



LESSON 5: 'MOSES SUPPOSES'

AIM:

To explore different ways of using voice concentrating on pronunciation and projection

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: BY THE END OF THIS

LESSON I WILL...

- * KNOW the importance of speaking clearly and loudly
- * UNDERSTAND how to use my lips, tongue and teeth to speak clearly.
- * BE ABLE TO create a short scene where dialogue is clear and audible.

TO BE SUCCESSFUL I WILL ...

- * Have practised the tongue twisters so that my mouth is exercised.
- * Use volume, pitch, pace and speed to make sure my words are heard .

RESOURCES

COPIES OF 'TONGUE TWISTERS' COPIES
OF THE DIALOGUE FOR 'DUELLING
CAVALIER'

GETTING IN THE ZONE

CIRCLE:

TONGUE TWISTERS & DICTION EXERCISES

Students can try out a number of tongues twisters, some from Singin' in the Rain others that are just widely known. These are great at warming up voices and also help actors build muscles in their lips and tongue. Examples:

- Peggy Babcock (try saying 10 times in a row)
- Unique New York (ditto)
- Red lorry, yellow lorry

Then seeing if the students can get these out all in one breath

- Sinful Caesar sipped his snifter, seized his knees and sneezed
- Moses supposes his toeses are roses, but Moses supposes erroneously
- Chester chooses chestnuts, cheddar cheese with chewy chives.

Students can have time to practice and then challenged to perform them 3 or 4 times in a row.

TAKE IT TO THE SPACE

Make sure all the students have memorised 'Moses supposes ... ' (can be shortened if needed). Write it up where they can see it if necessary. Other phrases from the task above could also be used. Students find a space and sit with a partner. Label themselves A and B

DEVELOPING VOICE

Taking it in turns the teacher plays around with this phrase. A: perform this to your partner slowly; B: reply using the same phrase but speak it quickly. Continue in this way exploring pitch, volume, pace, timbre (shrill, mellow etc.) Introducing emotions too (sad, nervous etc.) Introduce the concept of a stage whisper and see if they can do that. Try talking over each other: who can shut the other up?



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THE MAIN EVENT:

Teacher explains that when talking movies came out many actors had to take special diction lessons because they did not know how to act dialogue so that the microphones could pick them up. Some actors found out (like Lina Lamont) that their voices were not suitable for talking pictures and so their careers ended. Not only that there were many problems with where the microphones were positioned, and that they picked up lots of other things.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTFCctdiS04>

In this clip we see the problems they are having trying to record Lina Lamont's voice. How her voice does not match the character, despite the best efforts of her diction coach?

RECREATING THE SCENE

Students work in groups of 4: Lina, Don, Director and dialogue coach. Basic script of *The Duelling Cavalier* given to the actors. They are trying to get the scene recorded so that a) Lina's voice can be heard and b) Lina's voice sounds nice! The student playing Lina can play around with the voice – doesn't have to be nasal, high-pitched American – could be anything! They play on the idea of everything going wrong with the sound. Teacher can cue ideas:

- Lina moves her head/body too much – sound comes in and out (student has to recreate this by changing volume of voice)
- Too much background noise (actors can surreptitiously create background rustles and heartbeats, coughs, sneezes etc.)
- Lina's voice sounds too awful: she has to be interrupted by dialogue coach who pronounces is 'perfectly.'
- Don trips over wire from microphone unplugging it – goes to silence halfway through
- Because Don and Lina not used to remembering lines, they keep forgetting what they are meant to be saying.

Introducing another plot idea:

- The dialogue coach has to speak in some of the lines because Lina's voice is so terrible: practice lip synching. Other ideas may come from the students. The actors become increasingly more fed up. Students work on a minute's sequence where they use the best ideas from this session. Some can be performed and evaluated.



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SUCCESS CRITERIA:

* Did I use my voice so that the audience could hear me? Did I attempt to communicate character using my voice?
Were my words clear? Did I get a chance to play around with pitch, volume and pace? *

PLENARY:

Is it harder to use our bodies or our voices in acting? What really happens when we listen to people talking in real life?
Do we hear everything? How is real-life dialogue and film/stage dialogue different?