



## Help Students Slay the Mic with Their Powerful Voices

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### **A little bit about Jam**

- ❑ An educator, speaker, and entrepreneur from Toronto, Canada.
- ❑ A teacher for 10 years, in spec-ed for 17 years and a speaker for 6 years.

### **Where can we provide opportunities for students to share their voice?**

- If a student can't advocate for themselves then it will be very difficult for them to share their thoughts and opinions.
- Everything teachers can do to help develop student voice can be done on a \$0 budget.
  - Offer opportunities for ALL students to join clubs or activities where students are encouraged to speak.
    - Announcement clubs
    - News casting team
    - Speech/debate teams
    - Be a school tour leader
  - Don't just pick the "perfect speaker" offer opportunities for all of the students who need it.
  - Find opportunities for students to engage in community circles or class meetings.
    - Have discussions around topics they are passionate about and find important.
    - It doesn't have to be the entire class, you can start in small groups.
- Student voice isn't always something you can hear.
  - Sometimes students feel more comfortable sharing their voice in writing.

- Rather than refer to students as quiet or shy refer to them as developing their voice.

### **How can we coach our students to develop their speaking skills?**

- We need to reevaluate the rubrics we used to evaluate a student's speaking ability. It's more of a continuum and we should be looking at where the child began rather than where someone who may not even know our student decided they need to end up.
- Give our students the option of an oral presentation for how they will show what they have learned.
- Stop striving for perfection and start providing opportunities to share.
- The majority of public speaking in classrooms seems to be "read out loud" rather than "share out loud"
  - We don't go off of a script in our daily lives so having students read aloud as their primary form of public speaking isn't doing them a service. We need to allow them to practice speaking without a script.
  - Ways to do this:
    - Improv
    - Allow students to just get their ideas out, like a rough draft
    - Encourage your students to just "talk"

### **Some suggestions for speaking well.**

- Bring energy to your talk.
- Think about people's emotional needs and how you want them to feel after your talk.
  - Speak because you want to create an impact not just for the sake of speaking.
  - Speak with purpose and intention.
  - Picture your students 15 or 20 years down the road and think about what they will remember about what you said.
  - Strive to be the teacher you always needed.

### **What are the characteristics of the most powerful communicators?**

- Know that pausing and using um and ah is OK!
- Be animated.
- Visualize the words and match the actions with the words
- Truly love to share.
- Be connected to your thoughts and your words.

### **How can we encourage students who struggle to share?**

- Build relationships before you ask them to be vulnerable and share.
- Don't rush the process.

### **How can we get students to own their voices?**

- Give students a small choice of this or that.
- Give students the options to create option "c" even if it's something you might not be comfortable.
- Ask your students what they loved about what they did.

### **Slay The Mic Junior**

- Find information here <https://www.slayerofthemmic.com/slay-the-mic-junior.html>
- How the Slay The Mic Jr challenge works (from [www.slayerofthemmic.com](http://www.slayerofthemmic.com))

*For now, this is how things will work:*

*Each challenge is based on one of my Slay The Mic Affirmations. I will share the weekly affirmations along with a YouTube link. After you've watched the video with your class and discussed what the affirmation means, you will record your students sharing what the affirmation means to them.*

- 1. If you have students in your class who are non-verbal or use ASL, please, please, PLEASE, have them participate! This is an inclusive challenge and we definitely want to highlight that everyone communicates in their own way.*
- 2. If you are allowed to share the videos, please post them on Twitter! As a community, we will celebrate and offer positive feedback to everyone who participates! Don't forget to tag me @iamjamgamble and use #STMJRchallenge. Each of you has been added to the Twitter list. If you haven't subscribed to it yet, I encourage you to do that. That way you see all videos from everyone participating in one place. If your students don't want to be recorded, that's totally cool! We'd still love to hear from you how the challenge is going on Twitter.*
- 3. When you're ready, I will send you a reflection page to do with your students.*