Excitement and reward exist only outside your comfort zone. You'll experience neither of them until you make yourself do something you really don't want to do.

So what is it that scares the hell out of you?
Roy H. Williams, Wizard of Ads
The Art of Voice Acting
orchestrate your message!

Tele-Course Content

1 An Overview of Voice Acting
2 Techniques and tools to orchestrate your performance
3 Creating Characters
4 Telling the Story—Single voice monologue
5 Getting it in time—Single voice commercial
6 Dialogue & Multiples
7 Long Form: Corporate, Narrative, & Audio Books
8 The Business of Voice Acting
9 Supplemental Materials

WELCOME:

During the course of this workshop & seminar, you will have the opportunity to learn new skills and techniques that will make you a better communicator and more effective in your everyday life. You will learn how to understand your audience and how to achieve the results you want - and you can put these techniques to work immediately.

Our focus in this seminar is on using acting, voiceover and performance techniques to more effectively communicate your message, whatever it may be. The fascinating and fun business of voiceover is the basis of our training, and we will use numerous examples to demonstrate our concepts for connecting with an audience. As you will learn, voiceover involves far more than just reading a script. It's really a performing art that is more accurately referred to as “voice acting”.

You are encouraged to participate by asking questions and offering your thoughts and input. Although the fundamentals of voice acting and connecting with an audience are global, each community is unique and you may be able to contribute a valuable insight that I am not aware of.

This workshop is not intended to be the only training in voice-acting you will ever need. I promise that by the end of this workshop, you will have a stronger foundation in voice and acting techniques than many professional voice artists. However, voice acting is an evolving art form, with trends that change from year to year. To be the best voice actor you can be, you will need to invest in additional training and keep your skills up to date. I’m proud that this workshop is the one you have chosen to get you started.

James R. Alburger & Penny Abshire
YOUR INSTRUCTORS:

James R. Alburger has been performing since the age of 12 and has worked both sides of the microphone as a performer, producer, director and audio engineer. He received 11 Emmy Awards for sound design during his 25 years with NBC television in San Diego. James is the author of two books: “Get Your Act Together” and “The Art of Voice Acting,” and has produced or appeared in thousands of commercials. Through his production company, The Commercial Clinic, he works with specialty performers, business owners, advertising agencies, and film and television producers to create effective (and often award-winning) radio commercials and audio sound tracks. He is the founder of VoiceActing.com, owner of The Commercial Clinic, and the originator of this seminar.

Penny Abshire is no stranger to the stage, having been trained as a concert pianist. She has been a member of Toastmasters International for more years than she can remember. Penny has presented hundreds of motivational seminars and was an event facilitator for John Gray’s Mars & Venus Workshops. However, it was when she took her first “Art of Voice Acting” workshop that she discovered her passion for voice acting. She immediately signed up to repeat the course - twice! As her talent as a voice artist rapidly grew, she also discovered her incredible creative talent as a commercial copy writer. Today, Penny is a co-producer and award-winning copy writer for The Commercial Clinic. She also co-teaches and handles much of the marketing and promotion for the seminars she and James present.

As professional speakers, James and Penny present a variety of workshops and seminar programs designed to improve performing and communication skills. Their clients include people interested in the business of voiceover, broadcasting groups, advertising agencies, trade associations, and many other professional organizations.

GUIDE TO ICONS USED IN THIS WORKBOOK:

- 🔊 Exercise
- 🔊 On-mic coaching
- 🎧 Audio Playback
- 🎧 Recommended Reading
- 📚 See Supplemental Section
- 📚 Trick of the trade
- 🔨 For your VO Toolbox
- 🔨 Words to live by
- 🔥 Internet & other resource
- 🔥 Product resource
THE NATURE OF VOICE ACTING:

Voice Acting is all about making an emotional connection with your audience through the use of acting, voiceover, and performing techniques.

A voice actor's job is to create an “illusion of reality” in the mind of the listener through the use of compelling characters in interesting relationships. The key word here is relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice Acting</th>
<th>Typical Voiceover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversational</td>
<td>Often “Read-y” or “Announcery”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connects Emotionally</td>
<td>Connects Intellectually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells a Story</td>
<td>Forced Delivery—“Selling”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps Audience Attention</td>
<td>Creates Audience “Tune-out”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?:

Acting is about relationships - personal, physical, geographic, emotional, etc.. What is your relationship with your conscience?

Your thoughts create your reality and the way you express yourself.

Negative self-talk will hold you back and prevent you from achieving the things you want from life by expressing ideas that are not true or valid.

HOW YOUR BRAIN WORKS:

Broca’s area of your brain needs to be kept interested. Verbs (action and being), and anticipation are processed by Broca’s area.

The left hemisphere of your brain controls the right side of your body and is the center for logical and linear thinking.

The right hemisphere of your brain controls the left side of your body and is the center for creative and non-linear thinking.

You have two ways of thinking:

Judgmental thinking is negative and will impede growth. 
(e.g.: listening to the voices in your head - negative self-talk)

Critical thinking is observing from an objective point of view with an attitude of “what can I do different to improve this next time”.

Reading a script is a left brain function (sequential and linear). Performing is a right brain function (creative and often non-linear). In voice-acting, both hemispheres of the brain need to work together.
STORY ARC & CHARACTER ARC:

The story arc is the path along which the plot, or message, develops. As with a roller coaster, a story arc may have its “ups” and “downs,” “twists” and “turns,” changes in speed, and variations in dynamics. It is never explained, but rather is revealed through the evolution of the script—most often through a sequence of conflict and resolution (or non-resolution). It begins before the first word of the script and continues past the last word.

Understanding the arc of a story is critical to seeing the “big picture.”

Each character in a story traverses through their individual character arc.

A character’s arc is revealed through the evolution of the character’s attitude, emotional behavior, desires, and conflicts that take place within the context of the story. It is the visible transformation that takes place within the character as the story progresses. A character’s arc cannot exist outside the boundaries of the story’s arc. Understanding the arc of your character is critical for developing the dynamics of your performance.

A character arc may or may not be in alignment with the story arc.

THE 7 CORE ELEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE:

Every script will give you clues about how to use the 7 core elements of a performance: Audience; Back story; Character; Desires; Energy; Forget Who You Are & Focus; and Gamble.

All 7 core elements must be part of a performance, or the audience will sense something is missing—often on an unconscious level.

A = AUDIENCE

Your audience is ALWAYS ONE person - figure out WHO that person is—ideally, the one person who most needs to hear the story or message.

Some things to look for in the script to help define your audience:

- Age group
- Relationship to the product or service
- Lifestyle
- Familiarity with the product or service
- Social attitudes
- Attitude toward the product or service
- Philosophy
- Any regional or ethnic indicators
- Belief systems
- Does the writing style give any clues?

The way a script is written will give you clues as to the ideal audience.

In a single voice script, the audience is generally the listener.

In a dialogue script, the audience may be the listener, but is often another character in the script.

Understand as much as you possibly can about your one-person audience. The more you understand about your audience, the more believable your character will be.
B = BACK STORY

The back story is what you are responding to. It's the reason for the words. It's the specific event that occurs immediately before the first word of the script. (James Alburger, “The Art of Voice Acting”)

In theater a back story is often referred to as “The Moment Before!” and sometimes as “motivation.”

The back story is the cause, or reason, for your character speaking the words of the script. It’s what your character is responding to.

Every story travels in an Arc from beginning to end. The back story is what takes place just prior to the beginning of the Arc, and sets the tone for everything that follows.

The back story can change during a script or be different for every line.

Use visualization to create a vivid mental image of the back story to help create a more believable reality for your character. Make your mental picture of the back story and story scene as vivid as possible. The more real you create the image in your imagination, the more real it will be as you perform.

C = CHARACTER

Who is the speaker of the words? Hint: It’s NOT YOU!

What other characters exist in the story, either known or unknown. These other characters may play an important role in defining your character. How do these other characters interact with your character (or not).

What does your character have in common with the audience or other characters?

What relationships exist between your character and other characters, your character and objects, and your character and events in the story.

How does your character feel about what he/she is saying? What is your character’s principal attitude—and does it change as the story evolves?

Life will give you what you need . . . situations are your tools. (Christina Fasano - “Welcome to the Workshop” CD)

What are the dynamics of your character? How does your character speak (pace, volume, attitude, movement, etc.)

What other choices can you make about your character?

The more detail you give to your character in your imagination, the more believable your character will be.

What is the spine, or life-purpose of your character?
**D = DESIRES**

What does your character WANT and NEED as a result of saying the words?

How will your character go about getting what he/she wants and needs?

What is your character's ultimate intention behind saying the words?

Are your character’s desires, or intentions fulfilled at some point in the story? Why or why not? How or how not?

**E = ENERGY**

The three kinds of energy:

1. **Psychological:** The thoughts going through your character’s mind as your character speaks the words. Psychological energy can be in alignment with the message or in conflict (sarcasm).

2. **Kinetic:** The physicalization of body and face of your character.

3. **Emotional:** The feelings and emotions taking place in your character during the course of the story.

*Physicalize the moment and your voice will follow.*

(Bob Bergen - official Warner Bros. voice of Porky Pig)

In normal conversation, your physical movement comes from who you are, the thoughts behind your words, and your intentions.

When delivering a scripted presentation, allow yourself to use gestures, facial expressions and body language to “get off the page,” “get out of your box,” and add impact to the words you speak.

*Voice-acting comes from your entire body. If only your mouth is moving, that’s all anyone will hear.*

(Corey Burton—Daws Butler’s “Scenes for Actors & Voices”)

The most effective delivery will take place when your physical movement is coordinated with your words as you speak.

Physical movement includes: face, arms, hands, torso, hips and legs.

In voice-over, your head must remain in a constant position to the mic.

*I want you to understand the words. I want you to taste the words. I want you to love the words. Because the words are important. But they’re only words. You leave them on the paper and you take the thoughts and put them into your mind and then you as an actor recreate them, as if the thoughts had suddenly occurred to you.*
**F = FORGET WHO YOU ARE & FOCUS**

In order to create a believable character who expresses emotions, attitudes, or beliefs that are different from your own, it necessary to get out of your box and get into the box of the character.

Use your personal knowledge, experiences, and feelings as a starting point for adapting to those of the character you are playing, then **forget who you are**.

Bring your uniquely individual experiences and skills with you as you climb into the “box” of your character, making your knowledge and experience available for your character to tap into.

**Focus** on becoming the character—not just “doing” the voice. Allow the character to become real through you. If you have to think about what you’re doing, the character won’t be real.

The best acting (including voice acting) is **not** acting! In other words, the best acting appears to the audience to be completely real.

**G = GAMBLE**

Be willing to risk! The outcome of a performance is almost always uncertain. It may be a risk of possible failure, a risk of possible mispronunciation, a risk of making poor choices, or a risk of achieving a high level of success.

All acting is based on a willingness of the actor to risk by becoming someone (or something) outside of him or her self. By its very nature all performance, including standing in front of a microphone, is a risk.

Success in any aspect of life involves risk at some level. In voice acting, the level of risk requires a willingness to be vulnerable and possibly reveal some things that the actor might prefer remain hidden.
Avocado Marketing Group

Radio

Some people think they’re a mistake!
But most people think they’re delicious!
OK… so they’ve got a big seed and they’re green… Avocados are still my favorite fruit. Great in salads… or all by themselves. Get some today.
Script for Week 2

Providence Health Care
:30 radio

With locations throughout the Valley, Providence offers the most advanced technology and therapies for treating cancer in Southern California.

Call 1-800-HEALING for your annual check-up or second opinion.

The road to healing leads to Providence.