

# *Connecting Through Innovative Ideas*

## *Online Activity*

### **Abstract:**

This activity introduces a creative way to do a persuasive speech in a Public Speaking course (online or traditional classroom) by inviting students to investigate and propose an idea to change behaviors in their local communities by applying The Fun Theory.

### **Courses:**

Speech/Public Speaking

*This activity is currently being used as a speech assignment in an online communication course.*

*You can prep students for the assignment if you teach on a traditional campus, or create a brief explanation and assignment guidelines if you teach entirely online*

### **Concepts:**

Creating and researching an entirely unique topic for a persuasive speech

Completing preliminary and primary research on the issue in student's community

Organizing a persuasive speech message

### **Objective:**

- To encourage students to think creatively about their speech topics
- To engage students in their community
- To use current cultural motives and participate in developing good citizenship skills
- To make speeches fun!

### **Rationale:**

Many times students ask me what persuasive topics they should choose, or request permission to do speeches on overdone topics, such as pro-life, death penalty, or smoking. The latest

Facebook video of the “Piano Staircase” lent me the idea of participatory discourse that will give students a chance to create a unique speech that will not only encourage them to think critically about issues in their local community, but also inspire creativity and engagement of individual ideas that could make a difference.

**Time and Materials:**

- Internet access, a computer with speakers.
- Access to the following website (videos can be watched in class or at home)

<http://www.thefuntheory.com>

**Project Details:**

After a discussion about the purpose and constructions of persuasive speeches, introduce the concept of participatory discourse. Challenge students to think outside the box when coming up with a way to persuade their audience to change behavior for the better. Introduce them to the Fun Theory by showing them the videos of last year’s contest winners (see website) and ask them to think about things they can do in their communities to make a difference. Encourage them to observe their immediate environments and consider ideas that can enhance the world around them. Remind them that any persuasive speech requires research, so assign them to do some preliminary and, eventually, primary research to support their idea. Ask them to apply this research in their persuasive speech by creating a message that moves their audience to action.

**Debrief:**

Ask students what they learned from the exercise. You may wish to assign a brief self-evaluation in which they can reflect on what they thought was successful, and how (if necessary) they could make changes to their message. You may even implement a voting system to have students choose the best ideas/speeches presented. On a side note, suggest to them that they can submit their ideas to a contest for the next year’s prize.