



PICTURE: Tami Smith presenting to students from around the world at SpeechSchool.TV

How improving speech can change lives

The way you speak is one of the most personal things about you. It impacts on your success in professional and social settings, from job interviews to meeting new people. In a competitive employment market, those with the ability to speak clearly and with conviction have the edge.

A new programme, based at the e-centre at Massey University, claims it can help to neutralise foreign accents, improve speech clarity, reduce speech problems such as mumbling and stuttering and show people how to reach the full potential of their voice and speech.

It is called SpeechSchool.TV, an online TV channel headed up by voice coach, Simon Angelo.

“For the past 15 years I’ve seen firsthand how speech issues can hold people back,” Mr. Angelo says. “Half my client base has been new migrants and international students wanting to neutralise their accents. These talented people possess good English but struggle communicating in ‘local-speak’. Prospective employers worry they won’t be able to establish rapport with customers and colleagues, and the impact of these reactions on people’s confidence can be quite damaging. Speech and voice training in these situations can be life changing.”

As a voice coach, Mr. Angelo says he also experiences steady demand from native English speakers. These have included a business class flight attendant who was having difficulty being understood by passengers, and people in private and government organizations who felt their speech was holding them back from moving up the career ladder.

“I worked with one English gentleman who was on a secondment here. He claimed that if we could change his accent from broad London speech to Received Pronunciation he could probably earn £25,000 more a year on his return. We managed to achieve the accent he wanted to a natural standard through an intensive programme in about 4 months.”

SpeechSchool.TV promises to make speech and voice training available at around 5% of the normal in-studio cost. “The technology of internet television has enabled this,” explains Mr. Angelo. “To be effective, speech training needs to be audio-visual so you can hear sounds and see how they’re made. There must also be a robust assessment process where you can receive feedback on your voice.”

Tami Smith is a presenter on SpeechSchool.TV and holds a Masters Degree in Communication. The website claims she has delivered over 400 public presentations in the United States. Ms. Smith says that SpeechSchool.TV works because it provides learning by doing. “There’s a 4 step learning process we provide to our students which includes a weekly TV show, downloadable exercises, recordings and the opportunity to record and send in speech assessments. More importantly it’s fun, engaging and entertaining and that’s why it delivers lasting results.”

Steve Corbett, CEO of the e-centre at Massey University says that SpeechSchool.TV is a welcome addition to the knowledge economy businesses he works with on the Albany campus. “SpeechSchool.TV goes beyond language instruction to offer a finishing school for speakers of English,” Mr. Corbett says, “and the enjoyable thing is that learning is made fun through online TV.”

Currently SpeechSchool.TV offers three programs. An English Accent based speech training programme, an American based one and a Master Communicator programme focusing on speech skills for business and professional people.

“British Received Pronunciation and General American are the two standards for teaching spoken English,” Mr. Angelo says. “This is the best starting point for those wanting to neutralise a foreign accent or gain clearer speech.”

For further information, to request a free trial of SpeechSchool.TV or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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