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Louise Zaslowski has been working in the NSW Education Department for over 18 years as a School Learning Support Officer.

Although her first experience with storytelling came with her own children and then as a volunteer worker in primary schools in reading programmes. She eventually went into high schools supporting children with learning difficulties.

Louise has also practised Tai Chi and Qi Gong for 10 years and has also travelled China extensively with a Qi Gong and Tai Chi Master, visiting Wudang Mountain, the birth place of Tai Chi over 5 times.

12 Tips to Improve Your Storytelling Voice

[HTTPS://ACADEMY.BOOKCOUNCIL.SG/RESOURCES/ARTICLE/12-TIPS-TO-IMPROVE-YOUR-STORYTELLING-VOICE](https://academy.bookcouncil.sg/resources/article/12-tips-to-improve-your-storytelling-voice)



1. Be yourself

You need to like the story that you tell. If not, it will show in your expression or in your voice. Pick a story yourself as you need to be familiar with it and comfortable enough to tell it to others

2. Know the story well

It is important to know the story well so that you can deliver it with suitable method of delivery. It is important to not sound like you are reading the book paragraph by paragraph.

3. Relax your vocal muscles before the session

Practise breathing to clear your lungs, airways and also to calm yourself. Take a long breath. Know your air going into and out of your nostrils. Keep yourself in the right position while you are doing breathing exercise.

4. Point of View (POV)

You will have to decide whether you want to tell your story as first, second or third person and depending on it, the style, grammar and tone will differ. Choose the point of view you are comfortable with and the one best suited for the story to be told.

5. Characterization

Use the relevant experiences you have when you are imitating voices. You have heard the voices of people around you, be it the voices of your grandparents or babies and you can also apply the animal sounds that you are familiar with if you are telling anthropomorphic stories or stories with animal characters. You can do research if you are not sure but try to familiarise yourself with the character sounds before the session so that you will feel confident.

6. Clear pronunciation

It is best if you can tell the story with the right annotations and clear enunciation. From introduction to ending, speak loudly and clearly as well.

7. Take good care of your voice especially when you are planning a storytelling session

Do not strain your voice. Avoid food such as milk and dairy products, spicy food, caffeinated food, pepper, alcohol and small food that can be easily stuck between the teeth. Have a lot of water. If your throat has irritation, gargle with warm water and salt, have some honey, herbal tea or have lozenges.

8. Gesture

Non-verbal skills are also important to bring out the unspoken words. Certain gestures will add weight to your spoken word and will make it more powerful.

9. Be expressive

You want your audience to be happy and relaxed and in order to do so, you need to be relaxed and expressive. You can be overly expressive (most children will love it!) but at least you must try to be expressive enough so that you can send your message across to your audience.

10. Do not be shy

It is completely okay to look or sound funny because after all, you want your audience to enjoy and have fun

11. Practice, Practice & Practice

Read aloud and practise the story you will be telling. The more times you can practice, the better

12. Recording

Once you have practiced and feel ready, record yourself telling the story, replay it and practice more on parts that need improvement. Doing this would enable you to listen to yourself and be your own audience. You may use the rubric below to mark your skills.

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References

12 Tips to Improve your Storytelling Voice. Available at <https://academy.bookcouncil.sg/resources/article/12-tips-to-improve-your-storytelling-voice>

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Improving your Storytelling (1999) Doug Lipman.