

Best Speech Activities

These activities can be worked on over several weeks as necessary and as a small group.

1. Adult to role-play not best speech:
 - i.e. head down
 - slumped in chair
 - looking down/away from listener
 - not opening mouth much
 - talking too fast/slow
 - talking quietly/loudly
 - hand in front of mouth
 - monotone voice

Ask the students to help you list on the board what are not best speech. Prompt/re-role-play any they have omitted.

2. Ask the students to help you list what are best speech skills - see 'best speech sheet 1' for the skills that make up our 'best speech'
3. Discuss together the list of best speech skills (Best Speech Sheet 1). How do these things help our speech sound clearer?
 - Head up - sound can come out easier, it helps us feel more confident, the listener can see our mouth to get clues.
 - Looking at listener - so the sound is travelling towards to the listener, the listener can get clues from our mouth shapes.
 - Not too loud/quiet - Speech sounds less clear when we use a loud or quiet voice
 - Talking too fast/too slow - When we talk too fast the sounds blur into each other, and speech is less clear. Talking too slowly also distorts the sounds.
 - Saying sounds clearly - Opening mouth a little more makes the speech sounds clearer so that each speech sound is different from another.
 - Blocking mouth - Putting your hand in/in front of mouth makes us less clear because it blocks the sound, and the listener can't get clues from our mouth shapes.
 - Talking in an interesting way - using intonation (a wavy voice pattern) helps the listener know the meaning of what we are saying, and makes our speech more interesting to listen to.

Discuss how these skills help especially if we have difficulty making some speech sounds.

4. Students can role-play not best speech – just one non-best speech skill at a time (see list above in task 1.). It helps if you give them a topic to talk about e.g. favourite TV programme/sport/best friend etc. **Then ask them to re-do it using ‘best speech’ skills.**
5. If they can ask students to rate themselves from 1-10 (10 = best) for each best speech skill in their everyday talking (they don't have to show their peers) using the Best Speech Sheet 2. It may help to use the visual rating chart (in this pack). Students often rate themselves higher than you may think is true, so you may need to guide them a little. Mention that most people don't score 10 in everyday talking. Probably a news reader on TV would 10 for everything!
6. Discuss that the way we feel can affect how our speech is, and we may find it easier to use best speech on some days than others - that's okay. The important thing is that we try our best for that day.
7. Give the students a spoken activity to do/game to play and ask them to all focus on one best speech skill at a time (start off choosing one you think they can all do well). Ask them to rate themselves on this skill (Best Speech Sheet 3). Work through practising each best speech skill using a different talking activity each time. Praise students when they use a skill well, and suggest ways that they can make their speech even better e.g. 'see if you can slow down your speech even more'. Encourage students to praise each other when they notice a best speech skill. Give each student a little laminated reminder card to prompt them (Best Speech Sheet 4).
8. Ask the student to choose one best speech skill that they think they could work on. Again, they may need guidance here. You could suggest your own skill you think you could work on so that they know that nobody is perfect (mine would be talking too fast!!). See if they can make this a target for the week. Some students may be happy for staff to secretly remind them of it too. Each time you do a talking task in the group sessions, get students to rate how they felt that they performed out of 10 in their chosen best speech skill. They could choose a different skill to work on each week. You may like to use Best Speech Sheet 5 to record their goals.
9. Ask them to choose which situations they would like to practice their best

speech in and then build up confidence over time - start with talking in the group, then to family, then to a friend, then to a teacher, then in a shop, then on the phone, then in front of class/group of friends etc. They could even practice on their own with a mirror!






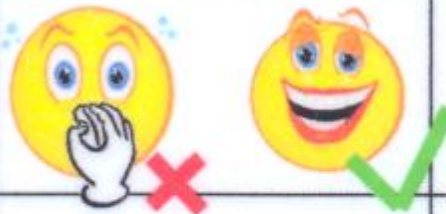

10. See if students/staff would find it useful to have a best speech poster up in classrooms where they have to do lots of talking e.g. English/French etc. Then all the students in the school can benefit!
11. Students may enjoy designing their own 'best speech' poster. Ask students if they would find it helpful to have their own reminder card or key-ring to keep with them in talking lessons, or a card with the speech skill on that they are trying to practice.
12. If you have time, show the students clips from soaps/films etc. and see if they can rate different speakers on their best speech skills.
13. Practise, practise, practise!! Remember to encourage students to gradually increase confidence in using their best speech skills in different situations (see point 8 above). The more that students have chance to think about their best speech skills, the better. It would be particularly useful if the students are happy for other staff to know what they are trying to practice they can praise them when they see them using that skill (not other students of course) - but check with the student first.

Ideas from: 'Improving Children's Communication' - Toombs et al

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Best Speech

Things that can help our speech sound clearer:

	Good Looking
	Head up (Good Sitting)
	Not too fast or slow
	Say sounds clearly
	Not too quiet or loud
	Not blocking mouth
	Use Wavy Talking

Name

Best Speech

In everyday talking this is how I rate my best speech skills:

1=not best speech, 10=best ever speech

Good Looking
Head up & Good sitting
Not too fast or slow
Say sounds clearly
Not too quiet or loud
Not blocking mouth
Wavy Talking

BEST SPEECH SHEET 2

Name

Best Speech

In everyday talking this is how I rate my best speech skills:

1=not best speech, 10=best ever speech








BEST SPEECH SKILL	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7
Good Looking							
Head up & Good sitting							
Not too fast or slow							
Say sounds clearly							
Not too quiet or loud							
Not blocking mouth							
Wavy Talking							

BEST SPEECH SHEET 3

BEST SPEECH 4:








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Goal Sheet:

Date Goal Started:	Goal:

BEST SPEECH SHEET 5