

Camp Utopia Yoga

Teaching Skills 1

24 Hours to Better Verbal Cueing

Teaching the mouth to speak the body



Verbal cueing is what we say to guide a student in and out of a pose. Visual demonstration is powerful, but it can limit the student who can't understand why their body won't look like someone else's body. Verbal cueing keeps the focus inward, not on another person. With powerful cues, the student can shut off their own mind chatter and LISTEN to the cues, allowing the body to respond, and deepening the mind-body connection.

The simple truth is, getting students in and out of poses safely, effectively, and quickly makes you a better teacher. Students also learn best with consistency and repetition. Boredom is not an issue – repeating the same opening sequence every time, or using the same cues, allows the questioning mind to relax. Hearing the words that a teacher has said over and over becomes as calming and centering as the first few breaths of class. Mind and body remember what to do, and settle in.

BVC works like this: We begin by memorizing the essential cues to teach specific postures, written in simple, plain language. The cues work to move a diverse people (including beginners) into the basic correct alignment safely within a few seconds. Then, we develop deep knowledge of the poses through experience, observation, research and analysis to “flesh out” our teaching “script” - the ideas, words and wisdom that we want to share while students are holding in the poses.

Your task will be to memorize, memorize, memorize, memorize these simple basic cues, and from there you will be set free as an instructor.

You may become frustrated by the study of verbal cueing if you can't memorize very well, or feel restricted by the words. Push through it. You won't turn into a robot or parrot. You will be able to change any words that don't feel comfortable in your mouth for words you use more often. But once you have mastered the magic of speaking clearly and directly in simple, repetitive language, you will apply it to every pose you teach, and teaching will become a lot easier and more powerful for you.