

TEACHERS' VOICE: THE MOST CRUCIAL YET THE LEAST APPROPRIATED ARMOUR OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the often overlooked yet crucial role of a teacher's voice in the classroom environment. It explores how different tones of voice affect student psychology, emphasizing the importance of fostering a supportive and engaging atmosphere. Additionally, it highlights common habits that damage teachers' voices and stresses the necessity of voice training for educators. Drawing on insights from experts and examples from institutions like Harvard University School of Education, the article advocates for comprehensive voice care initiatives to equip teachers with the necessary skills for effective communication and instruction.

Keywords: teacher voice, education, theatrics, feedback, communication.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В этой статье рассматривается часто упускаемая из виду, но решающая роль голоса учителя в классной среде. В нем исследуется, как разные тона голоса влияют на психологию учащихся, подчеркивается важность создания благоприятной и увлекательной атмосферы. Кроме того, в нем подчеркиваются распространенные привычки, которые вредят голосу учителей, и подчеркивается необходимость тренировки голоса для педагогов. Опираясь на мнения экспертов и примеры таких учреждений, как Педагогическая школа Гарвардского университета, в статье предлагаются комплексные инициативы по уходу за голосом, чтобы вооружить учителей необходимыми навыками для эффективного общения и обучения.

Ключевые слова: голос учителя, образование, театральность, обратная связь, общение.

INTRODUCTION

When people are asked to describe a good teacher who can influence and encourage students to learn with passion, their response will probably be a teacher with good communication skills, a teacher who is smart enough to analyze learners'

strengths and weaknesses, a teacher who is well-organized and dedicated, and other endless opinions on what a good teacher needs. However, a paramount armor that is rarely mentioned as necessary for teachers to have is a fine voice.

All information is delivered to students by the speech of teachers. If the definition of speech is the expression of or the ability to express thoughts and feelings by articulate sounds, it is apparent that the teacher's voice is utterly important in teaching as what teachers say is important but how they say it is more important. But, how does a teacher's voice affect students' psychology? How important is it to create a good learning atmosphere? How teachers are damaging their voices? How can teachers be trained to use their voice in the classroom effectively while not damaging it? These questions need to be answered.

METHODS

To investigate these observations, a systematic literature review was conducted that focused on the broad question of identifying 'What empirical research exists that includes both student voice and teacher voice?' Two specific research questions guide this literature review:

1. What participatory role(s) do students and teachers have in the research?
2. What influence or action results from the voices of students and teachers?

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The tone of teachers' voices has either a positive or negative impact on students.

Firstly, it is crucial to know how powerful instrument the teacher's tone of voice is in classrooms. There are some examples of

how various tones of voice affect students:

When a teacher speaks in a strict and controlling tone of voice, students are not likely to feel inspired and free in classrooms. They usually hide from their teachers what kind of problems they are facing. They find it hard to express their ideas because their self-esteem is lowered as a result they cannot show what they are capable of. When students are given assignments they try to complete them as how they are asked to because they do not feel inspired to be creative and express themselves freely. They are not sure that their teacher can give them feedback without judging them and without being harsh to them. The controlling tone of voice can lead to a loss of trust and students' intention to cooperate.

Whereas a teacher who speaks in a supportive-sounding voice can build a healthy connection between the teacher and students. Students always feel motivated and they are not afraid of making mistakes since they know their teacher can support them at any cost. Students learn how to express themselves, how to explain their ideas, and how to be cooperative in the classroom when the teacher's tone of voice is not controlling and demanding. If a friendly environment is created by teachers, students can feel free to tell what they did not understand in their previous class, they can tell who is bullying them and students can speak openly about other issues that they are concerned with.

Using theatrics is also a very good option for teachers. When the teacher speaks in a serious and stable tone of voice students feel bored and they barely pay attention to what the teacher is saying. Their chance of learning well may be lowered. Therefore, the teacher can fluctuate their tone of voice a little and use a humorous tone at times to get students' attention and create a friendly learning environment.

“There’s a theatricality to a classroom,” said Gene Kahane, an English and drama teacher in Alameda.

However, very soft-spoken teachers can seem to treat their students as if they are "babies". It also makes the examples and facts given by teachers untrustworthy so learners may not take their lessons seriously. Thus, avoiding a "sugary-sweet" tone should be a priority for teachers. Instead, they can opt for a more sincere and direct tone of voice to build trust.

When managing students' behaviour, one of the smartest ways is to lower their tone of voice and whisper. It makes students stop other activities they are busy with and pay more attention to what the teacher is saying. In addition, when a teacher shouts at a student who is misbehaving, it will probably lead to unnecessary embarrassment and loss of respect.

Teachers Are damaging their precious armour.

In the classroom, there is a multitude of factors contributing to the damage of teachers' voices without them even realizing it. According to Jack Denning, the coordinator of the Voice Care Network, a nonprofit organization offering assistance and resources to educators, supplying support and information, numerous teachers lack awareness regarding safeguarding their most crucial resource. " The muscles in the voice are affected by stress and emotions," says Jack Denning. " Teaching is a very stressful job, so you can imagine the impact on the voice. Unfortunately, lack of knowledge about voice care means that many teachers abuse their voices without even realizing it," he adds. Bad habits of teachers include:

- **Throat clearing**

Throat clearing is a reflex action where a person forcefully expels air to clear mucus or irritants from the throat. Excessive throat clearing for teachers can lead to vocal strain, irritation, and damage to the vocal cords over time. It may result in hoarseness, reduced vocal range, and communication difficulties.

• Dehydration

Insufficient water intake for teachers can lead to dehydration, causing dryness in the throat and vocal cords. This may result in vocal fatigue, hoarseness, and difficulty projecting the voice. Staying well-hydrated is crucial for maintaining optimal vocal health, especially for those who rely on their voice for teaching.

• Talking quickly

Rapid speech among educators may impart adverse effects on vocal health, inducing strain and fatigue in the vocal cords, consequently leading to hoarseness. In addition, swift speech patterns may compromise optimal breath control, diminishing overall vocal quality.

• Speaking with excessive pitch, whether too high or too deep

Excessive use of vocal fry, a low and creaky voice quality, by teachers can pose risks. It may lead to vocal fatigue, strain, and diminished vocal resonance, impacting the overall clarity and effectiveness of communication in the classroom.

• Teaching during sore throat

When celebrities have some health issues related to their voice such as sore throat or cold and caught, the concert or performance they planned should be cancelled, but why do teachers have to suffer from pressure put on their voice when it is already suffering enough? Teaching with a sore throat can exacerbate vocal strain, potentially leading to long-term issues. Continuous talking in a strained voice may worsen the throat condition, hinder clear communication, and affect the teacher's ability to convey information effectively. Persistent strain may contribute to vocal fatigue, hoarseness, or even voice disorders, impacting the teacher's overall well-being and job performance.

Persistent tickling cough, a hoarse throat, tenderness, or a noticeable alteration in vocal quality are warning signs that should not be overlooked. Denning suggests that teachers can prevent vocal strain by utilizing non-verbal cues to capture students' attention.

Voice training for teachers is a priority

James Williams, teacher training convenor at Harvard University School of Education, says "Teaching is about communication, and the voice is the main tool of communication". And he adds, "Not training teachers about voice skills would be like

training a surgeon to do an operation without explaining the tools and instruments to use ".

At Harvard University School of Education, student teachers are given voice sessions. They are given information about the anatomy of the voice and voice care. In the classroom setting, feedback also includes considerations on pitch, pace, and the effectiveness of intonation. " Teachers are very bad at seeing themselves as professional voice users" says Julia Stanford, a voice specialist in the School of Education. " So, we make it clear to the students from the outset. The message is very simple: if there is no voice, there is no job"

At the Harvard University School of Education, mandatory voice training proves highly advantageous for student teachers. Regrettably, this practice is not widespread in other universities, and many countries do not incorporate sessions on voice and voice care into the training for student teachers. Teachers must receive training akin to that provided to professional singers, as the significance of the teacher's voice in education cannot be overstated. Educators should be equipped with ample information on voice care and effective utilization of their vocal capabilities in the classroom setting. Nations should endeavour to elevate the vocal proficiency of educators through the implementation of robust training initiatives specifically addressing aspects such as pitch, pace, and adept intonation. Allocating resources to comprehensive professional development programs, workshops, and instructional materials can significantly contribute to the enhancement of teachers' communication skills. Moreover, establishing sustained support structures and feedback mechanisms will facilitate the continual refinement of educators' vocal capabilities.

DISCUSSION

An experiment was conducted to explore the impact of teachers' voices in the classroom. Two groups of 15-year-old students in a school in Uzbekistan were chosen for the experiment. In the group where teachers used a supportive tone, students were enthusiastic, attentive, and felt free to communicate openly without fear of judgment. They actively sought clarification and asked questions, displaying a positive response to feedback.

On the other hand, in a group with a controlling tone, students felt insecure, experienced lowered self-esteem, and sensed pressure. They were passive, hesitant to express themselves, and reluctant to ask questions during the lesson. Feedback from the controlling teacher resulted in negative emotions, decreased self-confidence, and an overall diminished mood. The experiment highlighted that a controlling and strict tone not only led to students disliking the teacher but also caused a decline in their interest in the subject. This suggests that communication in a controlling tone may

adversely affect students' passion, productivity, and interest, ultimately impacting their overall classroom performance.

Findings from this review reveal that a controlling and strict tone not only led to students disliking the teacher but also caused a decline in their interest in the subject. This suggests that communication in a controlling tone may adversely affect students' passion, productivity, and interest, ultimately impacting their overall classroom performance.

Voice is more than a process that seeks the views of participants; it also involves what is done with it (Lundy, Citation2007). The discussion that follows articulates key insights, associated recommendations, and possibilities for the field to encourage greater awareness for incorporating voice into both research and educational practice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the experiment showed that a teacher's voice is crucial in creating a conducive learning environment. A teacher's tone and delivery profoundly impact student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. It is essential to recognize the significance of voice care and training among educators. Neglecting it poses a significant risk to their well-being and effectiveness in the classroom. By prioritizing comprehensive voice care initiatives and integrating voice training into teacher education programs, we can empower educators to harness the full potential of their voices, creating enriching and conducive learning environments for students to thrive. As we recognize the voice as a fundamental tool of teaching, let us commit to nurturing and safeguarding this invaluable asset for the betterment of education worldwide.

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