

Exercise #4:

Here is another exercise designed to increase emotion through your voice.

1. Have students say the words "What's So Funny" using the following emotions:

Happy, Angry, Afraid, Surprised, Sad, Jealous, Apologetic, Shy

2. Read the following line from Bruce Lansky's poem, "What's So Funny?"

I notice people staring at me everywhere I go.

Now read the same line above, but mean the following things:

- A. You're mad that people are staring at you.
- B. You're sad that people are staring at you.
- C. You're glad that people are staring at you.
- D. You're nervous or anxious that people are staring at you.
- E. You're embarrassed that people are staring at you.
- F. You're surprised that people are staring at you.
- G. You're suspicious of people that are staring at you.
- H. You're tired of people staring at you.

Body Movement and Gesture Activity

This is a nonverbal exercise to increase the awareness of how we show our feelings through different parts of our bodies.

Exercise #1

1. Use the same emotion cards created in the facial expression exercise.
2. Have students practice being the arms of another student by standing behind the students and slipping their arms through the arms of student who is standing facing the audience.
3. The student playing the "hands" of the speaker tries to show the given emotion through her/his gesturing and positioning of her/his arms and hands.

Exercise #2

1. Select some of the basic emotion cards out of the pile. Ones that would be easier to display with one's body.
2. Have students select a card (or do as a group exercise) and portray that emotion through their posture only.

Exercise #3

1. Write down the names of animals on index cards.
 2. Have your students act out that animal nonverbally. Encourage them to think how their animal moves (slowly, quickly), any mannerism it might have (head movements...).
 3. Have the class guess what animal they are.
- (These animal cards can be used for students to use in exercise #4 of the vocal variety exercises. Have your students read the "What's So Funny" line as their animal would sound.)

Facial Expression Exercise/Expressing Emotion Through Facial Expressions

It is important when students recite poetry to have the appropriate facial expressions

accompany the text. It is easier for some students than others to do this. It is also helpful for everyone to practice this skill. This is a fun and interactive exercise. Encourage your students to over exaggerate the emotions through their facial expressions and have a great time.

1. Create a list of easily identifiable emotions that can be shown through facial expressions.
Such as:

Happy Sad Surprised Fearful
Anger Dislike Shy Hopeful
Disappointed Courageous Anxious Bored
Stubborn Tired Disgusted Puzzled
Calm Sorry Mischievous Arrogant

2. Have the group as a whole practice each expression together or ask selected students to volunteer what particular emotion might look like and demonstrate it for the class.

3. Write these words on index cards. Create a group of these for each small group in the class. Also write all of the expressions on the chalkboard.

4. Have each small group sit in a circle. The first person takes a card off the top of the deck without letting others in the group see the word.

5. She/he then shows this emotion to the group through a facial expression. Repeat the expression if the group needs to see it again.

6. The members guess which emotion the person demonstrated by writing it down on a piece of paper that they have numbered.

7. If they guessed correctly, they circle the number.

8. That card is then put in a throw away pile.

9. The next person in the circle repeats the activity.

Tips: If the younger children are having problems, let them use their whole body to express the emotion.

Quieter students may have a more difficult time with this exercise. Be careful who is in their small group.

Variations and additional exercises:

Purpose: To have students see how different parts of the face show emotion.

1. Draw a circle on the chalkboard. Pick an emotion word from the generated list. Fill in the eyes and eyebrows in the circle as they would appear for this emotion. Then fill in the nose and mouth.

2. Go through several or more words and repeat the above.

3. Have students practice moving their eyebrows, mouth, etc., to see how their facial expressions change with each movement.

Stance, Posture, Gestures, Movement & Eye Contact
Nonverbal Delivery Techniques

Stance:

When reciting a poem in front of the class or an audience, the speaker should stand in the front of the room or on the stage facing the audience. The speaker's stance should be balanced with the speaker's feet approximately shoulder width apart. Students should avoid swaying side to side, shifting their weight foot to foot, or crossing and uncrossing their ankles. The speaker's object is to deliver his or her presentation with as few distractions for the audience to observe as possible. An exception to the balanced stance would be if the student wished to emphasize a point, for example, as in the stomping of a foot, or as part of a characterization, to cross her/his ankles so as to show bashfulness.

Posture:

The speaker maintains an erect posture during his or her recitation (straight back, shoulder up and back, head direction straight forward). If a part of the poem calls for an old man or a sad moment, it could be reflected with a drooping of the shoulders and lowering of the head. Thus, if a change of posture is part of a characterization it is appropriate to otherwise maintain a balanced stance and erect posture.

Gestures:

The hands should rest down at the speaker's sides in a relaxed manner. As easy as this sounds, it takes practice in order to not grab at your clothes, ball up your hands, or fold them across your chest. Speakers should gesture appropriately to the material being presented and then return the hands down to the sides between gestures.

Movement:

For the majority of the presentation the speaker should maintain a balanced stance without much movement. If a part of the presentation lends itself to movement, such as bending down or bowing etc., it can be effective. Remember, though, that these moments of movement should be purposeful and planned. If this is not so, the speaker's movement may turn into a pacing back and forth across the stage.

Eye Contact:

The speaker's eyes should maintain contact with the audience members. the exception to this is if the speaker places a character or characters in certain places which are usually to the side and above the audience. The narrator should always maintain eye contact with the audience. this also takes much practice. Most students are not used to keeping eye contact with the audience members without looking down or up. Teach your students that when you look away from you audience members (without dramatic reasons) you are giving them permission to look away from you. The speaker wants the attention of the entire audience for the entire presentation . Also have your students work on maintaining eye contact on a particular audience member for roughly one to two seconds. It is distracting for the audience to have the speaker scan over the audience quickly wither their eye contact. Engage your audience by maintaining longer eye contact with your audience members Tip: Advise your students to avoid looking at

members of the class who might make them laugh.

The Performance:

I tell my students that their performance begins as soon as they are introduced. All eyes are on the speaker as she or he walks up to the front of the room. Walk confidently to the place where you will deliver your presentation and stand in a balanced stance with your hands down at your sides. The speaker stands in front of the audience, establishes eye contact with audience members, waits until they are all silent, and then begins with the title of the poem, the author, and after a brief pause, the poem itself. This is not a time to giggle or appear nervous. Teach your students that they can feel nervous, but act confident and the audience will never know that the speaker was apprehensive.

Delivery Exercise

Purpose: To become aware of the effectiveness of your delivery through feedback.

As your students realize what they are doing nonverbally in their delivery, they can correct distracting mannerisms and become more effective speakers.

1. Review the delivery techniques listed above with the class.
2. Have students speak in front of the class for one minute about any subject that you choose or that the class has brainstormed. For example, what happened over the past weekend, their favorite vacation, their most precious possession, etc.
3. Have the audience members observe the speaker's delivery. If the speaker doesn't maintain a balanced stance have the class stomp one foot. If the speaker doesn't return his or her hands down to his/her sides in a relaxed manner, have the audience snap their fingers once. If the speaker looks away from the students' eyes (up, down, or to the sides), have the class clap once.
4. The student is instructed to simply acknowledge the stomp, snap, or clap and continue on with his or her presentation until his/her minute is completed.

This exercise can also be used to reduce distracting filler words that do not belong in presentations, such as "like," "um," "uh," "anyway," "stuff like that," and "I mean" by the audience hitting their desks with one hand each time they hear one of these words.

The Audience

The oral speaking experience is not complete without an audience. When discussing effective delivery skills with your students, it is important also to instruct them on how to be an effective audience.

Effective audience members give their undivided attention to the speaker. It is disruptive to the speaker to talk with others, fiddle with their hair, clothing, or objects around them, or to make inappropriate facial expressions while the speaker is delivering her/his presentation. It is useful to remind your students how they would feel if people were disrespectful while they were presenting a poem, story, or speech.

Feeling comfortable speaking in front of an audience is only achieved through practice and positive speaking experiences. Even one negative experience can cause a speaker to be extremely anxious about performing in public again. As a teacher, be diligent about reminding the class to be a supportive, empathetic audience and your students will reap the benefits by

enjoying and looking forward to future speaking opportunities.

Readers Theater

A single student can present more than one poem in a given time or more commonly several students can join together and present poems which have a related theme.

A Readers Theater presentation is an oral interpretation of poem or prose. In this way it differs from a play production. Readers Theater is generally more subtle and suggestive. For example full costumes are not necessary. The performer may have a hat and change from the hat to a scarf to signal another character. It is also common for Readers Theater participants to have the poem or text in front of them (as in story telling), though it is not relied on heavily and sometimes only the narrator has the text in front of them. It enhances the "oral interpretation" delivery. Students may want to select poems that are grouped together by a common theme. For example, in Bruce Lansky's book, Poetry Party, poems are grouped in the table of contents according to a common theme.

There are no set rules in a Readers Theater performance. Let your students decide where the characters should be, how little or much movement and what props and costuming they want.

Preparation and Practice

1. Read through your poem silently
2. Think about the narrator and characters.
3. Ask yourself:
 - a. What is this character feeling?
 - b. What meaning is this character trying to get across?
 - c. What do you think this character looks like?
 - d. What do you think this character sounds like?
 - e. How do you think this character moves (slowly, quickly, proudly...)?
4. Think about how you can best portray this character through your:
 - a. Voice
 - b. Body
 - c. Facial expression
5. You may want to underline key words that need emphasizing or write instructions on the poem (if it is your own copy or photocopy), such as "slow down," "louder," "whisper," "stomp foot," etc.
6. The more preparation and practice that you do, the easier it will be to present your poem. Try to practice in front of others so that you get used to looking at different parts of the audience.
7. Record your poem and listen to it. Is there anything you can do to improve your presentation?
8. Videotape your presentation. Watch it and ask yourself what you can do to improve your delivery.