

Speaking Class: ICWF 2025
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We are always aiming for present, efficient, and effortless speech. As Patsy Rodenburg states, ‘speech muscles clarify the sound of your voice into words. Thus, carving reason into the emotion of your voice.’

Vocal and Physical Presence

- Being in the moment
- Understanding the physical and vocal qualities of the ‘Second Circle’
- Speak with projection, clarity, and confidence
- Prepare spoken text well in advance of the performance

Posture

- Body Awareness: Are you free of stress and tension?
- Be aware of your arms and hands and what they do as you speak. Are you being specific?
- Check the body for misplaced effort – jaw, neck, upper body, and legs
- Walking on stage with direction and purpose
- Feeling grounded and taking up space
- Use eye contact as you communicate – smile with your eyes

Breathing

- Primal connection
- Breathe in, releasing the abdominal girdle muscles
- Breathe out on an unvoiced consonant: s
- Breathe out on a voiced consonant: z, dz, v
- Yawn sigh, Hey
- Resist breathing into the upper body, which may cause vocal constriction

Connection and Muscle Workout

- Massage your face and gently open your jaw
- Smile
- Move your tongue around your mouth – teeth, hard palate
- Sound moves forward with breath: practice focus with a supported hum, lip trills, and tongue trills
- Ma, me, mi, mo, moo
- Vi, va, ve, vo, voo
- Bogabilla, Rallarina, Doranori
- Avoid harsh glottal attacks on initial vowel sounds

Practice Words

- Clear pronunciation
- Speak to the end of a word.
- Speak all syllables in multisyllabic words with appropriate stressed and unstressed syllables.
- Practice the following words: transformation, abundance, gratitude, dangerous, aptitude, coherent, community, explanation, interrogation, physiology, transparent, and neuroscience.

Connect to the full power and meaning of the word

- Practice being expressive
- Know what you want to say and say it
- Observe if you take words for granted
- Do you understand every word?
- Use your visual imagination to 'see' the word in your mind's eye.
- Modulate your voice according to the message you are communicating.
- Speak the truth and deliver accordingly

Pace

'You can speak as fast as you can make the words in your mouth and be present with their meaning as you speak them.' PR

- Are you present with the words or just reading them?
- What is the emotion behind each word?
- Are you telling your story in the present moment with expression?
- You can pace yourself appropriately if you are fully connected in the second circle with the breath and words accurately articulated.
- Maintain a smooth/legato speech pattern
- Rushing is boring; it switches people off
- By slowing down, you give the audience the ability to compute and absorb your words and message
- Pausing is effective and powerful if it has an active intention
- Practice out loud!

Rhythm

- 'Rhythm is the music and beat of communication.'
- Follow your heartbeat – de dum, de dum, de dum – 'hello'

Exercise: Using stressed and unstressed syllables

- 'Today' – De-dum 'Tomorrow' – 'ter- morrow'
- 'Today my mother is coming here for dinner' – notice how the sentence's meaning can change as you change the stress on a particular word.

Structure

- What is your narrative and emotional intent?
- Structure your speaking journey with a roadmap
- Decide where you are going and personalize your journey
- Imagine pitfalls and have a recovery plan

Resist

- Shouting, screaming, loud unsupported laughter, and speaking
- Smoke-filled environments
- Talking in noisy environments, which can cause constriction and vocal fatigue
- Throat clearing – swallow instead
- If you are sick and coughing, use a cough suppressant
- Medications that dry out the vocal folds.

Do

- Stay healthy and hydrated
- Enjoy communicating and expressing yourself through your voice

Exercise: Speak ‘A New Flute’

- What is the journey and the emotional weight of the story?
- Decide rhythm and pace
- Where are your stressed and unstressed syllables and words based on your emotional intent?
- Use your imagination - visualize the story in your mind’s eye.
- Mouth your paragraph - the muscles will become educated to make the sounds.
- Speak the words in the New Flute.
- Vowels hold the emotional content of a word and must be fed with air and support.
- Consonants give clarity and support the intention of the vowel.
- Enjoy your voice as a beautiful source of communication!

Exercise: Choose a piece that you love performing and speak about the piece.

- Include interesting facts
- Don’t give us a musicology lesson full of dry facts
- Personalize your narrative – how do you connect with this piece
- How do you connect with the audience and take them on a journey with you?