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**Effective Speaking for Professional Experience**

The purpose of this resource is to:

* highlight the importance of speaking clearly so as to avoid any misunderstandings; and
* provide some strategies that could be used to develop better speaking skills.

**Speaking effectively**

* Communication skills form a significant component of professional experience activities.
* As a pre-service educator it is important to pay attention to how you speak so that misunderstandings do not occur.
* A listener who is not familiar with your language may find it difficult to follow the conversation.
* The medium of communication (face-to-face interaction, phone conversation, presentation, etc.) can impact on the message and how it is comprehended.

**Strategies for Speaking Effectively**

* Speak clearly and more slowly than you usually do.
  + This allows the listener to process the message.
* Use an even tone of voice.
  + The person who is listening to you may not be a native speaker and that is not a reflection on intelligence so do not raise your voice or ‘talk down’ to them.
* Pronounce your words clearly and enunciate carefully.
  + Avoid expressions such as ‘Wanna go’ or ‘Gotta run’.
* Use the simplest and most common words in most cases.
  + A listener from outside your culture may have acquired the language through formal instruction in school and textbooks.
    - Vocabulary acquired from textbooks will be very different from everyday conversational or educational setting language.
    - If the listener does not understand you, then rephrase your message rather than repeat.
* Avoid slang and colloquial expressions as not everyone outside your culture may know them.
* Use stories and analogies that are universally understood when expanding on an idea.
  + Everyone can relate to stories of success, challenge, teamwork, etc.
* Use inclusive language and avoid terms and labels that may be offensive.
  + Labels such as ‘you guys’ may be offensive to some children/young people in a mix-gendered class.
* Be aware of language usage in other cultures.
  + For instance ‘Would you like to teach this class?’ could be interpreted as a command in one culture and an option in another.
* Pay special attention to language during phone calls or when leaving voice mail messages.
  + During phone conversations to your mentor teacher, colleagues or the educational setting community, ask questions to ensure that the listener has understood your message.
  + When leaving voice mail messages, match your tone of voice to the meaning and intent, speak slowly and clearly so that the words are not garbled when the other person plays back the message.

(Prince & Hoppe 2000, p. 14)  
**Why is Pronunciation Important?**

* Miscommunication can occur when someone:
* speaks too fast;
* says words incorrectly;
* has a strong accent; or
* hesitates too much when they speak.
* It is important to note that in the English language the spelling of the word may not always match its sound: For example the word ‘penchant’ is pronounced as ‘päsha’.
  + It is thus important to know how a word is pronounced. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) may be useful for learning the correct pronunciation of words. This can be accessed through : <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/grammar/pron/sounds/>
* An online dictionary can also come in handy when unsure of pronunciation:
  + <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/colleague>
* Aspects of communication such as where you place the stress in words and sentences and intonation can also impact on the message.

**References**Prince, D & Hoppe, MH 2000, *Communicating across cultures*, Center for Creative Leadership, USA. Thornbury, S 2005, *How to teach speaking*, Longman, England.