

# Teacher talk strains voices, especially for women

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Teachers tend to spend more time speaking than most professionals, putting them at a greater risk for hurting their voices -- they're 32 times more likely to experience voice problems, according to one study. And unlike singers or actors, teachers can't take a day off when their voices hurt.

Now a new study by the National Center for Voice and Speech (NCVS) reveals how teachers use their voices at work and at home and uncovers differences between male and female teachers. Its findings will be presented at a meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) next week in San Antonio, TX.

Eric Hunter, deputy director of the NCVS, and colleagues equipped teachers with the NCVS voice dosimeter, a device which captures voicing characteristics such as pitch and loudness rather than actual speech. The dosimeter sampled their voices 33 times per second. The researchers analyzed 20 million of these samplings which were collected during waking hours over a 14 day period for each [teacher](#).

Female teachers used their voices about 10 percent more than males when teaching and 7 percent more when not teaching. The data also indicated that female teachers speak louder than male teachers at work.

"These results may indicate an underlying reason for female teachers' increased [voice](#) problems," writes Hunter.

All of the teachers spoke about 50 percent more when at work, at both a higher pitch and a volume (about 3 decibels louder). Instead of resting their overworked voices at home, the teachers also spent significant amounts of time speaking outside of work.

More information: The talk "Variations in intensity, fundamental frequency, and voicing for teachers in occupational versus non-occupational settings" (1aSC14) by Eric Hunter is on Monday, October 26. Abstract: [asa.aip.org/web2/asa/abstracts ...rch.oct09/asa47.html](http://asa.aip.org/web2/asa/abstracts...rch.oct09/asa47.html)

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