

Microphone Mistakes

I've done it too...

I know you have taken a class from someone who's mic is turned up too loud, it cuts in and out, or their voice just plain hurts your ears. Guess what - that instructor is you. Yes it is. The mic is an issue in most classes, but most instructors swear they are using it correctly - well you do the math.



Here's how to be sure you are being heard (and not like the teacher on Charlie Brown - 'wa wa wa waaa'):

Volume - You should not be able to hear your own voice from the speakers while you are teaching. Remember, the way you hear yourself is different than the way the participants hear you. Your ears have to fight against the vibration of your voicebox to hear the sound of your voice on the speakers. So if you turn the mic up loud enough to hear yourself coming off those speakers the mic is probably too loud for the class. Your voice will be grating and maybe painful to your participants at this volume.

Look for a good balance between microphone volume and music. Check this BEFORE class. Turn the music on at the volume you will be playing it at, put the mic on, and walk to the middle of the room. Then gently blow in to the mic or speak. If you can hear that you are on the speakers, but can't hear yourself coming through very well, then you are at the right volume.

Mic Meltdown - the most common culprit of a fuzzy or flaky signal is low batteries. For God's sake - get to class 5 minutes early and change the battery. Don't ask the instructor before you if they changed it, and don't assume that it will still be working in 35 minutes. If you get to class late, make them wait the extra 2 minutes while you change the battery. Just change it. ESPECIALLY in gyms with rechargeable batteries - there is just no excuse for a run down battery in the middle of class.

Avoiding re-verb, feedback, and making people's ears bleed - a lot of instructors - especially women - like to turn the treble on the music up because when they do this they hear their own voice over the speakers more clearly. The problem is this - bass is what pumps the music and music is what motivates the participants. Bass is the part of the music that you feel in your body. Bass is the soothing, steadying, drum beat sound. Treble is the rest and treble alone is physically painful to listen to without the bass to even it out. Plus treble actually interferes with your voice - especially if you are a woman. If anything, you want as much bass as possible - leave the treble right in the middle! This will allow you to be heard, and allow the music to do it's job as well.

One more thing - shouting 'weeehew' in to the mic is not motivating, it's annoying. Words of encouragement and praise are motivating. The 'weeehew' and 'hhheehah'ing should come from the class as a response to something you've said, done, or prompted. Please use words, not sounds or yells, when wearing a mic.

Always watch your participants - if they seem like they aren't hearing you make some adjustments. Always use hand signals along with your verbal queues. And be kind to your participants' ears. An appreciative class will grow and grow.