



Presentation Tip: The Pause That Refreshes

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[This blog post](#) from *Harvard Business Review* makes a basic point about effective presentations that resonated with me. “Presenters would do well to give their audiences—whether native English speakers or English-as-a-second-language speakers—a moment to absorb their information by pausing at the ends of their phrases. The best way to create a pause is to drop your voice at the ends of your phrases.” The advice resonated with me because it is hard to follow, and it was even harder when I first started teaching.

I was usually trying to communicate way too much (which is a related but separate problem) and there is “an adrenaline rush which produces a time warp that causes the presenter to speak faster and rush past the pauses.” One issue is speaking so fast that your audience can’t understand, follow or absorb what you are saying.

A slightly different issue involves creating pauses in your presentation to emphasize key points and keep the attention of your audience. “Professional actors pay as much attention to the cadence of their speech as they do to the tone of their voices; and so, when actors end their sentences, they pause to punctuate the meaning of an idea. Presenters are not actors, but their ideas do fall into logical phrases.”

It can be hard on an audience if a teacher speaks quickly and never changes the cadence of his or her presentation, or the tone of voice. In fact, it can be exhausting. As the blog author says, learn a lesson from the Coca-Cola slogan, “the pause the refreshes.” What has been your experience, either as a presenter or a listener, when it comes to the effective use of pauses?