



In the studio

I'm no stranger to the sound of my own voice, but when it comes to addressing a room full of people, I'm quite the shrinking violet. Being able to confidently project your voice and hold the attention of an audience will have the most self-assured of people nervously shaking in the wings.

But forget the corporate world, these days our children are increasingly being asked to get up and present, whether they're compering a school assembly, presenting a project they've been working on in class or to an audience of parents as head boy or girl, these days the ability to communicate is skill vital to school success.

So what to do when the mic is definitely not your best mate? David Pope is founder of All Voice Talent, Hong Kong's only studio-based voice coaching organisation. And he has

recently launched Speak Up, a series of voice coaching programmes for 13-19 year olds.

As a coach, Pope has taught many senior level executives who suddenly find themselves in a position where they are centre stage and need to work on their vocal skills. "Taking to the limelight is not everyone's cup of tea," he says. "We work on volume, pace, projection, vocal tone, articulation, gravitas and so forth to enhance 'presence'. A lot about a successful presentation is not what you say, but how you deliver it. How do you make your speech 'pop'?"

His Speak Up programme delivers the same skill set, but to a younger audience. "Maybe students have an oral exam, maybe they've got school or university interviews lined up. Whatever the case, the ability to present yourself confidently to adults is vital," he says.



As well as voice projection, Pope also looks at body language, dealing with nerves and organising what you're going to say in the first place.

And of course the skills students take away are for life, not just for that college interview.

The sessions take place in Pope's voice recording studio in Yau Ma Tei, and each three-hour workshop focuses on specific vocal skills. Record and playback facilities mean students can quickly pinpoint what they're doing right - and what needs more work.

In a highly competitive world, of course the big focus for most students is on academic skills and exam results. But being able to get up in front of a group of adults and speak in a confident, polished manner is something that is sure to set them apart from the crowd.

When asked David, what they were looking forward to this year, he added, "look out for Speak Up! in schools this year. We're rolling out our 1-hour Voice and Confidence workshop in secondary/high schools - a fun and dynamic way to make teenagers aware of the impact of their voices. The workshop, delivered to 13-19 year old children in schools across Hong Kong, we will demonstrate the importance of vocal skills and posture to effective communication."

For more information, visit allvoicetalent.com 

