

FGSR Professional Development Communication Module



Basic Warm – Up Exercises for Your Voice

Our voice is one of our most important teaching tools. We are vocal athletes and like any athlete, we need to warm up before our event. Vocal athletes use a variety of images to help them with their warm up exercises, and these are used below. The following list was provided by Dawn Sadoway for the 2011 FGSR Teaching Development Week session on Using Your Voice in the Classroom.

Tips

- Stand with feet directly underneath your hips...legs are apart (not too far)...just enough so that your body feels centred and supported easily over your feet. Feel as if your spine is in the centre of your body. Lift shoulders an inch and drop. Repeat.
- Roll your shoulders gently forward in a swimming motion. Reverse the direction.
- Pour water out of your ear onto your shoulder and gently hang your head to the side to feel the stretch in your neck. Lift your head gently upright again, then repeat with the other side.
- Allow your head to drop forward, let the force of gravity pull your head forward and feel the stretch along the back. If you like, clasp your hands gently on top of your head and simply allow the additional weight of your hands to increase the intensity of the stretch. Don't pull down with your hands, simply release some of the weight of your arms each time you exhale.
- Drop your arms and bring your head gently upright. Jiggle your shoulders forward, keeping your arms and body relaxed. Let the jiggle move into your torso and pelvis.
- Roll and tilt your pelvis imagining that it is a large bowl filled with water. Tip that water from side to side/front to back...slosh it around.
- Keep breathing down to that bowl in the pelvis.
- With your elbows and wrists together, take three large gusty breaths to feel your back expand. Try this bending over from the waist, keeping your elbows and wrists together. Check that your head is dropped and relaxed. Continue to take big, gusty breaths and feel your insides moving in response to your breath.
- Slowly roll up your spine to an upright position and clasp your hands behind your back, pulling down with your hands to feel a nice stretch across your chest. Feel a sense of opening in the sternum as you continue to take big gusty breaths.
- Begin to exhale on an Mmmmmmm (Humming with support and a relaxed throat).
- Bring your arms to a relaxed position at your sides and explore pitch as you continue to exhale on a humming sound. Feel a gentle buzzing on your lips and in your mouth.
- Pound your chest, front and back and exhaling on an "ah" sound allow low tones to resonate there. Continue to jiggle your shoulders often as you explore sound checking to see that your shoulders, throat and torso are relaxed.
- Buzz/burble your lips like a horse.

- Now add voice and explore burbling your lips on a humming sound. (Lip trill) Burble your lips on as low a pitch as you can. Slowly drop your head on to your chest and roll down your spine as you slide that burble up to as high a pitch as you can. As you descend in pitch, roll your spine back up to an upright position and finish with a big “ahhhhhhh” as you jiggle of your entire torso.
- Sigh out fully on “My-my-my-my.....” from high to low pitch.
- Place one end of a drinking straw in your mouth. Close your lips around the straw and exhale energetically through the straw feeling the muscles in your lower torso respond. Add sound and explore range as you continue to exhale energetically through the straw. (If you don’t have a drinking straw, simply purse your lips tightly).
- Gently massage your jaw. See if you release your jaw into your hands and allow your hands to gently shake your jaw. Feel free to exhale on sound while you do this.
- Let your lower jaw relax and imagine the upper jaw floating up and away from the lower jaw.
- Tap all over your face and head to get the blood flowing.
- Enjoy large and rude chewing that is flexible and light.
- Move your top lip up and down. Make sure you are not moving any other muscles in your face, just your top lip. Move your bottom lip down and up. Now alternate ...top lip up/down...bottom lip down up. See if you can sneer with the right side of your top lip....try the left side. Drop the right side of your bottom lip....drop the left side. For fun...see if you can lift the right side of your top lip and drop the left side at the same time. Reverse!
- Repeat “Woo-Wee” a number of times to strengthen your lip muscles.
- Take the straw (or a pencil) and hold it across your mouth lightly between your teeth and count as clearly and vigorously as possible up to 20. Repeat saying the days of the week.
- Flap your tongue “Bla, Bla, Bla....”
- Inhale on a silent “Kah” sound and exhale on a gentle and relaxed open “Ah” sound.
- Hum on an “Mmmmm”. Explore moving through the sounds Mee ... Meh ... Mai ... Moh ... Moo. Exaggerate and enjoy the vibration of the “Mmm” on your lips.
- Repeat with V, Z, N...any voiced consonants.
- Explode a voiceless “S” from your mouth. Feel the connection to the lower abdominal muscles. (If you can’t, stop and practice a bit of panting with your hands on your lower belly to remind yourself to allow those muscles to engage and work for you.
- Repeat with T, K, P, F, CH
- Add all those explosives consonants together (S, T, K, P, F, CH) and work towards building tempo and clarity to create a bit of a “rap” for yourself. 😊
- Continue to check to see that your body is moveable and loose and your breath continues to be full and energized. Don’t hesitate to move around the room as you vocalize. Jiggle your body to help realize any tension.

