“THE ART OF TEACHING: USING ACTING TECHNIQUES IN THE TEACHING/LEARNING PROCESS”
Northern Illinois University
by
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DAY ONE
PART ONE: Introductions
A) A Place to Begin
1) Introduction by your workshop facilitator
2) The three objectives one can gain from any workshop
   a) Learn something new
   b) Make an adaptation to a learned behavior
   c) Confirm that a behavior is already good, sound and/or strong
3) Introductions by participants
4) Story of where you are from?
5) Examination of the differences
   a) Story is one of our best resources for grasping an audience

PART TWO: The Theory
A) What Are the Parallels of Acting to Teaching?
1) Some similarities in acting and teaching
   a) Similarities – Both: work with script, work on a stage, present to a paying audience, have set starting times, both are critiqued, definitions of each are the same
2) Differences:
   a) An actor must play a character
   b) An actor has one job to do in a production
3) An Actor’s main objective (and secondary objectives) when they do their work on stage
   a) To play character
   b) To have an audience watch and focus on them for as long a time as possible
   c) To have an audience hear and remember their words for as long a time as possible
4) How is it that we are able to remember what actors say for such long periods of time?
5) A Trivia Quiz – Name the Actor, Name the Character, Name the Movie

B) The Key Ingredient to Connecting with an Audience - Energy and Passion.
1) Strategies for passion
2) “The Dr. Fox experiment” (see additional handout)

C) A Unique Element Both Acting and Teaching Share:
The Actor and the Presenter must be “On” at a Certain Time
1) Talent vs. techniques in presentations
2) What to do with your talent while presenting
3) What to do when your talent abandons you while presenting

PART THREE: Making a Shift Toward Virtuosity in Teaching: The Physical Instrument

A) How long does it take to earn the title “Virtuoso?”
1) How long to become a prima donna ballerina?
2) How long to become a master craftsman?
3) How long to become a virtuoso pianist?

B) How Do Virtuosos, Ballerina’s and Craftsman Start Their Day?
What are their instruments?
1) Defining the presenter’s instruments
   a) The Physical
   b) The Voice
   c) The Brain/Emotions
      i) Many times emotions are overlooked as an important
         and integral part of quality and effective communication. For
         years, business considered emotional involvement as a negative to
         communication. Today, it aids in individualism, being remembered and
         making one feel like they are important in the grand scheme of things.

C) Nerves: What Are They and How Do Actors Get Rid of Them?
1) The good, bad and ugly of nerves
   a) What happens to you when you get nervous?
   b) What causes negative things to happen in terms of nerves?
   c) What is the one positive thing about being nervous?

2) Relaxation, warming-up and conditioning the instrument
   a) The ideal preparation for the physical instrument is a physical warm-up.
   b) Methods and ideas for warming up and preparing the physical instrument:
      i) Stretching through all muscles.
      ii) Rolling down the spine
      iii) Jumping jacks
      iv) Isolating and shaking out tensions
      v) Jogging in place and releasing physical tension
   c) Other ideas for physical warm-up, preparation and conditioning:
      i) Walk quickly, without tension from your car to the building
      ii) Take a brisk walk around the building before you go into the sales
         meeting
D) Examining Communication Effectiveness – Those Scary Statistics!!

1) Research shows that the average human will only remember approximately 17% of what is told to them in a class, training session or presentation. Repetition in all teaching is important and crucial.

2) The average attention span of people age 18-35 is?

3) The majority of people age 10-35 are considered to be non-linear learners. People over age 35 are considered linear learners. Classroom lectures can be tailored for each group.

4) Study on how humans perceive and retain effective communication
   a) 50% of effective communication happens through what a presenter does with their body (includes posture, physical placement, movement in space, gestures and PHYSICAL ENERGY)
   b) 40% of effective communication happens through what a presenter does with their voice (includes volume, projection, diction, inflection, vocal placement, dialect, tonality and VOCAL ENERGY!)
   c) 10% of effective communication happens through what a presenter does with the words (includes the words) (Taken from a video titled, THE TEACHING AGENDA)

PART FOUR: The Physical Instrument – Our Strongest & Most Effective Communicator

A) Looking at the Physical Instrument of the Teacher – The Strongest Communicator

1) The physical instrument as the strongest communicator
   a) What part of the physical is the strongest communicator?
      The torso
   b) The face as communicator

2) Defining physical energy
   a) Physical energy as a visible substance that moves and changes

   b) Avoid placing obstacles between you and the intended target of your physical energy
      i) No Podiums – EVER! (The best speakers are not podium dependent.)
ii) Use chairs and tables with caution

3) Working in the positive physical energy zone
   a) Positive and negative energy zones – (created by Francois Delsarte in the 1880s [from the book titled, EVERY LITTLE MOVEMENT by Ted Shawn])
   b) Experiment with positive and negative energy zones
   c) Define the flow of energy of individuals as they stand and as they sit.
      i) Our society is conditioned to function in the negative energy zone.
      ii) What are some of the statements made that make us want to indulge in the negative energy zone?

4) Exercises that allow you to work in the Positive Energy Zone.
   a. The String Exercise
      a) Leading with the torso

5) New Research on emotions and posture.
   a) Amy Cuddy – the second-most viewed Ted Talk of all time – Social Psychologist Harvard School of Business
      i) Slouching vs. alignment

6) The String Exercise
   b. Having you pull the string
   c. Having your audience pull the string
      i. My first technique on audience awareness

7) Losing and using physical obstacles in teaching
   a) Avoid obstacles between you and your intended audience.
   b) Don’t cut yourself off from your intended targets
   c) No Podiums. EVER!!
   d) The benefits of you walking into the audience

8) Tips on using a chair while teaching.
   a) Stay in the positive energy zone
   b) Know the limits of your 1.5 foot by 1.5 foot stage

9) Tips on using PowerPoint
   a) The correct purpose of this software
      i) A presentation enhancement vs. a substitute presenter
      ii) The Internet has great information on using this aid in more powerful ways

B) Making an Entrance and Grabbing Audiences with your First Line
   1) First impression entrances
   2) Volunteer entrances by participants
3) The components of the first moment
   a. Entrance
   b. Taking center stage
   c. Connecting with your audience
   d. Eye Contact
      i. The Winston Churchill Theory
      ii. The tops of heads
      iii. Looking at eye glasses
   e. Seeing your audience as individuals not generic groups of students
      i. What is your subtext as you make eye contact
      ii. Staying in the moment
      iii. Standing up straight and
      iv. Remembering to breathe

C) Gestures
   1) Their purpose
   2) When to use them, when to not use them

D) Eye Contact and Audience Connection
   1) Treating the Audience as your Friend
   2) Treating the Audience as Individuals or just another audience
   2) Eye Contact Techniques (if needed)

E) Circles of Concentration
   1) What happens when you “go up” in the middle of a performance?
   2) Definition of Circles of Concentration
   3) How do Circles of Concentration work when presenting?
   4) How Do Circles of Concentration help keep you aware of the audience?

PART FIVE: The Voice – The Second Strongest Communicator (and, Moving Out of the Box of Comfort)

A) Looking at the Vocal Instrument of the Presenter
   1) Defining the voice as a physical instrument
      a) The voice is a muscular system
      b) What does it take to create voice?
      c) What hurts vocal production?
         i) Defining places of vocal tension
      d) The voice does NOT like to change

B) Warming Up the Vocal Instrument
   1) Start slow and easy
      a) Begin with yawning
      b) Learning to hum again
      c) Gently increasing vocal energy
i) The difference between vocal energy and volume  
d) Opening the vocal channels and vocal cavity

2) The articulators  
a) Defining the articulators  
   i) Lips, tip of the tongue, back of the tongue, teeth, hard palette, soft palate  
b) Puh, Tuh, Kuh -- Kuh, Tuh, Puh  
c) Buh, Duh, Guh -- Guh, Duh, Buh  
d) Muh, Nuh, Nugh -- Nugh, Nuh, Muh  
e) Tongue twisters (see additional handout)  
   i) What is their purpose? How do they help vocal production?

3) Using vowels and consonants together  
a. Introduce yourself to the person sitting next to you.  
   i. Give name  
   ii. Where from  
   iii. Job title  
b. Do it again without any consonants  
c. Do it again without any vowels  
d. Vowels are the river, consonants are the banks the keep the river flowing and from flooding

4) Increasing volume and vocal energy – The “Calls”  
a) Hello  
b) Away  
c) Until  
d) Again

5) Putting it all together – Tongue twisters

PART SIX: Putting the Voice into Action and Working With The Words  
A) Where do Sound and Words Come From?  
1) What do I say if...???
   a) I sit on a on a hot stove?  
   b) I see fireworks?  
   c) If a boy gives a girl flowers?  
   d) If someone vomits next to you?

2) These words/sounds are programmed in ways similar to a dog having a built in bark and/or a cat having a built in meow.

3) All voices have power in the physical universe.
a) Pick up a piece of paper
b) Make sounds to make the paper move
4) The power is the only way that the voice is heard and understood.

B) Improving Speech Dynamics with Vocal Energy
1) Learning to never use Negative Vocal Energy
   a) What is Negative Vocal Energy
   b) Also called *teen-speak*
   c) Using Negative vocal Energy will put an audience to sleep

2) Borrowing from music and learning to crescendo as you speak.
   a) Learning to work with vocal energy
   b) Avoid vocal energy falling off at the end of sentences

3) Playwrights and other good writers put the most important words at the ends of their sentences.

   Ex. But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?
   It is the East and Juliet is the sun.

   To be or not to be. That is the question.

4) Improving speech dynamics – OPERATIVE WORDS
   a) Defining your operative words
   Ex. Go away. I don’t need you anymore.

5) Paying attention to punctuation
   Ex. Go away. I don’t need you anymore.
   Go away, I don’t need you anymore.
   Go away……I don’t need you anymore.
   Go away? I don’t need you anymore?
   Go away! I don’t need you anymore!

6) Punctuation Example #2
   a) A woman without her man is nothing
      i. A woman, without her man is nothing
      ii. A woman; Without her, man is nothing

7) Intonation can change the communication of meaning
   b) Do you want to go to the zoo or the museum?
      i. Raise the intonation/pitch after “zoo.”

   c) Do you want to go to the zoo or the museum?
i. Raise the intonation until the word “zoo” and go down to a lower pitch until finished saying “museum.”

c) Using the Word “Hello”
What is more important; what you say or how you say it?
Say “Hello” to one another
Say “Hello” in the following ways:
• as if it were to your boss
• to your best friend
• to someone you do not like or care for
• to someone you have not seen in years
• to an attractive man/woman at the bar
• to a six month old baby

8) Getting mileage out of your words
i) Learn to taste your words
ii) What’s your favorite word?

9) Improving vocal inflection
a) Getting the ear used to hearing the voice work at different levels
b) Reading with inflection – Every one reads the newspaper article with inflection.

Colorful past - NIU biologists help sequence petunia genomes
Two Northern Illinois University biologists are key members of an international consortium of scientists that has sequenced and analyzed the DNA of two wild varieties of petunia—a four-year effort that could usher in a new era in floriculture, one producing varieties of flowers with new color schemes and fragrances. The simple, colorful beauty of petunias created a multi-million dollar industry driven by the bedding plant’s popularity among backyard gardeners and professional landscapers alike.

10) Repetitive Words and the words we say again and again and again
a) Where do you work?
b) How many times a week do you say” Montana State University?”

11) WORDS, WORDS, WORDS
a) Group exercise in the physical and vocal being more powerful communicators than words alone.
b) One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six Seven – group exercise
12) Rhythms in Speech
   d) Playwrights have often used rhythm as a technique and device for keeping their audiences tuned into their stories.
   e) Shakespeare’s rhythms
   f) Rhythms in contemporary speech/Rhythms in prose

THE GRAPES OF WRATH by John Steinbeck
Pp. 1690-1691
   Look at that Texas boy, long legs loose, taps four times for ever’ damn step. Never seen a boy swing aroun’ like that. Look at him swing that Cherokee girl, red in her cheeks an’ her toe points out. Look at her pant, look at her heave. Think she’s tired? Think she’s winded? Well, she ain’t. Texas boy got his hair in his eyes, mouth’s wide open, can’t get air, but he pats four times for ever’ darn step, an’ he’ll keep a-going’ with the Cherokee girl. The fiddle squeaks and the guitar bongs. Mouth organ man is red in the face. Texas boy and the Cherokee girl, pantin’ like dogs an’ a-beatin’ the goun’. Ol’ folks stan’ a-pattin’ their han’s. Smilin’ a little, tappin’ their feet.
   Back home – in the schoolhouse it was. The big moon sailed off to the westward.

RHYTHMS IN PROSE Part II
   “This sentence has five words. Here are five more words. Five-word sentences are fine. But several together become monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is getting boring. The sound of it drones. It’s like a stuck record. The ear demands some variety.”

   “Now Listen
I vary the sentence length, and I create music. Music. The writing sings.
It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a harmony.
I use short sentences.
And I use sentences of medium length.
And sometimes, when I am certain the reader is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable length, a sentence that burns with energy and builds with all the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of the cymbals – sounds that say listen to this, it is important.” — Gary Provost

C) A Note on Dialects
   A dialect is helpful, useful and helps define who you are.
   It is NOT an excuse for lack of articulation, pronunciation or lazy speech.

   Ex. LAZY SPEECH -- Jeet Yet?
   A. Jeet yet?
   B. No. Jew?
PART SEVEN: Talking On the Telephone (& Teaching Online)
A) What is the number one cause for misunderstood, poor, or weak telephone conversations?
   1) What is strongest communicator when presenting? – The physical

   2) What happens when 50% of the most effective communication instrument we have is taken away?
      a) You only have 50% of your communication instruments left
         i. 40% is the Voice
         ii. 10% is the Words

   3) The most common mistakes made when speaking on the phone
      a. The first words out of your mouth make the first impression
      b. Change your posture to the positive energy zone
      c. Stand and deliver
      d. Dress for the phone call
      e. Avoid negative vocal energy (falling off at the ends of sentences)
      f. Putting on the smile

PART EIGHT: PARTICIPATORY EXERCISE TO END THE DAY
A) Interpretation and Misinterpretation in Communication
   1) The 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 Exercise
   2) Playing with Chairs – Exercises by Augusto Boal

PART NINE: Wrap-up, Questions and Answers and Conclusion
A) If you do not care about what you are talking about please do not think that your audience needs to care either
B) Learn to speak from your heart