



## **INSTRUCTOR TIP**

### **Improving Your Voice Tone**

Your voice is one of your most valuable tools as an instructor. It carries most of the content that the participants take with them. When you speak in a monotone voice participants see you as boring and dull. Participants report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to instructors who do not moderate their voices and who do not speak in a confident and persuasive voice.

**Use body language** – Physical activity puts energy and vitality into your voice. It can be as simple as hand gestures or a smile. If possible, stand and move around. If not, use body language. Body language helps your voice sound more interesting and encourages participants to be more receptive to your presentation.

**Speak with energy** – Energy is not to be confused with volume. Energy is the vitality the voice needs to convey your interest in and enthusiasm for what you're saying.

**Relax and smile** – The more relaxed you are the more confident you feel. Smiling at the participants helps you relax. A pleasant voice will hold the participant's interest while helping you avoid speaking in a monotone. Just thinking of a smile automatically reflects in your voice and makes it more appealing for others to listen to you.

**Speak from the heart** – Use emotion and feelings in your voice and the words you choose. This helps you connect with your participants.

**Evaluate and seek feedback** – Always evaluate your performance and seek to improve each time. Find time to practice with others with whom you are comfortable.

**Be yourself** – Develop your own style and be yourself. Relax and enjoy the experience.



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### **Talking Too Fast**

Instructors who constantly talk at a fast pace are likely to frustrate the participants. Also, participants tend to tune out if instructors make listening uncomfortable. It's your job to make it easy and comfortable for the participants to listen. The following strategies are suggested to help you slow down and deliver a very effective presentation:

- **Breathe.** Taking slow, deep breaths relaxes you. It helps you deal with that extra adrenaline inside of you. Breathing will help you slow down and also give you more energy for your voice. It's a fact that when adrenaline is flowing, your sense of time is distorted, and what seems natural to you may look like fast forward to your participants.
- **Give participants time to take in information.** Give participants a moment to feel and interpret what you've just said. Some instructors believe that they need to talk fast in order to cover all topics, not really giving the participant's time to take it all in. Feel free to pace yourself and walk from one side to another, in silence, at the end of a section or after making a point.
- **Pause to punctuate speech.** If you habitually talk fast, you need to pause to punctuate your speech. The most natural punctuation for speech is the pause you take when you reach for a breath. Speech, without pausing for punctuation is unclear and hard to listen to. Listeners are uncomfortable and are not allowed a chance to ponder and absorb the information.
- **Use props to help slow you down.** Use a flipchart or a PowerPoint slide to help you focus on main issues and to let you know when it is time to pause before going on to another topic.

Using these strategies enable you to hold the attention of your participants and deliver your points more powerfully and persuasively.