Spring 2013

The Actor Within: An Exploration of Present Moment Awareness in Business Presentations

Billie Shepard
San Jose State University

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.r3z3-ggsb>
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THE ACTOR WITHIN:
AN EXPLORATION OF PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS IN BUSINESS
PRESENTATIONS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre, Radio-Television-Film, Animation &

Illustration

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Billie Shepard

May 2013

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The Designated Thesis Committee Approves the Thesis Titled

THE ACTOR WITHIN:
AN EXPLORATION OF PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS IN BUSINESS
PRESENTATIONS

by

Billie Shepard

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE, RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM,
ANIMATION & ILLUSTRATION

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2013

Dr. Alison McKee Department of Theatre, Radio-TV-Film, Animation & Illustration

Dr. Kathie Kratochvil Department of Theatre, Radio-TV-Film, Animation & Illustration

Dr. David Price Terry Department of Communication Studies

ABSTRACT

THE ACTOR WITHIN: AN EXPLORATION OF PRESENT MOMENT AWARENESS IN BUSINESS PRESENTATIONS

by Billie Shepard

This thesis explores incorporating the use of acting skills in business presentations using present moment awareness techniques. Present moment awareness is defined in this study as the use of improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness and is drawn primarily from the theoretical work of Patsy Rodenburg.

The research project followed nine adult student-participants through a five-week course of study in business presentation methods, which incorporated the present moment awareness acting techniques. Data were collected throughout the five weeks and included a pre and post survey, participant journaling prompts, a researcher journal, peer reviews, and participant interviews. The study concluded that the practice of present moment awareness has great potential in offering business speakers very specific tools to calm their nerves, improve their focus, connect fully with their audience, and deliver their message successfully.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge my advisor, Dr. Kathie Kratochvil. Without her continuous support, enthusiasm and herculean efforts, this thesis would not have been possible. I am forever indebted to her.

I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Dr. David Price Terry, for believing in this project from the beginning, and his insightful comments. I thank Dr. Alison McKee, for her unending support during my entire graduate experience, and her direct feedback. She could be counted on, always. Thanks also to Dr. David Kahn, who became a mentor by example, and was ever supportive.

I thank my graduate school colleagues, especially Kimberly Peterson and Elissa Mondschein, for sharing their individual talents, expertise, and support so generously. I wish to thank Dr. William Starbuck for his insights, solid support, and devotion.

Last but not least, I thank my family and friends, most especially my extraordinary daughters Brenden and Kendall, my loving sisters Patty and Carol, my father who taught me to be brave, and my friend Heidi. These people gave me a consistent, solid place to land while completing this project.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. Statement of the Problem

In California's Silicon Valley, there is a high concentration of engineers and technology professionals who are often called upon to share their knowledge verbally. While the business environment in Silicon Valley affords great opportunities for these professionals to create and use innovative technical presentation tools, by nature, the engineers and technicians who are required to speak are often introverted, poor at verbalizing, and have difficulty communicating (Capretz 214). Consequently, these speakers may struggle with speaking publicly in an effective, calm, and clear way.

The "illusion" of communication between two people, or within groups, can become problematic on many levels. George Bernard Shaw once said that, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place" (Bowden 1). Missed, misunderstood, or misinterpreted information in a business environment has the potential to cause repercussions affecting personal relationships, management effectiveness, and even company success or failure. Ineffective presentations can also reach beyond the business environment, affecting local communities and even politics. In his book *On Politics and the Art of Acting*, Arthur Miller compares the poor acting skills of George Bush and Al Gore with the masterful skills of Bill Clinton, John F. Kennedy, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Miller's examination of the acting techniques used by these presidents offers prime examples of presenters in positions of leadership and power whose job it is to deliver information effectively. Arthur Miller reminds us

that although Ronald Reagan may have been the first professional actor to transition to the role of president of the United States, “President Reagan was by no means the only actor to occupy the White House in modern times” (Miller 1001).

Outside of the realm of politics, the use of acting techniques to improve public speaking skills has been shown to be promising (Gottesman, *Taking* 2). However, except for a few notable authors who examine this relationship, the research in the field is limited, and the acting references are often discussed in general terms. Predominant authors who have approached this relationship include Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro. Gottesman and Mauro opened their acting school in Washington D.C. in 1992. They found that most of their students were lawyers, politicians, and business people. These students enrolled in the acting class in order to improve their presentation skills (Gottesman, *Taking* 1).

Patricia Fripp is a prominent author of presentation skills books and CDs including *Presentation Superstar* and *12 Biggest Mistakes Salespeople Make in Their Presentations*. On her *Public Speaking Superstar* CD, Fripp encourages the application of “story-telling” techniques used by actors in the business presentation process. In “Acting Techniques for Public Speaking,” an interview conducted by speaker-trainer Ed Bradow, Fripp suggests that speakers include acting techniques such as improvising, being theatrical, and having a strong drive (Bradow 3). Fripp does not define in any specific way what she means by “being theatrical.” She does mention improvising, but she does not give specific methods of achieving it.

In his book *PowerSpeaking*, speaker-trainer Frederick Gilbert instructs his presenters to watch actors and performers because these professionals communicate for a living and know how to hold an audience's attention. He cites actress and former stockbroker, Therese McNally, who comments, "Every time a business person makes a presentation or gives a speech, he or she is indeed performing" (Gilbert, *PowerSpeaking* 72). Gilbert also encourages his speaking skills students to take acting lessons.

II. *Purpose and Significance*

Although current research suggests that there are benefits of using acting techniques to improve business presentation techniques, this research is limited in that it does not thoroughly examine the application of specific acting techniques, such as improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness, in the context of business speaker training. Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to further examine the relationship between specific acting techniques and business presentations in a significantly more specific manner.

Multiple authors such as Viola Spolin, Alan Arkin, and Patsy Rodenburg address the idea that one of the key ingredients needed in both a successful business presentation and the work of the actor on stage is the ability to make authentic reciprocal connections with the audience. In his book *Presentation Zen*, Garr Reynolds suggests, "The biggest item that separates mediocre presenters from world class ones is the ability to connect with an audience in an honest and exciting way" (Reynolds 185). Many acting teachers and coaches over time have attempted to define and develop specific techniques in order for actors to achieve this authentic connection.

Patsy Rodenburg, who is both an acting teacher and a prominent voice in the business presentation world, has developed a concept that describes present moment awareness in an attempt to codify the relationship between actor and audience.

Rodenburg argues that to achieve present moment awareness the actor or presenter must maintain a relaxed but aware state of consciousness, along with an energetic state within which the performer's energy is focused. More specifically, the actor or presenter is actively experiencing present moment awareness "as the energy moves out toward the object of your attention, touches it, and then receives energy back from it" (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* 19). Or to describe it another way, an actor in present moment awareness would have the ability to incorporate specific techniques such as the ability to improvise in the moment, speak clearly and loudly, focus on his or her intention, and use his or her body to communicate effectively.

There are indications that the practice of present moment awareness (as defined by Rodenburg) is a useful way to convey information clearly and effectively, whether in the context of acting or in the context of business presentations. This thesis therefore attempts to apply more specificity to general discussions regarding the application of acting techniques to the concept of Rodenburg's present moment awareness, using the related acting theories of Viola Spolin and Alan Arkin, in order to answer the following research question: To what extent does the practice of present moment awareness, using improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness, affect presentation skills for business speakers?

The findings of this study could potentially assist companies in professional development endeavors and offer Human Resources (HR) professionals techniques to help company employees communicate more effectively and efficiently. The findings could also provide information on the effects of applying present moment awareness to all manners of personal communication, including presentations in university settings, particularly in departments of engineering, communications studies, theatre, business, law, and accounting.

III. Inspiration for this Study

The concept and desire to undertake this project was born out of my thirty years of acting in theatre, film and commercials, and teaching hundreds of actors. My Creative Arts Bachelor's Degree engendered my ongoing interest in promoting the arts. As I had personal exposure to the business community due to my work in conducting workshops and trainings in business communication skills, I learned there existed a consistent problem in my workshop participants' abilities to speak effectively and clearly present their ideas. They had no methodology to overcome their inability to make presentations effectively. I was drawn to introduce acting methods into my workshops, and I built a business teaching presentation skills. I produced countless compelling presenters within the highest levels of the business community.

The inspiration for this thesis arose out of a deep interest to further explore and quantify my theory. Others had discussed the use of acting techniques for business speakers, but only in a general way. I wanted to bring more specific research to the field.

I was highly motivated to academically substantiate my supposition and perhaps break new ground within the field of business presentation skills.

IV. Terminology

The techniques and processes applied to this research are derived from three acting teachers and scholars: Viola Spolin, Alan Arkin, and Patsy Rodenburg. While other acting teachers address techniques such as improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness for the actor, Spolin, Arkin, and Rodenburg discuss these elements in a more expansive manner. All three offer specific techniques and exercises within the context of these elements that they deem helpful to the business world. These teachers have taught generations of acting students, and all three teachers approach acting from similar conceptual bases in ways that are accessible to learners and have proven to be successful. Additionally, this researcher's definition and framework for present moment awareness originated with Rodenburg but was widened to include the acting theories of Viola Spolin and Alan Arkin. What emerged from the writing of Spolin and Arkin was an expanded and more specific definition of present moment awareness and a more specific method of teaching it.

For the purposes of this thesis, present moment awareness includes four categories of skills and knowledge that a student would attain in order to improve his or her presentation skills: intention, improvisation, voice, and body/sensory awareness.

Intention is defined as the speaker's aim, goal, or objective. In the context of this study, intention refers to a state of awareness where the speaker has an objective, is connected with his or her audience, and is able to maintain a clear and focused purpose,

thereby removing the element of fear (Arkin, *Improvised Life* 147). Presentation coach Patricia Fripp uses the concept of intention and applies it to the business world by instructing speakers to be mindful that intentional eye contact helps convey an intended message to the audience (Brown 25). Likewise, teachers Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro suggest, “The formula for creating powerful speeches is actually quite simple. Just fill in the blanks: ‘I’m telling you x so that you will do y ’” (Gottesman, *Taking* 14). The y variable is the intention, or in other words, the active response from the audience that the speaker is working for.

Additionally, intention includes the development of the speech and/or presentation. An actor’s or business speaker’s performance must, among other things, engage the audience, deliver a clear purpose, and include a beginning, middle, and end. More specifically, in her book *Challenge for the Actor*, acting teacher Uta Hagen lists “The Six Steps,” which are six questions that need to be answered to fulfill a character’s intentions, purpose, and motivations on stage: Who am I? What are the circumstances? What are my relationships? What do I want? What is my obstacle? What do I do to get what I want? (134). Answering these questions assists the actor in discovering the answer to the primary intention question: What do I want? Presenters need to answer these questions, too, to be clear of their intention in order to deliver a clear message.

The term improvisation is defined by Alan Arkin as, “[the ability] to create something on the spur of the moment with whatever is at hand” (*Improvised Life* 190). When the term improvisation is used in this study, it refers to theatre games that require physical activity and spontaneity from the participants. It is hoped that through the use of

improvisational theater games, the participants will be able to access their intuitive, intellectual, and physical selves, thereby developing a sense of focus and transforming into more connected communicators.

By developing a skill set relating to the voice, it is hoped that participants will gain the ability to have a wide vocal range, understand pacing and timing, and be able to project their voices using diction, enunciation, and articulation.

Body/sensory awareness refers to the participants' understanding that much of their communication is transmitted through their bodies to an audience. When participants are aware of the use of their bodies (hands, facial expression, gestures, etc.), they may be better able to communicate their intents to an audience. Furthermore, body/sensory awareness allows participants to experience direct contact with their environment and, as Viola Spolin describes, have "a total organic involvement with it" (*Theatre Games* 4). Spolin believes that when participants are completely aware of their environment (the sights, sounds, smells, feelings, emotions, etc.), they may be able to connect with others in a more profound manner and deliver their messages more effectively. This type of sensory awareness is not typical for public speakers.

In her book *The Second Circle*, Rodenburg refers to the state of present moment awareness as the "Second Circle." This term is used throughout this thesis to describe one of Rodenburg's three states of consciousness: First Circle, Second Circle, and Third Circle. According to Rodenburg, in the First Circle, "your whole focus [is] inward. The energy you generate falls back into you" (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* 16). She suggests that in the First Circle, the speaker comes across as disengaged and shy. In the "Third

Circle,” Rodenburg explains, “all of your energy is outward-moving and non-specific, and is untargeted” (*Second Circle* 17). She describes the attention in the Third Circle as being “outside yourself, yet unfocused, lacking precision and detail” (*Second Circle* 17). It is in the Second Circle that we finally achieve a balance between the First and Third Circles – the desired state. In this desired state, “A natural movement of energy should always run through you. Body, breath, voice; how you listen, think, and feel. You feel this energy and others feel it around you” (*Second Circle* 15). This study seeks to explore the application of this “natural movement of energy” within the context of present moment awareness.

V. Structure of Thesis

In Chapter 2, I discuss the current theories of business presentation trainers and other researchers who address one or more of the individual elements of present moment awareness. In Chapter 3 I discuss the methodology for this study, which includes the approach to the study, the role of the researcher, site selection, course curriculum and structure, clarification of the four elements of present moment awareness, participant description, data collection, analysis methods, and specific description of the research tools applied. Chapter 4 is comprised of the results of the study, while Chapter 5 includes the conclusions and implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to provide a backdrop and context for the exploration of how the four elements of present moment awareness (improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness) may affect business presentations, it is important to first examine current theories and speaker training practices applied by noted business presentation experts in the field. As present moment awareness is the primary framework used in this investigation, it will be examined in detail. Literature specific to the work of Spolin, Arkin, and Rodenberg is also considered, followed by a blended discussion of researchers who specialize in both acting and business presentations.

I. Business Presentation Trainers

Jerry Weissman, author of *Presenting to Win*, is a graduate of Stanford's Speech and Drama Department. He is one of the most in-demand and highly paid Presentation Skills coaches in Silicon Valley. Weissman ignores the application of acting techniques and instead uses business terms when describing his methods, which are exemplified by his chapter headings: "The Virtual Presentation," "Pitching in the Majors," and "The Power of WIIFY (what's in it for you)." He also discusses some of the best practices of presenting, such as, "make it easy for your audience to follow you" (Weissman 16). This has typically been achieved through PowerPoint® presentations.

In the fifth edition of his book, Weissman discusses and updates his views on PowerPoint®. He currently believes that what presenters say and how they say it is of far greater importance than what presenters show, stating, "The slides or other graphics are

there to support the presenter, not the other way around” (95). Weissman is not the only expert who recommends a more carefully managed use of PowerPoint® slides.

The software presentation tool Microsoft PowerPoint®, enhanced by Robert Gaskins, has greatly affected business presentation culture in Silicon Valley, where a dependence on overly complicated PowerPoint® slides has mushroomed. This dependence on PowerPoint® often results in speakers turning their backs to their audiences, reading directly from their PowerPoint® slides, and creating less connection to their audience (Gaskins, *PowerPoint* 7). Although the program is his creation, even Gaskins suggests a more minimalist use of the PowerPoint® software so that speakers connect more authentically with their audience. Gaskins supports the “less is more” approach: “Audiences rarely complain about too little embellishment but are easily offended by too much” (*PowerPoint* 16). He has paid attention to the needs of the audience.

Patricia Fripp and four additional presentation coaches, Mark Brown, Darren LaCroix, Ed Tate, and Craig Valentine, are featured in *Speaker’s Edge: Secrets and Strategies for Connecting with Any Audience*. Each of these award-winning coaches offers what he or she considers techniques for connecting with the audience, which is a primary goal of achieving present moment awareness. These trainers’ strategies for connecting with audience are discussed in the book’s three sections: Platform Presence, Content Excellence, and Winning Techniques. While none of the trainers use the term present moment awareness, some of the techniques they discuss parallel the four individual elements within present moment awareness. Many techniques used by these

business speaker trainers are discussed within the individual element sections of this literature review.

II. *The Elements of Present Moment Awareness*

As noted in the previous chapter, the term present moment awareness is used to describe specifically these four elements: improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness. The following section describes these elements in detail.

Improvisation

One aspect of this study was to explore the application of improvisational theatre in a business-speaking arena in order to help students to improve their spontaneity and access their intuition. Viola Spolin offers great experience and insight into this area.

Spolin is considered one of the foremost improvisational teachers of the twentieth century and has been called the “high priestess of improvisational theatre” (Northwestern 1). In the foreword to her book, *Theater Games for Rehearsal: A Director’s Handbook*, actor/director Rob Reiner says, “[Spolin’s] book is the bible.” Spolin created improvisational and acting techniques that continue to influence the fields of theater, education, and mental health. Her theories and methods are important to this study because they offer a structure for improvisational games that are accessible to non-actors, particularly business people. Spolin asserts, “The techniques of the theater are the techniques of communicating” (*Improvisation* 14). Spolin’s book *Improvisation for the Theater* also addresses the notion of present moment as an acting device. Spolin is a proponent of “accessible intuition,” which she describes as the process of tapping into

and awakening a sense of self (xi). She suggests that intuition stimulates creative expression. Furthermore, she refers to the importance of focus in accessing this intuition. Spolin's text provides exercises and games that physically and mentally inform the student of the nature of immediacy and spontaneity. Spolin's improvisational exercises are important to the understanding of present moment awareness because, as Spolin says:

True improvisation re-shapes and alters the student-actor through the act of improvisation itself. Penetration into the focus, connection, and a live relation with fellow players result in a change, alteration, or new understanding for one or the other or both...The intuition gained remains with the player in everyday life, for whenever a circuit is opened for anyone, so to speak, it is usable everywhere. (*Improvisation* 37)

Spolin also believes that talent does not have as much to do with learning as experiencing does. "Experiencing is penetration into the environment, total organic involvement with it. This means involvement in all levels: intellectual, physical and intuitive" (Spolin, *Improvisation* 3). Spolin discovered that playing theatrical games sets up an environment in which this learning experience can take place most accessibly. The games afford a psychological freedom, creating "a condition in which strain and conflict are dissolved and potentialities are released in the spontaneous effort to meet the demands of the situation" (Spolin, *Improvisation* 5). Spolin also teaches the practice of present moment awareness by reminding students to "see the color of the sky, hear the sounds in the air, feel the ground beneath them and wind on their faces" (Spolin, *Improvisation* 15-16). Spolin's improvisational techniques and methods have been used widely by actors, directors, and writers. One proponent of her methods is Alan Arkin.

Academy Award winner Alan Arkin became well known as a member of Chicago's renowned improvisational troupe, Second City, early on in his acting career

(Arkin, *Improvised Life* 38). Arkin was recruited by Paul Sills (Viola Spolin's son), the founder and director of Second City. Sills used Spolin's methods to train the Second City actors. Consequently, Arkin was among the next generation of improvisers to use Spolin's techniques and processes. It was during his years at Second City that Arkin realized his capacity for and appreciation of improvisation (Arkin, *Improvised Life* 60). After a yearlong run of the play *Enter Laughing* on Broadway, he felt the constraints of having to do the same show each performance (*Improvised Life* 59). He says in his memoir:

I was an improvisatory actor, and not only because of the two years I'd just completed at Second City; improvisation seemed to be central to my nature. Anything else felt boring and rigid. In *Enter Laughing*, as the months went by, and my anxieties about being present mounted, I also felt inhibited by the rigidity of the form. (*Improvised Life* 60)

When portraying the role of the Russian submarine officer in the film *The Russians Are Coming*, Arkin discovered that he preferred film work. At the audition for the film he asked director Norman Jewison if his screen test could be improvised (*Improvised Life* 69). Arkin notes, "From the beginning, film felt like the medium I had been waiting for" (*Improvised Life* 71). Arkin's improvisational history is relevant to this study because his techniques are used to explore improvisation as an element of present moment awareness in the context of business presentations.

Having participated in four of Arkin's improvisation workshops and produced two of Arkin's workshops in the Bay Area, this researcher is familiar with the safe, fun, and effective manner in which these workshops are conducted. Collaborating closely with his wife, Suzanne Arkin, Alan Arkin hosts three-day workshops that generally flow

seamlessly, with participants gaining confidence and a willingness to improvise as one exercise builds on the last (*Bridging the Chasm*). Arkin describes his teaching methods in his memoir *An Improvised Life*, and he includes descriptions of the improvisational games, how they are introduced to the group, and how they are layered to include what Arkin believes are the two fundamental requirements for good acting: intention and emotional context (Arkin, *Improvised Life* 142).

In his improvisation workshops, Arkin reminds his students that “humans are instinctively creative” (*Improvised Life* 138). Similarly to Viola Spolin, Arkin asserts that experience can benefit learning as much as talent can. The first exercise conducted on the first day of his workshops (Tennis Ball), is designed to get participants out of their heads (trying to be funny and talented) and into experiencing the moment. Arkin is very specific in his direction to the participants, guiding them to, “Keep it moving. Don’t try to be funny” (*Bridging the Chasm*). Arkin practices meditation and is a proponent of the benefits of focus, believing that meditation can improve one’s awareness of the present moment (*Bridging the Chasm*). Arkin suggests the application of improvisation and meditation might be expanded beyond the theatre environment in fruitful ways. Alan Arkin’s editor, Barry Berg, draws attention to the fact that in Arkin’s memoir, *An Improvised Life*, Arkin offers the premise that good acting springs from a commitment to the present moment, an acceptance of spontaneity, and a release of rigid control (20). In his memoir, Arkin also informs the reader of the discoveries he and his students made during his improvisation workshops. The practice of Arkin’s improvisational techniques allows presenters to be authentic and persuasive on a stage or during a presentation.

Arkin argues, “I believe this fervently, both in life and in a workshop: that if this present moment is lived whole-heartedly and meticulously, the future will take care of itself” (*Improvised Life* 182).

When asked by an improvisation workshop participant, “How do we bring this back to the real world?” Arkin responded, “This is the real world! It’s as real as anything you’ve ever experienced” (*Improvised Life* 181-2). Arkin further states, “When I sense someone is avoiding something in a scene, when I push people into examining what’s going on, they are never asked to examine their past, their painful childhoods, their blocks, their fears. They are asked to be very much in the present” (185). Arkin believes that the freedom participants experience in his improvisation workshops is not psychological drama. He suggests participants take present moment awareness, openness, connection, and a sense of freedom and joy to everyone they encounter after they leave the workshop (Arkin, *Improvised Life* 184). Arkin proposes that humans are always improvising: “That’s what we’re doing, all the time, whether we know it or not. Whether we like it or not. Creating something on the spur of the moment with the materials at hand” (*Improvised Life* 190). Arkin’s clear and accessible philosophy and methods translate easily into the corporate world of business presentations.

Voice coach Patsy Rodenburg is well known in the corporate world because of her work helping people speak more effectively. Rodenburg’s techniques are integral to this study because they provide the most thoroughly defined theory and methodology regarding present moment awareness. Much like the improvisational techniques of Viola Spolin, Rodenburg’s techniques are structured to diminish tension (Rodenburg, *Second*

Circle 9) and include the audience as an integral part of the performance (*Second Circle* 226). Rodenburg's accessible techniques will be used as a model for much of the research and analysis in this study.

Patsy Rodenburg's professional history helps illuminate the success of implementing her accessible techniques. Rodenburg, OBE (Officer of the British Empire), is Director of Voice at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, teaches voice in New York, and has worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal National Theatre, The Moscow Art Theatre, and The Comedie-Francaise (Rodenburg, *Actor Speaks* xii). Rodenburg has been the vocal coach of well-known actors Judy Dench, Daniel Day-Lewis, Ralph Fiennes, Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman and Ian McKellen, and she has written pedagogical books on voice and acting including *The Right to Speak*, *The Need for Words*, *Speaking Shakespeare*, and *Presence*. The two Rodenburg books that will be primarily drawn from in this research are *The Actor Speaks* and *The Second Circle*. In *The Actor Speaks*, Rodenburg touches on her theory of the three circles of focus and energy. In her book *The Second Circle*, Rodenburg specifically states her theory about presence, defines the Three Circles of energy, and outlines her techniques in order to assist students in achieving present moment awareness (or as she refers to it, the Second Circle).

Rodenburg wrote *The Actor Speaks* specifically for the actor. Her goal in this in-depth training process is to eliminate any fear that the actor may have of speaking on stage in every circumstance. Rodenburg likens the activity of rehearsal and performance to an athletic feat and she addresses the skill and stamina necessary for this endeavor

(Rodenburg, *Actor Speaks* xi). She asserts that well-applied presence technique can liberate the actor. Furthermore, Rodenburg argues that learning the technique so well that it can be forgotten is crucial to the actor when the goal is for the imaginative life of the character to take over (Rodenburg, *Actor Speaks* xiv). Similarly, when the goal of a corporate leader is to encourage and instill trust among the work force, Rodenburg cites Shakespeare's *Henry V* as an example of a Second Circle [present moment awareness] leader (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* 220-221).

Rodenburg also utilizes this Second Circle approach specifically with business leaders in the corporate world. She notes, "The encouragement of the Second Circle means employees work hard for [business leaders], feel appreciated, recognized, and are loyal. They feel in some ways equal to their leader and are able to challenge them and contribute as a band of brothers" (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* 220). Rodenburg goes on to discuss in detail positive and negative qualities of business leaders and their performances. Positive qualities of a business leader might include charisma and passion for their work, whereas negative qualities might include Third Circle behaviors such as mocking or ignoring employees (*Second Circle* 220).

In *The Actor Speaks*, Rodenburg introduces her theory of the "circles of concentration:" "The circles are connected to how and where we are focused when we speak or listen" (226). She applies techniques of instruction that afford students the ability to identify for themselves which circle of energy they are experiencing. These methods of self-identification are relevant to this study as they were used by the

student/business speakers who participated in this research. In the early stage of discovery, Rodenburg defines the circles as follows:

1. First Circle is speaking to yourself. The imagination is very internal.
2. Second Circle is speaking very directly to one other person.
3. Third Circle is addressing many people or the universe. The speaking imagination is very generally distributed (*Actor Speaks* 226).

Rodenburg uses a series of exercises to take the actors through the various and shifting circles with the goal of placing the actors in the here and now (present moment awareness). The exercises are constructed “to help actors focus and energize their voice and place their imagination directly in service to the character’s words” (*Actor Speaks* 226). In the early stages of discovery, Rodenburg believes the circles of concentration are only necessary when the actor is unsure of either a speech or a scene’s focus. She later identifies the three basic movements of energy more specifically. It is the specificity and development of her techniques that affords the structure of examination for this study of business presenters.

Published in 2007, Rodenburg’s *The Second Circle* expands her theory of the Three Circles of energy. These three circles define the energetic state a person is in when performing or communicating. Present moment awareness is described more fully in *The Second Circle*, and Rodenburg says this particular energy is “completely tangible” (15). In *The Second Circle*, Rodenburg describes the three basic ways human energy moves:

1. First Circle: *The Circle of Self and Withdrawal*. This is the energy of introspection and reflection (16).

2. Second Circle: *The Energy of Connecting*. Rodenburg says, “Your energy is focused. Your energy moves out toward the object of your attention, touches it, and then receives energy back from it” (19). You can be aware of being in Second Circle if you feel centered and alert, notice details in others, acknowledge the feelings of others, hear clearly, etc. (20).
3. Third Circle: *The Circle of Bluff and Force*. Rodenburg describes this energy as “outward-moving and non-specific, and is untargeted. It is as if you are spraying your energy out to the world with an aerosol can. Your attention is outside yourself, yet unfocused, lacking precision and detail” (17).

Rodenburg’s intended audience is not exclusively actors, and she puts forth her methods for recognizing one’s own presence to everyone, claiming it can transform and invigorate every aspect of one’s life, awakening full potential. “It will change how you engage with others, how you look, listen, think, feel, learn and do business” (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* xi).

In Rodenburg’s discussion of leadership techniques and the use of Second Circle, she believes, “The corporate world should invest in Second Circle behavior within its own walls and outside them. In the long term, the company’s life would be healthier, more prosperous, and honest as a result” (*Second Circle* 224).

Rodenburg discovered the specific process of communication energy being transferred while working with her students. Some students had charisma and some did not, and it was commonly felt by many teachers and directors that this charismatic “it” factor was a gift (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* xiii). Rodenburg realized, however, that this

charisma had to do with energy and began to recognize different types of energy. Through formal exercises she helps students understand, develop, and enhance their present moment awareness by checking in with their breathing, posture, audience awareness, etc. (Rodenburg, *Second Circle* 56). She defines the three circles of energy very specifically, placing them in different contexts: family, corporate environments, and personal relationships. Furthermore, Rodenburg offers practical, physical practices to place one's self in Second Circle; she suggests, among other methods, to carefully, "Look, taste, listen, check in with your breathing, be gracious, try new things..." (*Second Circle* 256). Rodenburg notes that in practicing these methods:

You will realize that being present to life is critical not only to your well-being but to the well-being of everyone around you. It is an act of community. It is an act of personal intimacy with others. It enables not only the success of an individual but also the success of a family, society, and team. (*Second Circle* 9)

It is useful to again to note the similarities to Viola Spolin and Alan Arkin regarding their structured approach of the improvisational experience in achieving fuller communication experiences.

Darren LaCroix, 2001 Toastmasters World Champion of Public Speaking, is an expert in the area of connecting with an unfamiliar audience, and he specifically suggests the use of improvisational techniques to successfully do so. While he does not use the term improvisation, LaCroix does indicate the application of improvisation skills. He says, "If you find yourself in the middle of a presentation and it's not working, stop. Talk to them. Check in. It's perfectly legal to ask the audience where they are and what's wrong. It takes a true professional to do that" (Brown 9). This ability to improvise in the present moment during a presentation engages the audience. LaCroix suggests the ability

to improvise is helpful in another way. From his experience, if a venue is set up for a thousand people and only 25 percent of the seats fill, a speaker must be able to deliver with confidence, no matter what. The speaker needs to improvise within the present circumstance (Brown 50). LaCroix asserts that this self-awareness increases the ability to improvise and allows the speaker to connect more fully with an audience, a perspective that is highly relevant to this study.

Intention

Reiterating some assertions of the seminal acting teachers in this study, the purpose of intention is to develop connection with an audience and/or peers, to remove fear and self-consciousness while in front of an audience, and to deliver information as well as receive information from the audience (Rodenburg, *Actor Speaks* 343). As previously noted, Arkin asserts the two fundamental requirements for good acting are intention and emotional context, and that intention requires awareness, objective, a clear purpose, and connection with the audience (*Improvvised Life* 142-7).

Likewise, Rodenburg mentions in *The Actor Speaks* that her goal in the training process of presence (present moment awareness) is to encourage bravery and eliminate any fear that the actor may have of speaking in every circumstance (xvii). Rodenburg suggests the goal of the actor in achieving presence and speaking very directly to another (Second Circle) is the same as the goal of the corporate leader whose goal/intention is to encourage and instill trust among his or her work force (*Second Circle* 220-1). She asserts that the use of Second Circle communication ensures that employees feel appreciated and recognized, and are therefore loyal (*Second Circle* 220).

Speaker trainer Ed Tate also touches on the element of intention as he instructs his students to “focus on the core message” (Brown 16). He poses the question, “If you had one minute and could tell them one thing, what would that be?” (Brown 16). Tate’s use of narrow focus techniques is similar to this researcher’s use of intention techniques in the context of this study.

As mentioned previously, presentation coach Patricia Fripp correlates intention to the business world, instructing speakers to be mindful that their “main purpose” is to change audience behavior, and teachers Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro suggest that speakers should know exactly what they want from their audiences (Gottesman, *Taking* 14).

Voice

For the purposes of this study, the element of an effective voice is necessary to stimulate and refine the communication skills of the business speaker. According to Spolin, Arkin, Rodenburg, and other acting teachers, the goal of effective vocal technique is to improve the speaker’s projection, diction, enunciation, pacing and timing, consequently developing dialogue that flows naturally without the forced quality of a person trying to be funny, smart, etc., and to connect with an audience. The acting teachers within this study discuss voice in a variety of ways, appreciating that voice is more than just technical. Spolin, Arkin, and Rodenburg were selected as seminal sources for this study because they understand the reflective voice. If a speaker is connected with an audience he can more readily adapt the voice to reach that audience most effectively.

Rodenburg addresses the importance of voice in *The Actor Speaks*. She says, “Proper voice work, or the lack of it, could make or break a performer. It could enable you to act with greater ease or be the source of an endless struggle. After all, if an audience or another actor on-stage can neither hear nor understand you, your work is irrelevant” (4-5). She goes on to discuss business speakers, suggesting that a speaker with an untrained voice “has a tendency to push vocally when confronted with an audience instead of connecting to support an emotional truth. The audience is kept outside of his or her creative realm and pushed away rather than embraced” (*Actor Speaks* 15). Rodenburg applies the value of effective vocal technique in both the acting and business speaking arenas.

Martha Elliott, a professor at Princeton University, has also conducted research on “mindfulness” that is similar to this study’s focus on present moment awareness. Elliott teaches singing studio sessions and master classes at Princeton University, and in her *Journal of Singing* article, “Singing and Mindfulness,” she describes mindfulness as, “a way of paying attention to present moment experience without judgment or attachment” (35). Because Elliott teaches singing, the connection to the importance of voice is relatively easy to make. She provides definitions from other respected mindfulness teachers such as Bhante Henepolo Gunaratana, who describes mindfulness “as present moment awareness. It is the observance of what is happening right now in the present...mindfulness is nonjudgmental observation. It is that ability of the mind to observe without criticism” (Gunaratana 139-40). Elliott also asserts that mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment without attachment or judgment.

Alan Alda's improvisational work with the Center for Communicating Science, which has the goal of improving communication techniques of scientists, also relates to the aspect of voice within present moment awareness. Alda remarked that after participating in improvisation workshops, the scientists spoke with more animation in their faces and bodies (Stony Brook University).

Speaker-trainer Mark Brown's techniques relate to this thesis especially in his discussion of voice. Speaking in a monotone falls into the element of voice in present moment awareness, and Brown recognizes the importance of the element of voice in connecting with the audience. He discusses the importance of vocal inflection and varying intonation, pitch, and speaking rate (Brown 33). Speaker-trainer Patricia Fripp likewise asserts the importance of voice during presentations. When Fripp discusses nervousness, she focuses on the presenter's rate of speech. Fripp alludes to the vocal element of present moment awareness, saying: "Don't speak too quickly in front of your audience." She suggests, "The faster you talk, the longer your pauses should be" (Brown 24).

Body/Sensory Awareness

As mentioned, the body/sensory awareness techniques of Spolin, Arkin, and Rodenburg that are examined in this study include developing physical self-awareness inside and out, developing eye contact so that the speaker can connect with others, experiencing involvement with others (physically and vocally), and maintaining the ability to concentrate and focus.

Spolin, Arkin, and Rodenburg all discuss body/sensory awareness to some degree. Spolin created improvisational exercises that are designed for the participant to “experience penetration into the environment,” meaning they will experience multiple levels: “intellectual, physical and intuitive” (Spolin, *Improvisation* 3). Arkin asserts that present moment awareness allows a physical release of rigid control (*Improvised Life* 20), and Rodenburg provides a series of formal physical exercises to improve the body/sensory awareness of actors and business speakers. Rodenburg suggests that speakers check in with their breathing, posture, audience awareness, etc. (*Second Circle* 56). She offers further suggestions of carefully looking, tasting, and trying new things to enhance body/sensory awareness (*Second Circle* 256).

Martha Elliott describes the application of mindfulness (present moment awareness) to singing. While mindfulness is considered to originate from Buddhist practices, Elliott explains how it can be applied to singing in a secular manner (36). She is a proponent of the use of breathing exercises to achieve a state of mindfulness, describing simple breathing techniques to teach focus and awareness. Similarly, breathing techniques are taught and practiced in the teaching of body/sensory awareness in this thesis study. Elliott elaborates by saying that the techniques of mindfulness have useful applications outside the realm of vocal performance: “Mindfulness can also be applied to other activities, including walking, eating, washing dishes, brushing teeth and singing” (36).

Patricia Fripp asserts that audiences receive information through multiple senses, which requires that a speaker be mindful of body/sensory awareness, both within herself

and within the audience (Brown 20-22). Fripp teaches speakers to build an emotional connection with the audience through eye contact: “Eye contact can have a powerful effect on how people perceive you. The more eye contact you can maintain, the more self-esteem people perceive you have” (Brown 25). Additionally, Fripp offers suggestions to manage physical nervousness, such as a racing mind and jittery stomach. She provides exercises, such as the mental preparation of memorizing the opening and closing of the speech, and checking out the logistics of the space before presenting (Brown 26). She also offers techniques for becoming comfortable with an audience. She suggests that speakers meet the audience prior to the start of the speech, shake hands with the audience members in a small meeting, or shake the hands of a few front row audience members in a large meeting (Brown 20). She offers physical warm up exercises that are similar to many of the exercises actors use to warm up before going on stage (Brown 26-27). Fripp asserts that once the speaker understands the many different ways an audience learns, he or she can adapt a message into a more effective presentation. Fripp’s mental and physical techniques and exercises are similar in many ways to the techniques used in this study, specifically body/sensory awareness as it relates to present moment awareness.

Fripp says in *Speaker’s Edge* that it is not an indefinable “magic,” but “technique, knowledge, skill and preparation” that allow the presenter to connect with the audience (Brown 19). She discusses a variety of methods that allow the presenter to take the “magic” out of good speaking and explains how audience members learn. Fripp alludes to present moment awareness and body/sensory awareness in these suggestions to presenters. According to Fripp, “We learn by what we see, hear, and experience;

vicariously; on reflection; and by teaching others. The way our audience members learn affects the effectiveness of our message” (Brown 19). She suggests some common tips suggested by many speaker trainers: Be prepared, personable, polished, know your audience, and know the state of their industry (Brown 22).

Ed Tate asserts the techniques of body/sensory awareness and intention when he instructs his students to “get your presentation out of your head and into your heart” (Brown 13). He suggests that presenters focus on audience connection rather than content, asserting, “The biggest mistake that most presenters make is thinking that their content is the most important part of their presentation. The most important part of your presentation is how you will connect your content with each specific audience” (Brown 15). A presenter’s body/sensory awareness can be critical if a speaker is to achieve the ability to connect with each audience. For example, if a speaker consistently keeps his/her back to the audience while reading PowerPoint® slides, there would be a lack of body/sensory awareness. This could diminish the effectiveness of the presentation.

Although Craig Valentine does not use the term body/sensory awareness when discussing his “Tap and Transport” theory of teaching, the techniques he describes are similar to body/sensory awareness techniques. Valentine advises his speakers to first hook the audience by tapping into their world before bringing them into yours. He suggests, “For example, an eighth-grade teacher who is teaching today’s students about the civil rights movement in the 1950’s and 1960’s might begin a lesson by asking, ‘Have you ever felt like someone was not being fair to you? How did you react? What were you feeling?’” (Brown 109). The audience members have been creatively invited into the

“scene” of the speaker, and can now “tap in” and reflect on their own experiences.

Rather than the term body/sensory awareness, Valentine uses the acronym VAKS (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and smell). Valentine describes a story involving VAKS, saying, “If you had been sitting beside my wife and me on our old black leather sofa, with the chocolate chip cookies baking in the background, you would have heard her say something that can absolutely change your life. I know it changed mine” (Brown 111). Valentine believes that after the audience has been brought into the speaker’s scene, he/she should immediately follow up with questions that include the senses. He asks the audience:

- What could you see (visual)?
- What could you hear (auditory)?
- What could you feel (kinesthetic)?
- What could you smell?

Valentine says that this audience connection comes from “purposeful planning” and is no accident. He advises his students to “Tap” and “Transport” the audience to connect (Brown 112). This technique includes the element of body/sensory awareness.

III. Present Moment Awareness in Other Fields

Researchers in other fields (outside of business and acting) are also exploring aspects of present moment awareness. As previously mentioned, The Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook University, in collaboration with Brookhaven National Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Cold Spring, New York, is exploring the effects of improvisational training on scientists delivering their oral

presentations (Stony Brook University). Alan Alda, actor/writer/director and part-time faculty member in the Journalism Department at Stony Brook, conducts improvisation workshops designed specifically to help scientists communicate information in their field more effectively. The workshop participants play improvisational theater games to help them learn to communicate more clearly and in a more connected way when delivering their scientific information and discussing their work (Stony Brook University). In an online video sample of the improvisation workshop, Alda notes, “The object, of course, is not to turn these scientists into actors, but to help them become more open and direct in their communication of science” (Stony Brook University).

In these workshops, Alda uses improvisational methods similar to the methods used by Alan Arkin. Alda asserts that the first thing the improvisational games accomplish is to help scientists become “more aware of their own bodies and what others are doing” (Stony Brook University). While addressing the scientists, Alda says, “We are hoping scientists find greater clarity and vividness in presenting science to make their presentations stick in the listener’s mind” (Stony Brook University).

Alda’s workshop shows the scientists discussing their work before the improvisation workshop and after the improvisation workshop. This researcher observed significant speaking differences: before the workshop the scientists were nervous, shy, and reluctant to make statements about their work. After the workshop, the scientists spoke with energy, enthusiasm, confidence, and clarity. The information was much easier to understand and the speakers appeared to be much more connected with the audience. Alda complimented the scientists at the end of the workshop saying, “There

was so much more wonderful animation in your faces and your bodies. Really great. You've really let yourselves be present here" (Stony Brook University).

The Center of Communicating Science at Stony Brook University continues to explore the effects of improvisation on the speaking techniques of scientists. As described online, the university offers "innovative courses for current and future scientists and health professionals who want to communicate more effectively about their work with the public, public officials, the media, potential funders and employers, as well as colleagues in other disciplines" (centerforcommunicatingscience.org).

There are also research studies on the larger concept of present moment awareness outside the context of performing and/or presenting. A scientific study in the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* entitled "The Case for Mindfulness-based Approaches in the Cultivation of Empathy: Does Nonjudgmental, Present-moment Awareness Increase the Capacity for Perspective-taking and Empathetic Concern?" includes a section concerning mindfulness and present moment awareness. The study pertains to psychological areas, such as family relationships. Focusing on mindfulness-based approaches in the cultivation of empathy, the researchers ask: Does present moment awareness increase empathetic concern? (Block-Lerner 501). Using case studies, the researchers found that being in the present moment can be important in interpersonal exchanges:

Mindfulness practice keeps us in the present moment. This is important because, especially in heated interpersonal moments, rumination about past events and worries about the future can easily take us out of the here and now. If such private experiences are simply acknowledged and attention returned to an unfolding interaction, an individual is able to focus on what is actually unfolding before his

or her eyes...This increased awareness and sensitivity would likely lead to heightened appreciation of how one's own action impact others. (509)

Another scientific study originally published in the journal *Assessment* in 2008, "The Assessment of Present-Moment Awareness and Acceptance: The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale," was developed to measure two components of mindfulness: present-moment awareness and acceptance (Cardaciotto et al.). The study examined how case study participants responded to several structured experiments. This multifaceted scientific study included a questionnaire designed to examine the responses of nonclinical samples, and three clinical samples. Three clinical study samples were conducted using mixed psychiatric outpatients, eating disorder inpatients, and student counseling outpatients. Participants responded to the following:

1. When talking with other people, I am aware of the emotions I am experiencing.
2. I notice changes inside my body like my heart beating faster or my muscles tense.
3. When I walk outside, I am aware of smells or how the air feels against my face

(Cardaciotto 204).

The study by Cardaciotto and the work of Rodenburg share commonalities. Both explore the use of present moment awareness in a myriad of circumstances. While the language used to describe present moment awareness differs between the two studies, the end result is very similar. Presenters have a higher rate of success when mindfulness is present.

IV. Conclusion

Effective communication between business speakers and audiences is essential to companies as ineffective communication can have detrimental interpersonal and economic effects. Consequently, many businesses and corporations seek professional development for their employees in order to improve their employees' oral communication skills. Although there are a variety of techniques and approaches used for these trainings, there is little documented evidence of the effectiveness of various approaches.

Authors such as Gottesman, Mauro, Rodenburg, and Arkin have explored the possibility of specifically utilizing acting techniques in an effort to improve oral communication for business leaders, and each of these authors sees the possibility of multiple benefits. Although they have published their methods in a variety of books and articles, there are very few research studies that focus on the effects of using acting techniques to improve business speaking. These techniques include using improvisation, intention, and the building of vocal skills. It is also important to help the speakers understand how their body/sensory awareness plays a role in their presentations.

The authors above suggest that improvisation activities provide a safe place to fail, improve spontaneity, and facilitate successful connections with others. Having a specific intention aids in the removal of fear and self-consciousness while in front of an audience. An effective voice (which includes good diction, enunciation, and projection) can allow for dialogue that flows naturally, thereby refining communication skills. Additionally, body/sensory awareness can help individuals develop understanding of

their senses, thereby developing a physical self-awareness both inside and out. This self-awareness improves breath control, eye contact, and audience connection. When these methods are used collectively in this study, the term present moment awareness is used to describe the overall effect.

The following four tables illustrate the elements of present moment awareness as outlined by Spolin, Arkin, and Rodenburg. This compilation was designed by the researcher and describes the purpose, techniques, and processes used in this study. These descriptions also form the basis for the methodology of this research.

Table 1: Improvisation as an Element of Present Moment Awareness

	Viola Spolin	Alan Arkin	Patsy Rodenburg
Improvisation			
Purpose	To improve spontaneity, develop sensitivity to an audience, understand how “the intuitive” can help in delivering a presentation, and develop focus.	To allow for a safe space to fail, as well as allow for the feeling of success to have cumulative effects.	To develop meta-cognition, apply the ability to improvise during a presentation, connect with an audience, and develop self-awareness.
Techniques and Processes	Theatre games that allow the participants to physically, intellectually, and spontaneously react to their environment.	Improvisation work emphasizing environment, working together, intention, and feeling state.	Develop an understanding of the “3 Circles” including 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd , and apply them to delivering a presentation.

Table 2: Intention as an Element of Present Moment Awareness

	Viola Spolin	Alan Arkin	Patsy Rodenburg
Intention			
Purpose	To develop a connection with peers and/or an audience.	To remove fear and self-consciousness while in front of an audience.	To connect with an audience and deliver information as well as receive information from the audience.
Techniques and Processes	Theatre games that provides focus and a specific point of concentration; a problem at the center of the game. "Tug of War"	Specific point of concentration, goal: Don't be clever. Creativity comes naturally. "Tennis Ball"	To achieve intention one must connect to/with the audience. One must breathe to them, filling space effectively. "Reaching Out"

Table 3: Voice as an Element of Present Moment Awareness

	Viola Spolin	Alan Arkin	Patsy Rodenburg
Voice			
Purpose	To develop dialogue that flows naturally without the forced quality of a person trying to be funny, smart, sad, etc. To stimulate and refine communication skills. To heighten and extend communication by showing that sound occupies space.	To develop an effective vocal technique that works the voice in conjunction with a group, intention, and a feeling state.	To develop projection, diction, enunciation, pacing, and timing.
Techniques and Processes	Player conveys meaning by actions, tone of voice, expressions. "Gibberish"	To work on a common task in groups of three. "Move a piano"	Breath: Intro to Breath Control

Table 4: Body/Sensory Awareness as an Element of Present Moment Awareness

	Viola Spolin	Alan Arkin	Patsy Rodenburg
Body/Sensory Awareness			
Purpose	To isolate and examine the individual senses. To recognize that physical memory exists within each person that can be called up intuitively without speaking. To make visible the invisible for audience.	To experience involvement with peers (physically and vocally) while aware of audience, and to concentrate and focus. Body and vocal concentration.	To develop physical self-awareness inside and out, eye contact so that the speaker can connect with others.
Techniques and Processes	Theatre games to develop physical communication with the audience. “Deaf Audience”	Group exercise dealing with environment, to use entire body, voice, and creativity. “Magic Machine”	To practice 2 nd Circle present moment awareness inside and out. “Breathing Circle” Start of each class.

It is important to acknowledge that acting techniques are not the only route to successful business presentations; to be sure, there are effective speaker-trainers who do not include acting techniques or present moment awareness in their methodologies. Some trainers, however, do include non-acting terminology and techniques that closely correlate to present moment awareness and its elements.

It should also be noted that the application of present moment awareness is not limited to acting performances and business presentations. Exploring the application of present moment awareness could be useful in other areas that require effective communication, such as personal relationships, academic environments, and

communities. Although these areas are beyond the scope of this research project, they are potential avenues for further research.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I. Overview

As discussed in the first two chapters, the purpose of this research study was to explore how the use of the four elements of present moment awareness (improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness) may affect business presentation skills. In this study the participants attended a five-week course offered by the Business and Management Department of UCSC-Extension (Silicon Valley) in Santa Clara, California, which was taught by the researcher. The course/research study was held on five consecutive Thursday evenings, beginning June 21, 2012 and ending July 19, 2012.

II. Research Question

This research project was designed to investigate the following question: To what extent does the practice of present moment awareness, using improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness, affect presentation skills for business speakers?

III. Approach to the Study

In order to provide rich in-depth descriptions of the progress of the participants a qualitative, interpretive approach seemed most appropriate, given the importance of interpersonal human interaction. However, it also seemed important to include the use of a survey instrument in order to gauge the participants' own view of their progress from the start of the program to the end of the program. Therefore, this study used a mixed methods approach that was largely qualitative, but also relied on a quantitative survey instrument. The researcher approached the study utilizing a compilation of acting

techniques as described by Viola Spolin, Alan Arkin, and Patsy Rodenburg (see Tables 1-4).

IV. Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role was that of teacher/researcher. The roles of teacher and researcher were separated where possible, but intertwined throughout the study. While teaching the class the researcher also managed the collection of data as seamlessly as possible. This was feasible because systematic data collection is "simply characteristic of thoughtful teaching" (Anderson 5). Anderson suggests that:

The strength of teacher research is the development of a better understanding of classroom practice in ways that are specific and local. In its focus on intentional and systematic inquiry, teacher research empowers teachers to thoughtfully examine and analyze classroom practices in order to improve teaching, a tremendous outcome for teachers and students. (7)

The researcher analyzed the data only after the class had ended and the data had been formally collected.

The presentation skills class used in this study was originally created and designed by the researcher in 1999. It has been a part of the curriculum of UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley since that time. It is designed to teach business people how to become better presenters, trainers, and leaders by including acting techniques in the process. The current course title is *Presentation Skills for HR & Trainers*. The course title can and has been adjusted to fit different student needs and job demographics.

V. Site Selection for the Study

UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley was chosen as the site for this study primarily due to the researcher's role and interests as a teacher/researcher. Additional factors included accessibility, a manageable size sample group, and the availability of a heterogeneous group of Silicon Valley business professionals whose goal was to improve their oral communication skills.

UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley is certified by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of School and Colleges (WASC) (UCSC Extension 100). The mission statement of UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley is to combine "the academic excellence of the University of California with the expertise of seasoned practitioners to provide advanced professional training that addresses the real-world needs of people who work and live in Silicon Valley" (UCSC Extension 1).

Lorelei Vowinkel, UCSC-Extension Program Administrator, reports that after opening its doors in 1968, UCSC-Extension has had roughly 10,000 students (UCSC Extension). Classes are held in the Extension's building located in Santa Clara, California. Students may enroll online, with credit card, by mail or by telephone. Enrollment policies address discounts, cancellations, drops, withdrawals, and eligibility. Each of these aspects makes UCSC-Extension a feasible, accessible site for this research project.

VI. Course and Course Curriculum

The research was conducted at UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley on five Thursday evenings from 5:30-9:30, on June 21, 28, July 5, 12, and 19, 2012. *Presentation Skills for HR and Trainers* was designed to teach business speakers how to deliver more effective and powerful presentations. The UCSC-Extension Silicon Valley summer catalogue course description reads as follows:

Improve presentation skills using simple, proven and effective techniques employed by professional presenters. This course covers basic presentation techniques, developing materials, communicating with confidence and using the power of your personal style. The instructor guides you through the process of triumphing over fear and becoming a truly inspired speaker. You will learn easy relaxation methods and ways to cope with stage fright, grab the audience's attention, organize your presentation, open and close in a compelling manner, handle impromptu Q & A, and simplify your message. (UCSC Extension 34)

Acting techniques have always been included in the curriculum of this class. For the purposes of this research, however, only present moment awareness was studied. Specifically, the focus for the study was on the four elements of present moment awareness identified by the researcher and previously discussed. These include the areas of improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness. These elements of present moment awareness were taught in the following order:

Class #1	Improvisation
Class #2	Intention
Class #3	Voice
Class #4	Body/Sensory Awareness
Class #5	Rodenburg's Three Circles of Energy & Final Presentations.

Each class began with the participants sitting in a circle. This was followed by announcements, questions about the previous week's work, and a breathing and sensory awareness exercise that remained the same throughout the sessions. A teaching/lecture session was next, followed by an improvisational game or two. Each week a different element of present moment awareness was introduced. At the end of each session, the participants filled out a brief journal prompt answering one to three questions about the specific element taught that night. The first and last week included the participants' pre and post surveys, respectively. Since the focus of this research is to study how present moment awareness affects presentation skills, questions were specific to only those present moment awareness elements studied in each class session. The following table outlines the class structure, aspects studied, and goals.

Table 5: Course Structure to Explore the Five Elements of Present Moment Awareness

	Structure	Aspects Studied	Goals
Class #1	Breathing Exercise Tense/Release Improvisation	Breath Body Awareness Spontaneity, ability to let loose while focusing.	Develop projection, sensory awareness, connection with peers and audience, relaxation, and present moment awareness. Develop body awareness working toward Sensory awareness. Point of concentration, connection with peers and audience, lessen fear/self-consciousness.
Class #2	Breathing Exercise Intention Three Circle Theory Improvisation	Same exercises from previous class, plus: Focus and fear Rodenburg's Three Circles of Energy To include environment	Same exercises from previous class, plus: To replace fear and stage fright with focus and more directed energy. To add factors to the improvisational context and maintain focus and spontaneity.
Class # 3	Breathing Exercise Voice Improvisation	Same exercises from previous class, plus: Vocal ability	Same exercises from previous class, plus: To improve projection, diction, enunciation, and audience connection.
Class #4	Breathing Exercise Body and Sensory Awareness Improvisation	Same exercises from previous class, plus: Breathing exercises More complex games	Same exercises from previous class, plus: To improve total body and projection, diction, enunciation, and speaker/audience connection. Research the accumulative effects of more complex improvisational games.
Class # 5	Breathing Exercise Rodenburg's Three Circles of Energy Final Presentations Post Surveys Peer Reviews	Same exercises from previous class, plus: Lecture Assessment of skills learned Has the audience learned to be more discerning?	Same exercises from previous class, plus: Explore speaker self-awareness of Three Circles of energy while delivering Final Presentation Speakers will have more present moment awareness be stronger communicators. Improvement in presentation and viewing/listening ability.

VII. *The Participants*

The participants were volunteers in the study, and each participant signed a consent form showing his or her willingness to participate. The participants included eight females and one male who had signed up for the UCSC-Extension course prior to knowing about this study. In order to ensure confidentiality, the researcher randomly assigned students a research study number (P1 through P10) prior to the beginning of the first class session. One registered student/participant (P8) did not attend the class. Six of the eight participants in the class were second language learners, with English being their second language. Undergraduate degrees were held by five students, three students held graduate degrees, and one student had not acquired an academic degree. Current job titles included: HR Compensation Analyst, Secretary, HR Generalist, Executive Assistants (two participants), and Technical Training Manager. One participant described herself as a “stay at home Mom,” and another as currently unemployed.

Time in the participants’ current positions ranged from four months to five years. The number of years in their professions ranged from one and a half years to fifteen years. Previous occupations included: Elephant Trainer, Benefits Analyst, Manager of High End Retail, Waitress/Bartender, Human Resources, Systems Engineer and Product Manager, HR Generalist Consultant, HR Analyst, Compensation/Benefits Analyst.

The participants were asked pre survey questions to establish a baseline of their presentation skills. When asked to rate their experience as presenters, five of the nine participants said they were experienced, three participants said they were very experienced, and one participant said highly experienced. When students were asked to

estimate the number of presentations each had delivered in their career, four students had presented less than ten times. Two students said they had delivered more than 100 presentations. Students were asked to check any classes or training in their background that could pertain to presentation skills. Two students had participated in Speech and Debate, three had singing experience, three had breath technique training, two had played team sports, one had corporate training focusing on presentation skills, two had done some acting, two had meditation training and one had participated in an improvisation class. Other experiences reported that related to public speaking included daily presentations about animals, radio show host, and delivering freshman orientations at a college.

VIII. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection methods included the use of pre and post surveys, interviews, researcher field notes and observations, participant journal responses, and written peer reviews of each participant's final presentation. The collection methods for each instrument and an overview of each method are described below. Additionally, as the overall participants constituted a small sample size (nine participants total), each participant's data were compiled into an individual case study (see Chapter 4). These case studies were then analyzed through the lens of the primary research question and sub-questions of the four elements (see Chapter 5).

Pre and Post Surveys

The purpose of the pre and post surveys (see Appendices A and B) was to collect general background data on each participant, as well as to understand how the participants in the course viewed their presentation skills at the beginning of the course in comparison to the end of the course. The pre survey included questions such as: age, gender, degrees held, experience as a presenter, current job title, number of years in this profession, previous occupations, etc.

Additionally, participants were asked to rate themselves on their comfort levels and perceived skills sets in the presentation skills area. A Lickert Scale format was used and participants answered eight questions with “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Neutral,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly Disagree.” Participants were also asked to list any additional comments regarding their presentation skills (both pre and post).

The post survey included the same eight presentation skills questions presented at the first class meeting and was administered in Class #5 at the end of the session.

The researcher compared each participant’s responses from the pre survey to those of the post survey and noted any changes in each case study. Responses were recorded on a Table (see Table 6) dividing participant responses to each of the eight individual questions. The following point scale was applied to the Lickert Scale answers: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 4, Strongly Disagree = 5

Participant Journal Prompts

The purpose of the journal prompts was to record an individual written response from each participant in relation to each area of present moment awareness directly after

each element was taught. This revealed how the participants viewed their own growth (or non-growth) in each area. The prompt was handed out during the last ten minutes of class. One to four specific prompts/questions were used, depending on the area of present moment awareness that was addressed in that class. The participants' individual responses were woven into each case study. Various elements of present moment awareness were addressed through games and activities at each class session as follows:

First Class, Element: *Improvisation*

While not an improvisational exercise, the Breathing Circle exercise was practiced at the start of each class. Tennis Ball and Magic Machine were the improvisational exercises taught during the first class. Prompt questions asked at the end of class included:

1. How did the improvisation exercises that you participated in affect your focus?
2. What did you find out about your ability to connect with others while improvising?
3. What did you notice about your ability to be spontaneous while doing the improvisation exercise?

Second Class, Element: *Intention*

The Breathing Circle and the Tug of War exercises were taught in the second class to introduce the concept of focus. Prompt questions included:

1. How did the Tug of War exercise affect your concentration and connection with your peers?

2. Did you notice any differences in your breathing while doing the Tug of War exercise?

3. In what ways did (or did not) the Tug of War exercise affect your vocal projection, diction, pacing, and timing?

Third Class, Element: *Voice*

The Breathing Circle, Gibberish and the Move the Piano exercises were taught on the third night of instruction. The prompt questions included:

1. What did you notice about how your body, breath and voice responded for you while you were doing the exercise?

2. In what ways did (or did not) the Gibberish exercise affect your breath, projection, diction, pacing, and timing?

Fourth Class, Element: *Body/Sensory Awareness*

The Breathing Circle and Deaf Audience exercises were taught in the fourth class.

The prompt questions included:

1. What physical awareness did you have (if any) during the Breathing Circle exercise?

2. What did you notice about your body being available to you during the Deaf Audience exercise?

3. How might this awareness of your body help you as a presenter in the future?

Fifth Class: Final Presentations, Three Circles of Energy, Peer Reviews and Post Surveys

The Breathing Circle exercise was used, Rodenburg's Three Circles of energy lecture was delivered, and final presentations were delivered by each student. The

Participant Evaluation Forms were filled out, handed to each presenter, collected, and copied by the researcher and then coded to participant number. Participants completed a Three Circles of energy questionnaire, which included twenty-seven questions exploring their self-awareness with regard to the Three Circles of energy. The post survey was completed by participants.

Researcher Field Notes, Observations/Journal

A formatted observation form was used for each class session (see Appendix H). The researcher recorded observation notes pertaining to noted changes in the participant's understanding or improvement in present moment awareness skills (sometimes including who displayed the change, what the change was, at what point in the exercise the change was displayed, and where or in what exercise the change was displayed). The field note format included four quadrants that noted the four components of present moment awareness. Log entries also included researcher notes such as quotations, phrases (example: "Researcher noticed that Participant #1 was struggling with vocal projection..."). Also included were: conversations; surprising, confusing events or statements; reflections on observations; tentative theories; assumptions; what is working; what is not working; and descriptions of events and ideas about teaching (Anderson 4).

Peer Review

Audience peer reviews revealed how the participants viewed the growth (or non-growth) of their peers. Numbers were used instead of names and the list of names was kept separately. At the final class meeting, participants delivered their final

presentations. Peers were asked to fill in the appropriate space on a Lickert Scale form rating the speaker's delivery skill from extremely effective to ineffective. Skills observed included those listed among the four elements of present moment awareness: improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness. Specific skills observed and rated included: enunciation, spontaneity, focus, breath control, projection, gesture size, etc. The forms were collected and each participant received the evaluations of the other eight class members. There was a discussion at the end of class. Students were asked to share one thing they improved upon during the session and to tell the person to their right one thing that they had improved upon.

Participant Interviews

The purpose of the participant interviews was to reveal a more in-depth understanding of the selected participants' experiences in the class and the participants' own revelations about their experience and growth. It was also used to validate the researcher's own perceptions and field notes. Three volunteer participants were selected randomly before the first class convened. The participants who were selected randomly each gave consent for an additional interview. The interviews were held individually, outside of class, one week after class ended. They were audio and video-recorded. The interview questions used for this study followed an open-ended protocol (see Appendix J). The same interview protocol was applied with each participant. The interview protocol questions were based on the four elements of present moment awareness, but also included additional questions pertaining to the participants' personal challenges, successes, and interpretations of their work during the course. The interviews were

transcribed and coded utilizing the four elements of present moment awareness. The results of the three interviews are included within the case study of each relevant participant in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

I. Pre and Post Survey Results

The purpose of the pre and post surveys was to collect general background data on each participant, as well as to understand how the participants viewed their presentation skills at the beginning of the course in comparison to the end of the course. The pre survey questionnaire (see Appendix A) included background questions such as: age, gender, degrees held, experience as a presenter, current job title, number of years in this profession, previous occupations, etc.

Additionally, participants were asked to rate themselves on their comfort levels and perceived presentation skills. Participants were also asked to list any additional comments regarding their presentation skills (both pre and post). The post survey included the same eight presentation skill statements presented at the first class meeting and was administered in Class #5 at the end of the session. The participants were asked to respond to the following statements on a five point Lickert scale:

1. I feel comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation (improvisation).
2. I am aware of the audience and their responses when giving a presentation (improvisation).
3. When making a presentation I can easily “go with the flow” and be spontaneous with the material and the audience (improvisation).

4. When making a presentation, I experience fearful reactions in my body such as difficulty breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in my stomach, tight throat, etc. (body/sensory awareness).
5. When delivering a presentation, I am focused and present (intention).
6. I feel comfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience (voice).
7. I feel present and in control of my body when delivering a presentation (body/sensory).
8. If I feel a nervous reaction in my body before or during a presentation, I have techniques that I can use to calm the nervous reaction (body/sensory).

It should be noted that because of the wording in question number four, the positive change for that question is the opposite on the scale from the other questions. This was taken into account when reporting the average overall data listed below.

For the purpose of reporting the data, each possible response was given a number from 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1=Strongly Agree
- 2=Agree
- 3=Neutral
- 4=Disagree
- 5=Strongly Disagree

Each participant's pre response and post response was charted, and any changes from pre to post were noted. Pre and post comments were also charted (see Appendix K). Figure 1 depicts the nine participant's combined average responses to each question both pre and post. Table 6, which immediately follows Figure 1 below, shows the average overall changes from pre to post survey.

Figure 1: Pre and Post Survey Results – Averaged Responses

Table 6: Average Overall Changes from Pre to Post Survey

Survey Question	Average Pre Response	Average Post Response	Change from Pre to Post
1	3.1	1.9	1.2
2	2.6	1.6	1.0
3	3.7	2.0	1.7
4	3.8	2.8	1.0
5	2.9	1.9	1.0
6	3.0	1.8	1.2
7	2.6	1.8	0.8
8	4.1	1.6	2.5

All of the eight questions show a positive shift towards the “agree” side illustrating that overall the nine participants viewed their presentation skills more positively at the end of the course than at the beginning of the course. Of particular note is question number eight (“I have techniques that I can use to calm a nervous reaction”), which showed the biggest shift towards the “agree” side.

The participants’ individual responses to each of the survey questions are noted in the following case studies.

II. Case Studies

Case Study Participant 1: Imee

Background Information

Imee has worked in Human Resources (HR) for five years and holds a Bachelor’s Degree in HR Management. Currently looking for work, the former waitress describes herself as a stay-at-home mom. In her pre survey background information, Imee rated herself as a “low experience” presenter and estimated that she had done less than ten

presentations in her career. Her experience and background included no speech, acting, or vocal training. English is her second language.

Pre and Post Survey Results

In the pre survey, Imee disagreed with the statement, “I feel safe and comfortable delivering a presentation.” Her response to this question moved to “neutral” in the post survey. Most of Imee’s pre survey answers were in the neutral range, and moved up a point or two (e.g., from “neutral” to “agree” or “strongly agree”) in the post survey. It should be noted that Imee went from disagree (pre survey) to strongly agree (post survey) when asked if she had techniques to deal with her nervous reactions. Imee mentioned in her pre survey comments that she tended to stutter when nervous. She said in her post survey comments that she was aware that she needed to work on her diction and practice it more.

Participant Journal Responses

In her journal, Imee noted her ability to be in the present moment without feeling silly during improvisation exercises, and she also remarked that she enjoyed the exercises and being spontaneous. During the intention exercise (Tug of War), Imee wrote that she was very focused on winning, that she became bossier, and that her voice became loud and assertive. She mentioned that the voice exercise (Gibberish) affected her projection, diction, pacing, and timing, and that her timing felt “off” while trying to present in Gibberish. During the Breathing Circle exercise, Imee reflected that she became aware of her heart beating, and that she felt more relaxed. She wrote that she liked the exercise because it made her release the tension of the day from her body, relieving her anxiety.

Furthermore, Imee wrote that she plans to use the Breathing Circle exercise before any future presentations.

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Imee's peers rated her final presentation delivery skills (focus, pacing, concentration, projection, use of body, etc.) from "neutral" to "extremely effective," with only one "slightly ineffective" rating regarding her diction. Imee's content evaluations (opening, organization, transitions, closing) were rated "extremely effective." Peer comments included statements such as: "very good presence," "well organized," "established credibility through personal stories," "I enjoyed listening to you," and "you didn't seem nervous to me." Imee's peers reported a need for her to develop clarity of voice, and that she was "eating some words."

After delivering her final class presentation Imee reported a new awareness of herself within each of the three circles of energy. She noticed that a lack of preparation made her feel "unfocused" and not connected with the audience. Imee explained that she wanted to be in the Second Circle of energy and remain connected with the audience, and that she would practice more in the future before delivering her presentations. She said that she really enjoyed the class and appreciated the "valuable lessons about presentation."

Instructor/Researcher Observations and Field Notes

Imee came into class mentioning how "nervous" she felt in front of an audience. Field notes indicate that the instructor did not perceive her to be nervous; Imee exhibited a strong personality, an easy smile, and a sense of humor. The only indication of nerves

was a lack of vocal projection, poor diction, and a lack of content organization. Imee's diction still needed improvement after the five class sessions.

Interview

This participant was not randomly selected for an interview.

Conclusion

By the final presentation, Imee exhibited more confidence and a stronger connection with the audience, responding easily to audience reactions and feedback. Her organizational skills and projection improved. Her diction still needed improvement.

Case Study Participant 2: Chun

Background Information

Currently working as an HR Compensation and Benefits Analyst, Chun holds a Bachelor of Arts. She has worked as an HR analyst for two years. She rated herself an "experienced speaker," estimating that she has made 10-25 presentations throughout her career. Her experience and background included singing lessons, team sports, and a college class on presentations.

Pre and Post Survey Results

In the pre survey, Chun disagreed that she could easily "go with the flow" and be spontaneous with material and the audience while delivering a presentation. She gave mid-range responses ("neutral" or "agree") to the seven other pre survey questions, such as, "when delivering a presentation I am focused and present." In the post survey Chun strongly agreed with the survey questions and statements, indicating a strong change in how she felt about her presentation skills. Chun strongly disagreed that she experienced

fearful reactions in her body such as difficulty breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in the stomach, and tight throat. In her additional post survey comments Chun mentioned an awareness of the importance of breathing, and clarity of her intention to be excited about what she was speaking about.

Participant Journal Responses

In her journal responses, Chun listed improvements in spontaneity, focus, and the ability to connect with others while doing improvisation exercises. She wrote that the Tennis Ball exercise reminded her to maintain eye contact with the audience to see if audience members were ready to receive information. During the intention exercise (Tug of War), Chun said she was reminded to look at the opposite team for “signs and reactions.” Chun commented that the voice exercise (Gibberish) affected her breath, projection, diction, pacing, and timing, and further explained, “This was a useful exercise to focus on my projection to communicate to the group.” Chun reported greater body/sensory awareness after practicing the Breathing Circle and the Deaf Audience exercises, noting that the exercises made her relax and allowed her body to gesture more in order to bring out the ideas of her presentation.

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Chun’s peers rated her final presentation delivery skills (focus, pacing, projection enunciation diction, breath control) as “extremely effective.” They rated her use of body, overall energy, and gesture size as “neutral” or “effective.” Chun received “extremely effective” ratings regarding her content specifics (opening, organization, transitions, closing). Peer comments regarding her confidence, competence, and credibility included:

“very good presence,” “very well composed,” and “doesn’t look nervous or uncomfortable.” Peer comments about Chun’s strengths included, “you are a great trainer,” “well spoken,” and “in charge, pleasant, strong, positive, and calm.” Chun’s only peer comments regarding areas to develop were, “stop saying ‘um,’” and “show more energy.”

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Chun came to class with speaking experience and some presentation skills training. She was employed, but she was looking for a better position. She sat apart from the group much of the time, yet she was extremely attentive. Teacher field notes indicate that Chun was shy during the improvisation exercises. She had difficulty focusing and nervously smiled a lot. She was instructed to “not smile” no matter what. She did as instructed and her focus immediately improved. She was an extremely disciplined student. Her pre and post survey responses showed that she felt strong improvement in her presentation skills. This improvement was noticeable. Instructor field notes reflect an increase in confidence, spontaneity, relaxed voice, sense of humor and strong connection with the audience. The instructor commented on Chun’s excellent presentation structure and control of the audience, beautiful voice, good organization, good story-telling and strong connection with the audience.

Interview

This participant was not randomly selected for an interview.

Conclusion

Chun's pre and post survey responses indicate an increase in all aspects of present moment awareness. Chun reported greater connection with the audience, ease in spontaneity and vocal ability, and heightened body/sensory awareness. Chun was the hardest working student in the class, and this showed throughout her final presentation. She was always prepared and diligently practiced not smiling. She conveyed a strong yet likeable personality and very effective presentation skills. Chun followed instructions, applying techniques effectively in each exercise and presentation.

Case Study Participant 3: Karen

Background Information

Karen refers to herself as an HR Generalist and has been in this job for one year. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Biology. Karen is a former elephant trainer and said she misses that work. Because she delivered more than one hundred lectures during her elephant-training career, she rated herself an experienced speaker. Her background experience included a wide range of activities such as school plays, singing classes, delivering freshman orientation talks, meditation/relaxation techniques, and team sports.

Pre and Post Survey Results

In the pre survey, Karen strongly agreed that she felt comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation. She agreed that she felt focused and present, in control of her body, and aware of the audience when delivering a presentation. Even though she was an experienced and somewhat confident speaker, in her post survey Karen reported an improvement in techniques to calm nervous reactions in her body before or during a

presentation. Karen's post survey responses included statements indicating her appreciation of teacher feedback and learning new techniques. She wrote, "I was interactive in presenting before, but now I feel more confident being in the present moment while presenting."

Participant Journal Responses

In her participant journal responses, Karen reported feeling self-conscious during the improvisation exercises. She wrote that she was very aware of what others were thinking of her during the Tennis Ball exercise. She gained awareness that it is sometimes hard for her to be relaxed while in an uncomfortable environment. During the intention exercise (Tug of War), Karen noticed a difference in her breathing, and she noticed a need for concentration on the task at hand (the imaginary rope). During the vocal exercise (Gibberish), Karen became aware of the importance of tone of voice and body language to get the message across. The Breathing Circle exercise at the beginning of each class allowed Karen to bring her awareness into the present moment, letting go of what had happened throughout the day.

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Peer reviews of Karen's final presentation were conflicting. While peer comments were generally positive, including comments that Karen was a great public speaker, at ease, confident, strong, articulate, and that she did a great job, Karen received few "extremely effective" ratings on her delivery skills or presentation content. There was mention of Karen's over-dependence on PowerPoint® slides, which disconnected her from the audience.

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Teacher field notes report the nervousness Karen experienced. Karen needed to breathe more deeply before leaving her chair to present. She nervously smiled and giggled during improvisation exercises, but she was able to focus after being instructed to concentrate. Karen appeared more focused during the intention Tug of War exercise, later sharing with the class that she really did not want to be “pulled into the mud.” During her final presentation, Karen used too many visual slides and depended on these slides too often. She rarely smiled and had a negative attitude. She needed to connect with the audience more.

Interview

This participant was not randomly selected for an interview.

Conclusion

Karen came into class with presentation experience and confidence. She did not possess as much knowledge as she presumed. She also denied the degree of nervousness she was experiencing. Field notes report that her breathing was shallow and her body tightened before presenting. She joked with her classmate/friend while in the audience, but rarely smiled while presenting. With new techniques (intention, breathing, voice) and direct guidance, she said she did become a more focused, relaxed, and effective presenter.

Case Study, Participant 4: Jane

Background Information

Previously a waitress and bartender, Jane has been an Executive Assistant for six years and is currently earning a Bachelor of Arts and an HR Certificate. Jane listed her

experience as a presenter as low, estimating the number of presentations she has delivered as less than ten. Jane reported no experience relating to public speaking training such as vocal training, acting, Toastmasters, debate, etc.

Pre and Post Survey Results

Jane's pre survey responses disclosed an awareness of her problems communicating in groups. Her answers indicated a common theme of severe nervousness before and during any presentation experience. She mentioned strong bodily reactions to her nervousness, such as trouble breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in the stomach and tight throat. When asked if she had any techniques to calm her nervous reactions, she said she had none. In her additional comments, Jane said she wanted to find a way to control her facial flushing and learn how to find her place after losing her train of thought. She said she became easily "spooked" and was unable to recover gracefully regardless of how well she knew the material.

Jane's post survey responses showed dramatic improvement. She reported that practicing the elements of present moment awareness affected her presentation skills positively. Her response changed from "strongly disagree" in the pre survey to "strongly agree" in the post survey when describing whether she had techniques to calm her nervous reactions. In her comments Jane said, "I feel that the skills I learned in this class: breathing, being present, being organized allowed me to improve my skills tremendously from when I walked in."

Participant Journal Responses

When asked how the improvisation exercises affected her focus, spontaneity, and ability to connect with others while improvising, Jane said that the Tennis Ball exercise “Made [her] extremely present in the moment.” The Magic Machine exercise gave her the giggles and she found she was unable to focus, but Jane did report a greater awareness of other group members during the exercise. The Tug of War exercise highlighted her awareness of how to react to non-verbal actions and reactions from a group. Jane said the exercise gave her a sense of purpose to focus on (intention), which made the exercise more meaningful to her. She decided her intention was to “Not fall in the mud!” Jane said in her Participant Journal, “I felt the Gibberish exercise forced you to make eye contact with the subjects and project to get their attention. Pacing and timing affected how well they responded to the Gibberish instructions.”

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Jane’s Peer Evaluations were positive; she received no “slightly effective” or “ineffective” ratings and only five “neutral” responses, whereas fifty-six responses were listed as “effective” and fifty-one responses were listed as “extremely effective.” Additional comments from the peer evaluation responses included: “confident, competent, and credible.” Comments on Jane’s strengths included, “ability to get point across,” “strong, positive, articulate, great PowerPoint®.” Areas to develop included comments such as, “keep going even when distracted,” “nervousness,” and “don’t be nervous!”

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Jane came to the class with an extreme fear of public speaking and little presentation experience. At the first class meeting she sat unsmiling with eyes averted. During introductions she exhibited a tense body posture. Her shoulders were hunched forward and her arms were crossed. She had a withdrawn personality, showing little or no emotion. She expressed almost no reaction to the comments of other class members. When asked a question directly, her face would flush and she would answer as briefly as possible with a weak, monotone voice. Field Notes indicated that Jane, who was the most shy and introverted at the first class meeting, showed improvement in vocal projection, spontaneity and clarity. The Gibberish exercise allowed for a greater freedom of movement and energy; Jane's personality shined through, and the audience showed generous appreciation by smiling, nodding their heads in agreement with her statements and offering applause.

Interview

Randomly selected for this interview, Jane was asked questions from the research tools applied in this study: Pre and Post Surveys, Participant Journal Responses, Peer Evaluation Forms and Researcher Field Notes. The open-ended questions sought to elucidate individual understanding of the elements of present moment awareness (improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness). The objective of the interview was to explore more deeply the extent to which Jane applied each element and to see how the practice of any or all of the elements affected the growth (or non-growth) of presentation skills for the business speaker both during the training and after.

Jane said in the interview that she signed up for the class because she was aware she was a terrible public speaker and needed help. She said she knew it was obvious that she had a lot of anxiety, and that her face turned bright red when speaking in public. During presentations Jane also felt herself unable to breathe deeply, and she found that she would get “spooked,” then abruptly stop talking and be unable to recover.

Discussing the element of improvisation and spontaneity, Jane said, “My girlfriend and I went to a Zumba class yesterday. I was like, who cares if they’re looking at me. This is fun. That would be one example of something spontaneous I had done, that maybe I wouldn’t have done before.”

Jane did not notice physical changes (including breathing and vocal projection) in response to the intention exercise (Tug of War). The larger concept of the element of intention, however, resonated professionally and personally with Jane. Her comments during the interview expressed her newfound application and appreciation of the tool of intention clearly:

Most important in my career is being able to communicate what I want from my career, to my boss. I think there’s a tendency to hope someone recognizes you and tells you, “You’re good. I’m gonna give you a promotion.” So, for me, I felt confident enough to say, “Look, this is what I want from my career, and this is what I want to do. Can we have a conversation about this?” And, we are. It’s not to say that I wouldn’t have that conversation before, but I would have it in a different way. Like, kind of more shoulders in, and you know, maybe if you think it’s OK, could I possibly... You know? There would be no sense of confidence behind it. And now I definitely feel it’s more like, “Look, I’ve been here for a year and I’ve worked my ass off. We clearly need another pair of hands. This is what I’m doing now, and this is what I want to be doing. What do you think about this?”

The interview continued with a discussion of how clarity of intention can eradicate nervousness and fear. Jane then provided an example of her use of intention in a personal situation:

So, this will get a little personal, here. But, in the period during this class I had been going through a tough time with the boyfriend. And, we had some issues that were not, we were not really able to resolve. And I left, I forget what class it was, and he came over. I just sat there, plain as day, and just said, “These are the things that are wrong, and these are why they were wrong.” I don’t think I’ve ever been so clear and concise. I just narrowed down on exactly what was wrong. It wasn’t emotional or dramatic, or anything. I just was able to kind of end it. And not like a crazy, dramatic, fighting sort of way. It was just, “This is not working out anymore and I’m tired of fighting you. And I don’t want this in my life anymore.” It was such a change compared to the communications that we had had before that. In that moment I definitely felt like a different person.

Jane was asked whether she felt that any of the specific exercises affected her vocal skills more than the others. One of the voice exercises focused on diction. Students were instructed, as a group, to place a pencil in their mouths, holding it tightly with their teeth. The group then read poems out loud, trying to enunciate as clearly as possible. Jane found this exercise useful: “That’s been useful at work because we have a lot of international employees and you’re on Skype, or you’re on a phone, and they have a different accent than yours. You have to have everything right so that they can understand you over the network, or whatever device you’re using to communicate.”

Continuing the interview discussion of voice, Jane was asked what she noticed about her voice and vocal abilities, such as projection, diction, pacing, etc. from the beginning of the class session to the end of the class session. Jane said she had a greater awareness of her “California girl” accent and was trying to be mindful of it when speaking to people. She cited an example of working at a recent trade show, where she

needed to communicate and explain a software program to trade show attendees. Jane said it was very technical software and she needed to sound credible. She found herself able to speak more confidently and engage people, and then refer them to a more technical person for help with specific details.

During the class that focused on body/sensory awareness, participants engaged in exercises that included the Breathing Circle and Deaf Audience. When asked, “What physical awareness did you have (if any) during the Breathing Circle,” Jane said that she became aware of how tense she was before the Breathing Circle. She said during the Breathing Circle exercise her breathing was deeper, her heartbeat calmer, and she released the tension in her body. She felt mentally clearer and calmer. By about week three, she started totally relaxing. She now uses the exercise in situations that make her feel tense (like flying) or when she feels herself blushing. Jane said she uses Breathing Circle daily whenever she feels anxiety or starts feeling overwhelmed by her workload.

During the Deaf Audience exercise, participants were instructed to deliver a brief presentation to the class. The audience was told to cover their ears, rendering themselves as deaf as possible. Participants were asked, “What did you notice about your body being available to you during the Deaf Audience?” Jane said she realized that even without words, the audience reacted to the message of her acting. She felt more aware of her movements and noticed when the audience understood what she was trying to communicate.

Conclusion

According to the Field Notes, Jane showed greater confidence, energy, projection, clarity, animation, organization, and aptitude for connecting with the audience while delivering her final presentation. At one point she seemed to lose her place and reverted to her previous behavior of flushing and almost stopping, but she did not freeze completely this time. After a quick “teacher-coaching comment,” Jane recovered her place and completed her presentation with confidence and good humor. The class agreed she was worthy of the title “most improved.”

The interview uncovered growth in Jane’s presentation skills professionally and personally. Jane reported an improved ability to speak more directly and clearly to clients, her boss and former boyfriend. She reported feeling less anxiety while speaking, and she now had techniques to calm her nervousness. The interview indicated that she is actively and successfully applying the techniques of present moment awareness in many areas of her life.

Case Study, Participant 5: Alicia

Background Information

Alicia, who has not pursued formal higher education, has been an executive assistant for one and a half years. Alicia previously worked as an HR Generalist and consultant. She rated her experience as a speaker as low, estimating less than ten presentations delivered in her career. Her experience and background included one breathing class and a Dale Carnegie course that focused on communication skills.

Pre and Post Survey Results

Alicia's pre survey responses indicated strong fearful reactions and nervousness while presenting. She reported not being focused or present when delivering a presentation and having no techniques to calm her nervous reactions before speaking. She said she felt uncomfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience. In her additional comments Alicia said she is aware that she rambles and bores people, and that she wants to learn to relax and think on her feet. There was a notable difference in her post survey responses. Alicia strongly agreed that she now had techniques that she could use to calm her nervous reactions. She noticed that her fearful reactions, such as difficulty breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in the stomach, tight throat, etc. had diminished with the training. She agreed that she now felt comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation.

Participant Journal Responses

Alicia often mentioned her self-consciousness in her journal responses; this was a recurring issue during improvisation, intention, and voice exercises. She mentioned having fun whenever she focused because she found that her self-consciousness diminished, especially when she was aware of her intention. She especially noticed the benefit of intention during the Tug of War exercise. She said that learning intention was primary for her. Alicia reported having a difficult time with the Gibberish voice exercise, finding herself unable to speak up and coordinate timing and pacing. The Breathing Circle proved to be very helpful for her. She reported a sense of calming down and "letting go" with more animation in her body. After breathing deeply, she felt more

enjoyment while presenting. Alicia said she became aware daily of trying to speak more clearly and to speak loudly enough so she could be heard.

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Alicia's peers were supportive of her final presentation efforts. Comments concerning her strengths included her ability to be a nice person and a good friend. They noted her improvement since the beginning of class and that she was positive, warm and pleasant. Regarding Alicia's areas for development, peer comments included suggestions to relax and use more eye contact. Peers rated her delivery skills mostly in the "neutral" or "effective" columns.

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Alicia came into class with behaviors that indicated low confidence, such as lack of projection and eye contact. Alicia was unsure of herself and often questioned her choices of subject or plan of organization. She lacked concentration and focus and would speak before she had organized her thoughts. There was often no clear intention.

Interview

This participant was not randomly selected for an interview.

Conclusion

Based on Alicia's pre and post surveys, journal responses and instructor field notes, Alicia did exhibit some improvement in projection, clarity and confidence while presenting. She also showed improvement in her ability to be spontaneous and less self-conscious during her final presentation. She still needed to project more and have more eye contact with the audience. When asked whether she felt focused and present when

delivering a presentation, her response changed from “disagree” in the pre survey to “strongly agree” in the post survey. In actuality, however, her final presentation showed a less dramatic change. She had not rehearsed enough and she forgot materials for the presentation. She still needed to be more organized, and to have a more specific intention or purpose.

Case Study, Participant 6: Chandra

Background Information

Chandra has been an HR Manager for four years. She holds a Masters of Business Administration and English is her second language. She rated her public speaking experience as low, estimating her total number of presentation as less than ten. In her background she said she had taken only one corporate training class that focused on presentation skills.

Pre and Post Survey Results

In the pre survey, Chandra strongly disagreed that she had techniques she could use to calm her nervous reactions, that she felt present and in control of her body when delivering a presentation, or that she could be spontaneous and go with the flow. She strongly agreed that she experienced fearful reactions in her body such as difficulty breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in her stomach and a tight throat when making a presentation. She commented on her desire to “finish her presentation fast” and that she felt as though she was eating most of her words while speaking. In the post survey, Chandra’s responses changed: she agreed that she had techniques to calm her nervous reactions, that she felt comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation, that she felt

present and in control of her body, and that she felt comfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience. She commented that the breathing exercise helped. She said that focusing on the task (intention) helped her not focus on herself so much while presenting.

Participant Journal Responses

Chandra's journal responses showed that the improvisation and intention exercises made a difference for her. She noted after the improvisation session that she focused less on herself. She said, "I was more worried about the [tennis ball], less about myself. And, I was more spontaneous." She said after the intention exercise (Tug of War), she felt more connected to her team and more focused on watching the opposing team. She used the deep breathing to relax, but was very focused on winning. She noted how her timing was affected by the other team and that she had to concentrate and pay attention. Chandra wrote, "By this exercise I came to know the importance of intention in the presentation. In the future I will be clear about the intention of my presentation before presenting, because if I am not convinced and interested in the information I cannot make people listen to me."

The voice exercises, Gibberish and Move a Piano, were not as effective for Chandra. According to her journal responses she found it difficult to communicate with the group in both exercises. She felt as though she couldn't get their attention and she felt unsure of her role. She said that she did learn the importance of being loud and clear to gain audience attention. Chandra gained greater body/sensory awareness during the Breathing Circle and the Deaf Audience exercises. She noticed how relaxed and calm

she became during the Breathing Circle and how much more energy she needed to exert to get her audience to understand her during Deaf Audience. She said she now knew how to put more energy and body language into a presentation in order to connect with the audience. Chandra explained that the exercises helped her understand how to relax, stay focused, and stay present in the moment. She added, “The presentation is not about the person who is presenting; it’s about the audience and the connection we build with them.”

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Peers rated Chandra’s delivery skills (projection, focus, overall energy, use of body, pacing) in her final presentation as “mostly effective” or “extremely effective.” They gave her mostly “neutral” ratings on her breath control and spontaneity. Chandra received “extremely effective” ratings on her opening, organization, and closing. Her peers said they enjoyed her topic, they thought she was very knowledgeable about her topic, and that she was confident. Comments on Chandra’s strengths mentioned her clarity of intention, poise, good organization, and transitions. They enjoyed the funny ending of her presentation. Areas to develop included suggestions to relax more, look at visual slides less, and “remember that you are confident. Today you seemed to hold back a little. Relax.”

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Instructor field notes report that the more Chandra focused on the audience and her intention (rather than on herself), the more effective her public speaking became. This improvement was apparent from Chandra’s clarity of subject, strong projection, and

less dependence on her slides during her final presentation. The instructor noted that she spoke articulately about her subject without swallowing her words, even though English is her second language.

Interview

Randomly selected for this interview, Chandra was asked questions from the research tools applied in this study: Pre and Post Surveys, Participant Journal Responses, Peer Evaluation Forms and Researcher Field Notes. Chandra asked for more clarification regarding understanding of the purpose of the interview and the order of questions. She seemed concerned about answering questions correctly. The interviewer/instructor explained to Chandra that there could be no right or wrong answers. The purpose of the interview was to learn more about how she perceived her experience during and after the class. The interview sought to understand more deeply how (or how not) the elements of present moment awareness (improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness) affected her presentation skills. This clarification seemed to comfort Chandra. The discussion began with descriptions of each of the elements taught, making sure Chandra remembered each element and its purpose. After these explanations, the formal interview began.

When asked if she noticed any difference with regard to her spontaneity and ability to improvise after the improvisation exercises, Chandra said, “Improvisation is not something that made sense to me.” She said she liked the other elements better and that they gave her more confidence to communicate. When asked if she noticed any difference with regard to connecting with peers or with the audience after the

improvisation class, she said yes. Chandra explained that improvisation did allow her to focus on communicating rather than focus on herself.

The next questions focused on the element of intention. Chandra shared that the idea of intention was new to her: “I knew you have to introduce yourself, then you have to summarize, conclusion, the body. But the intention, I was not really familiar with this term. It’s really important to know what your intention is.” Chandra connected the value of intention to the following question about the element of voice. When asked if she had noticed anything about her vocal abilities, Chandra responded, “I think vocal and intention go together. When I’m clear with my intention, it’s easier for me to be clear and vocal about it. So, these are inter-related: the intention and the vocal. These two really worked for me.”

When asked about body/sensory awareness, Chandra said she noticed feeling more present after the Breathing Circle. She said that this exercise helped her to release pressure and tension. She noticed that she became less self-conscious and could focus on others. She added that she has continued to take deep breaths when she is doing something that makes her nervous.

Finally, Chandra was asked to talk about any changes or lack of changes she noticed since taking the class and practicing the elements of present moment awareness. Chandra said that the elements of intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness worked well for her. She said clarity of intention helped her be in the present moment. She is practicing being clearer with her intentions before she speaks. Chandra said, “If you are

comfortable with your intention, then other people will be. They will receive and then they will be happy about the presentation. Otherwise everybody will be brooding.”

Conclusion

It was clear from Chandra’s interview, her journal, and her post survey responses that Chandra found the elements of intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness most meaningful and helpful. According to the pre and post surveys and peer evaluations, experiencing instruction in these elements allowed her to feel more comfortable, to speak more assertively, and to appreciate the value of connecting with the audience. Furthermore, Chandra now has techniques to help her with her nervous reactions when presenting: “I strongly believe that these skills will greatly benefit me in my future presentations.” Chandra said that she did not find the improvisation exercises as helpful to her.

Case Study, Participant 7: Robert

Background Information

Robert holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and a Masters of Business Administration. Robert has been a Technical Training and Program Manager for two years. He listed previous occupations as Systems Engineer, Project Manager, IT Consultant, and Marketing Manager. He was a very articulate non-native English speaker. He listed no extra-curricular experience such as acting or Toastmasters, and he rated himself an “experienced presenter” having delivered 50-100 presentations in his career. Robert was the most experienced speaker in the class.

Pre and Post Survey Results

Robert's pre and post survey responses indicated that he viewed himself as confident in his presentation skills. In his pre survey, Robert agreed that he felt comfortable and safe when delivering presentations. He strongly agreed that he felt focused and present while presenting. Robert answered all of the other presentation skills questions with either "neutral" or "agree," indicating that he felt self-aware when presenting. The differences in Robert's responses from the pre survey to the post survey were minimal; he reported slight improvement in each answer, but in extremely narrow increments (e.g., moving only one space from "agree" to "strongly agree"). Robert believed that he had techniques to calm any nervous reactions. Robert mentioned in his additional post survey comments that the class had helped him be more aware of his abilities and shortcomings.

Participant Journal Responses

When asked how the improvisation exercises affected his focus, Robert reported the need to be aware of his surroundings in the Tennis Ball exercise. He had to make eye contact with others so he could catch the imaginary tennis ball. He said this exercise improved his spontaneity and connection with others. During the Magic Machine exercise, Robert noticed the need to go inward and concentrate, blocking out surrounding distractions, so he could do his job in the machine.

Robert found the Gibberish exercise difficult and said, "It was not a very successful exercise for me. I had a hard time with Gibberish talk. It was much more difficult to communicate without the ability to communicate verbally. I did not feel

confident with the exercise, but understood the good.” During the Deaf Audience exercise Robert said that he experienced his body becoming “...an instrument of communication as my words are.” Robert said the Breathing Circle exercise was very effective and got him connected, grounded, and focused. He reported feeling more centered and aware of what he was doing.

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Peer reviews of Robert’s final presentation showed a discrepancy between Robert’s estimation of his effectiveness as a presenter and what his peers experienced and observed. His focus was rated as only “slightly effective.” His ease of delivery, spontaneity, timing, and breath control received “neutral” ratings. Positive comments included remarks about Robert’s good presence and confidence, and that it was easy to tell that Robert had speaking experience. There were many comments in the “areas to develop” section, however, that suggested Robert had significant room for improvement. Peers said they felt as though Robert was talking down to them, that he needed to focus more on the positive in his presentation, that he was harsh, and that they felt as though they were “in trouble” and were going to automatically fail. They felt Robert’s content was difficult to understand.

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Instructor field notes report how confident and helpful Robert was. Robert had more speaking experience than the others, and he came into class exhibiting excellent leadership skills. Robert was a good storyteller and had a strong appearance, but he tended to lean his head far to the right when speaking, which weakened his presence

when speaking. He said this was an eye problem and that he was planning on getting new glasses. As Robert mentioned in his participant journal, the Gibberish exercise was not effective for him. He experienced a struggle in communicating with the audience – because he was unable to use his voice, he wanted to mime the exercise. When encouraged to vocalize and speak out using Gibberish, however, Robert seemed to enjoy presenting, and the audience understood his message.

Interview

Robert was very forthcoming in his interview. Because his class experiences, thoughts, and learnings about the elements of present moment awareness were so well articulated, more direct quotations will be included in his interview than the others.

Robert was asked to describe his ability to be spontaneous and to improvise before taking the class and after. He said most of his presentations were done over the phone. He suggested dividing his answer into two groups: presentations he did over the phone and in-person communications. He said that he used the same present moment awareness techniques in both situations, and that both situations benefited from the techniques learned in class. Robert said that as a “cerebral person,” he experienced rigidity at the beginning of the improvisation exercises and couldn’t “get in the groove.” He noticed that as he stopped trying to make sense of each exercise, he was more able to “go with the flow.” He said he became aware of two-way communication between himself and his audience: he was developing an ability to see if what he was saying was actually being absorbed. Robert noticed different layers of understanding and said, “I have become more aware of what I am trying to get across. Is it being heard? Is it being

understood? Is it being internalized to a point where you really have communication? I have become more attuned to the response that I get back.”

Discussing the element of intention, Robert was asked to elaborate upon how he felt at the beginning of class, where he ended up at the end of class, and where he felt he was now. He said he felt he was operating at a high level with regard to intention at the beginning of class. He thought that because he was a program manager, that he had to be very organized and clear about his intentions. He said that since taking the class, he now had the feedback mechanism that helped him gauge from the audience whether his intentions were being understood or not. “Are people getting what I’m trying to get them to understand?” Robert explained that he was now looking for more feedback from the audience.

Robert felt at the beginning of class he needed the most help with his vocal abilities. He was aware that he would start a presentation, quickly ramp up, and remain at a fast pace and high volume throughout. During the voice exercises he learned that he needed to get his breath under control before he started. He could then control his pacing and projection more effectively. Robert went on to share that during a weekly update with his manager and core team, he found himself frustrated with the team members on the other end of the telephone line. When the call was over, Robert’s co-worker said, “It was clear that you were reaching across the phone line for their throats.” Robert remarked:

I’m not sure if I’m able to control my voice. When my buttons are pushed, my voice becomes extremely powerful, and it can be used as a weapon in getting the point across. And this is not the first time this had happened. There are similar

incidences. So I am trying to get my arms around the voice component, using it when need be, instead of being pushed to using it and not being able to control it.

Robert continued on to say that before taking the class, all he would have known was that he was angry and showed it. He now recognizes that the voice has power and can be controlled, even over the phone. “No four letter words, nothing nasty, just being very clear, but using the intonation, the power of the voice to let the folks know my displeasure. Before, all I would have known was that I was unhappy and just exploded.”

When asked to describe whether or not he had noticed differences in his body/sensory awareness, Robert said the one thing he used most was the Breathing Circle technique. He said he not only used it getting prepared for a presentation, but throughout the course of the day. He said he used the breathing exercise as a means of disengaging from “hustle and bustle.” Instead of the day controlling him, he used the Breathing Circle exercise as a “fire-wall” to control the next few minutes in order to accomplish what he was after. During the Breathing Circle in class, Robert noticed that “the group would change gears, disengaging completely from the hustle and bustle that was behind the classroom door. We shifted into a completely different speed. Because we’re being pulled in many different directions during the day, it is an extremely helpful tool.”

Robert discussed his awareness of being in the present moment. He said that he was trying to practice being in the Second Circle of energy at work and in his personal relationships. He said that he is trying to stay mostly in Second Circle, not only in presentations, but also in daily conversations: “Going to the kitchenette at work, running into somebody. I try and make even that short interaction something that is beyond, ‘How’s it going?’ and the guy says, ‘My wife is sick, dog just died, and the car is on the

fritz.’ And I say, ‘Good, good, nice to see you.’ And keep moving.” Robert said he is trying to be aware of making interactions more worthwhile.

All three interviewees were asked whether they wanted to add anything that may have been missed in the questioning, or that they experienced in class. Robert felt the interview was very comprehensive, but he wanted to add the following remarks, which bridge the arenas of presentation skills and acting:

I realized before the end of the first class that this is a world, the world you [instructor/researcher] live in professionally, is something that I am not at all aware of. What I mean is I have probably not looked at a TV show or a movie with the same eye since then. And that different eye is, because of your personal background and acting and the theatre, you opened the window to a world I knew nothing about. And I see glimpses of it, of those techniques, how the stuff that you tried to pass on to us, to the class, I can see their professional application when I watch a movie. Or a TV show. And now I can tell why I do not like one actor versus the other. Or I do not like that person portraying the role. I can see the differences. Perhaps before, I might have known it instinctively, and it was an emotional response. Now it’s moving from the emotions further up, towards the head, where I have the analytical tools, and the techniques that I’ve picked up here in class, because of you opening that window for me.

Conclusion

Robert came into class with more speaking experience than the other participants. He exhibited a strong personality, and an ability to instruct and help others. Field notes report that his presentation skills were not up to his self-evaluation. His pre survey responses indicated that he felt his techniques were more effective than they appeared in actuality. Peer reviews agreed with the evaluation of the instructor. Peers said that Robert needed to improve his vocal technique (timing and breath control) and clarity of both intention and spontaneity. There were also comments regarding his harsh manner during his final presentation.

The interview proved to be helpful in digging deeper into Robert's experience. He offered insights into the class experience that furthered understanding of how the elements of present moment awareness affect presentation skills for the business speaker. Robert was more able to elaborate how the class experience revealed techniques to him that he had not been able to access previously. Robert realized that when he applied the vocal, breathing, and intention techniques professionally and personally, they had impact.

Case Study, Participant 9: Katarina *Background Information*

Katarina holds a Masters in Business Administration and is currently unemployed. She spent fifteen years as a high-end retail manager. She is a high level non-native English speaker. A former radio show and event host, she rated herself a very experienced speaker. Her experience and background included some acting, speech and debate, and she had taken singing lessons.

Pre and Post Survey Results

In the pre survey, Katarina disagreed that she felt comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation. She disagreed that she had techniques that she could use to calm nervous reactions in her body. She also disagreed that she could easily go with the flow and be spontaneous with the material and the audience. She agreed that she was aware of the audience, felt comfortable speaking loudly and clearly, and that she felt present and in control of her body while delivering a presentation. In the post survey, Katarina changed her responses: she now strongly agreed that she felt focused, present, in

control of her body, and comfortable speaking loudly and clearly when presenting. She added in her additional comments that she “loved learning organization and intention.”

Participant Journal Responses

Katarina said in her participant journal responses that she focused on receiving the ball in the Tennis Ball exercise and that the Magic Machine exercise was difficult but effective for focusing. She reported that part of her felt disconnected from the group during the Magic Machine exercise and part of her loved being part of the group. She said that her participation in the improvisation exercises, as well as watching others do the same thing, improved her ability to be spontaneous. Katarina did not find the Tug of War exercise effective for concentration because the space in the hall was not appropriate. She reported feeling no difference vocally in the Tug of War and Move a Piano exercise. She did notice that her voice and body had more power during the Gibberish exercise because her focus was on intention, pacing, and timing, rather than diction. During the Deaf Audience exercise Katarina realized how important the body was when the audience could not hear. She said, “[the body] is an important tool that should be used to the maximum.” Katarina said the Breathing Circle helped her cleanse her mind and body and helped engage in the present moment. When asked about the Three Circles of energy, Katarina said the First Circle helped her learn how to recognize where she was, and helped her avoid self-consciousness. Katarina was learning about the balance of connecting with the audience in the Second Circle, and also learning to focus on others and truly connect with them (as opposed to the Third Circle, where energy forced out and disconnected).

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Katarina received “extremely effective” ratings for her final presentation regarding her overall energy, ease of delivery, and stance. Her peers rated her “effective” in spontaneity, diction, concentration, gesture size, and enunciation. She received a few “slightly effective” ratings on her timing, as her presentation went long. Peer comments indicated an appreciation for her confidence, competence, and credibility; peers said they found her presentation truly enjoyable, and the group appreciated that Katarina brought people into the discussion. In Katarina’s areas to develop, peer comments included suggestions about the presentation being too long, needing more practice, and using fewer slides.

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

Katarina came into class with a strong personality. She was a competent speaker to begin with. Her acting experience was obvious during the improvisation exercises. Field notes report that she needed to relax and project her voice more, and be clearer on her intentions. Katarina also needed better organization skills. Her responses to activities and questions from the instructor were consistently well thought-out and direct. The class had been instructed to remove any high heels to prevent accidents during the Tug of War exercise, and Katarina said after the Tug of War exercise, “I just wanted to put my shoes back on.” Instructor field notes of Katarina’s final presentation suggest that she still needed to project her voice more and be more mindful of time. She displayed a very elegant, strong appearance and expressed joy and enthusiasm when speaking.

Interview

This participant was not randomly selected for an interview.

Conclusion

As mentioned, Katarina came to class with speaking and acting experience. She was already a competent presenter. She was an attentive, active, and helpful student. Her focus improved and she showed a commitment to practicing new techniques, especially intention and breathing for vocal improvement. When she applied these practices, her personality more readily shined through her presentation.

Case Study, Participant 10: Analyn

Background Information

Analyn has been an Administrative Secretary for four and a half years. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition, and English is her second language. She rated herself a low experience speaker, yet said she had delivered 50-100 presentations in her career. She listed some improvisation, speech, and debate in her background experience.

Pre and Post Survey Results

In her pre survey, Analyn disagreed that she had techniques to calm nervous reactions, and she also disagreed that she felt present and in control of her body, felt comfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience, or that she could easily go with the flow and be spontaneous. She said in her pre survey comments that she liked to make funny, humorous remarks but wanted to make meaningful and memorable presentations. Analyn's post survey responses showed that she felt improvement in all areas. She now strongly agreed that she felt comfortable and safe when delivering a

presentation, felt present and in control of her body, felt aware of the audience and audience responses, felt focused and present, and now had techniques to calm any nervous reactions. She reported that she no longer needed to giggle childishly, and that if she had something important to say she could connect with the audience and keep the presentation organized.

Participant Journal Responses

Analyn said that during the Tennis Ball improvisation exercise she was reminded how scared she was of getting hit by the imaginary ball. She said that she wore glasses at an early age, and she was afraid her mother would get mad if her glasses broke because they were expensive to replace. She said she calmed down when she noticed that others were nervous too. She felt how easy it was to “go with the flow.” The intention exercise Tug of War taught Analyn to come in with an intention and be more aware of the audience. Analyn noticed in the Gibberish exercise that her whole body communicates when she wants the audience to understand: “I did not say any words, yet the audience got me. When I’m stressing something it got faster and my Gibberish language got louder.” When asked what physical awareness she had during the Breathing Circle, Analyn said that she felt her body relax and her heart rate slow down. She said the exercise taught her to be present in the moment, focus, and be aware of the “now.”

Peer Reviews and Final Presentation

Peer reviews rated Analyn “extremely effective” in her ease of delivery, overall energy, and stance. She received “effective” ratings for her spontaneity, concentration, breath control, and diction. Analyn’s high diction rating was especially interesting

because English is Analyn's second language and she had to work hard to improve her clarity. The peer reviews indicated more work was needed on her pacing and focus.

There were several comments that mentioned how enjoyable she was to watch, and peers noticed the difference in her presence after she took on the role of Julie Andrews as part of one of the class exercises, playing the attributes of confidence, charm and elegance.

Peers thought she still needed to speak louder and use more eye contact.

Instructor/Researcher Observation and Field Notes

When Analyn came into class she would giggle nervously. She seemed to feel that making jokes was the way to control the audience. She was instructed not to giggle and to breathe more deeply. It was suggested that she imagine herself as a character or speaker that she admired and behave more like that person. She decided she respected Julie Andrews and proceeded to behave as Julie Andrews would behave while making a presentation. Field notes indicate this technique had a very positive effect on Analyn's behavior. She was calmer, more confident, and spoke more clearly.

Interview

This participant was not randomly selected for an interview.

Conclusion

Analyn showed great improvement from the first class to the last. She was open to all of the elements of present moment awareness, she tried hard during all of the exercises, and she took suggestions easily. Her pre and post surveys, journal notes, and instructor field notes support evidence of her growth. She shared in class that when she made a presentation at work (using techniques learned in class) she received many

positive comments. She gave a successful final presentation and felt confident doing so.

Analyn said this class experience transformed her.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The use of acting techniques to improve public speaking has been shown to be promising. As mentioned previously, however, there has been limited research on how present moment awareness affects presentation skills for business speakers. The purpose of this study was to examine how the elements of present moment awareness (specifically the four acting techniques of improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness) affect presentation skills for business speakers. In this chapter, I will discuss the results and conclusions of the study.

All nine of the research study participants reported finding one or more of the elements of present moment awareness helpful to them when making presentations. Furthermore, several of the participants reported that they had included some of the techniques in other areas of their life (e.g., personal relationships) and found their communication skills more effective. Overall, the nine participants viewed their presentation skills more positively at the end of the course than at the beginning of the course.

Information obtained from the participant pre and post survey responses provided general, quantitative results. By averaging the participants' responses to the eight individual pre and post survey questions it became apparent that all of the participants perceived themselves as more capable speakers with accessible techniques at the end of the study. The study showed that participants were able to discover which of the elements worked best for them. Some participants applied all the elements effectively

and some found one or two elements helpful. The end result showed improvement across the board. Teaching present moment awareness and blending the elements of improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness afforded a combination that gave participants the opportunity to explore the element most suitable to them. They all experienced a transformation into more effective business presenters.

The qualitative data obtained from the additional research tools (participant journals, instructor field notes, and peer evaluations) offered more specific information from each individual participant, each of whom could comment and elaborate regarding his or her experiences and perceptions of each exercise. The participant journals and field note tools were useful, showing in more detail the degree to which each element was or was not helpful for each participant. It was clear that some exercises were more accessible than others for participants; details on these findings will be discussed in the next sections.

Deeper, more personal information was gathered from three randomly selected interviewees. The interviews showed in even more detail that all three interviewees took away communication techniques that they found applicable and valuable in a business environment and beyond.

The pre and post survey responses and participant journals demonstrated that the participants perceived improvement in their abilities to speak in front of an audience after using the four elements of present moment awareness. Peer evaluations and instructor field notes reported that participants exhibited more confidence and clarity in their presentation skills after incorporating the elements into their presentations. Participant

responses indicated that the improvisation exercises improved their abilities to be spontaneous and access intuition. The intention exercises diminished fear and nervousness. These exercises also improved participant focus, eye contact, and audience connection. The voice exercises helped participants develop skills to improve projection, enunciation, pacing, timing, and, in all cases but one, diction. From instructor field note observations on the results of voice exercises, participant dialogue seemed to flow more naturally and effectively. The body/sensory awareness exercise, Breathing Circle, proved to be helpful for every participant; each student reported feeling calmer, more focused, more aware of his or her breathing and heartbeat, more connected to others, and more present in the moment after practicing this exercise at the beginning of each class session.

Some exercises were not as successful as Breathing Circle. Analyzing each exercise made clear the degree to which each exercises was or was not effective, and why. The following is a discussion of the strengths, weaknesses, and any unexpected limitations found from the applied individual exercises used to teach each element.

I. Improvisation

The two improvisation exercises taught were Tennis Ball and Magic Machine. From all reports and observations, these two exercises proved to be effective in increasing participant spontaneity and focus. As the instructor, I observed participants learning to concentrate, having fun, and bonding with their peers. Self-consciousness seemed to diminish as they committed more strongly to each exercise. During these two exercises several participants noted in their participant journals that they experienced improved concentration and focus during the Tennis Ball and Magic Machine exercises.

They mentioned feeling less nervous when they focused on the task of the exercise. Although one participant reported a lack of understanding regarding the purpose of improvisation, the study showed these two improvisation exercises to be valuable beginning exercises for business speakers. Based on what occurred during Tennis Ball and Magic Machine, I would strongly recommend continued application of these two improvisation exercises in future classes or studies.

II. Intention

The physical space for the intention exercise Tug of War could have been managed more appropriately. Instructor field notes and student responses indicate that the unplanned change of location for the exercise (using the hallway for the exercise instead of the classroom) may have contributed in part to the lack of success of the exercise. The change in location was not ideal: the close proximity of other classrooms and the narrowness of the hallway inhibited any spontaneous physical or vocal behavior from the students. Although the effectiveness of this particular intention exercise may have been diminished by my decision to move the Tug of War exercise from the classroom to the hallway, the participants did report some positive results. Their comments indicated an understanding of the value of intention during the exercise; comments included: “I wanted to win,” and “I didn’t want to fall in the mud.” Furthermore, several participants reported feeling more confident in their delivery when they knew their specific intention. Also, the participants indicated in their journal responses that they felt much less nervous while presenting when they were clear on their

intention. Consequently, even with the limitations of the hallway location, Tug of War turned out to be a useful exercise to teach the element of intention.

III. *Voice*

The original intention of the Move the Piano exercise was to improve participant awareness of vocal communication, specifically projection, enunciation, diction, and audience awareness, while attempting a common group goal. Participant responses and additional comments reported very little awareness of vocal improvement. Furthermore, participants were unclear of the purpose of the exercise and there was confusion regarding who was to do what. There seemed to be no leader or manager. Two participants split off from the group, causing more confusion. My instructions may have been unclear, and this may have contributed to the participant's confusion. Or, the exercise itself may not have been specific enough for the result intended. Another possibility is that the Move the Piano exercise may work better for actors than for business speakers. Regardless of the specific reasoning, I would eliminate the Move the Piano exercise in future studies and classes; it did not have the desired effect of improving vocal technique.

Gibberish proved to be an effective exercise to improve vocal awareness for all but one participant. Since the participants were not allowed to use the English language to communicate, each participant had to invent his or her own language (Gibberish) to communicate a message to the audience. The particular student who did not report any vocal improvement as a result of this exercise was a non-native English speaker (ESL, or English as a second language), and this may have played a part in the difficulty. None of

the other ESL speakers, however, remarked on any problem speaking Gibberish. One student had trouble with the exercise and reported tightening up and feeling inhibited, resorting to mime, and using no voice at all. After some coaching, the student did relax and communicated more effectively with the audience. From my instructor observations and field notes, more specific instructions or helpful suggestions to ESL speakers would improve the results of this voice exercise. Further study is required to address the question of how best to improve instructions and suggestions for ESL speakers.

The remainder of the participants found that the Gibberish exercise gave them an awareness of the importance of using their whole body along with the voice in order to communicate effectively, and an awareness of directing their energy more specifically while speaking to an audience. Several students said they became aware of the need to “pay attention to the audience.” From what I observed in my instructor field notes, the exercise seemed to lessen participant self-consciousness and improve audience connection. In the final analysis, Gibberish proved to be a useful exercise to teach the element of voice.

IV. Body/Sensory Awareness

The Deaf Audience exercise proved to be a successful method of exposing participants to the availability of their bodies to communicate when presenting in front of an audience. Because the audience had plugged their ears, rendering themselves “deaf,” speakers had to resort to broader physical moves, more facial expressions, and more eye contact to connect with the audience. Participants reported understanding the importance of including the body and face while presenting. From my instructor observations,

participants took advantage of the exercise, freeing up their bodies, expanding their energy toward the audience, and having fun doing so. Deaf Audience proved to be a valuable exercise to help speakers improve their body/sensory awareness.

From all accounts, the Breathing Circle proved to be the exercise that provided a very accessible tool for mitigating nervous reactions. All nine participants reported the positive benefits of the Breathing Circle. However, there are factors to consider with regard to the effectiveness of the Breathing Circle. Did regular practice of the exercise at the beginning of all five classes play a part in the usefulness? Or, is the intrinsic value of the breathing exercise dramatically more effective than the other exercises? From participant data and my observations, I am inclined to support the exercise's intrinsic effectiveness. Further research might answer these questions with more depth.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

From an academic perspective, my primary objective was to draw together the disparate elements of present moment awareness, and to demonstrate the utility of this paradigm within the business arena. I developed this specific and unique model, relying on my thirty years of acting and the teaching of these principles to both the acting and business communities, coupled with an intense literature review of relevant works and quantitative research.

Based on the results of this study, positive shifts occurred for all nine participants who viewed their presentation skills more positively after applying the elements of present moment awareness. The most notable result was the ability of participants to use one or more of the elements of present moment awareness to garner a more relaxed state

before speaking publicly. Participants were asked in both the pre and post surveys to rate the following statement: “If I feel a nervous reaction in my body before or during a presentation, I have techniques that I can use to calm the nervous reactions.” Participants unanimously reported that after participating in the course, they felt they had techniques to calm themselves while presenting. This turned out to be the most clearly significant result in the study. Some elements of present moment awareness were more accessible than others, but participants were taught a range of techniques that allowed them to experiment with which elements worked best for them. For all participants, there was a significant change from pre to post survey responses.

The research showed that applying the elements of present moment awareness provided an improvement for all of the business speakers in the class. Utilizing specific techniques that have previously been reserved for the performance community, this research has demonstrated that significant skills may be transferred to the business arena, which has lacked effective and innovative presentation techniques. Inasmuch as my survey participants represented a cross section of business people, and showed improvement in their presentation skills, this research validates my core hypothesis that the elements of present moment awareness can be used to improve oral business presentations.

The research showed significant participant improvement in focus, eye contact, and audience connection, as well as projection, enunciation, pacing, and timing. The research also demonstrated that participants gained the ability to present in a calmer, more natural and effective manner after applying present moment awareness techniques.

Therefore, the use of time-tested acting techniques in the business presentation community was substantiated.

Additionally, the research suggests that the specific combination of these applied techniques, where one technique is built upon other techniques, instills a sense of confidence and directed purpose that culminates in a more polished business presenter.

Continued and expanded research on the application of present moment awareness should not be limited to acting performances and business presentations; the techniques and elements of present moment awareness could enrich communications skills in many arenas. For future research, this study could be advanced by investigating the processes and methods of training additional instructors. It would also be useful to investigate incorporating this methodology and curriculum more expansively into in-house corporate training programs. The training could be useful in academic environments, specifically schools of engineering, accounting, law, and communication studies. Further research could also focus on improving and honing present moment awareness applications and teaching techniques, which could be done in part by checking in with participants six to nine months after their class session is finished to see how they are implementing the methods, how they are feeling about their presentation and communication skills, and which exercises they continue to use. Once a speaker understands and practices the elements of present moment awareness, he or she would likely benefit from the ongoing, reinforcing nature of the techniques' uses over time. Each time an element of present moment awareness is practiced, the speaker develops his or her unique "voice" within the method.

As Patsy Rodenburg asserts, further exploration of the use of present moment awareness, specifically the techniques of improvisation, intention, voice, and body/sensory awareness, could be useful in other areas that require effective communication: personal relationships, academic environments, and all types of communities. If the specific use of these elements of present moment awareness proved to be of assistance to this heterogeneous group of business speakers, it seems it could benefit all types of speakers and communicators. There could be significant value added to institutions where effective communication has far-reaching consequences, such as public policy and national security.

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APPENDIX A: Pre Survey

Participant #: _____ Date: _____

Thank you so much for participating in this survey. It is greatly appreciated.

Background Information:

1. Name _____
2. Male _____ Female _____
3. Degrees Held: _____
4. Current Job Title _____
5. Number of Years in this Profession _____
6. Number of Years on this Job _____
7. Previous Occupations _____
8. Please Rate your experience as a presenter:
_____ Highly Experienced
_____ Very Experienced
_____ Experienced
_____ Low Experience
_____ No Experience
9. Please estimate the number of presentations you have delivered in your career:
_____ Less than 10
_____ 10-25
_____ 25-50
_____ 50-100
_____ More than 100
10. Please check the boxes that apply to your experience and background:
_____ Speech & Debate
_____ Acting
_____ Improvisation
_____ Corporate Training focusing on presentation skills
_____ Toastmasters (or similar)
_____ Vocal Training
_____ Singing classes or participation in choral music
_____ Breathing techniques
_____ Sports training that included breath or relaxation work
_____ Team sports
_____ Meditation/relaxation techniques
_____ Other experiences that relate to public speaking: (please list)

Please Turn Over to Complete Survey

Presentation Skills: (Please check the most appropriate response.)

11. I feel comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation. (I)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

12. I am aware of the audience and their responses when giving a presentation. (I)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

13. When making a presentation, I can easily “go with the flow” and be spontaneous with the material and the audience. (I)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

14. When making a presentation, I experience fearful reactions in my body such as difficulty breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in my stomach, tight throat, etc. (B/S)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

15. When delivering a presentation I am focused and present. (IN)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

16. I feel comfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience. (V)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

17. I feel present and in control of my body when delivering a presentation. (B/S)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

18. If I feel a nervous reaction in my body before or during a presentation, I have techniques that I can use to calm the nervous reaction. (B/S)

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

Please list any additional comments you would like to make regarding your presentation skills:

APPENDIX B: Post Survey

Participant #: _____ Date: _____

Presentation Skills – Please check the most appropriate box.

1. I feel comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation. (I)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
2. I am aware of the audience and their responses when giving a presentation. (I)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
3. When making a presentation I can easily “go with the flow” and be spontaneous with the material and the audience. (I)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
4. When making a presentation I experience fearful reactions in my body, such as difficulty breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in my stomach, tight throat, etc. (B/S)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
5. When delivering a presentation I am focused and present. (IN)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
6. I feel comfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience. (V)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
7. I feel present and in control of my body when delivering a presentation. (B/S)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
8. If I feel a nervous reaction in my body before or during a presentation, I have techniques that I can use to calm the nervous reaction. (B/S)
___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

Please list any additional comments you would like to make regarding your presentation skills:

APPENDIX C: Participant Journal #1, Improvisation

Participant # _____

This journal will contribute to a study of how *present moment awareness* affects presentation skills in business speakers. Your responses will be kept anonymous. How did you feel/respond? Did you have any perceptions or new awarenesses? Please answer below and write legibly.

Improvisation

Exercise/Process: “Tennis Ball” and “Magic Machine”

1. How did the improvisation exercises that you participated in affect your focus?
2. What did you find out about your ability to connect with others while improvising?
3. What did you notice about your ability to be spontaneous while doing the improvisation exercise?

--Please turn page over or use more paper to thoroughly answer each question.--

APPENDIX D: Participant Journal #2, Intention

Participant # _____

This journal will contribute to a study of how *present moment awareness* affects presentation skills in business speakers. Your responses will be kept anonymous. Please answer below and write legibly.

“Tug of War”

1. How did the “Tug of War” exercise affect your concentration and connection with your peers?
2. Did you notice any differences in your breathing while doing the “Tug of War” exercise?
3. In what ways did (or did not) the “Tug of War” exercise affect your vocal projection, diction, pacing and timing?

--Please turn page over or use more paper to thoroughly answer the question.--

APPENDIX E: Participant Journal #3, Voice

Participant #_____

This journal will contribute to a study of how *present moment awareness* affects presentation skills in business speakers. Your responses will be kept anonymous. Please answer below and write legibly.

“Gibberish” and “Move a Piano”

1. What did you notice about how your body, breath and voice responded for you while you were doing the exercises?
2. In what ways did (or did not) the “Gibberish” exercise affect your breath, projection, diction, pacing and timing?

--Please turn page over or use more paper to thoroughly answer the question.--

APPENDIX F: Participant Journal #4, Body/Sensory Awareness

Participant # _____

“Breathing Circle” and “Deaf Audience”

This journal will contribute to a study of how *present moment awareness* affects presentation skills in business speakers. Your responses will be kept anonymous. Please answer below and write legibly. How did you feel/respond? Did you have any perceptions or new awarenesses?

1. What physical awarenesses did you have (if any) during the “Breathing Circle” exercise?
2. What did you notice about your body being available to you during the “Deaf Audience” exercise?
3. How might this awareness of your body help you as a presenter in the future?

--Please turn page over or use more paper if needed to thoroughly answer questions.--

APPENDIX G: Participant Journal #5, Culmination

Participant # _____

“Final Presentation” and “Three Circles”

Question 1: Recalling any connections between the skills learned from doing the exercises and delivering your business presentation, what did you notice about your speaking experience?

Answer:

Improvisation:

“Tennis Ball”

“Magic Machine”

Intention:

“Tug of War”

Voice:

“Gibberish”

“Move a Piano”

Body/Sensory Awareness:

”Breathing Circle”

“Solitary Half-hour”

Question 2. How do you think the experience of these exercises and awareness of the Three Circles of energy would affect your delivery during any future business presentations?

First Circle (within yourself)

Second Circle (give and take communication with audience)

Third Circle (forcing energy and not connected to audience)

APPENDIX H: Field Notes Protocol and Format

Element Taught _____

Date: _____

Who displayed the change/non-change?

What was the change?

When was the change/non-change displayed?

Where or in which exercise was the change/non-change displayed?

Improvisation	Intention
Voice	Body/Sensory Awareness

APPENDIX I: Participant Peer Evaluation Form

Participant Peer Evaluation

For _____ From _____

Delivery Skills

(Please fill in appropriate circle)

	<u>Extremely effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Slightly effective</u>	<u>Ineffective</u>
Ease of delivery	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Spontaneity	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Focus	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Concentration	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Timing	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Pacing	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Projection	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Enunciation	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Diction	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Breath control	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Stance	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Overall energy	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Gesture size	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Use of body	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				

Content:

Opening	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Organization	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Transitions	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				
Closing	0-----0-----0-----0-----0				

Comments:

Confidence/Competence/Credibility-

Strengths-

Areas to develop-

APPENDIX J: Interview Protocol

Overview:

- A. Have you been called upon to deliver any presentations since completing the class? If so, can you describe the presentation/s you made?
- B. Were you aware of using any of the skills or techniques you learned from the class during your presentation? If so, what techniques did you use? Please describe your experience in using them. In what ways did you feel successful? What problems did you encounter? How did you approach any problem?

Present Moment Awareness and its Individual Elements:

I'd like to talk now about *present moment awareness* and the individual elements we worked on.

Improvisation

- A. What can you tell me about your own spontaneity and ability to improvise before taking the class, and after taking the class?
- B. Can you talk about your self-awareness of connecting with an audience before taking the class and after taking the class? Did you notice any differences? If so, what were they?

Intention

- A. Would you describe your journey in dealing with any fear of being in front of an audience? Where did you start from at the beginning of the class, where did you end up at the end of the class sessions, and where are you now?

Voice

- A. What did you notice about your vocal abilities, such as projection, diction, pacing, etc. from the beginning of the class sessions to the end of the class sessions? If you have done any presentations since the class ended what have you noticed about your vocal abilities?
- B. Did you feel that any of the following exercises affected your vocal skills more than the others: Improvisation, Intention, Vocal, and Body/Sensory Awareness? If so, please describe what you have noticed.

Body/Sensory Awareness

- A. During the class sessions, you engaged in several body/sensory awareness exercises such as the Breathing Circle, The Magic Machine, and the Deaf Audience exercises. Have you noticed any differences in your awareness of your body or senses since doing these exercises? If so, can you describe this? Have you applied these exercises to any presentations since completing the class? If so, please describe how these exercises have affected you.

Three Circles of Energy

- A. In the class we explored the three circles of energy. Could you describe your experience with each of these and which of these you have been successful in applying? First: Within yourself. Second: Open and connected to the audience, receiving energy back from them. Third: Pushing energy out, unaware of audience response.

Verbal Communication Skills

- A. In closing I would like to ask you about your recent verbal communication experiences in general. Since taking the class and working on the elements of *present moment awareness: intention, improvisation, vocal, body/sensory awareness* and the *Three Circles of Energy*: Can you talk about any differences with regard to your verbal communication skills with people in business situations; in any size (one-on-ones to large audiences)?

Is there anything that you might like to add that I missed or over looked?

APPENDIX K: Pre and Post Survey Results

Question	Participant	Pre	Post	Changes from Pre to Post
<i>I feel comfortable and safe when delivering a presentation. (Improvisation)</i>				
	P1	4	3	↑1
<i>1=Strongly Agree</i>	P2	3	1	↑2
<i>2=Agree</i>	P3	1	2	↓1
<i>3=Neutral</i>	P4	4	2	↑2
<i>4=Disagree</i>	P5	3	2	↑1
<i>5=Strongly Disagree</i>	P6	3	2	↑1
	P7	2	2	No change
	P9	4	2	↑2
	P10	4	1	↑3
<i>I am aware of the audience and their responses when giving a presentation. (Improvisation)</i>				
	P1	1	2	↓1
	P2	4	1	↑3
	P3	2	1	↑1
	P4	3	1	↑2
	P5	3	1	↑2
	P6	3	2	↑1
	P7	3	2	↑1
	P9	2	2	No change
	P10	2	2	No change
<i>When making a presentation, I can easily “go with the flow” and be spontaneous with the material and the audience. (Improvisation)</i>				
	P1	3	2	↑1
	P2	5	1	↑4
	P3	2	2	No change
	P4	5	3	↑2
	P5	2	2	No change
	P6	4	2	↑2
	P7	4	2	↑2
	P9	4	2	↑2
	P10	4	2	↑2
<i>When making a presentation, I experience fearful reactions in my body such as difficulty</i>				

<i>breathing, sweaty palms, butterflies in my stomach, tight throat, etc. (Intention).</i>				
[NOTE: Positive change in this question	P1	4	2	↑2
is the opposite of other	P2	2	5	↑3
questions because of the way	P3	2	3	↑1
the question is framed.]	P4	1	3	↑2
	P5	1	4	↑3
	P6	1	1	No change
	P7	4	4	No change
	P9	2	4	↑2
	P10	3	3	No change
<i>When delivering a presentation, I am focused and present. (Intention)</i>				
	P1	3	2	↑1
	P2	2	1	↑1
	P3	2	2	No change
	P4	4	2	↑2
	P5	5	2	↑3
	P6	4	3	↑1
	P7	1	2	↓1
	P9	3	1	↑2
	P10	2	2	No change
<i>I feel comfortable speaking loudly and clearly in front of an audience. (Voice)</i>				
	P1	3	2	↑1
	P2	2	1	↑1
	P3	2	1	↑1
	P4	4	3	↑1
	P5	4	2	↑2
	P6	4	2	↑2
	P7	2	2	No change
	P9	2	1	↑1
	P10	4	2	↑2
<i>I feel present and in control of my body when delivering a presentation. (Body/Sensory)</i>				
	P1	3	3	No change
	P2	3	1	↑2
	P3	3	2	↑1

	P4	4	2	↑2
	P5	5	2	↑3
	P6	5	2	↑3
	P7	3	2	↑1
	P9	2	1	↑1
	P10	4	1	↑3
<i>If I feel a nervous reaction in my body before or during a presentation, I have techniques that I can use to calm the nervous reaction. (Body/Sensory)</i>				
	P1	5	3	↑2
	P2	3	1	↑2
	P3	3	1	↑2
	P4	5	1	↑4
	P5	5	1	↑4
	P6	5	2	↑3
	P7	3	2	↑1
	P9	4	2	↑2
	P10	4	1	↑3

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS:

Participant	Pre Comments	Post Comments
P1	I tend to stutter when I get nervous.	Need to work on my diction and practice and practice.
P2	No Comment	The pointers from the instructor (such as stand and wait at least three second before starting; less smiling so people will take me more seriously; breathe before going up to present) has helped me present with more confidence. The important pointer about making my intention clear in the presentation has helped me speak with clear purpose, and to be excited about what I am speaking about.

P3	No Comment	I appreciated all the feedback. If I didn't have this class, I would have never know about most of the techniques and how to better my presentation skills. I thought I was interactive in presenting before but now I feel more confident being in the present moment while presenting.
P4	I would like to find a way to control my facial flushing and how to find my place after losing my train of thought. I find that I get easily "spooked" and unable to recover gracefully regardless of how well I know the material.	I feel that the skills I learned in this class: breathing, being present, being organized, allowed me to improve my skills tremendously from when I walked in.
P5	I would like to learn to relax and think on my feet. I also want to make people feel comfortable. I am aware I probably ramble. Boring. Even when talking to a group of friends.	Thank you, thank you. I learned so much. Wish there was more!
P6	While giving presentation I try to finish it ASAP and eat most of my words.	Bullets work for me now. Before this I lived to have all of the information on the slide. Breathing helps. Pretending someone else helps. Not focusing on myself doing presentation is difficult but once I start doing that things go better and is working for me.
P7	No comment	This class helped me to be aware of my abilities and my shortcomings. Thanks Billie.
P9		I loved learning organization and intent.
P10	I like to make funny, humorous yet meaningful and memorable presentation.	I like to work on what I am expecting from my audience. I still have a lot of scary feeling of letting people do something. I really need to work on that. My take: Julie Andrews (character to play while presenting), No childish giggle, keep presentation organized, when I have something really important to say I get to connect it to audience.