

# Vocal Health for Teachers

Lee University Student Teaching Seminar

Monday, February 25, 2013

LuAnn Holden, Presenter

# Symptoms for Voice Disorders

- List any symptoms of vocal discomfort or illness you experienced which affected your voice while student teaching.
- List possible causes of the illness and discomfort.

# Teaching Profession

- ❖ **Risk for developing hoarseness.**

Job requires heavy voice use five days a week; little time in between for the voice to recover.

- ❖ **10-20% of all children and 7% of all adults have voice disorders at any given time.**

*The incidence for teachers is higher — 15%.*

- ❖ **Teachers are about 4% of the U.S. workforce, yet they are almost 20% of the patient load in voice centers.**

- ❖ **In a study comparing teachers to non-teachers, about 20% of teachers (but only 4% of non-teachers) said they've missed work due a voice problem.**

# Symptoms of Voice Disorders

- Hoarseness
- Difficulty making high pitches
- Voice breaks
- Aching and tiredness (or pain) in the throat
- Difficulty making soft sounds
- Speaking seems to require excessive energy
- Complete loss of voice.

# Vocal Disorders . . .

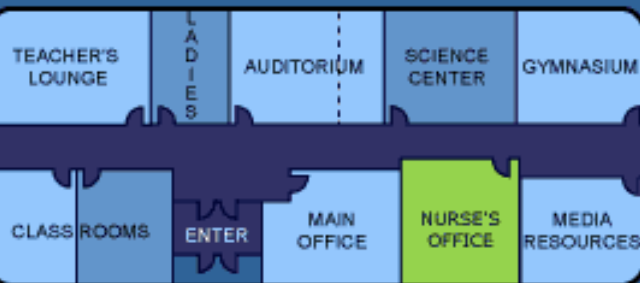
- can be caused by **disease, injury, over-use** (and abuse) or **environmental exposure**.
- caused by abuse and overuse are the most common, but also the **most preventable**, types of voice problems.
- and vocal fatigue occur when the structures that create the voice tire, **work inefficiently or become damaged** from overuse.



Welcome to the  
**Nurse's Office!**

Here, you will learn about voice problems and how to find qualified medical help when your voice needs one-on-one care.

Click on the illustration to expand your knowledge.



## NOTES:

Does your Rx affect your voice?   A voice team locator  
Finding the right ENT   Am I covered (by my health insurance)?  
What do unwell larynxes look like?   Your larynx in the spotlight



**Examination of  
Vocal Cords**



**Normal  
vocal cords**



**Contact  
ulcers**



**Polyp**



**Nodules**



**One-sided  
paralysis**



**Cancer**

**Examination Findings**

# Bacterial Infections, Viruses and Environmental Exposure

- **Preventive Practices—**
- Build a healthy body.
  - Eat a well-balanced, varied, low-fat diet
  - Drink sufficient liquids for adequate hydration
  - Physical activity
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water
  - Get adequate sleep
  - Determine allergies and manage them.

# Medications and the Voice

- **Antihistamines** dry out the mouth and throat.
- **Nasal sprays**, if used for too long, can cause "rebound" congestion.
- **Peppermint** tends to relax the muscle. This may be especially problematic for those prone to gastric acid refluxing into the throat.
- **Aspirin** products thin the blood. Rigorous voice use while using the products may make you more likely to sustain a vocal fold hemorrhage. Tylenol (acetaminophen) does not have this effect.

# Voice Therapy

## *Professional Voice Care Team*

- **Otolaryngologist**: physician with specialized training in ear-nose-throat problems
- **Speech-language pathologist**: therapist, master's degree, certified by the American Speech Language Hearing Association
- **Otolaryngologic nurse**: registered nurse skilled in the care of laryngeal disease
- **Voice educator**: trainer who specializes in skilled, healthy use of the voice during speaking and singing.

# Energize—the Body, the Breath, and the Voice

## Effective Warm-up Exercises

### **Energize the Body:**

*Stretching releases unnecessary tension. Gets the blood flowing.  
Good body alignment is essential to good voice use.  
Posture checkpoints.*

### **Energize the Breath: (Motion, Management, Pressure)**

*Effective breathing provides power, energy, resonance and flexibility.  
Inhale through the nose to warm and moisten air.  
Intercostal muscles expand as air fills the lungs.*

### **Energize the Voice:**

*Yawn-sign to hum in middle register of the voice or slightly higher.  
Use good breath support; feel the throat open.  
Hum at different pitch levels*

# Energize—the Body, the Breath, and the Voice

## Effective Warm-up Exercises

### **Energize the Articulators**

*The lips, the teeth, the tip of the tongue!  
Lift soft palate; release the jaw*

### **Develop your natural resonance**

*Resonance refers to the amplification, richness and quality.  
Resonating areas: nose, throat, and mouth  
Engage the body, the breath, and the articulators.  
Use your vowels.*

### **Discover your natural speaking pitch range.**

*Spontaneously say "mm-hmm" (agreeing with someone) is usually the middle of a person's natural pitch range.  
(natural yawn or laughter)*

### **Pitch (Vocal Inflection) is powerful tool**

*She took that boy to the party?*

# Speaking with a Resonant Voice

## Barter

Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

Life has loveliness to sell, All beautiful and splendid things,  
Blue waves whitened on a cliff, Soaring fire that sways and sings,  
And children's faces looking up, Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell, Music like the curve of gold,  
Scent of pine trees in the rain, Eyes that love you, arms that hold,  
And for your spirit's still delight, Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness, Buy it and never count the cost;  
For one white singing hour of peace, Count many a year of strife well  
lost,  
And for a breath of ecstasy, Give all you have been, or could be.

# Healthy Vocal Habits for Teachers

- **Reduce environmental noise**

*Lombard Effect: involuntary tendency of speakers to increase their vocal effort when speaking in loud noise to enhance the audibility of their voice.*

- **Avoid talking over noise**

*Develop non-verbal signals for student behavior*

- **Vocal Pacing**

# Healthy Vocal Habits for Teachers

- **Avoid the constant use of the voice**

*Work in “vocal naps”- 15 minutes of resting the voice.*

- **Avoid yelling or shouting**

*Project the voice with breath support and resonance*

- **Avoid chronic coughing or clearing your throat**

*Sip water*

- **Avoid whispering (glottal attack)**

*Use a quiet voice*



Welcome to the **Acoustically unfriendly classroom!**

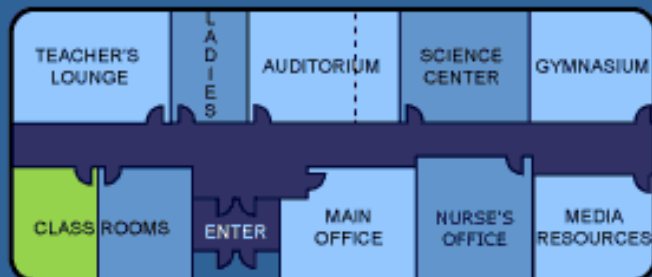
What features in this classroom add to the teacher's vocal burden?

Click on the illustration to find out.



**NOTES.**

What kids need to learn   How loud is loud?  
Are reflections ever desirable?



# Voice Academy

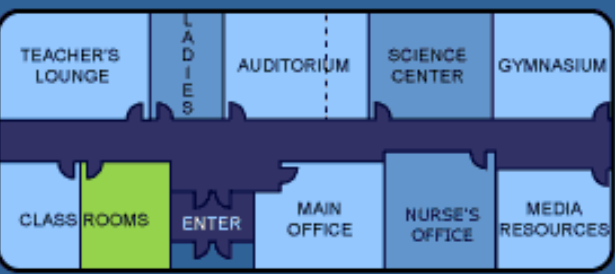
[glossary](#) | [homepage](#)



Welcome to the **Acoustically friendly classroom!**

What features in this classroom ease the teacher's vocal burden?

Click on the illustration to see for yourself.



**NOTES:**  
What do classroom acoustical improvements cost?  
How to approach your administration (a sample letter you may use)

# Voice Academy

*A no-cost, self-directed, virtual school built for the vocal health of U.S. teachers*



**START EXPLORING | A QUIZ: HOW'S YOUR VOCAL HEALTH? | IN-SERVICE TOOLS**

**FAQ's | DEMONSTRATION | TEXT ONLY | COMMUNICATORS' MEDIA KIT | SITEMAP | PROJECT TEAM**

# Sources

- <http://www.uiowa.edu/~shcvoice>
- [http://www.merckmanuals.com/media/home/figures/ENT\\_vocal\\_cord\\_problems](http://www.merckmanuals.com/media/home/figures/ENT_vocal_cord_problems)
- [http://www.dukehealth.org/services/voice\\_care\\_center/care\\_guides/voice\\_hygiene/tips\\_for\\_teachers](http://www.dukehealth.org/services/voice_care_center/care_guides/voice_hygiene/tips_for_teachers)