in the Western world's curriculum. Traditionally this has been seen as a realm for parents' involvement. However many children from families consisting of two breadwinners are spending less time with their parents. Soft skills suffer greatly as a result and we are seeing the consequences in our schools, workplaces and unemployment statistics.

Despite his Public Speaking for Kids initiative, Smit believes there is more to be done. "The Government should address the communication skills short fall by teaching public speaking at a younger age as a core part of the curriculum. We have an element in English at GCSE where children are assessed on their ability to deliver a pre-prepared talk, but I do not think this provides enough time for children to

develop the skills of speaking in public. It helps those who have a natural ability but the concern is that a growing number of children enter and leave school without this skill.

“Children need to be taught how to address an audience – it is now more important than ever. Public speaking courses can instil in children the confidence and poise they need to deal with the challenges of later life, from job interviews to addressing large teams at work”.

Public Speaking for Kids is an attempt to address these challenges head-on and to help and empower teachers and parents to help their children and students become good public speakers. Despite having recently launched, Smit has some major plans and will constantly be developing and updating the products and services on offer. The first product will be an e-book: The A-Z of Public Speaking for Kids.

For more information contact Andries Smit on: info@publicspeakingforkids.org

Visit: www.publicspeakingforkids.org

Public Speaking for Kids is a new website providing tips, advice and coaching for parents and teachers to help their children and pupils improve their public speaking and communication skills.