

Presenting in the classroom

Some tips for keeping them watching and listening!

Vocal things

- The voice needs breath to work, especially when filling a larger space.
- Internal smiling – find that lifted palate and send sounds arcing over the roof of the mouth to an imaginary row of dots on the far wall.

TIP: Yawn with your mouth shut to find that kind of internal space

- Vary the pace at which you speak. One element of being monotonous vocally is that the voice can 'drone' on and the ear of the listener is no longer stimulated. This means being comfortable speaking at different speeds – but *always* slower than close speech.

Try and lift the words you are saying 'off the page'. If you are using power point, classic mistakes include:

- Reading the power point to people – they will not be listening to you as visual takes precedence over audio
- Turning your head in the direction of the screen which means you have disconnected with your audience
- Fumbling around for the next slide!

Think about emphasis on certain words. Enjoy the rhythm and musicality of speech – PRACTISE what you are going to say and cut it down to essentials. Leave them wanting more!

Watch out for mumbling – be clear with your longer vowels and don't be careless with consonants!

Presenting tips

Engaging your class means looking them in the eye! You don't have to eyeball them, but sweep your eyes around the room. If you have to

think about it, have three directions in which you look – left, straight ahead and then right. Not in quick succession, but a slow, deliberate sweep.

- Do smile at them from time to time even if you don't feel like it!
- Do walk around – don't get stuck in one place.
- Keep your hands 'soft'. If you find yourself with rigid hands, just soften them and continue.

Being prepared and practising what you have to say helps with nerves. You are the one with the information which they need, so you have the advantage.

Personally, I like to use the unexpected. Is it appropriate to have somebody get up and demonstrate something? Can you 'use' your 'audience'? Can they ask questions? If you can include them, that keeps interest. Learning is best when done experientially – through practical work. Variety is what stops people being bored, both in your speech patterns and method of delivery.

Energy levels

Teachers can get very lack lustre, just like students. Classic times are

- Just before lunch
- Just after lunch!
- Around 3pm when the body allegedly has a biorhythm downturn

TIP: Keeping up hydration helps and changing activity every 20 minutes or your method of delivery.

Our ears get accustomed to patterns. If you alter something, the brain wakes up because it is different. Music relies on this – think verse and chorus; one singer/then more; changing beats; drum pattern shifts etc So use your voice like a well-crafted piece of music. How many different ways can you say the same thing? Challenge yourself!