

# Knowledge Transfer

## Voices That Work

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# Module 2

The Universal / Generic Voice

BY VERONICA ALLARDICE

The full list of modules available are:

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"An Introduction to Voice" Basic Voice Exercises – by Kate Pringle

### Module 2

The Universal / Generic Voice – by Veronica Allardice

### Module 3

An Example of Good Practice: "The Reflective Practitioner" – by John Tucker

Derived from "Female to male transgender project" Spring 2006

### Module 4

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# Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively in all areas of our lives can be dependant upon how confident we are as users of our voice. As individuals we possess a broad array of skills and talents but the inability to get our thoughts, our feelings, our desires and our messages across effectively to our “audiences” can hold us back. The ability to retrain our own voices and the voices of others can be challenging, empowering and creatively very exciting.

In the article that follows, an experienced voice and professional development trainer offers advice on techniques and strategies that will allow you to develop your own style of training to be most effective for the groups you are working with. We hope that by studying and putting into practice the approaches described, you will be able to enable your trainees/learners/clients to benefit from coaching that is integrated into personal and professional development programmes.

There are some important messages and caveats to bear in mind as you approach the material and work practically on your own voice and the voices of others. The following is a bullet point list of things to consider when you begin to integrate elements of voice coaching into your practice.

1. **Accessibility** – An understanding of the voice and the physical and psychological factors that effect how well we communicate is accessible to all trainers and can be incorporated into any training delivery. However, professional voice coaches undergo a significant amount of training. It is recommended that the practitioner undergo specific training before seeking work as a “voice coach”.
2. **Health and Safety** – Voice training is a physical process. As such, you must ensure that the health and safety of your group is supported. Those whose voice is damaged by prolonged misuse should be referred to a medical professional or speech therapist in the first instance.

3. **Making it your Own** – The theory and practice of voice training has been evolving for many years. There are no perfect or ideal exercises for any one group or situation. Take the exercises you think would work for you and make them your own.
4. **Being Patient** – The way we speak and communicate is hard wired by our experience. The muscles of speech and some of our thought processes therefore must be retrained. This process will take time and may happen in small increments or larger steps. Make sure you record progress and keep your trainees moving forward through feedback and encouragement.
5. **Reflecting on your Practice** – As a trainer, it is important that you reflect on your methods of delivery, how you connect with your training groups and what works/what doesn't. Again, take the material presented and use it so it suits your own development as a trainer to the benefit of your learners.

## Approaching the Material

- > All modules contain questions to prompt reflection and discussion of issues raised in the text.
- > Symbols in the margin show where listening (ear) speaking (mouth) and physical (body) exercises are featured.
- > If you wish to obtain other modules in this series of articles about voice training, please refer to other titles shown in the inside front cover and contact [kt@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:kt@cssd.ac.uk) for copies.

If you have any questions or comments about the material or ideas presented, please contact Charlie Cunningham or Paul Nicholl at The Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD) on 0207 559 3936 or email [kt@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:kt@cssd.ac.uk).

A faded, high-contrast portrait of a man in a suit and tie, serving as a background for the text.

# Module 2

The Universal / Generic Voice

BY VERONICA ALLARDICE



**This contribution is for those non-expert trainers who have little or no formal background in voice training. The exercises and commentary provided are designed to help trainers who work with adult students.**

## Welcome to a world of many voices

The world is far more connected today than at any other point in our history. Through the proliferation of communication technologies, increased global travel and growing career mobility, people from diverse backgrounds are able to communicate with more people, in more places, more often. As a result most of us, on a daily basis, interact with an array of people from a variety of ethnic, cultural, social, educational and professional backgrounds. We continually hear many varieties of voice, accent and vocal rhythm. In a single day we can hear examples of Indian English, British English, African English, Malaysian English, Caribbean English, Australian English, New Zealand English, Chinese English and American English amongst other varieties. This diversity is giving rise to an emerging vocal aesthetic or vocalic fusion that creates some interesting issues and challenges especially for the voice coach. Some questions that come to mind immediately are: (Put the questions in a box with space for reflection.)

- > With the growth and mix of spoken English internationally, is there a standard we should adopt?
- > Does the voice still matter in a technology driven world?
- > Regardless of the varieties of spoken English, what are the vocal skills that really make a difference to the effectiveness of communication?

Voice coaches grapple with these questions daily. What follows is an attempt to provide some brief comment on these important questions as a guide for those non-expert trainers working with people from different spoken English backgrounds.

## In a culturally diverse setting, what standard of Spoken English do we adopt?

An important consideration for the voice trainer is the standard by which to judge effective speech. As our voices and accents become more mingled in the international English speaking context, some interesting questions are raised about the issue of standard. Arthur Lessac makes some thought provoking and valuable observations. He notes that the search for standards of “proper” speech leads to confusion. Lessac suggests that our primary focus should be an approach based on concern for standards of enunciation, pronunciation, articulation, vocal quality and the energy brought to the task, rather than the development of different idiosyncratic and subjective taxonomies.

Lessac is at pains to point out that his approach is not designed to stand in the way of the evolution of the spoken language. Rather, he wants to encourage new, more energetic ‘levels’ of vocal quality to serve more effective communication and creativity in speech. His idea of a standard of speech is one that crosses nearly all cultural and linguistic borders. He proposes an interaction of voice and speech that is reflected in a pleasing, warm vocal quality allied to vitality and complete intelligibility. Such a standard, he believes, should stand against the lethargy, ignorance and laziness often found today in speech whilst maintaining a dignity, self-respect and concern for quality within the individual’s personal culture.

Training the speaking voice is a complex multi-dimensional task. A standard of spoken English characterised by vitality, clarity, intelligibility, and warmth and a delivery style that allows the individual's personal culture and creativity to shine through, is a standard worth cultivating for English speakers internationally.

## Research shows our voices matter despite the ubiquity of technology

In a rapidly expanding global economy, businesses wanting to be more commercial have sought ways to introduce artificial voice and voice recognition software. This is intended as a substitute for the human voice and in order to diminish the need for human interaction in some business transactions. Despite huge investment in the area of speech-recognition technology, experts have failed to replicate satisfactorily all the dimensions of the human voice. The customer or consumer often does not warm to the artificial voice.

Extensive international research looking at vocal tone and vocal cues demonstrates that the vocal tone, intonation, stress and speech rhythm of a speaker can predict important interaction outcomes. At this stage, the subtle complexities of the human voice cannot be replicated successfully by technology. This research is confirming something that voice teachers have known for decades: the voice affects the listener's perception of liking a person as well as the credibility of what is said. It also plays a key part in comprehension, persuasion, and the perception of a quality interaction. For example, research has now established that:

1. There is an important link between a speaker's vocal tone and a listener's perception of a quality experience.
2. A 'pleasant' voice is associated with having a pleasant or pleasing manner.
3. Voice tone, intonation, stress and the speech rhythm of a speaker can predict important interaction outcomes and are important in creating the perception of credibility, trust, and authority. Research shows a surgeon's tone of voice in communication might be a key factor in providing satisfactory care and in how a patient responds to treatment.
4. Humans assess the characteristics of the voice (sub-consciously and consciously) and this affects their perception of liking the speaker and the perceived credibility of what is said (Glasgow, 1952; Kurz and Pochhacker, 1995).
5. In the field of education, ratings of teachers' voice tones can predict important educational outcomes including student evaluation of teacher effectiveness.
6. Voice plays an important role in emotional connection and judgments, comprehension, retention, persuasion and engagement. Vocal tone of witnesses plays an important role in jurors' assessment of credibility. It is quite common now for key witnesses to be coached in vocal delivery. (Berry, 1991; Burgoon, 1990).
7. Precise communication uttered in a monotone will have an adverse affect on the listener who much prefers a melodious delivery (even with mistakes) to a dull monotone. (Callados 1998; Shiesinger, 1994).



This growing body of research supports the fact that our personal image and credibility are encapsulated in our voices. People make assumptions about us based on our voice and the way we use it. Our voice can open and close doors to opportunity. Despite the pervasiveness of communication technologies, our voices clearly remain of paramount importance to us in our everyday expression and connection with others. We should never underestimate the power of our vocal tone to attract or repel. Research suggests that regardless of the variety of spoken English we use, vocal tone is of critical importance to our success as a communicator.

## Regardless of the varieties of spoken English, what are the vocal skills that really make a difference to the effectiveness of communication?

All varieties of spoken English have distinguishing features some of which can be a distraction in different international settings. Some varieties can appear to other English speakers as nasal, drawling and colourless. Others can be perceived as jerky, clipped, and overly fast paced making them unintelligible. Others can be heard as harsh, blaring or monotonous.

Our benchmark is to develop a style of spoken English characterized by a pleasing vocal quality and a delivery style which has clarity, vitality and intelligibility. We want to be able to exhibit the qualities of attractiveness, trustworthiness, warmth, concern, and attentiveness. These are all key features of that successful communicator most of us want to be.

These features if mastered can make a significant improvement to vocal performance. The following exercises will help you become more aware of the natural voice you have to work with, and how you can develop it to communicate in a more effective way to achieve the impact you want. Try the exercises, practice the techniques suggested, and monitor the results. Remember, this is not meant to be a comprehensive guide to vocal development. For example, vocal performance is dramatically affected by health, posture, mastery of relaxation techniques, personal psychology e.g. self-confidence and self-efficacy, breathing, and other factors outside the technical production of voice.

## Let's get started

[The following instructions are designed to be communicated by the voice trainer to the student. The voice trainer's approach should be relaxed, supportive and constructive at all times. The trainer is encouraged to make these exercises his or her own and to stamp them with his or her individuality].

## What do you want your vocal image to be?

Whatever our vocal background, we are self-limiting our potential if we fail to work with our voices optimally. Your vocal style is a choice you make. It's time to develop an image of yourself as a great communicator. Think about what you most admire in successful communicators. Think of three or four adjectives that you would most like others to use when describing your communication style, for example, 'enthusiastic', 'charismatic', 'credible'. Write these descriptors down.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Now try thinking of the feeling you'd like to convey to others through your communication. Choose some active words to describe the feelings. You may think 'strong' 'dynamic' 'powerful'.

1.
2.
3.
4.

Look at these words and visualize yourself communicating in this way for a few minutes. See yourself as a star communicator in a setting of your choice surrounded by people who love what you do. You could be in a work situation, in an interview, communicating with your colleagues or in a social setting. Make sure the image of yourself in your mind's eye is bright, colourful and large. Take in all the cinematic details of where you are, who is present and their positive reaction. Run a movie in your head of yourself putting in a star performance. Repeat this many times. Visualization works for elite sports people, it will work for you. There is a lot of literature available in this area. Do some research of your own.

You might like to write down some positive affirmations that are meaningful to you e.g. 'I am a confident, dynamic and interesting speaker'; 'I engage others in a professional, powerful and authentic way'; 'I am a confident, clear and compelling speaker'. Note that these affirmations are all expressed in the present tense. Say these aloud (and to yourself) many times during the day to help you create a vibrant, attractive, and clear image of yourself as an effective communicator. Your sub-conscious will go to work.

## Evaluating your own voice

Your next task is to get a realistic assessment of how well you are using your voice. If you become aware that your standard vocal usage is causing you problems you may care to do something about it. It is equally important to clearly identify your strengths so you can develop these further.

When we first hear ourselves on tape or watch a video of ourselves we can be shocked. "Do I really look and sound like THAT?" Listening to your recorded voice is a vital part of the voice improvement process.

For those who may be speaking with a strong regional accent or using a variety of spoken English with a strong accent, this is a very useful exercise. It will help you identify (thanks to what you can hear for yourself and what you can learn from feedback from others) those specific features that may be preventing you from achieving the impact you want. Sometimes the intelligibility and style of our communication would be greatly enhanced if we just slowed down our rate of delivery, used more energy and variety, appeared more confident, phrased more smoothly or used pause more effectively.

### Step 1. Record Your Voice.



- (a) Choose a topic about which you feel passionate. Speak on this topic (ad-lib) for about 1-2 minutes. If possible make a video-recording.
- (b) Read an extract from a favourite book or poem or famous speech. It need only be 1-2 minutes long.

### Step 2. Evaluate What You Hear.

- (c) Now playback the recording of yourself speaking spontaneously and reading from a script. How do you feel about your speaking voice? You can use the following criteria to find your strengths and identify those areas that need improvement such as rate, loudness, pitch, vocal quality, diction, phrasing and other general areas of vocal delivery.

#### My Vocal Strengths

- |  |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm          | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear        | <input type="checkbox"/> Genuine/authentic   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasant tone | <input type="checkbox"/> Animated     | <input type="checkbox"/> Well paced          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Articulate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting  | <input type="checkbox"/> Commanded attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passionate    | <input type="checkbox"/> Convincing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident/poised    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personable    | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitality     | <input type="checkbox"/> Distinctive         |

Add more of your own adjectives to describe what you hear as strengths.

### Areas for Improvement

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hesitant           | <input type="checkbox"/> Mispronunciation                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous            | <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Strident/strained    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too fast           | <input type="checkbox"/> Thin tone                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Too high pitched     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too slow           | <input type="checkbox"/> Monotonous                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Clipped articulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too soft           | <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bombastic/too loud   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accent distracting | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack-lustre                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sound substitution   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor body language | <input type="checkbox"/> Too many fillers e.g. "uhm" "ah" "you know" |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irregular rhythm   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarse/husky                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Tremulous            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tense              | <input type="checkbox"/> Indistinct articulation                     |   |

Add more of your own adjectives to describe what you hear (and see if you are using a video recording) as areas to improve.

## Step 3. Checking Your Self-Assessment Against Others' Evaluation

It is hard to be objective about your own voice and vocal delivery. Get a few supportive people or colleagues whose opinion you respect to also view your video-tape and/or listen to you. Ask them to evaluate your voice and vocal delivery.

## Step 4. Making a Comparison.

Now compare your self-evaluation with those of your friends and colleagues. See where there is agreement and where there are differences in the evaluations. If you need to, seek FURTHER clarification from people. From these exercises you will start to see areas of both strength and weakness in vitality, vocal tone, speaking style, articulation, and pronunciation. The important thing is not to be too embarrassed, frustrated or discouraged. Look for those areas where there is consensus. Use this information to make a plan for vocal improvement (don't forget to identify strengths as well as weaknesses).

<b>Strengths</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Plans for improvement</b>

## Your Reactions

These exercises may feel overwhelming at first but the better you become at developing your own ear and judgment the more able you are to make the fine adjustments so necessary to developing good voice and speech habits. Remember, the individual who is serious about improving his or her voice and speech must

1. Overcome self-consciousness
2. Learn to listen objectively to his or her own voice, and
3. Be open and willing to accept critical feedback and suggestions from others without becoming defensive or resentful. Remember it's all about perception. The perceptions others have of you, matter.

You may be quite pleasantly surprised. You may discover unrecognized strengths! You may discover your communicative ability is being held back by a few features which if corrected would make a dramatic improvement. Some may be relatively easily corrected; others may take more time and effort.

**TRAINER TOP TIP:** *A good voice coach will always find some strengths or distinctive features to help build confidence as well as identifying weaknesses. It is always better to encourage the speaker to self-assess his or own voice and delivery first. This creates better ownership and reinforces the continuous need for self-assessment and self-monitoring. This exercise also works very well in a small group setting. After individuals evaluate themselves, group members are encouraged by the voice coach to help each speaker identify those features that are strengths and those that could be eliminated or improved. Group members are encouraged to give feedback using the 'hamburger model' of feedback (positive point followed by constructive criticism followed by positive point). If followed sincerely and sensitively (and the coach acts as a role model) this feedback technique works well. You will be surprised how valuable the group discussion is to everyone embarking on the vocal improvement journey. It also helps develop shared understanding within the group about the technical language associated with voice development.*

## Developing Vocal Clarity and Intelligibility

It is easy to allow bad habits and lazy articulation to creep into our vocal delivery. This can lead to lack-lustre, muffled or careless speech including jerky or monotonous delivery. Here are some exercises to help develop the muscularity of the organs of articulation to improve vocal clarity and intelligibility.

### The Articulation Test

The following extract contains all the sounds of the English language. Consonants appear in each of the three positions – initial, medial and final. It contains the consonants [l], [r], and [s] which most commonly cause problems for English speakers. Try reading these passages aloud. Have someone listen to you to provide feedback (or make a recording). Use the evaluation sheets as a guide.

## Passage one



\*It is usually rather easy to reach the Virginia Theatre. Board car number fifty-six somewhere along Churchill Street and ride to the highway. Transfer to the Mississippi bus. When you arrive at Judge Avenue, begin walking toward the business zone. You will pass a gift shop displaying little children's playthings that often look so clever you will wish yourself young again: such things as books and toys, and, behind the counter, a playroom with an elegant red rug and smooth, shining mirrors. Beyond this shop are the National Bank and the Globe Garage. Turn south to the next corner; the theatre is on your left.

## Passage two

When the sunlight strikes raindrops in the air, they act like a prism and form a rainbow. The rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colours. These take the shape of a long, round arch, with its path high above, and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon. There is, according to legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People search, but no one ever finds it. When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

(\* Extracts are taken from *Training the Speaking Voice* by Virgil Anderson Third Ed. P. 23-4.)

This exercise will help you identify those sounds or sound combinations that you find difficult. You may need to practice exercises specifically designed to correct certain articulation problems.

## Developing Your Vocal Tone



As we have seen, good vocal tone is vital to successful communication. It is achieved by having effective breath support and a pleasing, balanced resonance which is created by the presence of a full range of sound frequencies, overtones and undertones, around a well produced fundamental pitch.

Good posture or body alignment is fundamental to developing good vocal tone. This means standing with the body weight distributed evenly between both feet that are placed a comfortable distance apart, shoulders dropped and angled slightly forward, and the head looking forward, the chin neither raised nor lowered and the jaw and tongue relaxed. The best image to hold in mind is to lengthen the back of the neck. This allows the neck to fall into the correct position, one that respects the best position for the spine. Importantly the knees should be soft, unlocked, and the weight slightly forward on the balls of the feet. As with all adjustments, this position may feel quite strange and unusual at the outset. This is not surprising because all of us have developed our individual postural habits over the course of our particular life's journey and changing those habits takes a conscious effort and continuous practice. Practice with your eyes closed and experience these adjustments from the inside; start to build up muscle memory which will help you to make the changes you need to make. Practice walking in a balanced way as you maintain the elements of this posture.

The sigh and the yawn are valuable exercises for relaxing and tuning up the facial muscles and musculature of the upper body. Standing comfortably as described, breathe in and out without moving the shoulders, allowing the front and back of the ribcage and the trunk to swing gently like a bellows. Breathing in this way engages the abdominal muscles. It is important to avoid raising the chest when breathing and to feel the abdominals move outwards on the in-breath and contract on the out-breath. This is sometimes called yoga breathing and is the opposite way to how most people breathe. Focus for a while on quiet breathing through the nose and out through the mouth and feel the movement of the abdominals and the ribcage.

A good way to release tension in the upper body is to drop over from the waist, letting your knees bend and allowing your head to drop like a heavy weight towards the floor. You should then shake across your shoulders as you hang down. Slowly come to an upright position by rolling up your spine (imagine you are doing this one vertebra at a time starting from the tail bone) until you are fully upright again and you can lengthen the back of your neck, finding yourself in a good postural position.



Standing with knees soft (not locked) and weight distributed evenly, start to hum gently on mmmmmm, choosing a pitch towards the lower end of your vocal range. Feel the way the facial bones vibrate as you start to use your voice and, without straining, allow your mouth to open and intone an ahhhhh. Hold for a comfortable duration (about 8-10 seconds). Now try mmmmmm aw; mmmm oh; mmmmmm aw. Intoning means holding the note rather like singing. Experience the way your head and body vibrate, creating resonance. Your body resonates exactly like the body of a violin or a guitar. Your task is to develop an awareness of what this resonance feels like so that you can call upon it without effort. Good resonance is achieved by balancing and fully optimizing the head, mouth, pharyngeal (back of the throat), nasal and chest resonators.

Finding a good resonant pitch gives you a great starting point on which to work on vocal tone. Try to intone a scale on Yeeeeee, allowing your voice to run up and down its range without straining and placing the sound forward in the mask of the face with the lips relaxed and slightly forward; the teeth are apart and your tongue rests gently on the ridge behind your lower teeth. Monitor the result, relax and repeat, making adjustments so that your voice begins to move more freely and becomes more resonant.

Now hum a few bars of a favorite tune until you feel a buzzing sensation on the lips and around your nose. This area is called the facial mask. Choose a pitch which is comfortable and where you sense your voice is most focused and powerful.

Continuous practice is the key to vocal development. The exercises outlined above should set you on the path to improved vocal tone.

There are many useful books and talented teachers who can help you build on the basics of good voice production. The journey is one that takes a lifetime and is filled with challenge and discovery.



## Developing Your Vocal Expressiveness

Any great communicator uses his or her voice like a finely tuned instrument to fully exploit the music of the English language. Any voice will be dull without tone colour, variety and emphasis. Our intentions and feelings will be clouded and open to misinterpretation without appropriate vocal expression. To test this, see how many ways you can say the following:



“Good evening”; “He saw you”; “You won’t mind will you?”

Try to say them at least five or six different ways to convey a different meaning each time.

To develop vocal variety requires a sense of rhythm, good timing and the courage, skill and sensitivity to control and shape vocal dynamics. The key elements of vocal variety are pitch (high to low); inflection (rise and fall of the pitch of the voice on a syllable or word); intonation (rise and fall of the pitch of the voice over an extended utterance); resonance and tone (the timbre and colour of the voice); tempo (the rate of speech); rhythm; stress or emphasis; phrasing; duration (the length of time spent on individual sounds) and pause (the length of pauses between words and phrases used for both sense and drama).

One of the best ways to learn a new skill is to learn from the great communicators. Spend some time listening to and observing people who are widely recognized as expert communicators. Here are some ideas:



(a) Observe how Derek Jacobi performs the opening Chorus ‘O for a muse of fire...’ in Kenneth Branagh’s film version of Shakespeare’s *Henry V*. Watch Jacobi’s performance several times. Note how he uses his voice to bring the imagery alive and his powerful control of vocal dynamics (for example how he uses changes in pitch, pace, pause, volume, vocal tone, stress, duration and rhythm). Now you try the speaking part of the Chorus yourself to bring it alive. If you are working in a group, stand in a circle. Each person speaks aloud a line at a time. The intention is to make it sound like one voice is speaking so you really need to concentrate, listen to each other and maintain the dynamic. Try to perform it as expressively as possible and in a way that truthfully captures the mood and meaning of the piece. Note how much energy, precision and flexibility is required to achieve good articulation and create mood and meaning.



(b) Find a recording of Richard Burton reading the First Voice in Dylan Thomas’ radio play, *Under Milk Wood*. Listen to the First Voice at the opening of the play. What can you learn from Richard Burton’s technique as he tries to create and maintain mood and atmosphere? Try to re-create the atmosphere yourself. If working in a group, you can try performing the opening First Voice monologue as a group. Experiment with how you can orchestrate the piece using the various voices you have in your group. The dense texture of the language will make you work hard and give your organs of articulation a good workout. To make the piece intelligible you will have to be sure about phrasing, stress and emphasis. What is hard for you? Where are you getting better? What are you learning about controlling atmosphere?

- (c) If you have a favourite performer, observe how he or she communicates fine shades of meaning and emotional range. Note how he or she builds dramatic tension, contrast and variety to reinforce mood and meaning. Try to adopt some of their techniques. Don't simply mimic. Remember authenticity and individual creativity lie at the heart of effective communication.



- (d) Working as a group (or individually), and using the nonsense poem, *The Jabberwocky*, orchestrate your different voices to

- a) tell a ghost story
- b) make a corporate motivational speech
- c) rev up your losing team at half-time

This is a great opportunity to put all you have learnt about verbal dynamics into practice.

## A little practice goes a long way

Every day, set a specific goal for your vocal improvement. Small steps can lead to big breakthroughs.

Remember, regardless of the variety of English you speak, and wherever you are in the world, a standard of English characterized by vitality, clarity, intelligibility, and warmth and a delivery style that allows your individuality, personal culture and creativity to shine through is a desirable standard. It will be enough to make you stand out as a memorable communicator, anywhere.

## Reflection

Which exercises are you most comfortable with? Why?

Which did you find most challenging? Why?

Which will you use with your clients?

How might you adapt the 'listening to great speakers exercise for client group? Who might they really connect with? Think about role models.

The author discusses the issue of standards for spoken English. Do you agree with Lessac's ideas of the 'proper' way of speaking English? Write down your own definition of what these standards should be.

## Veronica Allardice

Veronica Allardice is a performance, voice and leadership education specialist trained in Australia and London. She is the founding Director of The Theatre of Leadership™ an innovative corporate training business focusing on combining an understanding of voice, acting and theatre techniques with leading edge leadership research and models. The training aims to cultivate effective leaders who are more charismatic, confident and creative not only in the business environment but in their daily lives. Veronica participated in the Central School of Speech & Drama's first Advanced Voice Studies post-graduate program in 1982-3 and graduated with Distinction. She works internationally as a freelance consultant.

**[www.theatreofleadership.com](http://www.theatreofleadership.com)**

