

English UK South West

Annual Conference and AGM, 27th October 2018

Millfield School, Somerset

How to find new sounds that are not in the first language

Adrian Underhill

Blog: adrianunderhill.com

Book: Sound Foundations – Learning and Teaching Pronunciation
(Macmillan Education)

App: SOUNDS: The pronunciation app v3

Videos: www.macmillanenglish.com/pronunciation-skills/

Eight facts that can revolutionise Pron teaching

- Pronunciation is not an end in itself: it serves *easy intelligibility*
- So everything should be in the service of **connected speech**
- Pronunciation is **everywhere - in everything!**
- Therefore **every lesson is a pron lesson:** even reading /writing
- **Teach your own accent:** and expose to multiple other accents
- “Pronunciation” includes **the entire physicality of speaking**
- **Know** your mouth V Know **about** your mouth
- Proprioception: A toolkit for **embodied pronunciation**

Embodied pronunciation

Our current methodology is:

Detached from the physicality of pronunciation

Dominated by cognitive descriptions of what goes on in the mouth

Embodied pronunciation = reconnecting with the **'4 muscle buttons'** that make the difference, then doing it differently:

1. *Lips* (spreading + back, or rounding + forward)
2. *Tongue* (moving forward and back)
3. *Jaw + tongue* (moving up and down).
4. *Voice* (on/off to make voiced or unvoiced sounds)

Teachers need to know what's going on in their mouth, otherwise they cannot help their students

In fact they can only say: *'Repeat after me!'*

Two solutions - No 1: Physicality

Problem 1: Pronunciation is a *physical* activity. It depends on *muscular coordination*. But ... we teach it cognitively

The Solution: Teach it *physically*. Get behind the habit and re-connect with the muscles that make the difference.

Teaching pron is more like teaching *dance* than teaching *grammar*

Using their proprioception (kinesthetic sensing of muscles) learners can connect with the muscles that make the difference.

Repetition cannot do this ...

Two solutions - No 2: The Chart

Problem 2: Pronunciation is mysterious, endless, floating in the air
How do I catch it? What is it? How much is there? Is there a 'map'?

Solution 2: The Sound Foundations chart is a *geographic map*.
A visible, kinesthetic thinking tool.

In one gestalt it shows:

- All* sounds, for *all* words, and *all* connected speech,
- How* and *where* the sounds are made,
- How sounds shape each other,
- And *all* sounds are needed from the beginning. The pron syllabus is *holistic, not linear*

ɪ	I	ʊ	u:	Iə	eɪ	ɪ	ɔ̃
e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	
æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j

Vowels and consonants: A simple insight

Vowels have *no restriction* to the air flow, just a shape in the mouth, made with tongue, lips and jaw. A vowel has breath, plus voice, plus a mouth shape.

A vowel is a *shaped, voiced breathstream*.

Consonants have *a restriction* to the air flow, made by two surfaces that come together to interrupt the air flow in a way characteristic for that consonant.

A consonant is an *interrupted breathstream*

Peter Ladefoged (1967) “...perhaps vowels are regulated primarily by auditory feedback and consonants by tactile feedback.”

Using one sound to discover new ones:

Some examples:

- From /s/ **discover** /ʃ/
- From /z/ **discover** /ʒ/
- From /f/ **discover** /θ/
- From /θ/ **discover** /s/ and /ʃ/
- From /ð/ **discover** /z/ and /ʒ/
- From /n/ /m/ /ŋ/ **discover 11 other consonants:** /t d s z p b g k/
- From /ð/ slide back to **discover** /z/ to /ʒ/ to /r/
- From /n/ **discover** /r/ and /l/



Resources to develop skilled pron teaching

- Blog:** adrianunderhill.com - sign up to receive posts free
- App:** SOUNDS: The pronunciation app v3
- Class pron charts:** Available from Macmillan ELT
- Videos (40 x 3 min):** www.macmillanenglish.com/pronunciation-skills/
- Teachers handbook:** Sound Foundations – Learning and Teaching Pronunciation (Macmillan ELT)
- Teacher Training** Cambridge: UK: 10-day training July 2018
- Intensives:** Oxford: 10-day training July 2018
London: 5-day training August 2018
Alexandria: 6-day training Sept 2018

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