

**CENTER FOR TEACHING & LEARNING**  
**Voice & Diction Workshop**  
**January 21, 2015**

**OUTLINE**

1. Why are YOU here today?
  - What would you like to learn more about or have help with?
  
2. The Value of Energetic Voice & Diction:
  - It stops boring your audience.
  - It leads to more effective communication.
  - It will help students to learn and understand the nuances of your communication.
  - It will help you persuade others.
  - It will give you additional outlets for communication (e.g. radio, TV, webinars, etc.) that can help you promote your program!
  
3. What elements does Voice and Diction include?
  - Pitch
  - Tone
  - Volume
  - Rate
  - Breath Control
  - Articulation
  - Proper Pronunciation
  - Uses of Pauses
  
4. Some examples of **negative voice** images:
  - Too nasal
  - Squeaking – uses upper/high registers continually
  - Voice is monotonous. Little variation of pitch or pace.
  - Too loud.
  - Lateral lisps: Tom Brokaw; Barbara Walters (L's become W's)
  - Constant rising inflection at the ends of sentences. (Observation: millennials and 30-40 somethings)
  - Mispronunciation: Would of; Pacific instead of specific; especially with double consonants
  - Shrill, hard piercing tones like the sound of a concrete cutter! S's and Pop P's with microphones
  - Sing-songy (Priests at church giving sermons); habitual pitch ranges regardless of subject matter
  - Hesitance in speech. Words are held back and come timidly.

- Strong accents or stammering/stuttering may need the help of a professional voice coach or speech therapist.
  - Too breathy or holds breath so it sounds tight or strangled
5. What personality traits do you conjure up about a speaker because of how their voice sounds to you?
- Shy
  - Poor self-esteem
  - Lazy
  - Careless
  - Arrogant (too loud for too long)
  - Over-anxious or nervy (motor-mouth)
  - Boring
  - Lacking intelligence
  - A complainer or whiner (Elmer Fudd)
  - Easily influenced
  - Incapable of leadership
  - Indecisive
  - Immature (Little Girl Syndrome)
  - Etc.
6. Some examples of **positive voice** images:
- Sounds natural, relaxed, and free
  - Varied and flexible pitch, pace, tone, volume, breath control that shifts according to what you are communicating. Punches certain words for emphasis. EXAMPLE:  
Say this sentence: “Put the book down and come over here.” How many ways can it be said and have different meanings?
  - Average rate of speech is 150 words per minute. Sometimes some people can get gusts up 150 miles per hour!
  - Good news for Western MA natives. We speak 70% general American speech! Cf. Boston accents who “pahk theya cah in Hahvad Yahd!”
7. Let’s practice!
- Breathing from diaphragm
  - Read a passage. Critique. Talk with your eyes and smile.
8. Handouts: FAQ’s The Voice Academy [www.uiowa.edu/~shcvoice](http://www.uiowa.edu/~shcvoice)