Power Speaking **Academy 101**
HANDBOOK

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About the project

Power Speaking Academy 101 (PSA101) is a European project under the Erasmus+ program. It is a joint initiative of Diapasoul Srl (DIA) – an innovative educational center founded and run by theater actors in Rome – and the University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź (AHE). The project aims to co-create, test, and standardize the modular "Power Speaking" course, designed for students, young people, local entrepreneurs, self-employed individuals, people with communication disorders, disadvantaged target groups, and employed individuals seeking retraining. It is therefore aimed at a broad audience and can be applied to various social groups.

The core of the course is the development of public speaking skills and other interpersonal communication skills (e.g., speaking in front of an audience, one-on-one interactions, presenting to investors, and many other applications in everyday life). The course was piloted at AHE and is being implemented in line with its key principle of the "Third Mission" (Kitagawa, Sanchez Barrioluengo, & Uyarra, 2016), which involves engaging society on cultural, social, and economic levels to create an innovative educational space.

Overall, the PSA101 pilot initiative is an experimental process of knowledge transfer between a private entity and a higher education institution, with the active participation of policy-makers and civil society. It thus embodies a multi-helix and multi-stakeholder approach, facilitating collaboration and educational co-innovation between knowledge holders, academic communities, and other key actors in society.

Project goals

- Creating a public speaking course at the higher education level, leveraging global and European best practices in this field;

- Building a knowledge base on public speaking for higher education students, in close collaboration with administrative and academic staff, assessing obstacles and bottlenecks, and refining learning strategies and objectives;

- Piloting the delivery of practical soft skills to specific target groups outside the university, in line with the principles of the "Third Mission," particularly youth, small business owners, unemployed individuals, young entrepreneurs, and people with communication disorders;

- Supporting inclusion and diversity in education, workplaces, and entrepreneurial ecosystems by fostering empowerment through verbal communication, self-expression, and soft skills;

- Creating and promoting an innovative educational space as an outcome of the pilot project, serving as a long-term tool for sustainable development, and disseminating its results in the European market.

Why is Power Speaking?

According to Matt Abrahams, a researcher from Stanford University, 85% of people admit to feeling anxiety before public speaking, making it one of the most common fears in the world. Young adults and adults, students who want to improve their oral communication before an exam or job interview, entrepreneurs looking to pitch their ideas to investors, researchers seeking to enhance their presentation skills, and healthcare professionals aiming to improve communication with patients are just a few examples of the diverse audience interested in these skills.

Power Speaking Academy 101 draws on an educational model that promotes and teaches emotional communication, offering a holistic approach to self-improvement and personal development. A focus on emotional communication and self-awareness helps individuals reach their full potential and achieve professional and personal fulfillment. In terms of content, this method addresses all key aspects of communication techniques, including storytelling, vocal techniques, and stage presence, as well as fundamental tools for effective communication and rhetoric, all under the guidance of professional trainers, primarily from the world of theater.

Currently, courses and learning elements within the expanded field of "power speaking" are taught at the most forward-thinking and innovative universities in the US and EU as part of business-oriented courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels [e.g., European University Institute in Fiesole, IE University in Madrid, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, and many others]. The emphasis on self-awareness and self-improvement is a key aspect of the new wave of educational policies (Lackéus, 2015), particularly in didactic approaches codified as project-

-based and aimed at developing self-entrepreneurial and creative skills in students.

Moreover, EU universities are gradually adopting the principle and logic of the "Third Mission" in their practice (Zomer & Benneworth, 2011), consistently going beyond the "walls of the campus" and involving civil society in their value-based efforts and projects, acting as catalysts for social innovation processes.

In this regard, PSA101 will enable individuals from all walks of life—particularly those who struggle to fully leverage the potential of their education and vocation—to develop interpersonal skills focused on improving communication, listening, interaction, self-awareness, and idea expression.

In summary, the overarching motivation for this project is to address the need for effective communication and public speaking skills at European universities and in European society, particularly among young adults and adults from diverse backgrounds, including those from disadvantaged groups.

How?

The primary mechanism at work here is the transfer of knowledge between the private sector and the university.

More specifically, DIA collaborates with AHE at a transnational level, enabling the exchange of knowledge and experience through the pilot program in a controlled testing environment, bringing new ideas and perspectives to the project.

AHE's expertise and interest in fostering creativity and project-based learning can assist DIA in further improving and refining the course in various aspects, including curriculum design, teaching strategies, technology integration, and assessment methods. Access to new resources, such as university facilities, can enhance the quality and effectiveness of the course and help test it in a new environment with diverse audiences.

AHE

- *University resources*
- *Creativity and project-
  -based methodology*

Knowledge and skills of actors

DIA
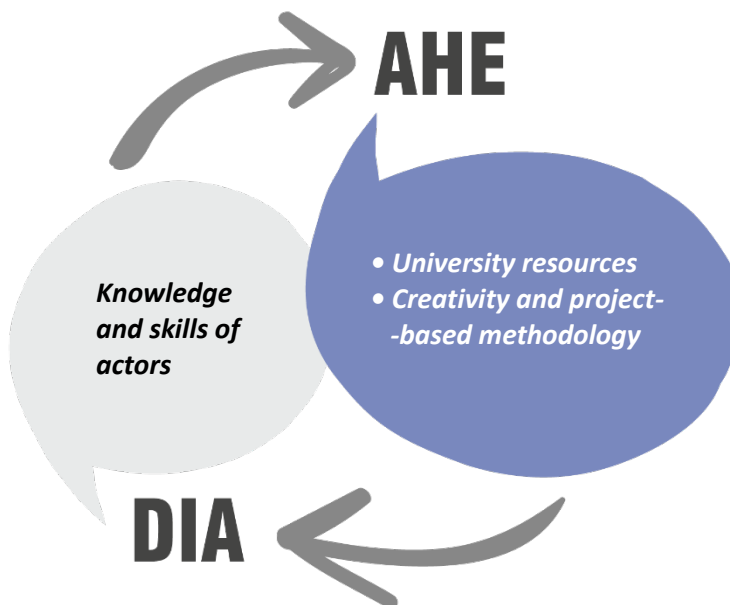
Diapasoul (DIA)

Based in Rome, Diapasoul (DIA) has been specializing in emotional management and public speaking for nearly six years, organizing both online and live courses, live events, and tailored power speaking programs. DIA collaborates with actors, screenwriters, and voice actors from the worlds of cinema, theater, and music. Through exercises and theatrical techniques, each participant gains full awareness of their communication method, using their emotions as a superpower to ultimately overcome the fear of public speaking.

DIA offers courses for students, teachers, trainers, professionals, speakers, and employees at various levels. These range from an initial phase for those needing to familiarize themselves with remote communication, video cameras, and their image, to advanced-level courses combining live sessions with interactive distance training for individuals looking to deepen their expertise.

University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź (AHE)

The University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź (AHE) is an accredited higher education institution that, in addition to traditional university programs (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees), also offers postgraduate studies and courses for various target groups (e.g., youth, students, individuals with disabilities, seniors, teachers, trainers, professionals, migrants, children, youth with developmental delays, and the unemployed).

As one of the largest private universities in Poland, AHE has 23 faculties and offers a wide range of subjects, including more than 100 courses, five of which are taught in English. Course programs are continually updated to align with market demands.

The faculty consists of approximately 200 permanent staff, including researchers, teachers, trainers, support staff (financial, administrative, and technical), as well as specialists and experts in various fields. AHE focuses on educational research, innovative teaching methods, and e-learning.

Needs and Expectations Analysis

Building the knowledge base for the Power Speaking Academy 101 project is founded on two research threads: one focusing on the context of universities and the other examining the third mission of universities.

Research Thread A

This thread focuses on identifying the challenges faced by higher education institutions in implementing new programs and evaluating the impact of the Power Speaking course on teaching and learning.

To this end, an interview questionnaire was developed to gather insights from university staff about their expectations regarding the use of acting skills and competencies in academic education for students across various disciplines.

Research Thread B

This thread centers on the so-called third mission of universities, which opens education to society through retraining or upskilling initiatives for the unemployed, business owners, and self-employed individuals.

To investigate the needs of society and the university's surrounding environment regarding the application of acting skills in education, an interview questionnaire was developed and conducted with individuals from a broader social context. These included students from other universities, corporate employees, and both white-collar and blue-collar workers.

A Needs and Expectations of Universities

What can actors teach students?

University staff agree that actors can provide students with valuable knowledge and skills.

ROLE-PLAYING AND ASSUMING DIFFERENT ROLES

First and foremost, university staff highlight the ability to play different roles or assume various personas as an important competency that actors can teach others.

Playing different roles and, through this, practicing various life roles.

I think so, I believe it also depends on the field of study, but when it comes to pedagogy, absolutely, because especially in early childhood education, a teacher has to be somewhat of an actor, and I think they can definitely make use of those acting skills.

I also noticed that if we modulate our voice appropriately and step into a role, children pay attention in a completely different way and are not as distracted. So, I think the actor's skillset is very useful.

ACTING SKILLS – VOICE WORK

An important skill from the perspective of university staff is the ability to work with one's voice.

> *First and foremost, they can teach greater self-awareness because actor training involves working on oneself, understanding oneself, exploring who I am, what I am like, and what I could become.*

SELF-AWARENESS

According to university staff, actors can help others develop greater self-awareness and assist them in seeking and discovering their true selves.

2

Can actors help students manage their emotions in any way?

Here, respondents' opinions were divided. Some believed that they definitely could, others felt that they could to some extent, while some stated that no, this should fall within the domain of a psychologist's work.

> *Yes, because then there's a greater sense of awareness of one's own body and self, and less fear of presenting in front of an audience.*

> *I'm not sure in the context of emotion management. On one hand, they should be able to some extent, because taking on various extreme roles likely comes with an emotional cost, I imagine. Handling or working through certain emotional states is a useful skill in an actor's work. So, to some extent, I think yes, but primarily, this is more the domain of a psychologist than an actor.*

Here, respondents unanimously agree that actors can teach others both verbal and non-verbal communication. In this area, university staff see a need to introduce workshops for students across various fields of study.

I think that the very essence of an actor's work is communication—working with the voice, experimenting with different ways of expression—so absolutely, yes.

Yes, absolutely, through practicing various situations.

Yes, both in terms of working with the voice—properly modulating it, intoning speech appropriately to match the other person's voice—and also in non-verbal communication, working with the body, and being aware of one's body in communication.

4

Can actors help students manage space?

Respondents indicate that managing space is particularly important during presentations and is something students should be taught. In teacher training, this is also a significant aspect of communication—such as speaking while facing the audience, managing space during meetings, and similar scenarios.

Yes, managing space during presentations, like knowing how to speak and to whom. Managing distance and maintaining appropriate spacing.
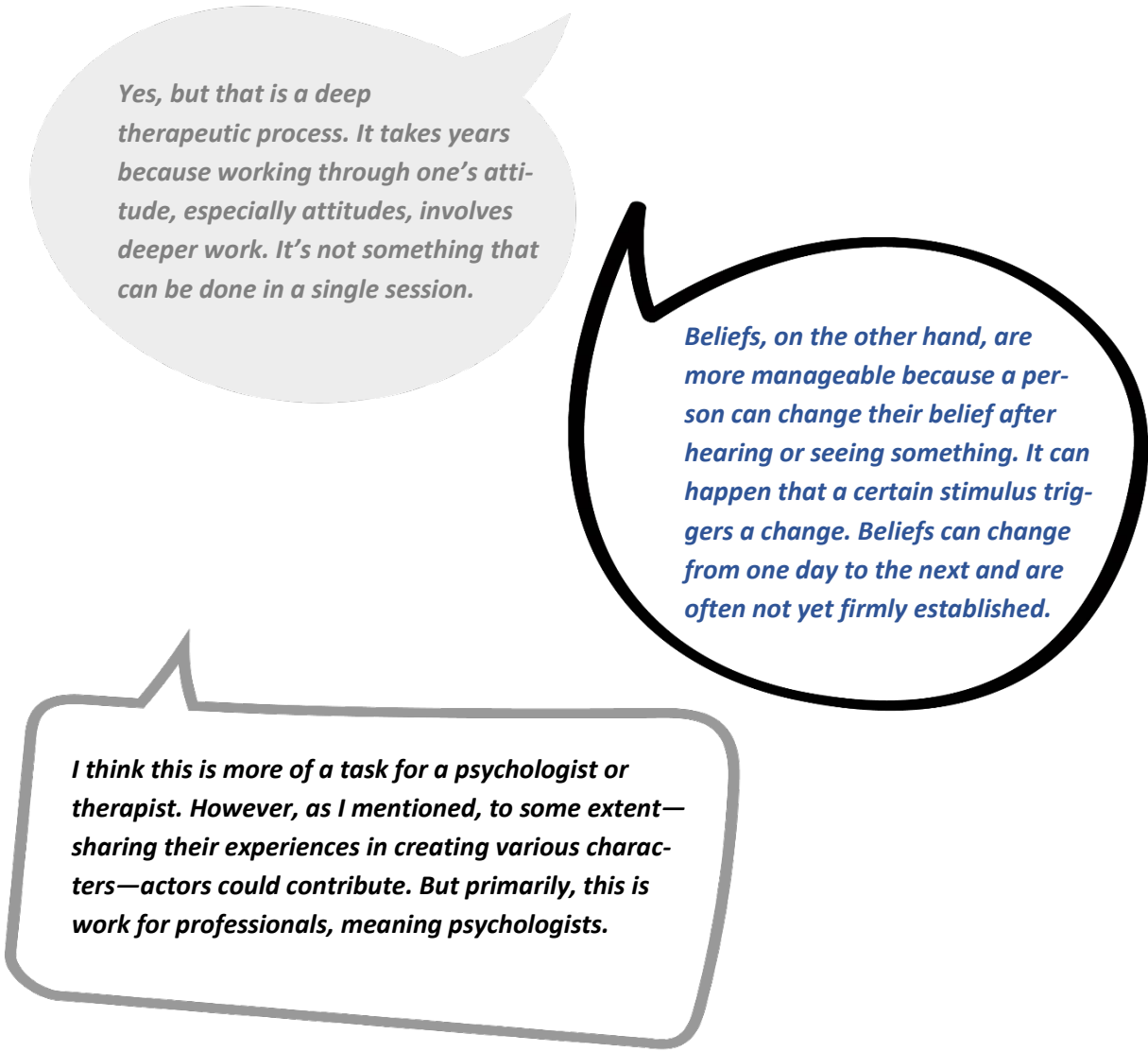
For pedagogy students, absolutely, especially when considering arranging the classroom or any space where lessons are conducted, or organizing various setups like assemblies on different topics. My own competence in this area is insufficient, and I think actors could share some interesting ideas, as this skill is very important in a teacher's work.

Yes, teaching that a person doesn't just stand stiffly in one spot or cling to the wall, but instead moves around. In education, this is important because there's a significant difference between someone who moves while conducting a lesson and someone who stands with their back turned to the class, facing the board.

5

Do beliefs and attitudes seem like an interesting topic for actors to work on with students?

Respondents are cautious on this topic. They believe that actors can, to some extent, work with students on their beliefs and attitudes. However, they note two key points: Working on attitudes is a long-term process, and attitudes cannot be changed during a single workshop. On the other hand, beliefs can be addressed, and quick changes can be made in this area. This is primarily considered the domain of psychologists rather than actors.

Yes, but that is a deep therapeutic process. It takes years because working through one's attitude, especially attitudes, involves deeper work. It's not something that can be done in a single session.

Beliefs, on the other hand, are more manageable because a person can change their belief after hearing or seeing something. It can happen that a certain stimulus triggers a change. Beliefs can change from one day to the next and are often not yet firmly established.

I think this is more of a task for a psychologist or therapist. However, as I mentioned, to some extent—sharing their experiences in creating various characters—actors could contribute. But primarily, this is work for professionals, meaning psychologists.

In summary, university staff see significant potential in workshops led by actors for students across various fields of study. They find the greatest value in such workshops in the development of communication skills—both verbal and non-verbal—as well as the ability to perform different social roles and enhance self-awareness.

They are more skeptical about the effectiveness of actor-led training in the areas of emotion management or working with beliefs and attitudes, emphasizing the need for workshop leaders to have psychological qualifications.

Managing space is also seen as an interesting topic and a skill that actors can teach others, primarily understood as the ability to manage space effectively during presentations.

B Researching the needs and expectations of the university's external environment

1

What can actors teach other people?

Respondents, answering the first open-ended question, talk about two main skills. First, according to them, actors can teach other people emotional mastery by learning to step into different roles, and second, to understand and accept their bodies and express themselves non-verbally as well.

A wide range of emotions. They can also teach us that when we need to be natural, and when the life situation demands it of us, we can impersonate, for example, someone else, well, depending on the needs, our life needs.

Pretending, lying, manipulating. The fact that they learn to act, actors learn to camouflage their true emotions. This can be taught to a person. I'm not saying in the negative aspect to manipulate people, but.... In the positive aspect they can teach composure in different situations. They can teach, for example, that focus, the ability to follow people.

Self-expression, understanding one's own body, plus such technical things as just training in body language, speaking to a crowd, public speaking.

Pretending, because they show the art of acting, expressing emotions, because they show different emotions, joy, sadness, etc., in different ways. They can teach acceptance of one's body, facial expressions, facial expressions. To acquire body awareness and facial expressions. To get rid of shame and fear of others' judgment.

Responses to the above question are divided. On the one hand, some respondents, believe that yes, through training with actors, one can learn to master emotions, and on the other hand, there is doubt among respondents that emotions are more the domain of psychologists.

Well, that's what they can teach them not to panic in different situations. Even if one panics internally, to cover it up for the situation, so as not to spread panic to others. Emotion management, to adjust one's emotions to the situation if one has a problem with it.

Well certainly during their performances on stage, during the organization of some workshops, where they have a cool contact and with the audience or some wider group of viewers.

We watch a movie and see, for example, a given emotion, such as anger, and we would behave differently, e.g. more aggressively, and we see that the actor acted more restrained.

It's hard to say, because probably on dealing with emotions are techniques, but whether exactly such techniques can be taken over from actors , I do not know. Well, for example, you can teach a person that when he is agitated, not to show that he is agitated, but it is probably not an actor only a psychologist could teach a person to know how to control nerves.

3 How can actors help other people improve their communication?

Here all the people interviewed agree that actors can teach other people to communicate better. They can help shy people in particular to overcome their shyness, but also all other people to better cope with social anxiety, rooted in a sense of social evaluation and fear of that evaluation.

Respondents also emphasize the opportunity to learn from non-verbal communication actors.

Some people have such a problem that someone is constantly judging them, and in the theatrical environment, well no one judges you, because you can pretend to be milk... I think such confidence.

That children or people in general should be helped to overcome shyness, either by speaking loudly, by diction, or by attitude.

The actor teaches that body language is also important as words. It can help to combine these aspects.

Well also through some numerous meetings, workshops, exchanges on some interesting topics related to different areas of our lives.

Non-verbal yes and verbal also. At large meetings, where there is a presenter and an audience. But this will translate into any communication, even one-on-one. Similar mechanisms that work at large meetings work at meetings in smaller groups.

The above question was perhaps the most surprising to re-spondents. They took a moment to think about the answer. They also asked, in what sense of space management, what is meant by space. The answers to the question therefore vary considerably and depend on the professional profile of the re-spondents. However, the question itself is of interest to the respondents.

Would space man-agement be of interest to you?

Certainly yes, it is a very broad topic in general. The very concept of public space is such a huge part of our lives in which we find ourselves every day. There can be different types of this public space. There can be open public space, there can be closed public space. We can meet with different people in these spaces, regardless of age group, but in general I think that public space and any contact with people is always such an original part of the day for me, which also gives me such a power to live. Well, because I believe that contact with people is extremely necessary for development in every area of our lives.

It would be useful. How to run a store to go that light must be appropriate, not irritating. This is interesting, interesting.

It would certainly be important. From the point of view for me, as a speaker, it could be interesting because it would give me a choice of whether I would perform in front of a small or large audience.

Well, yes, in different contexts, but when it comes to business, when it comes to negotiations, when it comes to the organization of the office and plants, it all mat-ters. It affects a person's comfort, how he feels, how he works.

5 Do your beliefs and attitudes strike you as an interesting issue to work through?

Survey participants unanimously agree that the issue of attitudes and beliefs is an interesting and important issue to work through. They would be willing to participate in workshops that would allow them to work on looking at their beliefs and attitudes from a different perspective.

Well, probably so, because we probably have a lot and attitudes and such beliefs inside of us that we don't think too much about, we take them for granted and as the only truth, so if you could work through them and someone would show you the same thing from a different side, or that they have a different opinion, then a person might change their mind, or they might even be confirmed in what they think, but they would get to know a bigger spectrum of why they think that way and they would even realize a lot of things through that.

Certainly, I think that all human attitudes or behaviors require or can push us somewhere to work further or to do some kind of rethinking, and we either correct or enrich it through some other action, or we can decide that this is just enough.

This is interesting. Everyone has this thing that I'm right. Just everyone has a different thing, and if someone would work through some negative attitude or attitude with me, well that would be cool, that would be interesting. I would like to do something like that.

In summary, those around the university see great opportunities to use actor-led training in developing such skills as mastery by learning to step into different roles, understanding and accepting their bodies and expressing themselves non-verbally as well. Like university staff, they see great potential for using actors' skills in developing other people's verbal and nonverbal communication. To a lesser extent, they express concern that teaching emotion management skills and working with beliefs and attitudes are areas intended not for actors but rather for psychologists.

The most significant difference is how the concept of space management is understood. While in the case of university employees it was space during speeches and distance between people, here there are many different types of space.

POWER SPEAKING

COURSE

TRAINERS

Umberto Bianchi

is an actor, mime, director and theater educator specializing in theater therapy. He began his training/artistic career at the Dramatic Academy of Lucca and later specialized in mime, body acting and emotional body expression. He uses the tools of theater and acting as a means of personal and professional development to achieve autonomy and scenic and individual awareness.

Silvia Gavarotti

founder and president of Power Speaking Academy, is an opera singer with 32 leading roles who made her debut in Italian operas, vocal coach, vocal technique teacher, public speaking and storytelling coach, dialogue adaptor for film, television, cinema and theater, actress; dubbing dialogue writer and teacher at theater academies. She began her career in the theater behind the scenes as a "lighting technician," where from the beginning she demonstrated her great passion for her work, her great interest in opera and her unbridled desire to learn and grow.

Silvia helps people communicate in public, eliminating the superstructures that often block them and make them "bad copies" of other existing communication models. She helps strengthen uniqueness, unleashing one's personality, exciting the interlocutor.

SESSION I

Opening

The first meeting is about focusing on ourselves, on the here and now, and opening up, through improvisation, freeing ourselves with movement, daring to do things without over-analyzing.

It also shows in a mirror image how we are, how we communicate, what our non-verbal communication is and how important it is.

Self-presentation

One by one, each participant comes to the center and introduces himself. He briefly tells who he is, what he does, what he likes, and what his passion is.

> *The exercise is difficult, sometimes causing reluctance on the part of the participants, so it is important to explain its purpose to the participants before carrying it out - to reveal just this difficulty, to concentrate on their speech, to observe themselves in this situation, to observe their body's reaction to the situation of social exposure in front of strangers.*

2

Feedback

The presenter gives feedback to each participant on non-verbal be-havior, but also on the audience's reactions, what the audience re-acts to the most, such as cats, children, the speaker's emotions, his gestures, etc.

3

Mirror feedback

The presenter also gives "mirror" feedback - reflects the way of speaking, the pace of speaking, and non-verbal behavior.

> *Mirror feedback can be difficult for some participants, being perceived as "foreboding," so it is necessary to first explain to participants that this is a kind of feedback, a kind of lesson from which we learn.*

4

Greetings

Class participants walk around the room and greet the people they meet by shaking hands and introducing themselves.

5

Exchanging names

Participants walk around the room and greet the people they meet by shaking hands, but this time, they exchange names each time. When they meet another person they already give them their new name and again exchange names. When they meet someone who gives them their real name, they sit down on a chair. The game ends when everyone sits down on the chairs.

A very engaging game, forcing you to focus on the here and now. On one specific element - the current name. On one word.
An exercise in concentration and mindfulness.
Allows you to get away from other things, other things and be here and now.

6

Paths

1) The first path – animals

Participants stand in a circle. The leader gives the name of an animal, points to any person, and squats down. The indicated person gives the name of the animal, points to the next person, and squats. It is not allowed to point to persons squatting. The last person standing points to the leader. Repeat the path several times.

2) The second path – swapping places

Participants stand in a circle. The leader walks up to any person, stands behind his back, then that person goes to the next person and stands behind his back. The person who has already passed - crouches down. The squatting person cannot be approached. The last person standing approaches the leader. We repeat the path several times.

We combine two paths. We start by saying names and at any time the leader starts the path with a change of places.

3) Third path – throwing ball

Participants stand in a circle. The leader throws a ball to any person and squats down. The selected person throws the ball to the next person and squats down. The ball cannot be thrown to the squatting pox. The last person standing throws the ball to the leader. Repeat the path several times.

We combine three paths. We start with saying names and at any time the leader starts a path with swapping places, then a path with throwing the ball.

4) Fourth path – handshake

Participants stand in a circle. The leader approaches any person, shakes his hand, exchanges a handshake, and returns to their place. The selected person approaches the next person, shakes his hand, exchanges a handshake, and returns to their place. The person who returns to his place - squats down. The squatting person cannot be approached. The last person standing approaches the leader. We repeat the path several times.

We combine all four paths.

7

Leadership

When students understand who they are deep inside - and consequently decide to be fully aware of it - it is time to start treating themselves with respect, to gain the respect of other people, become a leader. A leader "leads": he listens and moves with different kinds of music, making others follow him. A leader "shares": makes others feel naturally included, and makes others feel comfortable. The exercise involves movement improvisation to music. One person improvises, and the others mimic his movements. A movement-opening, unblocking exercise that gives good energy at the end of the session.

SESSION II

Communication

As a start to the process of getting to know one's mindset (mind-set), the presenter explains a concentration-developing exercise from the world of Peter Brook and the art avant-garde.

This exercise begins the process of motor, mental, and emotional coordination by combining, in one group sequence, ten sub-sequences to be performed simultaneously by each participant.

A simulation of a performance is created, where the circulation of words, actions, movements, and relationships begins simultaneously. Through theater therapy, the simulation is reinforced, leading to awareness of one's attitudes and relationships in real life. By technically overlapping words, actions, and thoughts - something we usually do unconsciously - and sharing them in real-time with others, we realize how necessary it is to pay attention to the "how" rather than the "what": we learn to stay in the realm of cognitive thinking, to respect each other and our mistakes. It is from mistakes that we learn to solve problems!

STEP **1**

Entering the stage

Without using words, each workshop participant must choose a commonly known character from the world of fairy tales or famous movies (Snow White, Spiderman, Titanic, etc., etc.) without revealing it to the other participants.

Students take turns getting on stage and presenting the chosen character.

STEP **2**

The stage

Each student is to enter the stage in the role of a fictional character and, through non-verbal improvisation, make the chosen character understandable. For example, Aurora from "The Sleeping Beauty": a character with a graceful gait enters the stage, sees something that intrigues her, walks up, and touches her finger. She is stung and falls asleep.

Creative expression becomes an effective model for discovering hidden talents and opportunities to achieve unexpected goals. Managing movements and overcoming shame on stage open emotional channels that move toward positive reformulation: anxiety becomes satisfaction, and shame is transformed into self-esteem. Basic emotions are released autonomously, but instead of flowing out in a disordered and abnormal way, they move into a guided representation of the unconscious and functional self-analysis process.

STEP **3**

Awareness process

The workshop participant learns to be aware of his gestures, bringing them to their maximum physical and facial expression. Movements mark the basic steps of narration, leading to effective synthesis.

After the corrections and specifications given to the student, he or she is now able to unify everything, repeating the activity over again and completing it. Through this process, the student gains confidence and begins to think "I can do this." Eyes and movements light up and take on a different glow; self-esteem has increased and potential has been discovered.

SESSION III

Public Speaking

After experiencing all the theatrical exercises, participants are ready to engage in a TEDx-style presentation. Fear and judgment are left behind: with newfound awareness, each person communicates with their audience with passion, engagement, ethics, and humanity.

Through these exercises, participants release their personalities, overcome their fear of public speaking by discovering themselves, and share with others. Communication becomes pure pleasure, an act of healthy generosity.

Workshop Outline

1

The facilitator introduces participants to the principles of effective and engaging public speaking. They highlight elements of a well-told story (*inspiration, fun, education*) and discuss space management during a presentation (*flower, moon, horizon*). The facilitator shares their own story as an example.

INSPIRATION – FUN – EDUCATION

A good, engaging presentation should include three elements:

1) INSPIRATION

- Whom do I want to inspire with my story?

- Who is my audience? Whom am I addressing?

- What do I want to change, and how do I want to impact my listeners?

2) FUN

- An anecdote, joke, or story—something to captivate the audience's attention.

3) EDUCATION

The concluding element:

- What do I want them to learn?

- What message do I want to convey?

- What is the motto, conclusion, or moral of my story?

FLOWER–MOON–HORIZON

Image Technique

Before appearing in front of the camera, workshop participants work on the direction and emotional content of their gaze, using the image technique. Images serve as the final result of a visualization process, helping to infuse the gaze with the emotional state required for interpretation.

1) FLOWER – SADNESS

When speaking about something sad, look down and to the right, as if a beautiful flower is growing there.

2) MOON – JOY, HAPPINESS

When speaking about something joyful moments in your life, look up and to the left, as if gazing at the moon.

3) HORIZON – DREAMS, PLANS

When speaking about your plans and dreams, look straight ahead, as if looking into the distance, toward the horizon.

2 Workshop participants prepare a plan for their presentation.

3 Each participant takes turns stepping forward to deliver their presentation.

4 The facilitator and workshop participants provide feedback to the presenter.

Workshop participants talk about themselves and their world, their passions, past experiences, and expectations for the future, highlighting key aspects of their personality and utilizing emotional intelligence.

If necessary, and if the presenter wishes, the presentation is repeated. **5**

Follow-up feedback is provided to the presenter. **6**

EWALUATION

Case studies

The evaluation involved three participants of the course who attended all sessions of the Power Speaking Academy 101 course, thereby completing the full cycle of training.

The evaluation was conducted using the case study method, utilizing individual interview techniques and observation.

The evaluation participants were students of pedagogy and psychology at the University of Humanities and Economics in Łódź. One of them has been working in the education sector for 20 years, the second has just started her career, and the third is unemployed.

The participants' names have been changed for confidentiality.

Ida's Feedback and Observations

What can actors teach others?

"First of all, posture and breathing, which affects the oxygenation of the entire body and, most importantly, the mind. Confidence, communication with others, connection, assertiveness, and many positive things that help people in everyday interactions."

"I believe such workshops with actors should be part of the core curriculum to ensure that communication doesn't devolve into online chatting but instead fosters interpersonal communication and conversations. Starting with posture, as we did in the workshops—standing straight, breathing smoothly, confidence—is essential because slouched posture makes us retreat into our shells."

Can actors help others manage emotions?

"Absolutely. When we are more self-aware and confident, it impacts our ability to manage emotions. We become conscious enough to control our emotions, know when to express them, and even when feeling anger, we can work through it and manage it."

How can actors help others improve communication?

"Through exercises like those conducted here by the actors—approaching someone, shaking hands, any kind of greeting. These are the first steps, crucial in communication. Small exercises and steps help young people grow, like flowers opening from a bud."

"In typical communication exercises, phones are set aside, and we focus only on the present moment. That focus is essential."

Is managing space an interesting topic for you?

"Managing the space around me—I think I constantly manage my space. What I lack is not managing it. It feels like everything around me is planned and under control, both in my professional and private life. Even when relaxing, it's still controlled, and I'd like a moment of not managing my space."

"On the other hand, young people seem to have the opposite issue. They're more relaxed and not managing their space, and maybe we should envy them for that. But we often criticize them for it, saying they're wasting time or are lazy. I think the key is finding balance."

Do beliefs and attitudes seem like an interesting topic to explore?

"Beliefs and attitudes—I respect everyone's beliefs and attitudes. It's a personal matter. However, if someone feels uncomfortable with themselves or gets feedback that their attitude is causing conflict, maybe they should work on it."

"I reflect on myself daily, analyzing my actions—whether I behaved appropriately, fairly, or hurt anyone. If something feels wrong, I work on it. I don't think I know everything; I'm always learning and improving. Sometimes, I discuss my actions with others to see if I was objective or not."

## Which topics proposed by Power Speaking Academy interest you the most?

"Public speaking and vocal techniques are always useful. Even speaking to a small group is often trial-and-error, and proper training would be beneficial."

How did you perceive the workshops in Rome and the feedback from the trainers?

"I had no issues with the feedback. They're trained in acting and expected something different from me, as my daily work is different. I'm used to straightforward communication—delivering the message without focusing on gestures, smiles, or voice modulation. People listen to me as I am, focusing on the message."

"In the workshops, I experienced acting, which isn't natural to me. For example, smiling depends on the context—if I'm explaining something technical, it feels odd to smile."

"I move a lot when I talk; even on the phone, I walk around. Ubi pointed out that constant movement might distract from the message. Acting has different dynamics, but for me, staying still felt unnatural."
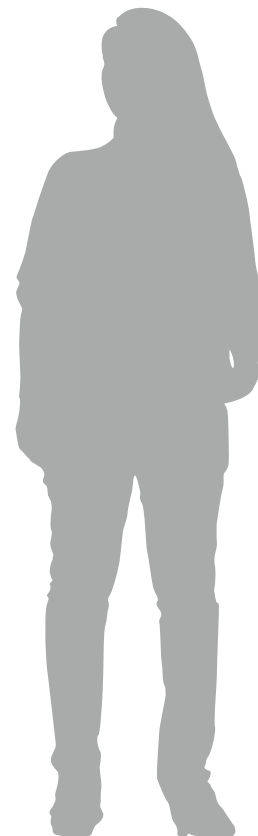
Additional thoughts?

"The workshops in Łódź were wonderful and relaxing. I felt truly refreshed. Observing young people, I noticed how much they struggled with posture and confidence. Ubi worked tirelessly to correct slouched posture and encourage confidence in communication."

"These workshops are invaluable for young people. For me, it was relaxing and allowed me to step away from daily problems. For them, it was an opening to the world and future relationships. I believe such workshops should be part of the core curriculum to help young people develop proper communication skills and prevent them from becoming disconnected from real-world interactions."

Observations

Ida has over 20 years of experience in education and holds a managerial role. She is confident and communicates well but places significant emphasis on adhering to the norms of her socio-professional roles.

The Power Speaking Academy workshops revealed areas for personal growth, such as self-care, emotional well-being, and stepping outside the constraints of her professional identity. The workshops also highlighted the importance of non-verbal communication within her professional and social roles.

While Ida's professional role often requires structured and clear communication, the workshops encouraged her to explore more dynamic and expressive communication styles. She also recognized the importance of such workshops for young people, particularly in fostering interpersonal communication skills and self-confidence.

Julia's Feedback and Observations

What can actors teach others?

"In my opinion, they teach how to convey emotions, how to show the audience what we want to communicate. How to dress it in emotions, posture, or words. I think they also teach, as we saw in these workshops, golden tips—what not to do and what to do to ensure the message aligns with body language so that everything is cohesive, making the communication light for the audience and logical."

Can actors help others manage emotions?

"I think they definitely can. Often, we have a block within us, perhaps because of the overwhelming number of life tasks or responsibilities, and emotions build up. Sometimes, we don't know how to express ourselves, how to say something to someone or express ourselves. These blocks prevent us from knowing how to do it. Workshops like these can help bring that out, encouraging us and removing these blocks."

"I also experienced such a release of a block. Now I can express myself more strongly. I'm still working on it because it's challenging, and we fear judgment, but it's going well. It helps to open up and express emotions better."

How can actors help others improve communication?

"Even more so, I think. Communication problems often arise because we want to communicate something but do it poorly. I'm not sure why we can't express ourselves properly. Body language ties into this, and an actor as a teacher can guide us on how to communicate so the recipient understands. Then, conversations flow smoothly because I understand what you're saying to me, and you'll understand what I say."

"I remember when Ubi said, 'Just speak! Boldly!' I remember that encouragement vividly because I'm quite shy, especially in larger groups."

Is managing space an interesting topic for you?

"I see it as managing the space around me. It's great because we often let others or external factors, like responsibilities and life events, overwhelm us. Managing space means understanding that I have my space, which I, as the architect, create and control. I allow in only what I choose—what I deem valuable—and separate myself from the rest. It gives me a sense of comfort, clarity in my thinking, and control over my surroundings. This applies to people, information, or events. I can take what I truly need and leave the rest."

Do beliefs and attitudes seem like an interesting topic to explore?

"Yes, especially if it involves looking at one's beliefs and attitudes from a new perspective and engaging in some self-reflection. Often, we hold onto deeply ingrained beliefs, sometimes inherited from our parents, without considering whether they are truly ours or if we would think differently if we knew more. Exploring this could be fascinating and valuable, opening a door to new possibilities. You might think, 'I've believed this my whole life, but there's an entire spectrum of other options.' That would be great."

Which topics proposed by the Power Speaking Academy interest you the most?

"Definitely public speaking, vocal techniques, and effective video communication."
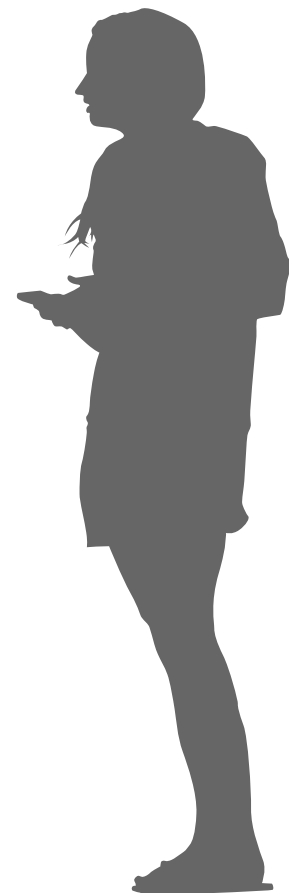
Observations

Julia is a highly educated individual currently pursuing two additional degree programs. She is in the process of retraining and making a complete career change. Having recently started a new job, Julia credits the Power Speaking Academy 101 workshops with helping and inspiring her to take action. After completing the workshops, she enrolled in another field of study and is planning a new career path.

As she mentioned in her interview, theater workshops help remove certain communication blocks, which was true in her case. The Power Speaking Academy 101 workshops helped her overcome barriers in expressing emotions and gave her greater self-confidence.

Julia describes herself as shy, yet her participation in the workshops, particularly the feedback from the trainer, gave her the push she needed to open up. She became more confident in speaking—louder, clearer, and in a way that is more understandable to others.

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Anna's Feedback and Observations

What can actors teach others?

"I think actors can teach people to focus on the here and now, on the present moment, on what we're doing, clearing the space in our minds and within ourselves, and allowing us to be aware."

What did these workshops personally give you?

"Personally, I found myself again, and it helped me organize my emotions. There was a kind of chaos within me, and participating in these workshops—where you have to focus on the task at hand, then add something to it, but remain focused the entire time—made me start focusing more on life and not spreading myself too thin."

How did you feel about Silvia acting like a mirror, imitating a bit, and Ubi giving sharp feedback? Did it bother you?

"No, I see it as a lesson, as learning through observing and feeling. Even though his words were sharp and firm, they conveyed a lot of emotion. It's a lesson meant to show me something, to push me out of my comfort zone, and help me understand why I act the way I do."

Are you afraid to step out of your comfort zone?

"Not anymore."

How can actors help others manage emotions?

"Actors could teach separating emotions and reflecting on whether the emotion is truly what I want to convey. For example, when angry, is it really about anger, rage, aggression, or is it about helplessness and surrender?"

Can actors help others improve their communication?

"Yes, because they teach people to speak loudly, and clearly, and direct their words where they need to go. They teach courage, how to express thoughts, and put them into words."

Is managing space an interesting topic for you?

"Yes."

Why?

"Because I feel I'm made for it."

Do beliefs and attitudes seem like an interesting topic to explore?

"Yes, but more in terms of not changing someone else's or my own beliefs, but showing through actions or other perspectives that things can be different. Beliefs can be modified, viewed from another point of view, or understood through another person."

Which topics proposed by Power Speaking Academy interest you the most?

"Public speaking interests me the most."

Observations

Anna is currently unemployed and raising her teenage daughter on her own. She is a sociable person with a great sense of humor and a confident, yet assertive, way of expressing her opinions.

The workshops offered through the Power Speaking Academy 101 project helped Anna organize her thoughts and emotions, taming a sense of chaos within her by focusing on the here and now. The exercises proposed by the actors pushed Anna out of her comfort zone, helping her open up to others and, seemingly, to herself.

Based on observations, Anna underwent significant changes between the first and last session. During the first session, she was somewhat closed off and approached the workshop with a negative attitude. She stated outright that she didn't speak English and wouldn't participate in English (although it later became clear that her English skills were quite good). By the final session, she was open, smiling, and confidently handling English. She shared her story with energy, humor, and great self-assurance.

Summary

Summary of the Power Speaking Academy Project

The conclusion of the Power Speaking Academy project aligns with the recommendation to introduce this type of workshop into higher education curricula and, as suggested by participants throughout the training cycle, even into the core curriculum for primary and secondary schools.

The most important skills that actors can teach others include:

- **Communication skills** – both verbal and non-verbal

- **Ability to perform various social roles**

- **Development of self-awareness**

- **Management of space** – during presentations and in a broader sense, managing life spaces

Notably, participants of the Power Speaking Academy course are significantly more supportive of these activities than survey respondents, such as university staff and individuals from its external environment. They reference their personal experiences during the course, and in some cases, explicitly describe how the workshops changed their beliefs about themselves and the world.

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