EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

www.agoraspeakers.org

Alexander Hristov
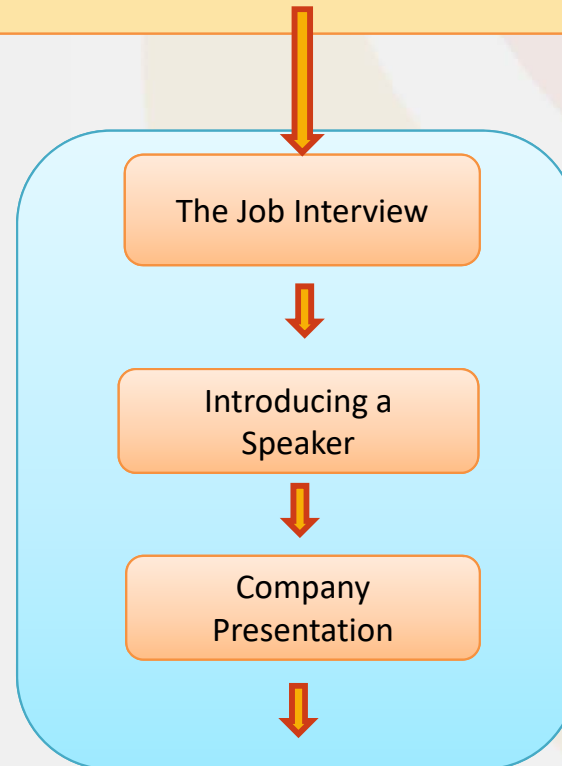
HIGHLIGHTS AND MAIN FEATURES

- Two easier projects before the "Who am I?" (or first speech) project

- No pressure to move forward : only when you're satisfied with yourself.

- One main path with branching options-

- Some projects are composite (several steps).

- Some projects require measured results.

- Some projects are done outside the club.

- Speech Analysis projects.

- Three levels of "mastery" for the advanced branches.

- Community driven with a vetting committee monitoring quality.

- Recognition of prior experience from Toastmasters International or similar organizations. No need to repeat finished projects or learned skills

BRANCHING

- Paths that diverge from the main path exploring specific speaking techniques, contexts or environments

- Some of the path projects are still mandatory for the main path.

- Progress on a branch path can be paused and resumed at any time

BRANCHING - EXAMPLE

Main Path

Knowing your Audience → Presentation Software → Inconvenient Allies

"Speaking in Business Contexts" Path

The Job Interview → Introducing a Speaker → Company Presentation

Can be started at any point after completing "Presentation Software" project
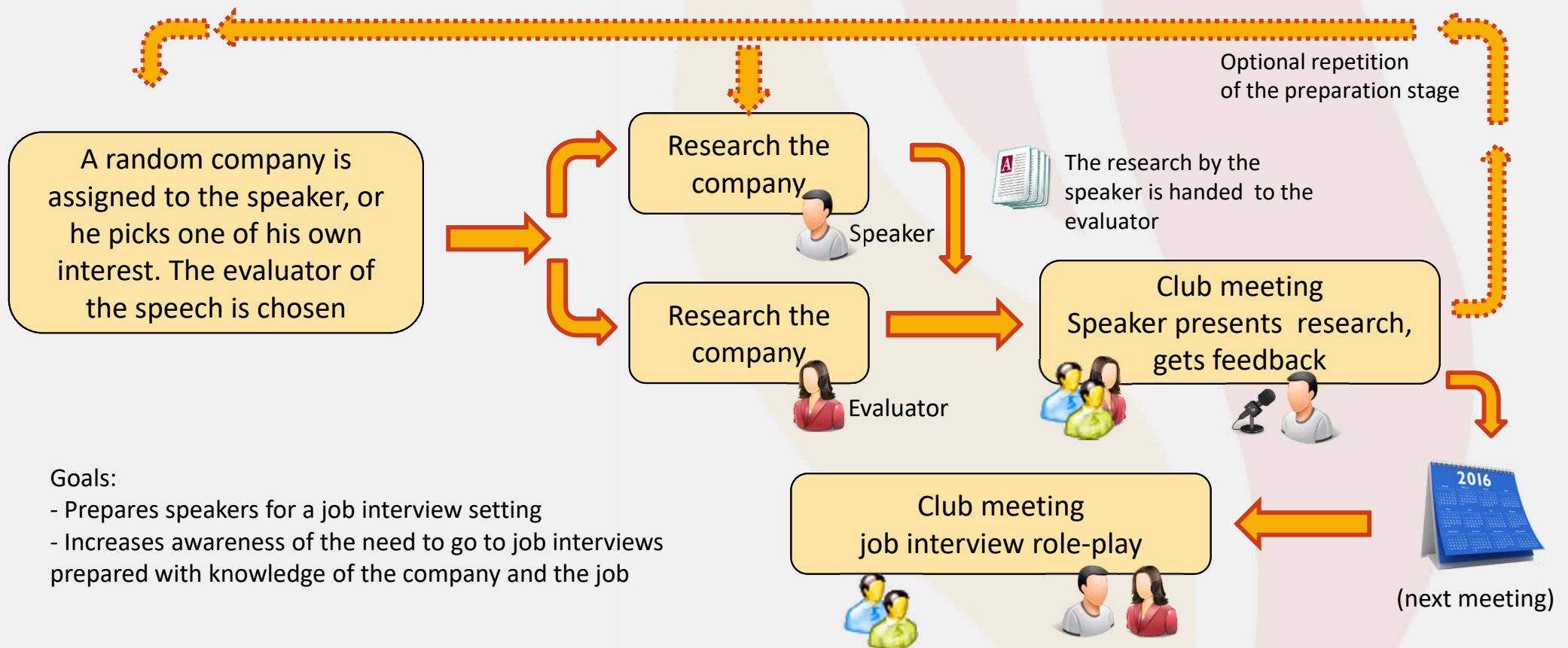
COMPOSITE PROJECTS

- Some projects have a "research" or "preparation" part that starts well before the speech preparation

COMPOSITE PROJECTS - EXAMPLE
"The Job Interview"

A random company is assigned to the speaker, or he picks one of his own interest. The evaluator of the speech is chosen

Research the company

Speaker

Research the company

Evaluator

The research by the speaker is handed to the evaluator

Club meeting
Speaker presents research, gets feedback

Optional repetition of the preparation stage

Club meeting
job interview role-play

2016

(next meeting)

Goals:
- Prepares speakers for a job interview setting
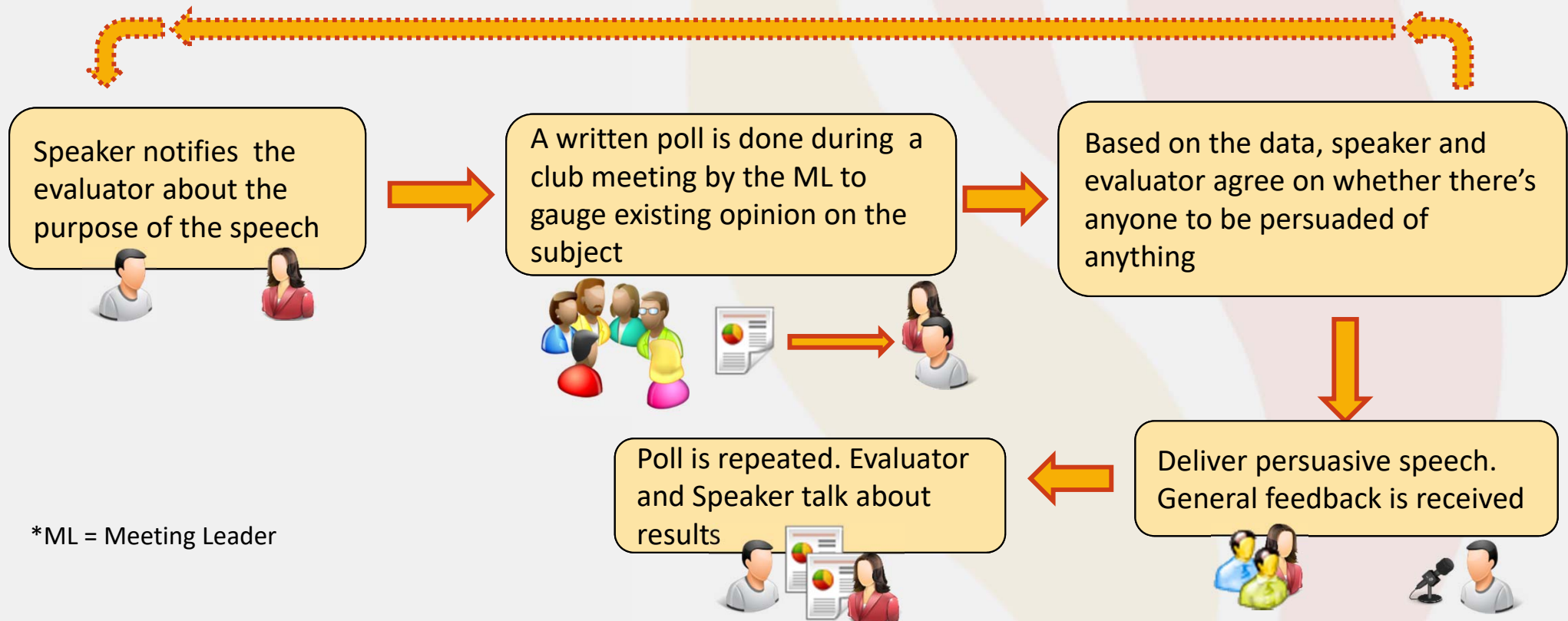- Increases awareness of the need to go to job interviews prepared with knowledge of the company and the job

MEASURED PROJECTS

- Specific measure of success

- No "failure" score -> just raising awareness of the effectiveness of the project

- No point in lying to oneself.

MEASURED PROJECTS - EXAMPLE

"The Persuasive Speech"

Speaker notifies the evaluator about the purpose of the speech

A written poll is done during a club meeting by the ML to gauge existing opinion on the subject

Based on the data, speaker and evaluator agree on whether there's anyone to be persuaded of anything

Poll is repeated. Evaluator and Speaker talk about results

Deliver persuasive speech. General feedback is received

*ML = Meeting Leader

PROJECTS OUTSIDE CLUBS

- Role playing is difficult and many times artificial

- Not really out of the comfort zone

- Role playing the same project in the club, even by different participants, leads to scripted outcomes

- Members need to "fly away from the nest"

PROJECTS OUTSIDE CLUBS - EXAMPLE

"Small Talk"

Speaker notifies the evaluator about the project

Speaker talks to a random stranger at an appropriate location. The evaluator - and optionally a limited number of club members - stand at a distance and observe silently, without intervening or helping.

Results are shared at the club meeting. Feedback is received

SPEECH ANALYSIS PROJECTS

- Require analyzing a notable speech from a specific viewpoint (body language, vocal variety, etc.)

- Expose members to state of the art speeches in the real (non Agora) world

- Provide patterns or role models for inspiration

- Develop in members a critical eye for speeches around them

THREE LEVELS OF MASTERY FOR BRANCHES

- 1st Level – On completion of the branch
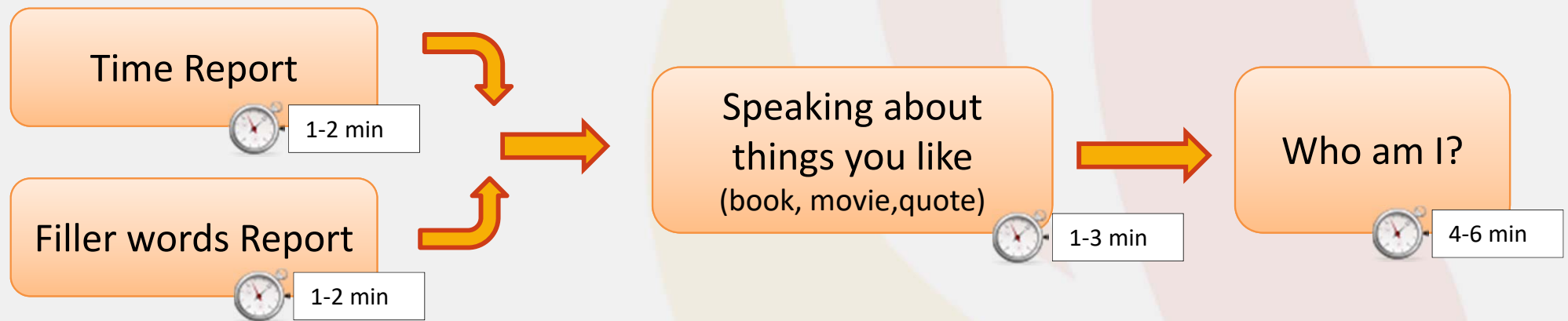
- 2nd Level – On mentoring a member through the branch

- 3rd Level – On creating a new optional project for a branch

OVERVIEW

First Projects - 3

Basic Club Skills – 8+3

Basics of Speaking - 7
(applicable to any speech)

Speaking Techniques - 7
(specific techniques not suitable for every speech)

Badges are awarded at the end of each branch and at intermediate points of the main track

Interpersonal Skills - 7

Speaking in Business Contexts - 11

Speaking for Entrepreneurs - 10

Against All Odds - 7

Dramatization - 7

Storytelling - 10

Persuasive Skills - 9

Critical Thinking and Debating - 8

Educational Speeches - 9

Humorous Speeches - 7

Improving Agora - 11

Leadership - 7

FIRST PROJECTS

Time Report — 1-2 min

Filler words Report — 1-2 min

Speaking about things you like (book, movie, quote) — 1-3 min

Who am I? — 4-6 min

- Sometimes speaking about oneself is difficult
- Even a 4-6 minute speech may be difficult initially
- Icebreaker can be a big bottleneck

MAIN PATH (1) - BASICS OF SPEAKING

- "Speech Structure"

- "Speech Message"

- "Speech Development" – Rhetorical Devices

- "Body Language"

- "Knowing your Audience"

- "Presentation Software"

- "Inconvenient Allies"

(Two step project)

Branches to "Interpersonal Skills"

Branches to "Speaking in Business Contexts"

Requires working with hand-held microphones

Branches to "Against All Odds"

MAIN PATH (2) - SPEAKING TECHNIQUES

- "Vocal Variety"

- "Researching a topic"

- "Using Humour"

- "Using Anecdotes"

- "Using Emotion"

- "Stage Presence"

- "My journey"

Branches to "Educational Speeches"
Branches to "Critical Thinking and Debating"

Branches to "Humorous Speeches"

Branches to "Storytelling"

Branches to "Persuasive Speaking"

Branches to "Dramatization"

Concluding speech designed to encourage guests and other members. Must have completed all main track projects and at least three branches to deliver it.

BRANCH – INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- "Small Talk"

- "Small Talk Revisited"

- "Seeking Rapport"

- "The random friend"

- "The mentor"

- "The difficult story"

- "Effective Assertiveness"

Outside the club – Must actually engage a stranger in small talk (shared with persuasive speaking)

Outside the club – Must actually engage a stranger and create rapport with him/her. (Shared with persuasive speaking)

Within the framework of a club, requires calling a random telephone number, hands-free, and engaging the speaker for an amount of time, creating rapport if possible.

Requires mentoring a club member during the basic speaking stage

Requires openly sharing a difficult and personal experience with members

Outside the club – Requires attending a place, or calling, hands-free, a service and exercising assertiveness about something that is not right.

BRANCH – SPEAKING FOR ENTREPRENEURS

- "The Elevator Pitch"
- "Presenting your idea"
- "Facilitating Meetings"
- "Leading Creativity Sessions"
- "Defending a Proposal"
- "Talking to Investors"
- "Effective Networking"
- "Presenting your idea, revisited"
- "Radio Interviews"
- "TV Interviews"

Measured : How well the audience knows the idea after the speech. Must use presentation software and research existing alternatives

Outside the club – Requires attending a networking event and gathering interested contacts

Outside the club – Requires attending a "First Tuesday" or similar event and presenting your idea in that environment

BRANCH – SPEAKING IN BUSINESS CONTEXTS

- "The Job Interview"

- "Introducing a Speaker"

- "Company Presentation"

- "Facilitating Meetings"

- "Leading Creativity Sessions"

- "Defending a Proposal"

- "Delivering bad news"

- "Radio Interviews"

- "TV Interviews"

- "Leading a Company Event"

- "The Keynote Speech"

Measured : How well the audience knows the company after the speech

Outside the club – Must actually lead an event as a MC, not necessarily Agora.

BRANCH – AGAINST ALL ODDS

- **"Dealing with Failure"** — Requires using a computer, presentation software and a microphone. One of the elements will have a failure at a random point of the presentation, and the speaker must be prepared to continue without that element

- **"Dealing with Disruption"** — Requires dealing with disruptive elements of the audience during a speech – hecklers, booers, phone calls, etc.

- **"Twisted geometry"** — Requires dealing with inappropriate or weird seating distributions. The club will arrange the chairs and tables in an inconvenient fashion for this speech. Splitting the audience in several parts

- **"Time Warp"** — The speaker must prepare a 10 minute speech. Before the start, the common situation of a previous panelist using most of your time will be simulated. The speaker must deliver the speech in a randomly selected amount of time

- **"Duplicates"** — The speaker must prepare a 7 minute speech. Before the start, the common situation of a previous panelist talking about your own topic will be simulated. The speaker must still fill the allotted time.

- **"Blank"** — The speaker must prepare a 10 minute speech with notes. At a random moment, the notes will be taken away.

- **"No questions"** — The speaker must prepare a 7 minute speech with a 5 minute Q&A session. However, there are no questions.

BRANCH – DRAMATIZATION

- "Dramatic Reading"

- "Reading Poetry"

- "Dramatic Monologues"

- "Dramatic Reading Revisited"

- "Basics of Acting"

- "No Words"

- "The Play"

Outside the club – Must actually read at a non-Agora reading or poetry club

Must present a story without speaking, using only acting and props

Outside the club – Must take a small part in an amateur local theatre group.

BRANCH – CRITICAL THINKING AND DEBATING

- "Presenting facts neutrally"

- "A Supporting speech"

- "An opposing speech"

- "Presenting charged issues"

- "Identifying fallacies"

- "Hardball questioning"

- "Hardball questioning revisited "

- "Debating"

Must deliver a speech on which the majority of the club has an opposing viewpoint, on a sensitive topic.

Club role play

Outside the club – Must actually attend an event and ask inconvenient yet appropriate questions

BRANCH – EDUCATIONAL SPEECHES

- "Presenting facts neutrally"

- "Using innovative visual aids"

- "Demonstrations"

- "Educational Speech"

- "Seminars and Workshops"

- "Educational Outreach-I"

- "Educational Outreach-II"

- "Public Seminars"

- "Recorded Educational Speeches"

(Shared with Critical Thinking and Debating)

Measured – degree of understanding of the subject by the audience

Measured – degree of understanding of the subject by the audience

Outside the club – Must actually organize or participate in a Agora seminar on an educational subject related to clubs

Must present two educational speeches - the first one focused on Agora and its mission, and the second one on a subject unrelated to Agora - to an external audience. Could be a school, an existing association, etc.

Outside the club – Must actually organize or participate in a nonAgora seminar on an educational subject

Outside the club – Must record and publish an educational presentation for the general audience

BRANCH – STORYTELLING

- "Basics of Storytelling"

- "Personal Stories"

- "Stories with morals"

- "The hero's journey"

- "Characterization and Emotions"

- "The Basic Story Types" (x3)

Must deliver 3 projects, each with one of the 7 basic plot types (as per Christopher Booker). The audience is not to be informed in advance which plot type the story fits in. The measure of success is how clearly the audience's impression of the plot type matched the intention of the storywriter.

- "Advanced Storytelling"

Outside the club – Must create and deliver a story at a local storytelling or similar club

- "Visual Storytelling"

Outside the club – Must record and publish a short video story. Display and feedback happens in the club.

BRANCH – PERSUASIVE SKILLS

- "Small Talk Revisited"
- "Seeking Rapport"
- "The Elevator Pitch"
- "Tell me more"
- "Principles of persuasion"
- "Biases in Cognition"
- "Defusing rejection"
- "Fairs and Events"
- "Campaigning"
- "The promoter"
- "Fundraising"

Outside the club – Must actually engage a stranger in small talk (shared with persuasive speaking)

Outside the club – Must actually engage a stranger and create rapport with him/her. (Shared with persuasive speaking)

(Shared with Speaking in Business Contexts)

Outside the club, must engage strangers and persuade them to accept giving up their personal information for helping a cause.

Outside the club – must engage strangers and persuade them to have lunch or a drink at a particular venue nearby.

Outside the club – Requires running a successful campaign for raising funds for a nonprofit cause – preferably nonAgora related

BRANCH – HUMOROUS SPEECHES

- "The inconspicuous joke"

- "The entertaining speech"

- "The self deprecating introduction"

- "The tall tale"

- "The parody"

- "The humorous speech"

- "Stand up comedy"

Measured – did the audience laugh when they were expected to?

Measured – laughs and duration

Measured – laughs and duration

Measured – laughs and duration

Outside the club – Requires delivering a humorous speech at an amateur stand up comedy club

BRANCH – LEADERSHIP

- "Principles of Leadership"

- "Leading Teams"

- "Organization and Planning"

- "Delegating and Coordinating"

- "Being a pioneer"

- "Spearheading change"

- "One Starfish at a time,…"

- "… I change the world"

Club Officer role required for at least 6 months

Requires organizing a club event

Requires organizing a multiclub event that includes clubs from different cities

Requires starting a new Agora club

Requires designing, campaigning, getting approval and successfully executing an Agora project using the eVoting platform

Requires designing, planning and successfully executing two specific nonAgora-related project in the real world that will impact positively the lives a small number of people (first project), and then at least a hundred (second project), neither of whom can be Agora members.

Must be pre-approved at District Level (to avoid misguided projects to be associated with Agora)

This project can be executed in cooperation with an existing nonprofit (other than Agora), or on its own.

BRANCH – BASIC CLUB SKILLS

This is a branch that explores all basic club roles. They can be completed in any order, although the presented one is recommended

- "Meeting Facilitator" (optional)
- "Timer"
- "Filler word counter"
- "Grammarian"
- "Hot Questions Master"
- "Hot Questions Evaluator"
- "Speech Evaluator"
- "Meeting Leader"
- "Meeting Evaluator"
- "Meeting Host " (optional)
- "Listening Evaluator" (optional)

The meeting facilitator ensures that the venue is properly set up, agendas are available, everyone has feedback forms, etc.

The meeting host welcomes guests, explains the purpose of the organization and the overall structure of the meeting to them, takes care of them during the meeting, answers their questions, hands them printed information about Agora, and introduces them to members during the social post-meeting gathering, if there is such.

IMPROVING AGORA

A set of projects and activities that can be done in any order, each of them earning a badge for the member.

- "Mentoring" — Mentoring a member through the first part of the basic path
- "Leading Teams" — Club Officer role for at least 6 months
- "Mentoring II" — Mentoring a member through the second part of the basic path
- "Advanced Mentoring" — Mentoring a member through a completed advanced path
- "Pioneer" — Creating a new Agora club
- "Spearheading change" — Designing, campaigning, getting approval and successfully executing an Agora project using the eVoting platform
- "At the controls" — Serving as an officer at a District or higher organizational level
- "Marketing Outreach" — Publishing an article or interview about Agora in a magazine or newspaper
- "Ambassador" — Creating a new Agora club in a city where there are none
- "Educator" — Creating and getting approval of a new educational project
- "Recruiter" — Recruiting a (yet to be specified) number of new members

PLANNED BRANCHES

Branches planned for future development

Media Presence

Conflict Resolution

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the following people for their invaluable contributions to the program (in alphabetical order):

- Andy Cristofori

- Kristian Rother

- Michal Papis

- Péter Csík

- Schorsch M. Tschürtz

- Stephanie Hobert

CHANGES

1.6

- Speech Analysis Projects
- Stage Presence project of the basic path moved to the end
- No longer in Draft Status.

1.4 to 1.5

- Future branches to be implemented
- Removed duplicate "Inconvenient Allies" project from the main path.

CHANGES

1.3 to 1.4

- Moved the "Job Interview" project to the Speaking in Business Contexts Branch
- Forked a "Speaking for Entrepreneurs" branch off the "Speaking in Business Contexts" one.
- One new project in the main path – "Inconvenient Allies", for speaking with a hand-held microphone
- One new branch – "Against all odds", for training in dealing with unexpected but frequent problems in public speaking.

1.2 to 1.3

- Levels of mastery for branches
- "Improving Agora" branch
- Community-driven improvements to the program
- Explicitly mentioning the recognition of prior learning experience

1.1 to 1.2

- Improved project descriptions in the leadership branch.
- Basic Skills branch

1.0 to 1.1

- Improvised Speeches changed to "Hot Questions"
- Icebreaker project changed to "Who am I?"
- New projects introduced in ¨Speaking in Business Contexts" and "Persuasive Skills"
- New leadership branch added
- Project equivalence and recognition added