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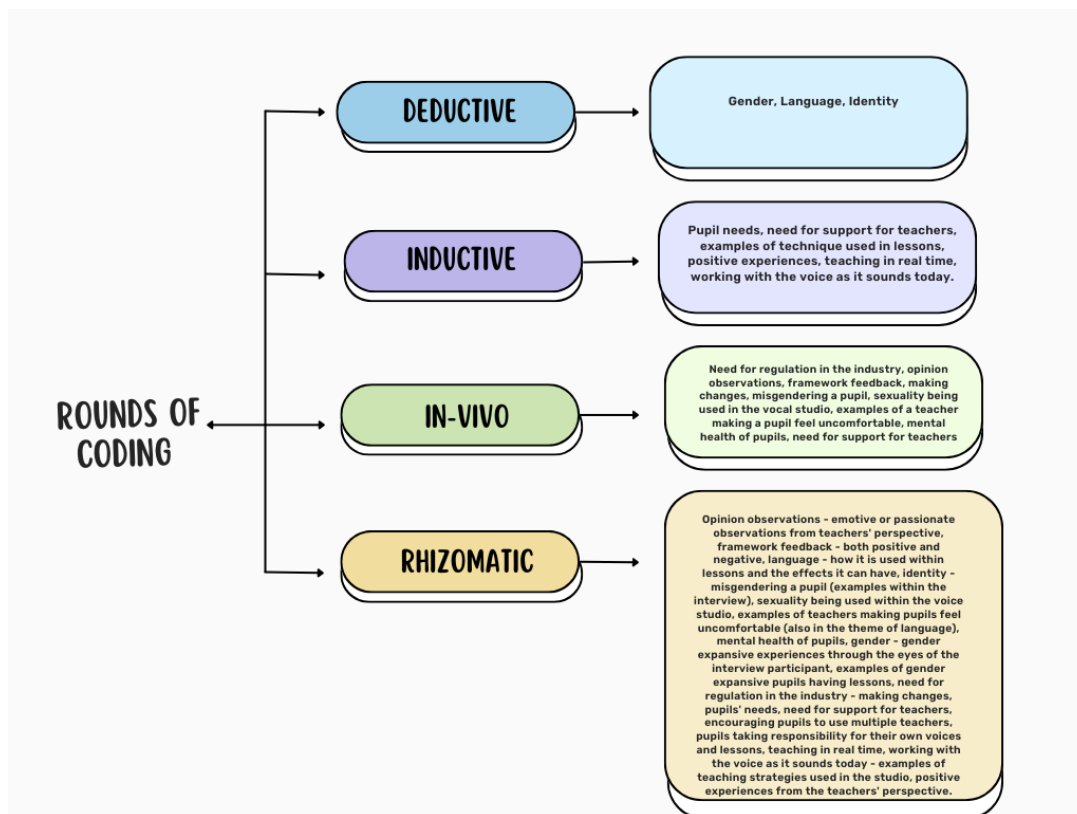
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1) Habits of Mind

 Thinking About Your Thinking (Metacognition) <i>Know your Knowing!</i> Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others.	 Persisting <i>Stick to it!</i> Persevering with a task through to completion; remaining focused. Searching for ways to reach your goal when stuck. Not giving up.	 Managing Impulsivity <i>Take your time!</i> Thinking before acting; remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberative.	 Striving for Accuracy <i>Check it again!</i> Doing your best. Setting high standards. Fact checking and finding ways to improve.
 Listening with Understanding and Empathy <i>Understand others!</i> Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas. Making an effort to perceive another's point of view and emotions.	 Thinking Flexibly <i>Look at it another way!</i> Being able to change perspectives; generating alternatives, considering options.	 Questioning and Posing Problems <i>How do you know?</i> Having a questioning attitude; knowing what data are needed & developing questioning strategies to produce those data. Finding problems to solve.	 Thinking Interdependently <i>Work together!</i> Working with and learning from others in reciprocal situations. Teamwork.
 Thinking & Communicating with Clarity and Precision <i>Be clear!</i> Striving for accurate communication in both written and oral form; avoiding over-generalizations, distortions, deletions and exaggerations.	 Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations <i>Use what you learn!</i> Accessing prior knowledge; transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.	 Gathering Data Through All Senses <i>Use your natural pathways!</i> Paying attention to the world around you. Gathering data through all the senses: Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste, and Touch.	 Creating, Imagining, and Innovating <i>Try a different or new way!</i> Generating possibilities; playing with new ideas.
 Taking Responsible Risks <i>Venture out!</i> Being adventuresome; living on the edge of your competence.	 Finding Humor <i>Laugh a little!</i> Finding the whimsical, incongruous and unexpected. Being able to laugh at one's self.	 Responding with Wonderment and Awe <i>Become intrigued!</i> Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty.	 Remaining Open to Continuous Learning <i>Learn throughout your lifetime!</i> Having humility and admitting when you don't know and are curious to find out. Resisting complacency.

2) Coding



3) Application for Ethical Approval

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of research activity: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Emily May Lowe			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
3	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR			
5	Campus:	Carmarthen			
6	E-mail address:	emily@loweacademy.com			
7	Contact Telephone Number:	07538185301			
<i>For students:</i>					
8	Student Number:	2116273			
9	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)			
10	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Debbie Winter/ Julie Crossman			

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
				Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): <i>Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
3		Institute Research Committee	☐		
4		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative	☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
1	<u>UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice</u> ☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy ☒
3	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared as part of this collaboration.					
3	Institution					
4	Contact person name					
5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
8	Is your research externally funded	YES	☐	NO	☐	
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
10		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐
12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

13	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☒
14	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Resonating Identities: Testing an Inclusive Framework for Understanding Gender, Language, Identity, to encourage inclusivity within Singing Lessons		
2	Proposed start date:	16 th January 2024	Proposed end date:	September 2024
3	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>			
4	Purpose of Research Activity Examining the alignment of perspectives between adolescents and voice educators is crucial in creating gender-inclusive voice lessons. Given the growing necessity for educators to deliver inclusive content catering to the rise in gender-expansive pupils, I intend to explore the viewpoints of both students and practitioners. This investigation aims to trial a developing framework for inclusivity and discuss with pupils and fellow practitioners its potential impact. (this box should expand as you type)			
5	Research Question Is there a need for an inclusive for-all-voices framework? Could pupils and practitioners benefit from a readily available framework? (this box should expand as you type)			
6	Aims of Research Activity My goal is to explore the perspectives of both students and practitioners. Ultimately, I seek to determine if there is an opportunity to continue developing a new framework that can effectively address the evolving needs in gender-inclusive voice education. (this box should expand as you type)			
7	Objectives of Research Activity Gather data that is representative of pupils and educators regarding gender inclusivity in music education. Gather experiences of teachers not just in the UK to expand the scope of this research.			

	Conduct and trial framework, discuss with pupils in focus group, make relevant changes then share with practitioners to gauge their thoughts towards said framework. Increase my own awareness of gender inclusivity. (this box should expand as you type)
8	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.
9	This is a qualitative research project and will consist of three stages. The first will be a literature review, which, alongside my previous work from my MA, will guide the creation of a framework designed to encourage inclusivity within singing lessons. This will then be trialled with pupils over a 3-week period. It will be used with all pupils regardless of gender as it will be an inclusive for all approaches. Phase two will consist of two focus groups. These focus groups will aim to determine pupils' responses towards the framework and suggest any amendments. They will also encourage discussion around individual perspectives towards gender and identity and the voice. Should it not be possible to conduct focus groups, the same questions will be asked via an anonymous questionnaire using the same open-ended questions designed for my focus groups. Phase three will include any edits or rewrites for the framework. I will then engage in 3 – 5 short 20 – 30-minute semi-structured interviews with a selected group of voice teachers to discuss the potential of my framework. These interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and coded using the established coding system, which will be further expanded. The results from these teacher interviews will be compared to the findings from the pupil perspective, aiming to identify any disparities. Throughout this research journey, I will maintain a diary or journal to document feedback received during my own teaching practice. This journal will not only capture insights into my teaching strategies but also serve as a platform for self-reflection. (this box should expand as you type)

10	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
11	In school lessons will provide a basis for trialling my framework. Focus groups will be held in my private teaching studio and interviews will be via Zoom or also in my studio. Should I need to use questionnaires, they will be electronic. (this box should expand as you type)
12	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.
13	Potentially interview teachers who are not based in the UK. This will all be done via zoom with relevant permission and consent forms gathered ahead of time. (this box should expand as you type)

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
15	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales. (this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
3	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
4	Use of diaries?	☒	☐
5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
7	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒

13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☒	☐
16	Details of any other primary data collection method: Focus Groups (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and may be exempt from some of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

1	Who are the intended participants:	YES	NO
2	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
3	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
4	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
5	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☒	☐
6	Prisoners?	☐	☒
7	Young offenders?	☐	☒
8	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
9	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
10	Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	☐	☒
11	Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

12	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
13	How many participants are expected?	30 Students engaging in lessons trialling framework. 6 – 12 students in each focus groups. 3 – 5 semi structured interview participants. (this box should expand as you type)
14	Who will the participants be?	Students already enrolled and engaged in lessons with me. The tutors will be specialists in the field of voice education who have a notable online presence to whom I will reach out directly.

		<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
15	How will you identify the participants?	As stated above, participating students will already be engaged in lessons with me and will be invited directly, with their parent/guardian's knowledge. Specialists in the field of voice will be identified online and via social media, and then contacted according to their preferred advertised method. Once consent is received via online from parents or guardians, each pupil will receive a unique identifier which will be used in lessons and within focus groups. This will be unique to each participant and will ensure no details can be traced to any participant, which is in line with safeguarding concerns. Interview participants will be identified as "teacher 1", "teacher 2" so on and so forth. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

16	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	(this box should expand as you type)			

28	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
29	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	I will be using recording equipment to record my focus groups and interviews in order to transcribe them post interview using transcription software such as otter.ai			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.		
	If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
2	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐
		No	☒
3	Risks to participants		

	For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information	
4	Risk to Participant: I intend to use audio recording in my focus groups and interviews and providing a transcript of these which will provide a risk of some personal data disclosed. There is a risk that students may find gender identity and terminology distressing. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant</i> By using codes to identify participants and ensuring safe storage of this data to which only I have access I will mitigate the risk to participants I will use college pastoral systems where appropriate and contact with personal tutors where needed. These systems specialise in referring to relevant external bodies. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities	
	Discussing pronouns and gender terms may be a sensitive topic for participants and I will offer then the option to opt out of any questions they do not wish to answer or terminate focus groups or interviews and ensure that any disclosures are followed up with the correct safeguarding protocol. I will also ensure I have parent/guardian consent for any work done with participants under the age of 18. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
6	Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to Investigator: There may be a risk of this research being emotionally challenging and I may find myself having a conflict of interest with my peer and teaching professionals. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator:</i> I am aware that my research topic can be emotionally distressing, and I will seek support should I need it. I intend to ensure I can distance myself from my research and if I find myself with a conflict of interest, I shall withdraw the participants' interactions from my research and seek further support if needed. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
7	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to University: The risk to the University will be Data protection <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How will you mitigate the Risk to University:</i> By using code to identify participants and all the data being safely and securely stored in m own password protected computer I intend to mitigate this risk. All data will be destroyed at the end of the research.

		(this box should expand as you type)
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8	Disclosure and Barring Service			
9	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
10	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Participants will have my contact details prior to the research starting. However, I will ensure they receive another copy of my email address during the research process and know they can request feedback and research results should they want it. (this box should expand as you type)
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	I will require formal consent from all participants and their parents/guardians prior to the research. This will give details of their time, involvement and what I am seeking to achieve through the research. I will send a formal consent form through email. (this box should expand as you type)
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Code will be used to ensure participants remain anonymous. These details will be stored in my password protected MAC laptop. At no point will I name any participant or provide details of the school/workplace that they are affiliated with, (this box should expand as you type)

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or	☒	☐

	<i>more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.</i>		
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	Personal data that will be collected includes the email address of participants (if under 18 this will be the parents or guardian's emails), the signed consent forms and the audio recordings and transcripts from the focus groups and interviews. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
	"Special category data" means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☒	☐
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	Gender is a sensitive area and links to sexual identity. The purpose is to find which terminologies the students find helpful it is not to delve into issues of sexual identity. The data needs to be collected to improve knowledge understanding and my teaching practice. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	YES	NO
6	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
7	University computers?	☐	☒
8	Private company computers?	☐	☒
9	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
11	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
12	Other – specify:	☐	☒
13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be kept in password protected cloud storage on my personal, password protected MAC which will not be shared. Audio/visual data will be transcribed and would be shown to participants to check accuracy of reporting. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder.		

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
14	All Data Storage		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	☐	☒
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
22	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
23	Data archiving?	☐	☒
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my personal, password protected MAC which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All data transfers will be encrypted and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Myself, Emily May Lowe <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Myself, Emily May Lowe <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my personal, password protected MAC which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected, and will be reformatted at the end of the project in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtSD.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
		NO	☐
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒
		NO	☐

SECTION K: Declaration

31	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
	Signature of applicant:	Emily Lowe	Date: 13/11/23

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	Date: 15.1.24
33	Signature:	Laura James	

For STAFF Submissions:

34	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
35	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☒	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
☒	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore **it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.**

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Application Process

All staff research projects and all research students must submit the Ethical Approval Form to the University Research Ethics Committee via the Academic Office (pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk). Staff research directly in relation to personal study for taught undergraduate or Masters programmes should be submitted via the Institute procedures explained below.

Taught masters and taught undergraduate research Ethical Approval Forms are considered within Institutes. Institutes will provide details of the specific processes for this. Where the Ethical issues within any single ethical application are of particular concern the Institute will refer these to the University Research Ethics Committee. Any student activity that involves the collection of primary data needs to undergo Ethical approval, this includes assignment work as well as dissertations.

4) Redacted Parental consent forms

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

[Redacted]

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

[Redacted]

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

[Redacted]

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

[Redacted]

Date of form submission

Thursday, June 13, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

[REDACTED]

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

[REDACTED]

Date of form submission

Monday, June 3, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)



Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address



Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18



Date of form submission

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

Date of form submission

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Monday, May 27, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

[REDACTED]

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

[REDACTED]

Date of form submission

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

SECRET

10/10/2019

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

Date of form submission

Wednesday, May 22, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)



Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address



Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18



Date of form submission

Monday, February 5, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)



Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)



Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address



Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18



Date of form submission

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

Date of form submission

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

XXXXXXXXXX

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

[Redacted Signature]

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

XXXXXXXXXX

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

XXXXXX

Date of form submission

Friday, May 28, 2004

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

XXXXXX

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)



Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

XXXXXX

Date of form submission

Monday, May 27, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

[REDACTED]

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

[REDACTED]

Date of form submission

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

[REDACTED]

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)



Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

[REDACTED]

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

[REDACTED]

Date of form submission

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

You Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

Your Child's name if filling out on behalf of a participant under age 18

Date of form submission

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

5) Redacted interview consent forms

Your Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

Date of form submission

Friday, June 14, 2024

Your Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)



Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)



Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address



Date of form submission



Your Name (Parent or Participant over the age of 18)

XXXXXXXXXX

Signature (Parent or participant over the age of 18)

[Redacted Signature]

Parent (or participant over the age of 18) email address

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@XXXXXX

Date of form submission

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

6) Redacted Pupil Consent form for FWF

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Thursday, June 6, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Thursday, June 6, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Thursday, June 6, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Saturday, April 6, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Thursday, June 6, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Tuesday, June 4, 2024

(or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Your Name

Signature



Date of form submission

Thursday, June 6, 2024

7) Redacted parent focus group permission

shared. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. · I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above. · I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information. What if I have concerns about this research? If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact the Director of Studies at: Voice Study Centre The Old Stables Hadleigh Road East Bergholt Suffolk CO7 6QT (or email at info@voicestudycentre.com)

Please select an option from below

Friday 12th July 5-6pm (face to face location hunters bar studio)	☐
Monday 15th July 5-6pm (face to face location hunters bar studio)	☐
Friday 19th July 5-6pm (face to face location hunters bar studio)	☐
Cant make any of these days	☐

Please provide your email address below

Please provide your child's name

By signing below you are consenting to your child taking part in a focus group led by myself

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Friday 12th July 5-6pm (face to face location hunters bar studio)	☐
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Friday 19th July 5-6pm (face to face location hunters bar studio)	☐
Cant make any of these days	☐

Please provide your email address below

Please provide your child's name

By signing below you are consenting to your child taking part in a focus group led by myself

8) Redacted pupil focus group permission

deleted. · I understand that under freedom of information
legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have
provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above. · I
understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved
in the research to seek further clarification and
information. What if I have concerns about this research? If you
are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about
how it is being conducted, you can contact the Director of
Studies at: Voice Study Centre The Old Stables Hadleigh
Road East Bergholt Suffolk CO7 6QT (or email at
info@voicestudycentre.com)

Please provide your name

By signing below you are consenting
to taking part in a focus group led by
myself



deleted. · I understand that under freedom of information
legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have
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Road East Bergholt Suffolk CO7 6QT (or email at
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Please provide your name

**By signing below you are consenting
to taking part in a focus group led by
myself**



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are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about
how it is being conducted, you can contact the Director of
Studies at: Voice Study Centre The Old Stables Hadleigh
Road East Bergholt Suffolk CO7 6QT (or email at
info@voicestudycentre.com)

Please provide your name

By signing below you are consenting
to taking part in a focus group led by
myself



9) Permission emails from schools

From: "Keeble E, Ms (Staff)"

Subject: Research

Date: 14 May 2024 at 10:01:20 BST

To: Emily Lowe <emily@loweacademy.com>

Morning,

All good to go on the research front.

Lizzy



Mrs E Keeble
Head of Music
Newfield School
Lees Hall Road
Sheffield
S8 9JP

Email: ekeeble@newfield.Sheffield.sch.uk
Web: www.newfield.Sheffield.sch.uk



From: "Ward, Mr A (Music)"
Subject: permission email
Date: 17 November 2023 at 11:05:06 GMT
To: Emily Lowe <emily@loweacademy.com>

To whom it may concern

I, Alexander E A Ward , on behalf of Notre Dame High School Sheffield , give permission for Emily Lowe to conduct academic research within school.

Notre Dame High School is part of St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (reg. no. 13589684). Registered office: Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU.

From: "Margaret Hayes (Staff Chorus Trust)"

Subject: Research

Date: 24 May 2024 at 12:21:01 BST

To: "emily@loweacademy.com" <emily@loweacademy.com>

Cc: "Jennifer Machan (Staff Chorus Trust)", "Gaynor Jones (Staff Chorus Trust)"

Hi Emily

This email is to confirm we understand the research and are happy for you to go ahead with your students on the basis we discussed yesterday,

Margaret Hayes

Assistant Principal - Teaching and Learning

Hope Valley College

10) Four Week Framework

LESSON PLAN

WEEK 1 OF 4 INTRODUCTIONS AND RESPECT

EXPECTATIONS | GOALS

- Discuss the aims of this project and my proposal
- State that it is to develop music lessons to be more inclusive and encourage pupils to increase their self-awareness of their voices.
- Discuss how the pupils view themselves, their identities, and their voices and how they would like me to address them (as these are existing pupils, this will be part of the half-term check-in).

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Listening and responding to pupils' needs. Pupil led discussions around their identity and their voices
- Understanding of the gender unicorn and a copy to complete if the pupil would like to (see appendices)

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Bring in a copy of the gender unicorn and fill it out if/where appropriate and discuss it with pupils.
- Discuss why certain elements might be helpful to voice lessons.
- Discuss the pointers that Garrett and Spano and Sutherland suggest are the vocal foundations and how we can implement them.
 - 1) Rehearsal pacing
 - 2) Breath activation and awareness
 - 3) Phonation and resonance building
 - 4) Developing flexibility throughout vocal registers
 - 5) Improving freedom of articulation
- Ask them to describe their voice using the words they feel best suit them.
- Run a warm-up led by the pupil, checking in and asking them to describe how the exercise feels.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Gender unicorn
- Vocal foundations as listed above
- Toolkit of warm ups using the warm me up app and suggestions from Garret and Spano, Sutherland and Sherwell

ASSESSMENT

- Ask the pupils to recap the session and identify anything that has helped them understand their voice a little more or has improved the link between their voices and their identity.
- Ask them if they would like to provide any feedback
- Complete my self reflections

LESSON PLAN

WEEK 2 OF 4 GRBAS AND MUSIC MARK

EXPECTATIONS | GOALS

- Recap last week.
- Discuss GRBAS. Ask them to use the scale to rate and grade their voices.
- Discuss the Music Mark curriculum and ask them to consider whether they feel the skills have already been accomplished. If not, ask what elements they would like to work on.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Knowledge of GRBAS (Attached to framework appendices)
- Knowledge of the Music Mark Curriculum (key points attached to framework appendices)
- Encouraging pupils to keep describing their own voices in their own words and using GRBAS to guide this.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Using my existing skills, offer the pupil some suggested warm-ups to run together.
- Using the Grbas scale discuss these elements with the pupil and ask them to grade their voices according to the words used. Ask them if they think they like the words or if they would prefer to use other words.
- Discuss the Music Mark curriculum and ask them to consider whether they feel the skills have already been accomplished. If not, ask what elements they would like to work on.
- Ask the pupil for a song recommendation they would like to sing and see how we could implement one of the overall aims of this project.
- Discuss any lyrical changes they would like to make and stress that I am more than happy to adapt in this room; however, in a professional setting, this might not be allowed, and I recommend that we discuss this once we have improved our personal awareness in future lessons

MATERIALS NEEDED

- GRBAS Scale
- Music Mark Curriculum
- Toolkit of warm ups using the warm me up app and suggestions from Garret and Spano, Sutherland and Sherwell
- Song suggestions appropriate for the individuals voice (see suggested inclusive list in appendices)

ASSESSMENT

- Ask the pupils to recap the session and identify anything that has helped them understand their voice a little more or has improved the link between their voices and their identity.
- Ask them if they would like to provide any feedback
- Complete my self reflections

LESSON PLAN

WEEK 3 OF 4 VOCAL ASSESSMENT METHODS

EXPECTATIONS | GOALS

- Recap last week.
- Discuss Chris Johnsons Vocal Assesments Method (VAM). Ask them to assess their voice with you by using it
- Ask them if they have any feedback from last week and if they have used GRBAS

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Listening and Understanding pupils voices.
- Pupil led discuss around how their voices feel and sound
- Knowledge of VAM

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Discuss the previous two weeks' work and ask them to rate their GRBAS scale and whether there have been any changes to their gender unicorn.
- Discuss awareness of their own voice. Are they aware when their voice isn't working as efficiently as they would like it too?
- Implement Chris Johnsons Vocal Assessments Methods. Discuss each exercise and how it will help them evaluate their voices and identify any issues and solve them.
- This may take the whole lesson and if so, explain how valuable it is and to work on any of the exercises they found trickier.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chris Johnsons Vocal Aeesement Method (see appendicies)
- Toolkit of warm ups using the warm me up app and suggestions from Garret and Spano, Sutherland and Sherwell
- Song suggestions appropriate for the individuals voice (see suggested inclusive list in appendicies)

ASSESSMENT

- Ask the pupils to recap the session and identify anything that has helped them understand their voice a little more or has improved the link between their voices and their identity.
- Ask them if they would like to provide any feedback
- Complete my self reflections

LESSON PLAN

WEEK 4 OF 4

RECAP OF THE FRAMEWORK AND PLANS TO MOVE FORWARD USING THE NEW SKILLS

EXPECTATIONS | GOALS

- Recap the three sessions so far and ask what they can remember, if anything
- Recap the specific aims of the project
- Recap GRBAS and Vocal Assessment Methods.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Listening and responding
- Allowing pupils to guide their own vocal journey
- Provide guidance to help further their understanding of their own voices and make plans for future lessons

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Recap the previous 3 weeks and ask if they have any questions.
- Recap GRBAS and Vocal Assessment Methods.
- Cover any exercises or points that need addressing that have been highlighted by either myself or the pupil
- Explain that we are going to implement what we have learnt to a song, and which one would they like to do?
- End the lesson by thanking them for their participation and asking if they have any questions. Explain they will be invited to a focus group in 2 weeks' time, and it would be helpful if they would consider coming along.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Chris Johnsons Vocal Assessment Method and GRBAS (see appendices)
 - Toolkit of warm ups using the warm me up app and suggestions from Garret and Spano, Sutherland and Sherwell
- Song suggestions appropriate for the individuals voice (see suggested inclusive list in appendices)

ASSESSMENT

- Ask the pupils to recap the framework and identify anything that has helped them understand their voice a little more or has improved the link between their voices and their identity.
- Ask them if they would like to provide any feedback
- Complete my self reflections

	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2 (First Access)	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 2/3	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 3
Technique	Basic posture with relaxed shoulders Dynamic contrasts Breathing to show phrases		Open mouth, relaxed jaw and clear pronunciation Dynamic range	Even tone across the dynamic range with clear open vowels	Animated facial expression Changes in articulation including staccato and accents	Breathing without interrupting the musical line
Range	Range of a sixth by ear	Range of an octave, mostly by step Using notation	Range of an octave with leaps	Range beyond an octave	Range appropriate to pupil's voice	

11) Chris Johnsons VAMS

TEACH
VOICE



By
CHRIS
JOHNSON

VAM Exercises - Reach UP!

Arms + Strap - reconfiguring to a buoyant, open ribcage and abdominal interaction.

Initially, if the arms up assessment was a good one, do this exercise with the arms above the head. Hold a belt, jumper or exercise band. With a light force, pull each arm away from each other and keep this for the remainder of the exercise (see image below).

Apply to singing of repertoire, passages and exercises that benefit.

This will create a more open, buoyant ribcage, with space to breath in to and reduced ribcage collapse on the out breath. Encourage awareness throughout.



Breath Suspension - Training the openness of the ribcage and a coordinated onset

This exercises is great if the habit is for the collapse of the ribcage on the onset, creating too much pressure for the voice. If the ribcage is happy being open, it helps to transfer some of the breath onset responsibility to the transversus abdominus (belly). Excellent to train into the more adducted qualities where breath flow isn't supposed to be generous.

1. Check breathing pattern - be sure to first encourage breathing into the whole self with a slight expansion around the whole torso on the in-breath. Not high or into the neck Breath calmly like this two or three times.
2. At the top of the breath where the body is expanded, actively pause the movement of breathing. Keep the body feeling relaxed and DO NOT pause by holding the breath with the larynx (IE not like a bracing feeling). The larynx and folds must remain open in the breathing position, which ensures the pause in breath coming out is being done by the coordination of the breathing muscles only.
3. Remain paused for 3 seconds staying loose and calm. Roll the shoulders and move the body whilst paused and be sure there's no physical tenseness during the pause. Gently and slowly let the air out again after the pause. Don't collapse! Repeat 3 times.
4. If pause looks good, add voice. Start with an AH vowel in chest, where there's a normal breath in, a one second pause, and then onset onto a sustained AH vowel whilst resisting strong bounce or collapse of the ribcage on the onset. This may trigger a very slight inward movement of the abdomen, as it would now have to lead the way. Repeat 3-4 times, or as necessary for learning.



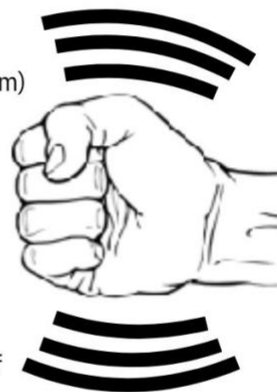
teachvoice.com

5. Lastly, experimentally apply this onset approach to songs segments. Be sure that the breaths aren't too large as they get to this stage, and are normal and suitable for the vocal demands.
6. Reminder: This isn't about holding the ribcage open and holding breath at all costs. It's about using the feeling of breath to guide the ribcage open where there's range of motion available for it to manage pressure. It should also help increase the singers attention on how they can create a more consistent breath flow from the full side to the empty side.

This exercises can be a longer term resolution for arms up, as the arm may have to halting the collapse of the rib cage. You can also pair this with vocal fry to either discover fry or using fry as an onset slowing device.

Shaking fists - in terms of how breath and voice come together, shaking both fists in front of you in synchronisation (like banging on a table or a drum) affects it a few ways.

1. if a singer tends to use more airflow than needed, it gently encourages the singer into a more static body posture. This serves to slow down airflow a little, helping to move over to a thicker register or less breathy tone.
2. Shaking the fists needs the body to reflexively change to maintain balance. In that reflex, the diaphragm along with the core tends to become a little more active, which also serves to reduce the amount of airflow to be driven.
3. Tempo/intensity matters - going at 120bpm (2 shakes per second) is slow and ineffective on breath flow. Roughly 240bpm (4 shakes per second) requires much more stabilisation from the core muscles, so tends to be a good point to go towards to see an effect. If you were to do those shakes more vigorously, or with a wider excursion, the effect would increase more. Be sure to remind the singer not to brace or hold their throat to perform this exercise.



Combination with REGISTER WORK

These exercises are great to combine with register work if that is part of the students goals. Either when searching for a stable chest voice, or working towards less breathy qualities. They are also especially good to use when using called or high energy sounds, as throwing the arms in the air on the high note so often creates a great freedom.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

- Singer feels better, vocal tone improves significantly

Breath/posture is severely interfering with good function
Helps to balance breath to suit the vocal goal!
Mirror 'reach up' body posture maintenance
Use arms up in performance
Example exercise: breath suspension

- Singer feels better, bare changes in vocal tone

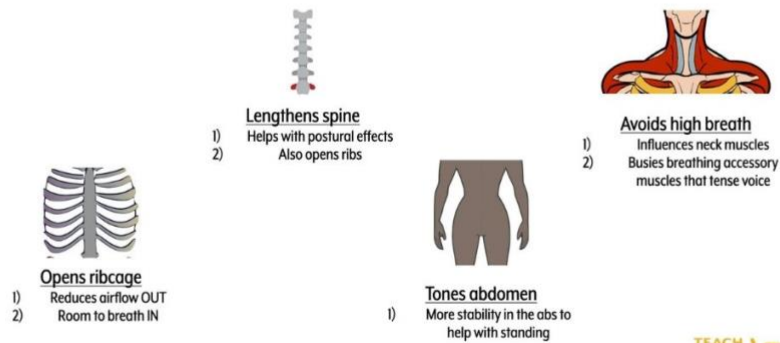
Breath + register work
Combine the same as above with vocal exercises that work the tonal goal (closure/register)

- Singer falls apart, feels difficulty

Possibility of unhelpful chest breathing
Voice demanding lots of air volume.
Heavily reliant on current pattern.
Train with: shaking fists (core stability) + vocal work on register/closure/tone

TEACH VOICE 

WHY DOES THIS WORK?



TEACH VOICE 

VAM Exercises - Shoulder Rolls

Continue with shoulder rolls - the best way to work with the shoulder assessment is to continue with it. This is because of a principle called 'motor equivalence', which basically means "find another way with a different pattern".

In other words, if shoulder rolls busy a habitual muscle pattern whilst singing, then the nervous system will have to create a new pattern. That's why we should continue to move whilst singing and practising in the short term.

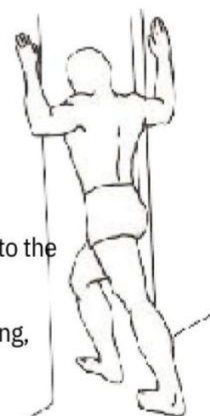
Swing arms - Much like the alternating movement you would need for swimming in a backstroke. This continues the movement of the shoulder but can be much more interrupting of the habitual muscle pattern. Like shaking, it's also going to activate a little core stability.

Be sure to go at a speed that allows the arms to swing with some momentum, rather than too slow where you have to use muscle to control them.

Stretch chest - Standing in a doorway and stepping forward to open your chest (pictured right) is a great acknowledgement of some usual suspects in shoulder issues; the pecs!

It's advisable to spend at least 2mins (even better if it's 3 or 4) gradually relaxing into the movement and allowing the stretch. Try not to tense up.

Repeat every day for 2 weeks. If working/living conditions mean there's a lot of sitting, keep this as part of a daily routine indefinitely.



Stretch ribs- This is great if ribs have become less mobile in general, which affects singing.

On a yoga ball (or improvising by hanging backwards off the sofa!), lay back fully so that there's a stretch throughout the front of the ribs. Lay there for a minute allowing the area to lengthen.

After a minute, remain in position while you practice slow and deep breathing. This will further stretch the intercostal spaces between the ribs.



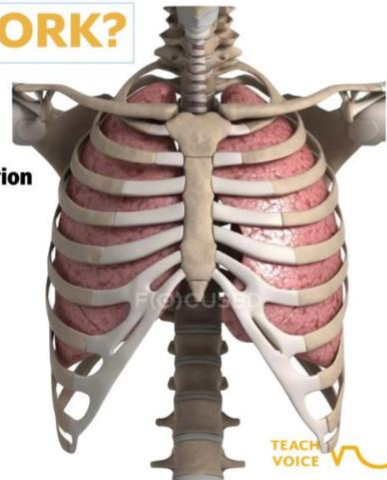
WHAT DOES IT DO?

- Singer feels better →
 - Prod further!
 - Can you see any other clues for shoulder rigidity, posture, holding patterns, high breathing?
 - Continue movement as treatment, gradually reducing it.
 - Example exercises - rib stretch, swinging arms
- Difficulty, or can't do on both simultaneously →
 - Distract and separate
 - Trying to control too much? Questioning...
 - Work on shoulder movement in isolation first, then add voice
 - Habit pattern too strong? Increase movement intensity!
 - Asymmetry in shoulder movement? Use mirror.
- Singer falls apart →
 - Possibility of unhelpful chest breathing
 - Singer relies on the muscles that connect to shoulder: Pecs, lats, traps + indirect connections like obliques
 - Try continuing movement but REDUCE SONG DIFFICULTY

TEACH VOICE 

WHY DOES THIS WORK?

- Shoulder joint and ribs **move together in interaction**
- Interrupts muscles in a **'high breath' pattern**
- **Interrupts holding patterns**
- SIDE BENEFIT - slight **tone of the abs!**



VAM Exercises - Head + Jaw

Continue with head movement - back on the 'motor equivalence' principle, movement of the neck whilst singing is a great thing to continue to do. Left to right, infinity, nodding, or anything that frees the voice from lots of neck tenseness.

Keep the image of the 'spinning plate' even into singing, to help align the head on the spine.

Also incorporate reaching up and shoulder rolls if neck tension appears to be a barrier for the singer, as they also busy neck muscle.

Neck stretches- There are several ways to stretch the neck muscles. Here are some examples for inspiration:

- 1) Chin tuck - sitting tall, lower your head to touch your chin to your chest. This will stretch the muscles at the back of your neck . Hold for 5 secs, repeat 5 times.
- 2) SCM/side stretch - tip head to the left, reach over the head with the left hand and place the finger tips on the skin of the temple. Gently pull the skin temple skin upwards which should transfer a stretch feeling down the side of neck. Hold for 20 secs. Whilst in a tipped position, deepen the stretch by turning the head to look toward the floor. Hold for 20 secs. Repeat on the right side.
- 3) Platysma stretch - place one hand on top of the other, place flat on the skin at the very top of the chest, and pull the skin toward the floor. Then, raise the chin to look at the sky and you should feel the front of the neck stretch. With the chin raised, deepen the stretch by jutting the chin forward for 2 secs, repeating the jut 5 times.

Flip Top Head - Opening the mouth by releasing the jaws bite, rather than pulling the jaw down.

By keeping the jaw stable with a gentle hold from our hands, we can use the muscles that lift the head up to open the mouth. Gradually, the only way to find the full range of motion is the release the bite and the masseters etc.

1. First, get a sense of the current jaw position when slack, open and left to gravity. If helpful, look in a mirror when you do it to get a senses of how open the mouth is when the jaw is left to drop. Open and close the jaw a few times to also notice the movement quality.
2. With the head level, hold your chin with both hands to keep it fixed in one place.
3. Without letting the chin move from it's normal spot, open the mouth by tipping your head back only

4. Repeat several times, focussing on how to release the bite in masseters to gradually open to the maximum but COMFORTABLE range of motion.
5. When there appears to be an increased range of motion, tip the head back to full opening, then leave the mouth open as you tip your head back to an almost level position. Monitor the difference in the mirror.
6. Open and close the jaw a few times again, and notice the different in movement quality, sensation, tenseness or anything else that seems to have changed. Prompt an awareness of this improved feeling and check in with it everyday and/or during singing periods.



Thumbs under chin - Use the thumbs under the chin to massage away some of the hardening in vowels on scales. Use the jaw wiggle to encourage the softening under the chin if it hardens noticeably in a part of the comfortable range.

Sometimes the hardening under the chin is due to a tensed up tongue, so experiment with noticing the tongues behaviour. If it's being flattened or retracted to bottom of the mouth, encourage it to go to sleep and rise slightly in the mouth.

WHAT IT MEANS

- Singer feels better

Reduced neck tenseness allowing function
Continue movement + sound with a focus on letting the tone 'be what it will be' - decouple neck & voice
Ask the singer to note if they feel changes in how they breath - neck muscles ARE accessory breathing muscles!

- Too difficult to perform, multitask issues

Distract and/or separate
Check movement - Sticky? Body goes with? Head pulls down when voice added? Work on fluid movement without voice, then add simple sounds.
Let the tone 'be' what it will 'be'... allow breaks.
Simplify vocal task

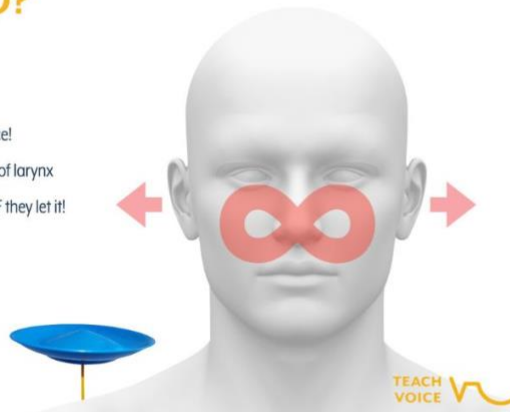
- Singers falls apart

Neck supporting voice a lot
Simplify vocal task
May need a few moments to let the body work it out
Possibility of technique being too unsuitable to let go of tenseness, so may have to assess other things and monitor change in neck tenseness.

TEACH
VOICE 

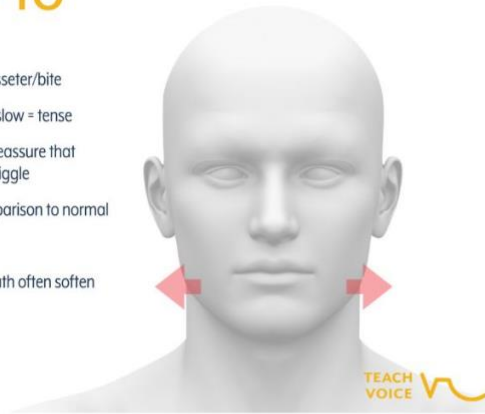
WHAT DOES IT DO?

- **Neck muscles busied** - DECOUPLED from voice!
- **Unbrace the vocal folds** - disturbs HOLDING of larynx
- **Allows new sounds and tones** to emerge... IF they let it!
- Aids in **reducing MANAGEMENT** of voice



JAW WIGGLE - HOW TO

- Let the jaw **fall open with GRAVITY** - loosens masseter/bite
- **Wiggle the jaw left and right**, relatively rapidly - slow = tense
- Sing song segment but not too crazy high - accept/reassure that **diction will be weird** and to stay prioritising the wiggle
- Give it a score of **vocal EASE** (not beauty!!) in comparison to normal
- **SOMETHING TO NOTICE** - muscles under the mouth often soften during wiggle.



WHAT IT MEANS

- Singer feels better 

Movement is loosening the whole area
 Masseters and other jaw connections working too hard,
 interfering with the voice. Find out why!
 Use wiggle in **SMALL AMOUNTS!!**
 Would benefit from jaw massage and jaw movement/awareness
 exercises like chewing (covered in later modules!)
- Too difficult to perform 

Jaw tenseness habituated / can't multitask
 If the jaw locks in middle when voice starts, simplify task to
 single vowels, like AH.
 Gradually increase difficulty.
 Jaw pain? Move on, but probe further on jaw pain through
 history



VAM - TONGUE EXERCISES

GRADUAL RETURN - This is the quickest way to get from a positive tongue out assessment to a positive result in the songs:

1. With a positive result with the tongue resting on the bottom lip, sing with it for several minutes to get a deeper sense of what it changes. Remind the singer to aim for some definition in the diction.
2. When you experience consistent results with the tongue on the bottom lip, allows to return only half way back in the mouth. Be careful to retain as much of the positive change from step 1 as possible. Spend time there to gain consistent results (anything from minutes to days), again preserving as much diction as possible.
3. Finally, allow the tongue to go back in the mouth and to normal diction, but retaining a sense of forwardness in the mouth and the positive results from steps 1 and 2.



TONGUE CURL - This exercise is quite like going to the tongue gym, as many singers find this difficult initially. Mainly because the back of the tongue pulls it back in, so it does require some will and a little tongue effort to keep this shape. It can also take quite a few weeks or months to be able to do this easily!

1. Place the tip of the tongue behind the bottom teeth, and curl the tongue body out over them. Hold it there for 10 secs, then relax.
2. Using an AE (cat) or a bright AH (father), sing a 5 tone scale in comfortable chest voice range (no higher than G4) for 20-30secs, or until the tongue tires. Take frequent breaks to reduce tongue fatigue!
3. **LEVEL UP** -
Increase the amount of scaling time to 1 minute.
Hold a pencil or chopstick under the tongue whilst voicing.
Silently create this tongue position 5 times during the day, for 1 minute each time.





TONGUE-JAW INDEPENDENCE - The tongue and the jaw obviously work together, but they also need to be trained to be able to move somewhat independently so that you can easily create exceptional shapes for exceptional singing.

1. Let the jaw fall open with gravity, and place one hand flat on the side of the face to monitor any jaw movement.
2. Only allowing the tongue to move, repeat the babble YAH YAH YAH YAH YAH on a 5 tone scale in comfortable chest range. 4 per second is a good baseline speed. You should feel the tongue vault up and forward with every Y and move backward with every AH.
3. As the scale goes on for a minute or two, exaggerate the movement of the tongue and the definition of the Y and the AH. The bigger the better! This will increase the freedom of the tongue from any tense points in the chest voice range. This is especially important to notice and change at the upper part of chest voice, as the tongue has the tendency to get stuck, leaving the movement small and barely any definition in the babble sound.
4. HELPER - if the jaw always seems to move to help the diction, hold the thumb knuckle lightly between the front teeth to inhibit the movement of the jaw and repeat the exercise.



BREATH AS A BY-PRODUCT

HEAVIER REGISTER and/or TIGHTER CLOSURE
To help someone out of a heavy, pressed voice or chest voice

- Upper body freedom (roll shoulders)
- Increase lung capacity (breathing + reach up)
- Looser closure exercises

reversal

LIGHTER REGISTER and/or LOOSER CLOSURE
To help someone into chest voice or a less breathy sound

- Rib/upper body stability (arms up + shaking fists)
- Firmer vocal fold closure exercises

TEACH VOICE 

BREATH AS A BY-PRODUCT

HEAVIER REGISTER
and/or
TIGHTER CLOSURE



SMALLER
BREATHS

LIGHTER REGISTER
and/or
LOOSER CLOSURE



LARGER
BREATHS



TEACH VOICE 

MOVEMENT ASSESSMENT LOG

ASSESSMENT	SONG SEGMENT NAME	PRE-SCORE	POST-SCORE	NOTES
Reach Up				
Shoulders				
Head				
Jaw				
Tongue				

12) Extra four-week framework resources



Reducing vocal tension using humming exercises and lip trills

These exercises may be given to you by a speech and language therapist if you are experiencing dysphonia (voice difficulties).

Aim of the exercises

These exercises aim to reduce unnecessary muscle tension around your voice box. A relaxed, open vocal tract can help to promote improved voice quality.

Before you begin:

- Ensure that you are in a quiet, relaxed environment.
- Make sure that your shoulders are relaxed.
- If your speech and language therapist has given you exercises to relax your face, neck or shoulders, you may like to do those first.

Exercise 1: Relaxing

Breathing: Begin taking a few nice deep breathes out... and in.... via your nose.

Yawn-sigh: Next, take a deep breathe in with an open mouth. Feel the air enter your lungs and your throat widen. Now, breathe out with your mouth open, as if having a yawn. Feel the breath flow out freely. Repeat and on the exhale make a loud sigh. Don't force the voice...just let it come out easily with your breath.

Exercise 2: Lip trills

Produce lip trills as demonstrated to you by the speech and language therapist during your appointment. Watch this video as a reminder <https://youtu.be/LSbmghPvW60>

Try these without and then with making a "bbrrrr" voice sound.

Try gliding up and down in pitch.

Exercise 3a: Humming

Produce a gentle "mmmmmm" (humming sound).

Aim for a smooth, clear sound. It will not be loud.

Stop after a few seconds or if your voice starts to sound hoarse.

Be aware of the sound resonating around your nose and lips – you should feel a tingling on your lips, or vibration on your nose/lips.

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent

Exercise 3b: Develop humming by adding a vowel sound

Once you can achieve a clear voice quality with the yawning and humming, you can start to add in some speech sounds.

“mmmmmmaaaaah”

Try to keep a clear smooth voice quality. Make sure that you glide straight from the humming into the speech sound without a gap in between.

mmmooooooh

mmmy

mmmmmay

mmmmeeeee

mmmore

Exercise 3c: Shorten the “mmm” to produce single words:

moo my may me more ma myrrh mine mean many money marry

Then words beginning with “h”:

he hah hey here high her how who

Then words beginning with “w”:

we why way war woo where were we’re wow

We use words beginning with “m”, “h” or “w” because they have a gentle ‘easy onset’.

Tip: If the words are coming out as if you are “singing”, then now try “saying” the words in your spoken voice instead.

Exercise 3d: Extending humming into phrases:

- My mother
- Many men
- Move over
- Much money
- Marry me
- More men
- Merry millions
- Mighty moon
- Morning Melody

Concentrate on how your voice box feels when it is producing a smoother voice quality.

Try to keep your clearer, “easy” voice quality going throughout the phrases and into sentences.

Compassionate	Aspirational	Resourceful	Excellent
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Exercise 3e: Extending humming into sentences:

- ~~Mandy makes mince~~

Many men make much work
My Mum makes bread on Mondays
Marry me in marvellous May
Many merry men make noise in Morecombe Bay
Nine mean men manage millions
Moonlight murder mystery by night
Mysterious market manager is muffin millionaire
Not monotone, but marvellous melodic music
Moonlight mountain climb makes momentous memories

Tips for practising:

Think about how you will make time to do the exercises frequently throughout the day. Some people make a chart or timetable like the example below, for motivation and structure to practise.

If you find that you lose the smoother, easier, clearer voice quality once you start developing the exercises, then go back a step, or right back to gentle humming “mmmmm” (ensuring you can feel the vibration on your lips).

It may be useful to record yourself speaking and listen to it back. This will help you to monitor what is really happening when you speak. Try this in a range of situations, e.g., with friends / family, a work phone call etc.

We do not recommend that you do these exercises while driving. Your attention should be on the road and you will not be able to concentrate fully on both driving and your voice quality.

Contact us

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Caroline Parry, RBFT, Speech and Language Therapy, March 2024
Next review due: March 2026

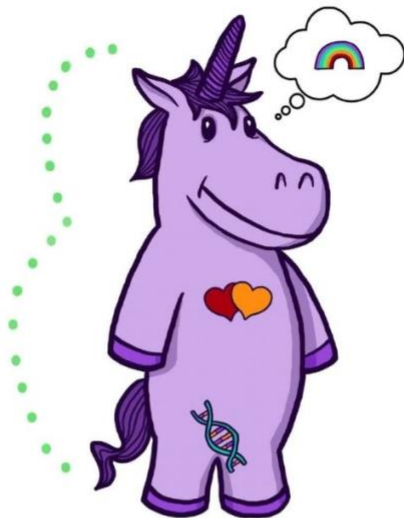
Speech and Language Therapy / Reducing vocal tension using humming exercises and lip trills

	Tick when completed						Comments
	Lip trill practise			Humming exercises			
	1	2	3	1	2	3	
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							

Compassionate	Aspirational	Resourceful	Excellent
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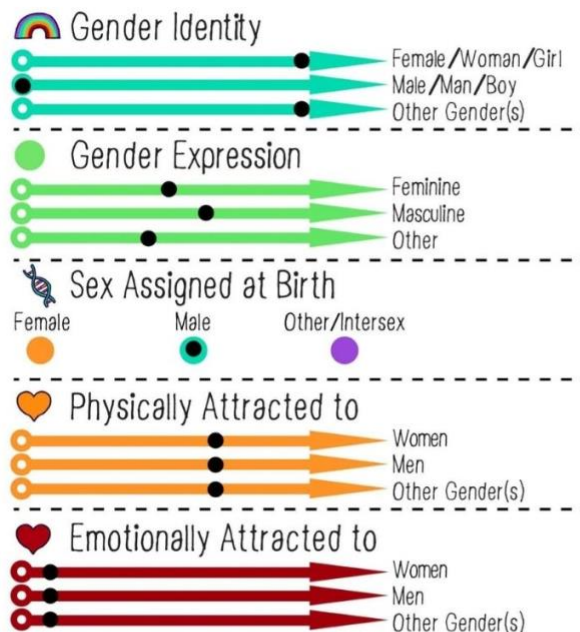
The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



Component		Description
G	Grade	Degree of hoarseness of the voice
R	Roughness	Impression of irregularity of the vibration of the vocal folds
B	Breathiness	Degree to which air escaping from between the vocal folds can be heard by the examiner
A	Asthenia	Degree of weakness heard in the voice
S	Strain	Extent to which strain or hyperfunctional use of phonation is heard
I	Instability	Changes in voice quality over time

Rating scale: 0, normal; 1, slight; 2, moderate; 3, severe.

Source: Yamauchi, E.J., Imaizumi, S., Maruyama, H. & Haji, T. (2010). Perceptual evaluation of pathological voice quality: A comparative analysis between the RASATI and GRBASI scales. *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, 35, 121–128.

13) Focus group Transcription

Mon, Jul 15, 2024 5:00PM • 53:16

SPEAKERS

Participant 2, Emily Lowe, Participant 3, Participant 1

Emily Lowe: 00:00

Progress. Just going to transcribe the meeting for us. I'll let P1 in.

Emily Lowe: 00:11

It's not the most soundproof spaces, hence why all of the soundproofing is behind you.

Emily Lowe: 00:18

Hi, P1. You're welcome to unmute yourself and put your camera on. Hello, P1. This is P3. P3. This is P1.

Participant 1: 00:39

Hi.

Emily Lowe: 00:40

Are you okay P1?

Participant 1: 00:41

yeah, yeah.

Emily Lowe: 00:43

We're just waiting two minutes to see if P2 turns up, and then we'll get started if that's okay. I am also audio recording this meeting for transcription purposes. So if you can

see a little recording thing in the corner, it's a really cool piece of software called otter AI, which transcribes your meeting for you so that I don't have to spend hours and hours and hours typing out everything we say.

Participant 1: 01:07
That's cool.

Emily Lowe: 01:09
Yeah, it's pretty good. Also, this height difference looks hilarious on this camera. P3 is sat on the higher chair and I'm sat on a beanbag. She's not like, eight feet tall. Have you all had nice weeks?

Participant 3: 01:25
Yeah, sort of

Emily Lowe: 01:26
how did you get on with teacher 2, P1?

Participant 1: 01:29
She was good, good.

Emily Lowe: 01:31
Let me just let P2 in. Oh, this room's really warm. Sorry, P1 , you looked really like high definition with your background blurred.

Participant 2: 01:44
My mum blurred it out. I don't like it.

Emily Lowe: 01:48
Doyou feel like you're a floating head? Hi, P2, feel free to turn your camera on and your microphone. How are you? P2,

Participant 2: 02:00

good. Thank you.

Emily Lowe: 02:01

Brilliant. Oh, your camera automatically tracking your face.

Participant 2: 02:07

Yeah

Emily Lowe: 02:11

Amazing. So what I'll just do is I'll just give you a little bit of background and housekeeping, and then we'll get straight into it. So P1 and P2 both go to the same school, and then I've got P3 here with me, who goes to a different school. You've all done bits, or all of the framework, and then we're just kind of here to get an idea of what you think about and what you think could go better, or what you would like to see more of in lessons. So as I've mentioned, this is being audio recorded. We're not recording the video. I'm just recording the audio. In fact, I'm going to record it on a secondary device, because we can't trust technology. It's being recorded and audio transcribed, which basically just means there's a piece of software running in the background that's taking notes of everything we're saying, so I don't have to do it later on. Is that okay with everyone?

Emily Lowe: 03:03

Brilliant, also, I would like to remind you that you can withdraw at any point. So if you don't want to take part anymore, that is absolutely fine. Just let me know everything will be deleted and you can leave the room. It's not a problem. Is that a problem? Brilliant, I won't ask you to be like, I consent, because that feels very, very formal. And the whole point of a focus group is that it's not as formal as an interview. So I thought we could do like a really cringy icebreaker to get started, because everyone hates them, so do I, but it's a really good way of just making sure everyone knows who everyone else is. So I'll start, and obviously, because we've got in person and zoom, if we just try to maybe, like, raise a hand, or if we can try and make sure that we're not talking over each other just for the recording purpose, because, like I said, I've got to sit through and check it all so that would be really helpful. So obviously, you all know me. You all know that this is part of my research project and my dissertation, which I'm very excited to finish. I've been teaching all of you for different amounts of time, like I've known P2 since she was in

primary school. I've known P3 a year now, and I think I've known P1 almost a year as well. So we're all at different parts and different stages of our singing journey, and this is just for me to get an idea about what you guys want more from me, and what you feel like is being met and isn't being met by your singing lessons. So P2 why don't you go next? Because I know you're super confident and very excited to talk about your singing.

Participant 1: 03:03

Yeah.

Emily Lowe: 03:31

What do I say?

Emily Lowe: 04:31

Well, why don't you tell us your name and tell us a little bit about your journey with singing so far.

Participant 2: 04:39

My name is P2. I have been singing for as long as I can remember. I would do tunes before I could speak like sing Sweet nightingale without even words, just a tune. And I do a lot of dancing as well. So music itself comes into a lot of aspects of my life, but I love to sing like wherever I am or whatever I'm doing. I enjoy that and just being able to enjoy the whole feeling of it. I'm quite a confident performer, so I love to perform for people and sing awesome for anyone.

Emily Lowe: 05:24

I would agree with that. P2 will come into lessons having practiced her songs really beautifully, and then will show me a fully choreographed dance routine as well, which is always awesome, P1, why don't tell us a little bit about yourself as well?

Participant 1: 05:38

Um, so I'm P1, and with singing, I've been singing for like, my entire life, because my mom sings as well and stuff. So we've always been, like, a musical family. Um, with singing, I'm not very confident, like, like, with P2. P2 is, like, one of the most confident people that I know. But I'm, I'm trying to work on it, but I think it's my confidence has

been boosted with, like, being in year seven and stuff, and I've, like, sang a bit more in front of people,

Emily Lowe: 06:15
yeah.

Participant 2: 06:16
And I mostly liked seeing, like, musical theater kind of things and stuff.

Emily Lowe: 06:21
P2 absolutely has, like, a powerhouse voice. Um, but she'll get to the end of songs and she'll be surprised at what she's done, because I'll just be stood there like, P2, how are you singing like this? At this age, I was still very much had a very young voice, and P2 just comes in and, like, throws out some Mean Girls in there. Regina, George, ain't got nothing on P3 and me tell us a little bit about you.

Participant 3: 06:44
My name's P3. I've been I did various like in and out of primary school choir, which is quite fun, I've done school shows and being an ensemble. And I'm not the most confident performer as me, but when I'm playing a character, I'm way more confident.

Emily Lowe: 07:06
That's really cool. You've been working on it so hard, though. And did you take part in the festival? You ran away? I've definitely ran away from performances before.

Participant 3: 07:16
I freaked out, I went to the little room, the people who were doing it with me. P3 you readt and I ran, it's a little bit embarrassing.

Emily Lowe: 07:23
No, we do what we need to to get by. So I'm going to start with some questions, and then the kind of the idea of the questions is that they start quite broad and that they're going to kind of narrow down, so that I get a bit more of an idea of kind of what you need.

So the first thing I wanted to say to you is that, like at the start of this term, I asked all of you if you could describe your voices and tell me how they felt, and most people who were taking part in the in the framework just found it really difficult to pick the right words and found it really difficult to tell me, from a physical sensation and a Feeling point of you how their voices felt and sounded on the day. Now I'm interested to check back in with you. So I'll start with P2 then I'll go, P1, then I'll go, P3. You don't have to tell me about your voice today, but I just kind of want a yes or a no or maybe as to if I asked you to do that. Now, would you feel a little bit more confident being able to do that. P2,

Participant 2: 08:22

can I actually tell you about my voice today?

Emily Lowe: 08:24

Yeah,

Participant 2: 08:25

urm, my voice is quite strong and very versatile, so I'm able to adapt to quite different styles. I was able to sing psalm yesterday. So I can go quite classical, but then go to the complete other end of the spectrum with a song that we did this morning called X's and O's. Today, I've just recovered from a cold, so it's finally back to being as smooth as it used to be, but it was slightly hoarse like a few days ago because of sports day. But it's now a bit smoother and is quite easy to use, and I've been working my shoulder tension, which is really releasing my voice even more.

Emily Lowe: 09:05

That's amazing. And that is such a thorough description, compared to a couple of weeks ago, when you'd have been, like, my voice is a little bit high, but also a little bit low, and kind of those words were very much based in pitch, and now you're coming out with, like, a real thorough description that's amazing. What about you, P1,

Participant 1: 09:22

um, so like, what P2 said about, like, sports day and stuff. I feel like, even though, on sports day, I was like, cheering everyone on and stuff, and I was also, like, there was lots of music, so I was singing along to everything. I feel like I'm one of the only people in the in in the entire year that's like, actually, my voice is still here.

Emily Lowe: 09:40

Yay.

Participant 1: 09:41

And then I had, like, a fun day today, because you went out with this group called rainbows, and then in bowling and like, jump, there was, like, songs on, so I was singing in front of people. So it was, it was okay. So my voice, it hasn't been bad, but, like, I haven't sung like a lot today, but like on Friday, I was in the car with my mum, and then we were singing like, Heathers and stuff,

Emily Lowe: 10:11

amazing. All right. P3, what about you? Do you feel like you could use the words that we've learned a little bit to describe what we're thinking a little bit more, like the the breathiness, the roughness, the esthenia, which is still one of my favorite words, do you think they help? Or do you think that it's still something that we might need to work on a little bit

Emily Lowe: 10:29

more, maybe a little bit more?

Emily Lowe: 10:30

Yeah,

Participant 3: 10:31

absolutely. I don't know. Sometimes, remember, I have a specific idea of what a work means, like, kind of difficult, like, what I want to say, but the words don't really

Emily Lowe: 10:42

Yeah, so the words that I've told you might not be the way that you see those words. So with you, it might be a case that we find some words together that that can help do that. And the whole point of of being kind of a teacher that works with you is, is having these conversations and going right, okay, we don't have to use those words. We can use any words that you want. You can even make up words, as long as you know what they mean. So how does it feel for particularly P2 and P1? Oh, yes P2

Participant 2: 11:10

with the making up words things. I made up tons of different terms for different things in singing, we've got blobfish jaw, spider monkey jaw, all sorts.

Emily Lowe: 11:19

Yeah. P2 is a big fan of making up words, and that kind of relates to this, really and like, how does it feel for you being able to tell me what you want and what you need and what you're feeling, rather than me going, this is what I can hear, so P1, how does it feel for you?

11:35 Participant 2

I don't know. It just feels like I'm more in control of, like, how I'm expressing myself and things like that.

Emily Lowe: 11:42

Yeah. P2,

11:44 Participant 2

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey. It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like. I'm helping to build that

Emily Lowe: 11:58

amazing P2, P3 get confused because you're P3, and my name is Emily P3, so it's very confusing going Emily P3.

Participant 3: 12:09

I think, I think it means that I can probably communicate to you that maybe stuff that you didn't know, like maybe stuff I've done on my own when no one's there.

Emily Lowe: 12:20

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. So kind of a nitty gritty question that I would like your kind of honest, brutal feedback. I know I'm your singing teacher, so there's always going to be an element of maybe you wanting to say what you think I want to hear. But for this question, I don't really want you to do that. I want you to have a think. And is there anything that you would like to see covered more in your lessons? Or do you feel like I'm meeting your needs as a singer? And is there any point, any part of like your vocal mechanisms, like your diaphragm, your vocal folds, anything that doesn't feel like it gets addressed enough, or anything that you'd like to be addressed more? So we'll start with P2 again, just go. It's easier to go in that order, if that's okay,

13:04 Participant 2

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Emily Lowe: 13:39

absolutely and so this is kind of what this whole framework is about. So obviously, my background is very much in musical theater and pop. I trained classically when I was younger, so all the way through secondary school and sixth form, I trained classically, and it's not my favorite thing. But what what I can do now is knowing that P2 wants that path, I can teach her the foundations that she needs to get those good groundwork skills in there, and then I can bring in other teachers that might be able to just further that a little bit more for you. Because I think it's important as a teacher to work with your skill set and to acknowledge the point in which you go actually, I think this person might benefit from someone else coming in and doing a little bit of work with them, bringing in a classical specialist, bringing in your musical theater specialist, bringing in your nice, soft voice specialist, to just help you progress with that journey. What about you, P1? Give me some brutal feedback. Well,

Participant 1: 14:31

I mean, I don't want to sound like I'm like, copying what P2 said, but I feel like you're a really good singing teacher. Like, if I'd had just not done singing lessons, and I'd just be like, self slash, taught by my mom, like, it wouldn't be the same. You've got someone who's, like, professionally trained and like, you're not, you're not strict. You're really,

like, it's like, you're never strict. It's like most teachers have, like a strict side and like a soft side, but you'll always have the soft side. So like, you have two soft sides.

Emily Lowe: 14:32
Do you want me stricter?

Participant 1: 14:34
But like, yeah, it helps. It does help a lot to have a teacher who's nice all the time.

Emily Lowe: 15:25
Oh, that's a lovely thing to say.

Participant 1: 15:27
Like, especially like, when I start crying because my singing and stuff,

Emily Lowe: 15:33
I just like a show of hands. But your hand, if you have cried in a lesson with Emily, yeah,

Participant 3: 15:39
I don't remember,

Emily Lowe: 15:40
yeah, yeah, was you were singing the one from the moomin soundtrack? Just, yeah, I find my own lessons. And P3 Have you got any brutal feedback for me?

Participant 3: 16:02
yeah, um, I think you're a good teacher. I feel like comfortable to, like, you know, go wrong. Like, I'm not trying to go wrong, but I know that there's not going to be any like shame if I do

Emily Lowe: 16:16
Absolutely.

Participant 3: 16:17
Um, I think I would like to probably explore the different things my voice can do, like, see what else I can do apart from, like, like, soft stuff,

Emily Lowe: 16:29
yeah, so you're a little bit more pushing and a little bit more looking at tone and the different sounds that you can make

Participant 3: 16:37
different sorts of songs.

Emily Lowe: 16:38
Great. I'm going to remember that in September, because what will happen is I'll go, P3, Would you like to sing this? And P3 will go, no, no, I don't want to say that one actually, no, thank you. So what I'm going to do now is we're going to move on a little bit, and we're going to talk about your identity as a singer. So I have told this to all of you throughout this journey, but singing lessons are unregulated, so anyone can come in and go, I'm a singing teacher, and as long as they have got a clean criminal record and a safeguarding certificate of any format, they can come in and teach singing. I've been teaching singing for 12 years now, and at no point has anyone turned to me and gone, Emily, can you just show me a piece of paper that says you're a singing teacher. No one has done that, which I think is wild, because it means that no one is checking what teachers are teaching in lessons. So when people are getting into university, there's a whole spectrum of people that can read music, people that can't read music, people that sing musical theater, people that sing pop, people that sing classical because singing is all kind of lumped in to one thing. And you guys know your singers, Singing isn't just one thing. You don't ever just sing one thing. You don't ever just sing in one style, you don't ever sing in one tone. So what this framework has been designed to do is be a starting point so that potentially other teachers can use it. And we're all teaching the same healthy goals and the same skills and foundations. So that if you then go to another teacher, you can say, I sometimes get a little bit breathy, I sometimes struggle with stamina, sometimes I get some shoulder tension. And that singing teacher can go, great, brilliant. We can work on that. So it's also worth noting that currently, there are no guidelines and no existing frameworks or legislation that teachers can turn to as a starting point. There is no like, how do you teach singing lessons that doesn't exist? So I

want to now ask you a question that is, as a singer, can you think of any times that a teacher or a vocal coach or a director of a show, or someone involved in the arts has taught you something that hasn't felt quite right or made you go, not really sure about this, and if you have, can you share it? Yes, P2

Pupil 2 16:58

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Emily Lowe: 19:35

So it's kind of a bit of like conflicting information. Sing with an open mouth, but then close your mouth and use your lips for saying the words. That's interesting. I know the teacher that you're talking about there, and I would say that she is not a singer by trade, so it's quite interesting to be teaching skills that maybe you don't really know. Maybe someone taught her sing with your mouth open and because we know that when teachers are doing their teach training, they're only doing five hours of how to teach music in that whole year, and then expected to go and teach music at a primary school level, which is crazy, right? P1, have you had any instances where you're like, I'm not sure what you're teaching me is, right?

Participant 1

I don't think so. There might have been, like, one or two times when, like, my mom's told me to do night, to do something. But I don't actually think there's been any times

Emily Lowe: 20:27

that's good, that's a good thing, P3?

Participant 3: 20:31

Probably not, and wouldn't of remembered

Emily Lowe: 20:35

Thats really interesting. I think that's a good sign, right? If you'd have all turned around and been like, I had a singing teacher that taught me this, and I had a singing teacher that taught me this. It that that would be a bad thing. So this is, this is a positive step that you guys haven't had any interactions with a teacher that you think is doing a terrible job. I call them cowboys because they're still like the wild west of singing teachers out there. So the next kind of question is just aimed at you. P2, did you feel like that experience being taught something that didn't feel quite right? Do you feel like it validated your identity, or did it make you kind of question your identity as a singer? Was it? Did it impact you in a way that you maybe questioned your singing abilities? Or were you able to just kind of go, No, I'm just gonna let it go.

Participant 2: 21:20

Well, this is probably just due to my personality. I didn't really think anything of it, but I did get upset when I couldn't sing some particular wordy songs, and it was a lot more work to learn quiet from Matilda at first, because it had so much words.

Emily Lowe: 21:35

Yeah, that song is a marathon. You did a very good job with it. So kind of circling back to the unregulated Wild West of singing. Do you think, as pupils currently having singing lessons, that there should be some set rules and a scheme of work that all teachers are working towards? Now I'm not talking grades, because, again, grades are very set in in the way that they do things. And sometimes that works for some pupils, and sometimes it doesn't like for P3, I feel like grades would not be your cup of tea, but P2 quite likes that drive to go and do grades and things. But do you think that there should be something, a document somewhere, that is just a set of rules that all senior teachers are working towards P3? So because there's no current rules or legislation or anything for singing teachers, do you think it would be beneficial to you and to other singers if there were just, like a set thing that I could go? Here you go. This is what singing lessons means. Do you think you would find that helpful? Or do you think you don't really need it? You're kind of happy to trust what I'm doing.

Participant 3: 22:42

I think it will be helpful so that, you know, people know it's not just a random person coming in and you have to listen to them like there is, like a specific thing that they should be doing and shouldn't be doing.

Emily Lowe: 22:54

Yeah, absolutely. What about you? P1?

Participant 1: 22:56

I mean, I think, I think that would probably be very beneficial, but also at the same time, they should have at least one rule that says that, like, you can teach how you want, but like, just stick to the rules. So, like, you don't have to do exactly what the rules tell you, but make sure you have make sure, like, that you know about them and stuff?

Emily Lowe: 23:22

Yeah, absolutely. P2?

Participant 2 23:24

And I agree. I think that there should be some sort of guidelines, because then you don't know what these people are learning. And if they want to go and sing classically, if they really do love singing, they may not have learned anything close to what they'll actually need. So they'll be like, Oh, I've been doing sing lessons for years, but actually, none of that has been anything that would help them for what they want to do in life.

Emily Lowe: 23:49

Yeah, that's kind of what I'm aiming for really. It's not, a framework that isn't based in kind of the tonal quality. So it's not based around classical, pop. It's just based in that foundational knowledge of how your voice works, when it is sounding healthy and when it isn't. And I think that's what's what's being missed with quite a few teachers, they're not getting that, that healthy knowledge in there, because you can all sing. You all came to singing lessons already able to sing, and as a teacher, it's my job to go great. And now, do you know how that works? And some of you will go yes, and some of you'll go No, and that's, that's what I have to do. But I think some teachers aren't doing that, and they're kind of going, you've got a great voice, you sound fantastic. Let's push it and see where you can go. And I think that's when, when that framework and that that kind of rules and regulations of, do you know this? Do you know this would come in really helpful. But that kind of comes to the next question of, do you think the language that is used within that framework and within a kind of scheme of work could impact on your experience, and your identity? So if I came into a lesson and I said, we're going to do this, it's based in classical music for a female high voice. Do you think that could impact on you in a positive or negative way? Do you think words are important when we're having singing lessons, P2?

Participant 2

25:10

I do because I feel like if you came into a lesson and was like, Okay, today we're doing a song. It's for a soprano voice that's very staccato and is very smooth and elegant and feminine, then I might think that might put me off the song at first, but also that might not be suited to my voice. Personally, I don't I don't know if I have a, I wouldn't know if I had a staccato voice, or what I actually had I just said that these are words that I'm not sure about, and I'm going to do what my teacher says,

Emily Lowe: 25:47
yeah, absolutely P3.

Participant 3: 25:49

Um, I think it's like describing how the song is and like understanding your own voice at the same time can be helpful, because then you can think to yourself, can I do that? Do I want to do that?

Emily Lowe: 26:04

Yeah, more of the describing words and less of the like technique words and kind of labeling words, just more about this song might feel a little bit jumpy and a bit breathy, and then it might feel really smooth, so then you can picture yourself singing it right. What about you p1?

Participant 1: 26:20

Um, I think, like, describing it in a way that's saying, like, like, what P2 said, like, for a soprano voice, if you don't know, like, what kind of voice you have, like, if you It depends, like, how big of a range you have for your voice. So, like, I can go really high, but I struggle with the low notes, yeah. So if you, if you use more basic words, yeah, probably will help.

Emily Lowe: 26:51

Yeah, absolutely. And also, we all know that your voice might sound soprano one week and the next week it might not be there. You're like, Oh, I was a soprano last week, and now I'm a mezzo, great. So I feel like language is quite an important way of communicating, but sometimes it can be misunderstood, and it can actually deter you from doing something if I've not used the appropriate language to describe it to you, and like you said, describe it in a more sensation based way, rather than a more musicality

kind of way, might be really helpful. So big question, as singers, do you feel like that is part of your identity, being a singer? Does that make up part of you? And do you feel like those two things are really linked together. P1, can see, literally, your cogs started ticking as I asked that question.

Participant 1: 27:47

Well, I mean, we've talked about this before, quite a bit. Actually, it builds up at least more than half of my identity. I use it wherever I go. Like, if I'm out in public and the song comes on that I like, I'm I'm there, I'm not, I'm not singing it in my head. It's there. It's not, it's not somewhere else, it's in the room. Like you can, you can hear it, but like, sometimes I get nervous to show it off, but it's there. It's part of me, so I need to show off like the rest of me.

Emily Lowe: 28:29

Yeah, absolutely, I'd agree. P2, what about you? Do you feel like being a singer is part of your identity?

Participant 2: 28:35

Certainly, I will list the first few reasons why I could list many more than this. First of all, I think that it's part of my personality, my voice, and when I sing, it shows me. And so I go up to people and I'm like, Oh, can you describe yourself? I'm a singer, that describes me with just it's built me in so many different ways. It built my confidence. It built the fact that I can literally, just last second, have 10 minutes to get a song for someone and then perform in front of an audience, like all of that I've it's built me as a person and how I react with people, and how confident I am to actually speak my mind, and it's also created just how I'm very much a forward person who's always volunteering for different things. So I think it's really just me as a person

Emily Lowe: 29:40

that's awesome. P3, what about you?

Participant 3: 29:42

I think singing is like a really interesting part of the person, because it's sort of an instrument that's also a part of you. And I do have it in my identity that I am a singer, but I don't tend to go out and say that,

Emily Lowe: 29:59

yeah, you're not walking down the street singing a musical song.

Participant 3: 30:01

But I feel like music is, like, very deeply ingrained within me.

Emily Lowe: 30:06

Yes,

Participant 3: 30:06

its how I feel, feelings.

Emily Lowe: 30:08

I think for singers, it's, because you summed up so beautiful there in that singers, it's built into you. You don't sit down at a drum kit, and you know when you sing, it's literally a mechanism that is happening inside of you, and that makes it feel like such a big part of our identity, but also such a big part that we can be judged on. Right? It's really hard to sing in front of people that you don't know, because it's you. Like, even now as an adult, I still get so nervous to sing in front of new pupils, because I'm like, what if they don't like it won't they judge me because it's me? Yes, P2?

Participant 2: 30:44

it okay if we don't really feel like that anymore?

Emily Lowe: 30:47

Yeah, absolutely. There's no right or wrong. So that's my next question. Really, do your singing lessons make you feel empowered? Do they make you feel like as a singer, you're like, Yeah, I am a singer. That is me. That is what I do.

Participant 2: 31:04

Is this me?

Emily Lowe: 31:05

Yeah

Participant 2: 31:06

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Emily Lowe: 31:38

What about you P3?, do you feel empowered when you ever sing in lesson?

Participant 3: 31:43

Sometimes,

Emily Lowe: 31:44

sometimes

Participant 3: 31:44

I feel like, when it's gone well, I feel like I can do it, but then sometimes I can't do it,

Emily Lowe: 31:51

yeah

Participant 3: 31:51

and it's just, it's sometimes it's quite frustrating, but other times I realize I actually can do something

Emily Lowe: 31:58

absolutely. That's the journey of a singer, right? Sometimes lessons aren't fun. Sometimes they're quite boring. Sometimes you're having to work on the same bit again and again. And I'm getting really picky, and I'm telling you, your mouth isn't right well, your tongue is not in the right place, or you're using your nose too much. And I feel like those lessons are the ones where if you didn't love it, you'd be like, Oh, I'm just not going to do it anymore. What about you, P1? Do you feel like you're empowered.

Participant 1: 32:20

Everyone in my class knows that I have singing lessons. So it's kind of like, oh, P1's going for singing lessons. So then they hear me singing sometimes, like, if I have, like, when I had like, my first Singing Lesson, or whatever, or like when I have them, like, sometimes, if I don't have them at 20 past and I have them at 10 o'clock, then my class is always like, was that you? I was like, Well, yeah, who else would it be? And I always, I always look forward to singing lessons on on weeks when I don't have singing lessons, I'm always like, really grumpy because I don't want to have to go to history. My singing lessons just make it more fun, then I can dawdle to history as well.

Emily Lowe: 32:21

Yeah, yeah, not that I tell you to dawdle to history. But so the next question is, you must know other people that having other singing lessons or engaging in kind of stuff like that. Do you think all the people feel empowered by the singing lessons? Do you think teachers generally are doing a good job? Or do you think that there are some people that you've heard them say negative things about their lessons P2 your eyes went huge. You about to spill some tea?

Participant 2: 33:38

Yes, one of my friends did do singing lessons, but instead of really bringing her up, it kind of pushed her down a bit, because she was, she was getting great comments, but it wasn't fully heartfelt comments. It was just like, good, good, well done. It wasn't she didn't have a connection with her teacher. She was just very much kind of half minded, and it put her down about her voice, and that kind of lowered her confidence slightly overall.

Emily Lowe: 34:19

Yeah, I that that. I hear that happening quite a bit, and I like, I'm the other end of that spectrum, like, I will always be your hype woman when you finish. Like, it doesn't matter if we've fluffed up 17 notes in the middle, we will always end with like, a yes, well done. Like, that was really good. This is what we're going to work on. But what a great job. And

I think it's really important to validate you as a person by going you just did something that is quite vulnerable, like you just sang that whole song for me, and I asked you to go all out in this tiny room with no windows. We're not on a big stage, and you've gone for it. And yes, there are some mistakes in the middle, because you're a human, not a robot, but I think it's really important to kind of uplift people like that. What about you, P1, have you experienced anyone that any kind of people having lessons that are maybe slightly deterred by their teachers? Or

Participant 1: 35:11

I don't know anyone who has lessons, to be honest, I feel like friend who wants to do lessons, but she doesn't have them yet, but I try, and I try and help her with her singing sometimes

Emily Lowe: 35:27

Good. That's good. Pass on those tips and technique. It's it's really helpful. I think that's what we should be doing. What about you P3?

Participant 3: 35:34

All the people I know who have singing lessons have singing lessons with you, and it's positive, like all the good

Emily Lowe: 35:43

yeah, good, I would hope so. But I also am, like, really open to people telling me when things work and when they don't work. Like, I know with P2 that we can go and we can try some crazy songs, and I will throw all kinds of technique at P2. And to be like, Yeah, okay. And I know with P1, I can pick the most ridiculous musical theater song that I can never sing, but P1 can sing it beautifully. And I know with you sometimes we go in slightly more gentle, and we'll work on, like, those confidence building skills, and we'll work on getting you feeling comfortable. And then she'll smash out burn and be like, that was me. I did that. And I'm like, you did that. So like, I think it's really important to be responsive to everyone's needs and also to tell me what I'm getting it wrong. Like, sometimes if I'm too much or if I'm not enough, you can tell me that you need more or less energy from me, and I can respond to that. So this is also kind of a big general question, really, not just related to music lessons. You can you can widen it up, but you guys are teenagers. Well, P1, you're nearly a teenager, and P2, your adolescence. So you guys are all exploring your identity. There are a lot of people exploring their gender identity. You're exploring what it means to be you and your teachers can have really positive and negative impacts on that. Can you think of any examples where any teacher has positively or negatively impacted upon your identity by just saying

something or making a comment or making a remark that kind of made you go, Oh, doesn't really fit with who I am and how I feel right now. Awesome. I mean, that's a good thing. Who wants to go first?

Participant 2: 37:32

Does anyone else want to go first? Or should I?

Emily Lowe: 37:34

P3's like, No, thank you.

Participant 2: 37:37

No, I'll go first. Okay, I'll go then

Emily Lowe: 37:43

go for it.

Participant 2: 37:44

I like talking. When teachers, some have said things like, okay. And for my brain, okay, seems like it puts me down a lot. And if someone after I sing, doesn't say well done or anything like that, like some teachers have done, then, it doesn't make me feel good. It makes me think, Oh, what did I do wrong then? And a lot of people have judged me for how my brain works. I have some friends who like, I talked to, none of them knew I had autism or ADHD, and when I told them, they were like, Are you sure? And it makes me feel really put down, and that does make my singing less good. It means that I don't feel confident to sing in front of them, because they put me down at one point because of just what they think about me.

Emily Lowe: 38:41

Yeah, that's not helpful. Is it when, when you need something, I'm the same. So I know that okay, isn't a negative word. Like, I know that, but as a as an individual, as a human, if I've done something okay, I'm like, well, it's not good enough. Is it Emily? okay? Like, and it's such a weird mentality to have because it was okay. It was fine. If anything, like, if I get my marks back and I'm like, Oh, they're fine, I view that as a negative thing, and it's not a negative thing, but my self criticism came from when I was younger, when my

feedback from my teachers would be, that's okay, that's fine. And I would take that as a you can do better, and I didn't do better. Yes, P2?

Participant 2: 39:26

also like have to add one more thing about me. I am a perfectionist. So for me, okay is even worse.

Emily Lowe: 39:34

Yes

Participant 2: 39:36

that does add an extra element, so

Emily Lowe: 39:38

Lets have a no okay rule across the board. What about you? P3, can you think of any times when you have felt like your identity doesn't quite match up with what someone's saying to you or what a teacher has maybe said to you?

Participant 3: 39:54

It's quite difficult to say because sometimes it feels a bit like this just like, any sort of

Emily Lowe: 40:01

yeah,

Participant 3: 40:02

Sometimes it feels a bit like they don't really know exactly what you can do. And it's like, you don't feel able to communicate,

Emily Lowe: 40:12

yeah

Participant 3: 40:13

what you need to do sometimes. And it's like, oh, you feel this, but it's like, Oh, no. Yeah. And I think, you know, when teachers go, that was good, but like, just tell me what I did wrong. Yeah, I would rather be told what I'm doing wrong instead of someone saying that was okay.

Emily Lowe: 40:37

It's kind of invalidating, isn't it? As well when, when someone doesn't give you more than that. Like, yeah, we know that okay is fine, but to move forward from okay, we need more. We need someone to go actually P3 for you, this would mean the law, and often that's the thing that gets missed. What about you, P1?

Participant 1: 40:55

I don't think I've been in a conversation with so many people who literally have almost the same brain as me. It's like, I I, like my mum thinks I'm probably, like, autistic, because I show some sides sometimes, but like, I feel like, obviously, okay. Is okay, Like, when we're saying, Oh yeah, I'm fine. I'm okay, it means we're not okay. When we say it, we say it as if we mean the complete opposite. So it's like, if people tell me, yeah, that was fine. It affects, I don't want to, like, repeat what P2 has been saying, because I feel like I literally, like, think the exact same as what P2 is thinking.

Emily Lowe: 41:53

That's a good thing.

Participant 1: 41:54

But like, what she said with, like, if friends do something or say something, then you don't feel as confident in front of them like I feel like that most of the time, but I'm glad that a lot of my friends from secondary school haven't done things like that. There's this, this one girl who I'm not quite friends with anymore because we had a little like argument. So it's, I don't feel as comfortable around her anymore, but like, yeah, that's,

Emily Lowe: 42:27

I think it's a good thing that we're all kind of saying the same thing, because it means that more people are feeling it, and it means that there is more room for validation, which I think there always is. I think we can always validate, validate each other as

humans, more even when you're in your 80s, we can still validate people by just giving them some autonomy and giving them a little bit of space to be themselves, which is what I'm trying to do. So my I've got two more questions. One of them is, do you think there's any way that I can improve the framework? Can you think of any thing that you'd like to be added in or taken away like I know that we did the we did the GRBAS words, and some of you did the Chris Johnson movement series. Some of you didn't, and that's absolutely fine, just because of the timings that we had. But is there anything that you'd like to see more in there? Would you like more technical terminology? Would you like more descriptors? Is there anything you'd like to see less of do I talk too much? Do I tell you too much? And your brain then goes, oh, when you leave P3?

Participant 3: 43:24

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Emily Lowe: 43:38

yeah. So more descriptive, yeah. And do you think that it would be really helpful? Really helpful for everyone to have, like, their personal descriptive words? Like, we sit and we spend a lesson just making the descriptive words that we know will work for you, so that at the beginning of every lesson, it could be like, right? Bam, bam, bam, bam, brilliant. Let's go.

Participant 3: 43:55

Yeah? So I don't have to, like, when someone asks me

Emily Lowe: 43:58

remind you what that one means and

Participant 3: 44:00

sit there and yeah, have an awkward 15 minutes or, like, well, it kind of feels here. Yeah, so more personal, like a personalized approach. What about you? P1

Participant 1: 44:14

I'm not sure. Yeah,

Emily Lowe: 44:17

like, that's okay. You can be not sure. Maybe,

Participant 1 44:19

like more trying to step outside of my comfort zone to then expand, like, my confidence in different areas that I might not be so confident with. Yeah.

Emily Lowe: 44:32

I mean, that sounds to me like it would be good in every lesson to have a conversation about what your comfort zone is and whether you want to stay in it or out of it. At the beginning of every lesson you might come in, you might be like, right? I had a terrible week. My comfort zone belt. I want you to push me. Push me. Today. We're going to do define gravity three times, and that would be a conversation that we could have, whereas you might come in one week and be like, actually, my comfort zone is very, very small. Today. I don't want to use my belt. It's going to make me feel weird, and we could just incorporate that conversation in. We can always incorporate more conversation and more talk about feels. What about you? P2, I know that you loved the girl bass and the Chris Johnson stuff. I feel like they were really helpful to you so that you could connect with your body.

Participant 2 45:21

that really got me being able to feel where the tension actually was. I'd like to see more like, on things that can help you work with your technique, because I'm working on increasing my range, and I'd like to have particular exercises that, like I can follow that of going to actually work to increase my range, because my range is increased in getting lower, but it stayed at that high note, and I want to get higher than that high note, yeah,

Emily Lowe: 45:52

so having conversations about, like, realistic expectations for your range. Awesome, yes, P1. And

Participant 1 45:58

also another thing maybe, like, because obviously, if I want to do musical theater and stuff, it's there's a lot of moving around with, like, walking while singing stuff, which I struggle with, the breathing aspect of it sometimes. So maybe, like, could work on the movement with the singing at the same time. Maybe, yeah, absolutely. There's

Emily Lowe: 46:24

that amazing video of a think it's Miley Cyrus, who's jogging on a treadmill and singing her full album as she's going in preparation for her tour. It's amazing. Her stamina. You're just like, Girl, what are you doing? This is insane. Yes. P2

Participant 2 46:39

as a dancer, I do musical theater as one of my dancers, but I hear what you're saying, because we have to sing while dancing full out, and it does mean that breath control becomes something really important, but I think that is a really hard one, because you're in a singing lesson, you're not in a moving lesson, yeah. But also, for my exam that I attempted to do, like, a year ago, I had to learn stage presence. And I think it would be good to cover stage presence and just how to be on a stage and move around and interact with, like, if you were with an audience, yeah, and

Emily Lowe: 47:22

own it take up space. Awesome. That's really good. So when I was I digress, but when I was out in America, I did a couple of really amazing workshops on musical theater and stage presence and body language. And you know, when you learn something and you come out and you're like, I can't wait to try that out. So that is one of the things that I'm really keen to add in as well. Because the rooms that we teach in a really small right? There's hardly any space in there. So the last thing I want is to be like, wait your arms and then like, smacking each other in the face. But teaching strange presence is really important, so I've got it kind of on the list to see if maybe once every term, or twice every term, we can go into the big room so we can walk around and we can do a little bit of running while we sing, and just work on that as well. So it's really good to hear that that's some of the feedback that you want. So my last question to you is, is there anything else that you want to add, or that you'd like to say, or that you feel positively or notably about before we end the recording? Sorry, is your camera doing a slow zoom into your face? Why?

Participant 1 48:27

I want to learn how to make my voice sound good recorded. Because I think being a singer is one of the jobs that I might lean towards when I'm older, but that would mean recording, and I've not had much experience with microphones or any of that, and I think it would be good to learn like how my technique

Emily Lowe: 48:51

and a little bit of production on it, and having a listen, one of the things that I can't recommend to you enough is recording yourselves at home and just sitting and having The ick and listening to it back and just getting comfortable with how that sounds on your phone or in a tablet or in your computer, it isn't a nice thing to do. It May's face summarize it beautifully, then it's just not nice. I'm

Participant 3: 49:15

still recording things at school for my mock GCSE recording and also the MOBO workshop, and I'm glad I did it, but both times I heard my voice, I wanted to punch whoever was singing. Yeah,

Emily Lowe: 49:30

I like it's very common. You're not alone in how that feels, but we can certainly understand why it sounds like that a little bit more. And we can, we can? We can acknowledge it's never going to sound how it sounds in the room, right? It just is my phone speaker, my computer speaker. Can never sound how you sound in real life, but it's definitely something we can work on, especially because it's so common for everyone to feel really gross about it. Amazing. Anything else for anyone? Yes, P1 well, with

Participant 1 50:03

the on the topic of, like, recordings and stuff, I hate recording myself on my phone, but it's the only option I've got right now, because I did get like a recording kind of set, so I have like a a board and stuff. And then we did use a computer, but then the computer, like, broke or something. So when I did use the microphone, and, like, sang into the microphone and listened to it on the computer, it sounded a lot better, yeah. But with proper without the microphone, like in person, it sounds amazing and stuff, yeah? But like, when on the phone, how do you how do you get used to the the sound of your voice on the recording? Like, how do you not, how do you not feel the ick when you're listening exposure?

Emily Lowe: 50:58

Like, just doing it and just sitting with those uncomfortable feelings and going, this is this is what it's going to sound like. I cannot change that, but I can acknowledge it. Yes, P2,

Participant 2 51:12

and I've had to do that. I've listened to this fun recording of my voice for a very long time now, and I'm finally okay with it. Because, like you do, sometimes do online exams where you send in the video recording. And at first, when I heard it, was like, No, that is not me. But after listening to it for ages and ages, you do get used to it, but it's just annoying that it can't be quicker,

Emily Lowe: 51:39

like a magic button. It's just like, I'm okay with this now, but it will, it will make you feel icky, but just kind of sit with it and let let yourself have those feelings towards it. And the more you let yourself have them, the less you'll feel them the next time. And then you'll, you'll eventually to a point where you're like, I don't hate it. I don't like it, but I don't hate it, and that's that's a good place to be. Amazing. Anything else? Well, it's perfectly timed car horn. Then, wasn't there

Emily Lowe: 52:15

without you?

Emily Lowe: 52:19

Amazing? Well, thank you so much. Thank you for being really accommodating over the last few weeks when I've not been around and you've had different teachers. It's it's been very helpful. I will, of course, share my paper with you once it's been marked, which will be in October, November time, and as soon as it's been marked and my final marks have been given, this will all be deleted, which is heartbreaking, but thank you. Everything that you've said has been really helpful, and if you have any questions, you of course, can message me at any point. Not a problem. Mia and Zara, I think I'm probably going to see you on Wednesday, because I think you might need one more lesson, so I'll probably be in. I'll drop you a message anyway. I'll drop you a text and just confirm you can but

Emily Lowe: 53:03

I might slightly sneaky longer lessons, anyway. Awesome. All right. Thank you. Thank you so much for everything. And meeting for.

14) Interview 1

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

voice, singing, work, teachers, students, teaching, sing, sound, pupils, feel, song, people, class, singer, coming, repertoire, great, give, thinking, lovely

SPEAKERS

Participant 1, Emily Lowe

Emily Lowe: 00:00

To the kind of the end of this process now, which is really nice and looking for PhD placements, which is something I never thought that I'd be doing, which is really exciting.

Participant 1: 00:13

It is very exciting and good for you. Well done you've obviously worked really hard at what you're doing. Do you love it Emily, do you just love it?

Emily Lowe: 00:21

I love it. So once I started teaching, I realised that for me, it's so unregulated, that that something needs to happen that's giving a base level because even just thinking back to when we were at uni, and everyone that was a singer was just coming through with different levels of experience and different things about what they knew. And when I started doing that in secondary schools as I found that, like kids were coming to me from other teachers and I was just like, you have no knowledge of voice here at all and then post pandemic, the kind of the amount of children that are starting to explore with their gender and identifying as non binary and then trying to navigate that and going I don't know, I don't know how to do this. So then looking at the resources and just going these are rubbish, there's nothing here. That is going to help any pupil then there needs to be something. And it's going to be a huge process and a huge project, but at least we're making baby steps in the right direction.

Participant 1: 01:21

Yeah, going in the right in a good direction. Good for you.

Emily Lowe: 01:25

Yeah,

Participant 1: 01:25

I agree that something needs to be cranked up a little bit there. needs to be thought put in there needs to be it just needs addressing.

Emily Lowe: 01:33

Yeah

Participant 1: 01:33

that's it.

Emily Lowe: 01:34

Absolutely.

Participant 1: 01:35

Happy Students, Yeah.

Participant 1: 01:36

Yeah,

Emily Lowe: 01:36

And Sheffield are really trying to to get everyone together. So part of what Jack and our company are now we're associate partners with Sheffield music hub. And every couple of months we get the singing team together to just kind of almost to hash it out and talk about what we think is being done and what we think isn't being done and have those conversations with people that usually would maybe be a little bit catty or like a little bit gatekeeping the work and we just kind of get together and go this has got to stop.

Emily Lowe: 01:54

I'll pass you pupils that I can't teach and you can pass me pupils that you couldn't teach and that way we'll get better at our skills.

Participant 1: 02:16

Yes, yeah.

Emily Lowe: 02:18

So it's exciting stuff is happening. But the foundations of this project basically have to see what other teachers think. So I've been teaching this framework and I'm about I'm on kind of week two before going to America The plan is to get it in before then and then talk to teachers and then when I come back, talk to the pupils and just say, you know what's been helpful, what hasn't been helpful? What do you need from me?

Participant 1: 02:44

Whats there, What's good, what's still missing, maybe for individuals.

Emily Lowe: 02:49

And the idea of taking it to teachers is terrifying. Like this part of the project has been what has scared me the most because it feels really vulnerable to go I've worked three years on this. What do you think? Even now

Participant 1: 03:02

It feels like a minefield Yeah

Emily Lowe: 03:04

Even though I look back on it and I I'm like oh this needs to change this part needs to change and and that will come but I'm really excited to hear hear kind of your views on it because obviously your experience is so vast and you've got

Participant 1: 03:20

Yes, i would hope it would be anyway I'm hoping I'm hoping it comes across as that. But obviously there are still things that I feel like I'm a little not at sea with but just not in the loop with or universities not addressing it because I teach the LCM I teach some class work but a lot of one to one as well.

Emily Lowe: 03:43

Yep

Participant 1: 03:43

And and there are some things that I feel the are not down to me in my teaching solely, but just within the whole machine.

Emily Lowe: 03:54

Yep

Participant 1: 03:54

But my students actually because I'm obviously teaching all university age students that they are not afraid to come forward and you know, if I kind of prompt and say Look What's Missing, what do we need to what do we need to address and then you because by then they kind of have the vocabulary to be able to express I'd say, Look, this isn't working for us. This isn't working for us as a class or de de de de de whetheras I think probably when you're looking at the slightly younger ones, where the students are starting to just explore who they are and how they do things and stuff like that. It's a bit harder for them to find the language as you were saying, you know, it's finding the language to be able to express themselves. So

Emily Lowe: 04:34

It's giving them those tools, which they just don't have and there's no standardisation of that language or tool either.

Participant 1: 04:42

Yeah

Emily Lowe: 04:42

and that's what's kind of made me go. Okay, well, we could we all know how the voice works. If we just agree to the same language then we're already giving them a massive boost in being able to do it. Have you come across pupils kind of gender expansive pupils in a university setting and kind of have you approached it?

Participant 1: 05:05

I have it but not not. I haven't experienced what you would call a problem or an issue with it. And the people that I have worked with so far are either going through gender reassignment but they're but their vocal thing hasn't actually changed. So I have ended up teaching someone who is transitioning to be female instead of male. And they still have their very bass voice, you know, but it's all been a very positive thing. Maybe I've been a lucky teacher in that it has been a positive experience because as far as I'm coming from, what I work towards is a healthy voice. So however you are identifying your voice is always going to be your way that you express yourself the way that communicate with people. And so far I haven't had any students that has said, Actually, what I'm thinking about myself, isn't this now, the person that I'm thinking about was going to be going through surgery to obviously remove Adam's apple and because he did have quite a pronounced Adam's apple and to address the vocal thing. No, I haven't seen him since that's all happened. So urm so I'm not able to kind of comment on what were his his, what his journey was, if you like to that transition, and finding the finding of maybe a different sound or whatever. What I do find and this is slightly related to what we're talking about, is sometimes there's a student that can't that doesn't equate the sound that comes out of their voice as their sound. I'm always banging on about you have to sing with your sound

Emily Lowe: 06:49

Yep

Participant 1: 06:49

sounds that have been given to maximise its potential if you like.

Emily Lowe: 06:55

Yeah

Participant 1: 06:56

And quite often I find that students are like, well, I want to sing this song. I want to sing like this singer and then I go, your voice doesn't like singing like that. It won't do that. You will never be satisfied with the end result of that, because it's not the way your mechanics work. Okay. And it would be very dull if we were all like, you know, if we all sound like Britney Spears, or if we all you know, have had the same sort of sound. So I do kind of try and promote this. Let's see what you've got. Let's see what you're not happy with or what you would like to change because there is a whole gamut of stuff that can be altered through continuous practice and working in a way that the voice slightly changes if you like we're never going to get a massive kind of you know different voice but we can we can alter the way the perception of the voice for the student is kind of heard if you like yeah but yeah, I think probably the, I don't know. I haven't done a lot of class teaching, as I said, but I have been in the class teaching that I have done has been doing much more with musicianship if you like, and I'm tools for musicianship. So I find in some classes I will have students I'm like trying to work as very difficult in a class situation as well because you sometimes you miss things and you can't always hear but you can sense when there are confident students and when there are not confident students so it's trying to work out what's holding them back. What's what's stopping them from, from putting themselves forward from being confident with what they've got. A lot of the time, it just comes down to they don't have a background in musicianship, they haven't ever been taught that, you know, and we come back to this thing about the lack of musicianship in schools now. It has had this big knock on effect to what we're expecting and even even looking at when people are accepted onto courses at university. Now the focus is not on how much musicianship you have because I teach quite a lot of the foundation years that come into LCM. And then it's quite startling, they can sing, but they've no idea how to look at something on a page or how to express what they're looking at how to how to group them together. So I do find that quite alarming. I don't know what your experience of that is, but there yeah, there's something missing along the lines that would give them more confidence immediately. You know, it's

09:22

giving them that autonomy, isn't it? They I had exactly the same feedback from one of the lecturers at Sheffield University, who said that that people are coming into academics without the understanding of of the foundations of that musicianship without not saying they have to be able to read a score beautifully, but even just looking at it and going, Oh, I can follow the melody line. And these are the dynamics

Participant 1: 09:46
Not panicking

Emily Lowe: 09:46

Yeah, yeah, that's just not happening. And and I wonder if part of that is because teachers don't feel confident in their abilities these days. And because there's so many, there's so many online resources, like tik tok with the Tik Tok music teachers, and it's making people question their skill set, which kind of is what has led to a creation of even just a four week framework that's going to go here's your basics, we're gonna look at the foundations, and we're gonna give you some skills. And I think my main kind of concern with what I've made is, if I handed it to teachers, do you think they would be able to understand it? Or do you think teachers would kind of go oh, this needs some training. I don't know what this means.

Participant 1: 10:31

Yeah. I mean, there's going to be odd things that people maybe haven't come across from looking at your framework. And looking at the way that I teach. It might be expressed in a slightly different way, But it's still coming from the same building blocks if you like. Yeah. It's using slightly different wording and slightly different things. But it all comes back to that thing of getting good basic technique, which drives me crazy sometimes because I think students are encouraged obviously, to enjoy singing, and therefore some of the exercises and things that they are given they are designed to be fun so that they'll do them. But actually, when I'm listening to them, do them a they don't actually understand what the outcome of those exercises is meant to be. And also, that singing sometimes isn't fun. You have to work at it. If you want to get good it doesn't always have to be fun. Sometimes you just literally have to do an exercise which actually sounds very boring, but gets you a very good result over time. So it can all be about you know jumping about everybody being energised and da da da da because in the end, that's only a tiny little cog in your overall wheel. And I think this is I mean, just a case in point. I was I had a class to teach of some very strong musical theatre singers last year. Part of their thing was that part of their class work was that individually, they had to provide the warm up for start of class. So they will take charge and I had to make sure that they explained what the exercise was, what it was for, what it was meant to achieve, how they do it. And they were also meant to listen for students who were maybe uncomfortable in any part of that exercise. Now there are quite a lot of those things being missed along the line. The word most worrying one was not being able to identify within a group that that's students voice doesn't go up there. That students is not happy to hear that students are not looking comfortable. That student is not opening their mouth properly. You know, just basic things like that. It's great to give them control. But if it's not actually producing the correct results, and if it's not actually aiding the student in the right way, then I think that also needs addressing, I like the fact that they get a chance to take control of the class if you like them to to show what skills they've got. It's just that how they do it. And I think this is where it comes down to. We need a set of things that we know work and that we pass on to the students will go if you do this, there's this this this and this that will make sure you achieve a healthy or a part of your healthy voice building if you like so

Emily Lowe: 13:24

I apologise as the dishwasher just beeping. I'm sorry,

Participant 1: 13:27

I've totally interrupted you're setting up if you're Are you recording now

Emily Lowe: 13:31

you've got everything. Yeah, got everything going on. That's fine. Yeah, sorry. Yeah.

Participant 1: 13:35

The past there but but yeah. Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing. We all have different voices. We all have different speaking voices. We all have different singing voices, and it's meant to be so that we can recognise each other. And if we can find I think what you're coming down to is the fact that some students are still at that point where they don't really recognise themselves yet, as what they're fully fully grown person is going to be and therefore that we're in that kind of no man's land of what how do I see my voice portraying who I think I am?

Emily Lowe: 14:27

Yeah,

Participant 1: 14:28

that's the grey area, isn't it

Emily Lowe: 14:29

when those things don't necessarily line up, that's where it becomes difficult because there's the love of singing, and there's their identity and they're not sure how those things fit together because they love this, but they don't love this. And yeah, by loving this, this makes this even more complicated.

Participant 1: 14:47

Sure.

Emily Lowe: 14:47

And I think what I was trying to do was give them words that aren't associated with identity necessarily, kind of give them the descriptive words of things they can feel so that they can tell me what they're feeling. And then you can talk about tone and we can talk about if they're wanting that lower sound. We can talk about low larynx placement and go from there to build on that identity of what they want us to see as opposed to what they're feeling.

Participant 1: 15:13

Sure

Emily Lowe: 15:14

But I think that this kind of the the four week framework barely scrapes that surface, really, and I think that some parts of it are really useful, but I think looking back on it now some some parts are less useful and obviously it's been designed for my my practice, so my my MA is a professional practice module. So obviously, when creating it, I was thinking about the pupils that I had. And I think that that's probably one of the things that is going to lead to a lot more changes like for yourself, do you think there's anything in there that you found particularly useful or anything that you found less useful and kind of

Participant 1: 15:52

I found alot of things very useful because it it presents in a very calm and orderly way. It's like a kind of a join the dots, they were thinking you have to have this in place before you can do that. So that part of it is extremely useful. I think the student awareness thing is very, very good of that. feedback of how does this make you feel? What sensations Do you feel? How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for. So putting it back on them and did that actually feel comfortable? Did that feel better than the previous time that you did it? That's all great. And the more that that happens, the more analytical they will become of what they're actually hearing, but also giving them the tools to then if they don't like that, or if it doesn't feel comfortable, if it's not a sound that they think well, that's not a usable sound for me, giving them the tools to then go, right you can try A, B or C here to make an improvement. It could be this, it could be this it could be this and not just them

thinking, "Oh, my voice won't do that." You know what's "wrong with my voice that would do that?" Voices always voices I've got a huge radius of kind of, this is what I like this is what I don't like okay, and we can fit in a whole lot of stuff within that radius. This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit. This can't be worked in with a bit of technical, er, kind of thought and trying out, you know, obviously, there are some things that some voices just won't do certain things, which is absolutely fine. We'd all want to be rock stars or you know, or opera singers or whatever. Urm, But what worries me sometimes is when a student comes to me and they go or I want to sing that song from The Magic Flute, the one that the Queen of the Night sings with all the high notes and I'm going well, actually, you know, given what you've already sung to me, maybe with some low to medium to low musical theatre stuff, I'd said it's unlikely that your voice will want to do that "oh but I can make these noises up there. You know, I can't do a go." Yeah, it's not all about whether you can actually make a sound it's whether your voice is happy going there and happy sustaining and happy being there. Oh, do you feel after you've sung this, you know, you should be able to sing this five times and still feel fine because it's it's not about can I hit the notes, it's about how your whole technique deals with that. You know, sometimes it's a case of convincing.

Emily Lowe: 18:26

Yeah

Participant 1: 18:26

It's great to listen to that stuff. It's great to see how people work with it. But it's not going to work. Your voice doesn't want to be there all the time. And sometimes it's not giving you the best quality of sound.

Emily Lowe: 18:38

Yeah

Participant 1: 18:39

Just because pop out some high notes. You know, it doesn't mean it's going to happen every single time. So, so Yeah, a bit of convincing sometimes or just guidance as to this is what I'm hearing from your voice. This is what these are the things that I think would be lovely and your sound, try to find all of the mega positive things that you can do with this sound okay? To try and take away from the fact that it's not going to be what they've picked up in their head, as their sound is not their sound, but somebody else's sound. So yeah, yeah,

Emily Lowe: 19:13

I think one of my sorry, after you

Participant 1: 19:16

go on.

Emily Lowe: 19:17

I was gonna say I think one of my concerns is that I believe that there are a lot of teachers not doing that. And I believe that there are a lot of teachers without the skill set to be able to turn around and go, I'm hearing this, maybe we should work on this and make it feel happy. And I know through some of the pupils that I've got, and they have other singing teachers and they do other clubs, and they come in and some of the things that they say to me, I find incredibly worrying

Participant 1: 19:46

I do to, especially when they're coming in first year, you're gonna get a foundation that you need, and I go what's in your repertoire folder. All well, this is what I did for my exam. And I said, Well, how did your exam go? Well, it was okay, I passed, you know, and then I look at the repertoire folder and I go okay, so we've got something super high here. And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you. And I think this is another thing doing the exams thing I think is great, any opportunity to get up and perform and have an audience and have somebody that's going yeah, this is good. This is not so good. Delta is very, very good. And getting them doing that early is very good. But the guidance in the repertoire is a little off kilter sometimes, and then you kind of have to almost go through a repair process. Of let's take it back to basics. Let's see where your actual where your voice actually is happy where it lies naturally where its natural limits are and then let's have a little look relook at your your repertoire, but that doesn't mean that they're not going to be things that they've done. They're just going to approach them in a slightly different way. But yeah,

Emily Lowe: 21:03

a lot of that is very gender based, I think a lot of the exam repertoire, and that that kind of frustrates me because you've got lovely kind of 13 year old male voices that are singing so high and then you look at the repertoire suggested for them and you're like this just doesn't this doesn't work and I know with ABRSM you can't change the key

Participant 1: 21:24

Exactly

Emily Lowe: 21:24

which is just "oh come on!"

Participant 1: 21:28

Yeah, because a lot of those those exam things although some of them are quite specific in that if this is written for male voice it has to be a male that sings it or de de de and again then we come into that grey area. What if my voice doesn't match what they're saying the male voice should be doing?

Participant 1: 21:46

I think er I think I think there should be more freedom in certainly in the exams. It's not like if you were actually singing a show or if you're in an opera, there is less opportunity to change stuff, just the way that the whole thing the whole machine. The the way the composer has, has seen all his relationships between keys and things as he goes through. Obviously, that's much more rigid.

Emily Lowe: 21:46

Yeah

Emily Lowe: 22:09

Especially when they're changing voices as well. We're especially when when adolescent voices are changing voices we know that their song they sing 13 isn't going to be what they'll say when they're 17.

Emily Lowe: 22:09

Yeah

Participant 1: 22:09

I think for for getting students confidence in early exam work or early festivals and things like that. There should be a little bit more relaxation around the key that you sing something because sometimes there can be a very beautiful song that the student really relates to the lyrics of that they feel they can express well, but it's just not in a good key for them. And I feel that its a shame that they should abandon that potential to express the song and to be performing and to be communicating a message from the song. If it's just simply something as simple as it's in the wrong key for the voice which is never going to achieve the best outcome. So

Participant 1: 23:06

But listen to the whole thing of you know year on year on year you will notice change you'll notice changes in your voice probably from when you started singing, you're still noticing changes you will see them until you're 85/90 there will be changes in your voice and you know, and not and the changes are not a pattern they don't all happen the same way for everybody which again, is why we need to address the individual sound, not the clump if you like which is definitely kind of where I come from with my teaching in order to get the most confident student the most happy student with their voices. Coming from let's work with the tools the built the basic blocks that you've been given. And I make that work unless there is something extreme happening, like a gender reassignment or whatever, where as I say, I don't have any experience in dealing with the after this. Yeah Yeah, exactly.

Emily Lowe: 24:00

Do you agree that there should be some kind of framework or base level or guidance that all singing teachers are working towards? Because if we're all going into educational settings, I know at no point in the last 10 years has anyone said to me, What qualifications do you have to teach this? What what is your? You've got to clean DBS check and safeguarding but that's all that anyone's ever seen.

Participant 1: 24:28

In all the teaching that I've ever done from starting at Ground Zero with with Northumbria University this is looking at university teaching obviously I've done some kind of private teaching and stuff before that, but we're looking at the university kind of thing. No one No one has ever come into my class to see what I'm doing. No one.

Emily Lowe: 24:55

I just think it's wild that we've got all of these rogue teachers going round. Just going I can sing i'll teach singing

Participant 1: 25:04

There's no check on it, there's absolutely nothing, nothing to say all this is fitting in with how to say I don't the majority of the kind of class singing and stuff like that is that other tutors that you need. I try and avoid it as much as possible because I don't feel like I can have the best input because I get frustrated because I can't hear the individual student properly. And I feel like I'm missing so I will do the musicianship classes. I will do the acting the song things in groups and things like that as far as stage presentation and use of lyrics and all of that, but I've tried to avoid the technical singing class sessions because they frustrate me. An awful lot of things get missed. And I know from feedback from the students that shouldn't really be telling me these things when they're being taught by, these things by other tutors but they do they just blurt you know, as they do and then which shows that they actually they don't want any you know, it doesn't go any further to those bachelors tutors or anything it sticks with me, but they feel quite a lot of the time this person that's taking a song class with us doesn't warm us up. We don't get a warm up. But if they do get a warm up, it's not encompassing all the students in the class. Yeah, so they do a bit of voice, but then somebody has to stand up and sing a song that they need top G's or top A's for, Well, I wasn't warmed up to there and that's and that's why I try and instil in them there's taking on board your personal responsibility for your voice. Always do your warmup before you get to uni,

Emily Lowe: 26:34

Yep

Participant 1: 26:34

Do it. Then you know that you're covered even if you get a warm up or you don't and it depends on the kind of warm up that you get. I do quite thorough, quite boring warmups, but they're very thorough. My student feedback for me has always been we love your warm ups. There's a little bit of balance between let's have fun with this, but it always has a purpose. Yeah, it always has some sort of outcome. But I do bang on about let's see if we can get the quality sound from the group if you like.

Emily Lowe: 27:01

Yep

Participant 1: 27:02

And I am quite picky and they get fed up with me banging on about you're not opening your mouth, you're not relaxing your jaw your your posture is not good. You know and I do bang on about it because the difference that it makes when everybody's singing in a group situation, all do that same thing. It's amazing. If they if they could just click into that thing of this is what we do when we're saying this is what this is better. We need this, this, this, this and this, and then off we go and then we can explore all the other offshoots that come out of that class, but the basic thing has to be absolutely there and sometimes it's not very exciting, but they get, they do in the end get a lot of satisfaction because they can feel their voices are solid and and safe if you like and I'm all about a safe, safe environment for the voice especially at those young ages. You know, when they're just starting out on and working very hard actually, voice they're doing things day in day in and day out, having to rely on their stamina a lot. So it's really important that we get the safety element in there as well, which again, sometimes is overlooked in the fact that there's so much to be done. But when you're dealing with voices, if you lose it if it's damaged, you can't often get it back the way it was.

Emily Lowe: 28:17
Absolutley

Participant 1: 28:18
Looks like you have to start with basics again. So so it's I just I can't instil in them the importance of taking on board their own responsibility for their own body they do if they had dance lessons, they will do it at home

Emily Lowe: 28:31
Yep

Participant 1: 28:32
Do it for your voice as well. Also, the other thing of warming down if we've done a busy singing session, we've had two hours of lots and lots of busy busy stuff to do a vocal warm down which some of them had never encountered before.

Participant 1: 28:44
I do it in my own practice. So I'm basically just going to do everything that I know that works for me and I'm 60 I've been singing since goodness knows when. Fortunately, I did get off to a very, very good start even with my teachers at school. Were very good about the right phrasing the right breathing the right you know, use of lyrics and all of

that so I did I'm very lucky. I know I'm very lucky in that I had a very good grounding right from the start. And I had a very, very good singing teacher when I first went to the RSA MD, who put me totally on the right lines and I've I've had different teachers and tutors since then, and I've taken bits from them that applied to me and ditch the other bits and so on. Like I do encourage the students to do to work with as many people as possible to get all of those different views on how to how things work. Don't stick with one person because I don't think that's healthy. And what works for one doesn't work for everybody. So it's just, you know, feed off for what the opportunities are to really, really learn as much as possible from different sources.

Emily Lowe: 28:44
Nope

Emily Lowe: 29:50
Absolutely get that input from everyone and I think you're gonna end up a way more rounded musician if you if you share but I think again, that just comes back to the teachers and that whole gatekeeping in the industry of like, I had a pupil start a couple of weeks ago and they sing with the Steel City choristers and wonderful, lovely classical voice came to me because they wanted to do some CCM they were like I love my classical singing love my classical lessons. But I want to explore a little bit of pop and I can't do that. And I was like amazing. That's great. I can absolutely help you that and she's turned to me and said, I was told that I'm not allowed to tell my other singing teacher that I'm having lessons with you. And I was just like, Well firstly, that is a massive safeguarding issue you should never ask a child to keep a secret. And secondly, it doesn't matter because I'm not trying to teach you the same things. And if we are very good teachers, we will both be teaching you the same foundations and just applying it in different ways.

Participant 1: 30:50
My Greame had exactly the same experience in uni he he's not on staff at LCM although they desperately want them to be on staff but he just doesn't. He's not here enough to be able to do it. And what there's a singing teacher that that I work with with the upper class and so on. You know, we kind of work work together with our students and so she's very, very good. She's an excellent teacher. We are not coming on her with saying that there's any you know, kind of anything that she's not doing right. But one of her one of her students had asked Graham because there was a couple of times that Graham took upper class for me when I wasn't able to do it. And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows what you know, what's being cast, he knows

he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House. So he, he knows what's out there. He knows what he's listening for. He's a very, very good sounding board for someone that wants to go on and do that and she is a very good singer. It's strange, it's it's not a strange voice. It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands. But it needs her repertoire needs broadening out and also she's she's from Lithuania, so she naturally has that quite far back so far back in promo and for traditional you know, your Italian repertoire and things like that. It's it's a lot. That's not the right placement for that. That hasn't been addressed yet because her teacher doesn't want to upset the boat too much with her. She wants her to be comfortable at all times. But it hasn't been addressed. So which means that she's not going to be cast in an Italian opera. If she starts going to auditions. They're not going to cast her because the positioning of the thing is as basic as that. And she'd asked for lessons Graham. Well Graham, got this long, lengthy email from the teacher. You know, saying I think you know, would, Graham hadn't even said yes, by that stage. He just literally said, let me think about it. Let's see how we can get this to work better. And he got this email and she was very up in arms about, you know, basically how dare you try and take over one of my students wasn't he was trying to input into her experience of what she was going to be going on to do and she will go on and she will you know, she will do do well in classical but she can do better with different inputs.

Emily Lowe: 33:26

Yeah.

Participant 1: 33:27

Because there are certainly things that she's she's coming up for her, she'll be going into her level six this next year. Things that should have been addressed way before that haven't been and it's getting to the point where you go this voice is getting stuck in rut a little bit and it's safe. It does does what she asked it to do, but it's not there are some things that need addressing. So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Emily Lowe: 34:08

No

Participant 1: 34:09

because they're not rounded then as you say them they don't have the broad outlook they don't have that thing of well let's try this you know or see what see what else I can avoid is going to do. So, which I'm all for.

Emily Lowe: 34:21

They then come back and teach you as well. They come back and they go Have you tried this warm up and I go no, let's do it.

Participant 1: 34:28

I know I've constantly with the new intakes and everything. They all come in with the all these different things and going oh, that's great. Or sometimes I go not quite sure what that's meant to do. But yeah, it's brilliant. And then you know, whatever makes them engage I think is good as long as it is producing a healthy result. That's where I'm coming from quickly. So

Emily Lowe: 34:51

I guess that kind of brings me to my last point really, which was can you see how there could be some positive outcomes from a standardised framework, not necessarily the one that I've created but from something that would give a base level and do you think that teachers would be excited by that resource? Or do you think some of them might find it overwhelming because they might start to question themselves?

Participant 1: 35:13

I think there's got to be a balance here. I think. I think I think all teachers should welcome added information

Emily Lowe: 35:22

Yeah,

Participant 1: 35:23

Okay. Whether they actually choose to use it or whether they think it's going to actually not impede but disturb the way that they get their results, I think you probably will find that the odd one will maybe go actually no this is the way I've always done it. So I don't need that. And for me, I think there are lots of positives to be taken from this framework. One of the main ones that comes out is that way to describe your voice and not always

saying and that high voice means that it's a soprano voice or a female voice and this thing of asking your students to describe their own sound, how and how would they like it to be different? If it's radically different then obviously the chat has to come about, I don't think your mechanism will deal with a radical change but we can make this little alteration But coming back to the teachers, I think for people that maybe do a lot of work with choirs and so on, I think they're going to find that very tricky because the whole choir mentality is based on soprano, alto, tenor bass.

Emily Lowe: 35:34

Yep

Participant 1: 36:30

Unfortunately, even now that we're in 2024 that's still kind of what linear it's, you are in this section you are in this section, you are in this section, because of the way your voice and I know that I've come across a lot of quiet and this is a very this is a very regular standard thing now where some women don't feel that they want to be in the Alto section, just because they've got a lower voice and they can sing low notes. They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it. If it doesn't, then we go, well however much you want to sing and the tenor or however much you want to sing the highest Sopranos If you're a bloke, if your voice doesn't get round it then it's a no no. Okay, so again, it comes back down to how does your voice work? Where is it happy? Where's it going to give us the best results? So I think the wording and everything is very important. And it's good that we're moving forwards with it. This thing of, of asking students to say, does this melody does, what does it make you feel does and not necessarily going, oh, that's that's going to be a man singing that or that's going to be a woman. This or That. I think also a bigger focus on what we want to achieve from lyrics. I think that's often missed in the in that kind of quest for the sound and so on. It's often the whole purpose of the song is sometimes missed. About what are you actually singing about therefore, what sound doesn't want to make you make. If it's a sad song, then obviously we don't want to be saying super loud or or whatever, just to show that we can. If it's if it's if it's something that requires an excited so then we are going to be higher in the voice aren't we? But it doesn't necessarily mean that that's a negative for somebody that's used to singing down low.

Emily Lowe: 38:27

Yep

Participant 1: 38:28

So I think the thing of coming back much, much more emphasis on composer intention that's missed greatly as well. Put yourself in the mind of the composer and go what do you think the end result of this would be in his mind? And that will very gradually give you your full journey if you like through a song or whatever it is that you're doing. And also, if it's something that's not from a musical or if it's not from an opera or not from a standard set thing, if it's just a song on its own, it still has character it still is somebody else's words. So that encouragement to there's very few times I know I'm going off a tangent here. There's very few times where we are actually singing as ourselves, unless we write our own music, obviously and then it's things that are coming from our own hearts and things but there are very few occasions where we're actually communicating something that is ours. It's somebody else's that we're transferring to someone else. So we're always in effect whatever it is that we're saying, we're always being somebody else, if you like just for that short three minutes that we're singing the song or whatever, you know, then we can go back to being ourselves in between. There we go and be somebody else. That's the brilliance of what we do as performers that we get to be so many different people, if you like, and I think maybe a little bit more emphasis on that aspect of it might help those that are maybe slightly struggling with where they fit in, especially in a class situation. There's an awful lot of comparisons, they do give themselves comparisons. So So sounds really good, but I don't sound like that. And I think come back to that thing of Yeah, be your individual self or be your character be be what you want to be basically with your sound as long as the voice wants to go there. So I don't know I've been rambling. I know I ramble. Oh, I

Emily Lowe: 40:32

No love it. Its so helpful.

Participant 1: 40:36

This and this. But But yeah, it all comes back down to that being in control of what you're doing. And knowing that you have options. Sometimes they're not broad options, but there are options. There are always options, so you're not stuck with one thing. And this reminder that if this song doesn't work for you this year, chances are two years down the line. It might work because closer things will have adjusted by then, your whole body is changing. Nothing stays still in your body anyway, so it doesn't, it doesn't really come down to if you're if you're thinking of doing a gender transition or whatever or you're not sure how you see your own self or your own body or whatever. Just think your voice is on a transition the entire time. Your whole body is on a transition the entire time. So it's kind of tap into that a little bit. And I think I think that way then they kind of find their journey to to be content with what's there at the moment because it will change and then ultimately it will change again and then it'll change again. So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very

much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

Emily Lowe: 42:26

Thats amazing

Participant 1: 42:27

So again, we just come back down to let's get the best out of this voice as it is at the moment. You know, the student was very, very pliable and willing to try different things but no point that they ever say I don't want this voice at the moment because I know things aren't going to change and

Emily Lowe: 42:49

I think that is a lovely representation of you though creating a safe space for pupils, you've said quite a few things

Participant 1: 42:56

I would hope so

Emily Lowe: 42:57

that you're you're their safe place because you're so welcoming and your toolkit is so vast and you know how to work with that healthy sound.

Participant 1: 43:06

Yeah

Emily Lowe: 43:06

that they then feel open to trying new things. And that that again is one of the things that's come into this framework, is this kind of this term ambient belonging, which is creating a space that as soon as someone enters it, they feel welcome and worthwhile and able to do whatever

Participant 1: 43:23

yeah. Yes

Emily Lowe: 43:24

Which is what we should be aiming for. We should be creating those safe spaces as safe people rather than

Participant 1: 43:31

Yeah, I mean, you'll know music is such an emotive issue anyway. You can't if you're if you're not in the right headspace, you're not going to be able to to give out what's what's required. And so I do always encourage students to I can, you can usually tell if they're in a great mood or if they're not in a great mood. I don't want I don't want them to kind of feel like they have to pour out their heart to me but if there's a niggling issue that is going to stop them enjoying their half hour or their hour with me, then I need to know about it because sometimes it's detrimental to continue to try and get results if if the head is not in the right place. Because so much of what we do is head based, you know, as you all know, it's sometimes there's more in the head that gets in the way than there is physically so if we can address that tiny little bit and just be there if they want to open up if they don't, that's absolutely fine. But it's this encouraging this, let's just have a lovely almost like therapy. Because it is singings just therapy, isn't it? It's great, especially when they're working on and a lot most students are doing this, this and this, and usually they're coming in saying i'm so tired, i'm so tired. And you go right, let's get let's get a little bit of energy back in the body in some form. It might be nice calm energy, it might just be replacing for the rest of the day if they've got a load of stuff lined up for their afternoon or whatever which they often do on their busy schedules. And sometimes it's just great, they can just go ah, i feel like I can breathe just for an hour, and then you know, enjoying what they're doing and then and then go out and I have to say again, I think I've been a very, very lucky teacher in that, I have I can't really I can probably only count on one hand, any resistance that I found from students, but a lot of my students only come voluntarily for one to one because in their four or certainly in foundation year and in level four, they don't get any one believers. They don't get any one to one singing lessons in their level four year which is supposed to be getting them off to a good start but they don't get any one to one which means that any technical issues are not being addressed right, that kind of the base. So quite a lot of them now, if they can afford it. all comes down to that they come for private lessons. And make sure that they're ahead of the game if you like when things start to hot up level five, level six, they're crazy as anything busy. So I think by level six, which is when they are sheduled to get one to one lessons is too late by then they've all got into the groove. They've all got into their bad habits by then, or getting their voices to work with stuff that they're not meant to be singing or, and that is my constant bugbear Is that why don't we treat it like because they get the they get their dance lesson straight from the start. Whats wrong

with singing from the start? But it all comes down to money of course. Because it's thought that you can teach singing in a class which you can, but it's not efficient. It's not. It doesn't cover everything.

Emily Lowe: 46:39

No, absolutely.

Participant 1: 46:40

Also some students don't like I would love to be able to say to somebody, I do still sometimes I've caught your you're you could afford to just give them more space you can do some students don't like being picked out and asked to do things that other people aren't being asked to do or you know, so it's very difficult. You have to be very careful in case people take offence or the feeling of being picked on or which I never, ever would do anyway. But but some things I feel like I have to say this otherwise that students just want to carry on doing exactly that wrong thing. Yeah. Some of them are very grateful because they then feel the effects of that but it's difficult in a class because they're also aware of what everyone else is doing. They're doing it know that you just have to treat it a little bit carefully. In that respect, which is why I don't really I'm not a big fan of class technical singing lessons.

Emily Lowe: 47:35

It's really hard to cover everything and like you said you only need to say that one thing to the wrong pupil, and it can shatter them like

Participant 1: 47:44

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Emily Lowe: 47:46

And you didn't mean it in that way. But the way that like to see it is like oh my God, why did they think that person is doing it wrong as well?

Participant 1: 47:54

Excactly. Yeah, there was one there's one girl. And this was a musicianship class. But we're dealing with musicianship and repertoire and things like that in group situations. And one of the classes I couldn't take so I got someone to stand in and do it for me. And

the next week. There's this girl was sitting there and I said, Oh, you're looking a bit glum. And she said, Oh, well, there's the teacher that came last week. She told me that because I hadn't I didn't know this song. She kind of she said, Oh, she made fun of me for not knowing this song, which it was in standard musical theatre, but I know that this girl doesn't have a big history of musical theatre rep. Chances are there's a lot of singers, young those young singers that don't know, the musical theatre rep that probably you know, and I know from way back, you know, there's going to be lots of things that they don't know. But she was picked out or singled out and felt like she was being ridiculed for not knowing this, you know? No, I think I think that's something that that you have to be incredibly careful with. You don't know every, what everybody's knowledge is. So you just work on what they're giving you. And I think it's great. If you're working with students, and they go, Oh, no, I've never done this song before or what's it from and then I think it's brilliant because then you're working with complete blank sheet they haven't heard it before. They don't know what it's meant to be like, and then they get that nice surprise when you get to the end of it. And they go Oh, that was fantastic. That was you know, really enjoyed that. And sometimes it's something that's out of their era, if you like something from you know, golden age or da da da which which nearly all of them are not in immersed in, you know, they're all wanting to do the Hamiltons and da da da nearly all of them are lacking in solid legit and golden age.

Emily Lowe: 49:40

Yep

Participant 1: 49:41

So, which is just because of the demographics so, so if you want to listen to this, listen to this and a lot of the time they'll go oh, that's gorgeous. Oh, why haven't I heard that before? And oh, no, no. So So I think, you know, just broadening the landscape as far as repertoire goes as well opens up a lot of doors and gives them a lot of freedom of choice as well. Which I think is the great thing so that they don't feel like I should be doing this or I shouldn't be doing that. If there's if they've got that all that whole awareness of what's out there for them to accomplish in the repertoire department, then that's a good thing for me.

Emily Lowe: 50:21

Yeah, absolutely. It opens up the doors to tone as well. Like I've been doing a lot of legit in the last couple of months to just kind of show them that that not everything has to be in your belt. Not everything has this like powerhouse voice

Participant 1: 50:34

you can use vibrato, you are allowed to use vibrato, please use your vibrato

Emily Lowe: 50:38
sounds really lovely.

Participant 1: 50:40

Yeah, and it's natural occurring, they have this misconception that vibrato is something that you add in and actually it's not something that you take, if you're changing the style that you don't add in because your voice doesn't totally naturally, but it's a bonus because it shows that it's nice and relaxed and willing to work. But I've got a lovely guy, Michael, he's extremely gay, and he's a lovely, lovely chap. But because he's extremely gay and he dresses in a very flamboyant way. He seems to feel like he has to be the life and soul of the party. The entire time. So he's constantly bringing along songs that are very extrovert and don't really show his but he's got a beautiful bass baritone voice, absolute stunner of a voice and he's Australian as well. It's neither here nor there, but it's just nice to have a lovely charm about him. And I got Why do you feel that you have to be pizzazzy all the time, fine for if you can do it, but let's have the other side of it that nobody practically nobody will have heard this before. Just gorgeous sound and I think it's possibly because he's thought that sounds actually too old for me. That's the sound associated with an older person. And I go but you do so beautifully and your voice loves being down there. And there's and you're a small market, which means you will get the opportunities you know you're there's not hundreds of you like there are hundreds of mid voice mezzo so music theatre, hundreds and 1000s of them so if you find your little niche where you go, wasn't wasn't expecting to hear that, you know that's useful that's da da da da granted you will probably have to hunt around a little bit more to find your things that that work for you repertoire wise and show wise and things like that. But there's still loads out there that you can make good and he's a good actor as well. He's great. He doesn't put himself in a he doesn't normally put himself in an age bracket for characters that he portrays. So I said why do you put yourself in that age bracket for your sound? It's just a gorgeous sound. It's not an old sound. It's not a young sound. It sounds gorgeous sound. So let's use it and this is where I bang on about what does your voice actually do? It goes from there to way up there. Okay, so we have masses to work with.

Emily Lowe: 53:06
Don't just put yourself here

Participant 1: 53:08

Yeah, exactly. Or that's the sound that I meant to be making. So there's a stick and we go but your voice does that it goes goes both ends. And there's loads of students I've had like that. Well, I didn't know I could sing up the top there. I said if you can bring out the odd top load here and there solidly. I promise you you will work yeah, okay. It's those that harness in the middle in the safe space, that won't work because there are too many of them. There are loads of loads. You have to be brave and you have to take the step out and with good guidance, obviously with good guidance and make sure that the techniques supports it. But see what's capable for what your voice is capable of. At least give it the chance. If you don't like it, then fine stick with your safe notes, but let's see what potential is there for employment apart from anything else. The more you've got, the more you more chances you've got to be employed. So,

Emily Lowe: 54:00

Which is crazy if they're coming to you at that age and not having explored that range.

Participant 1: 54:05

Some of them have never never even dusted off the top and usually it's usually the top end. But you go did you know you have that? Oh, well, I don't know. And I think again, it comes back down to if you sing high you've got to sing soprano and a choir or you've got to, it identifies you as something almost classical, which when they're that age, and they're studying musical theatre, they don't want to be associated with that. They want to be the, as you say, the power sound and then I said, but that's just boring we don't want to listen to the power of sound the whole time

Emily Lowe: 54:35

No

Participant 1: 54:36

It's good. It's good if you can produce it when it's necessary, when the lyrics demand it, but not the whole time. It's just boring and we tune out. We need variety. We need to know what this voice and all the, if you listen to all the successful music, certainly music theatre things aren't even opera singers. You know, the successful ones are very good at getting their voices around loads, loads and loads of different styles of stuff, you know, from standard early opera to contemporary squeaky door stuff, you know, if you've got the technique and if your voice has the notes, get round it make it work. You know,

Emily Lowe: 55:11

my favourite description that someone said to me the other day was I was doing some reading and I found out the difference between a singer and an artist and I was like, oh, okay, tell me and they were like, well a singer can sing and an artist will colour and they'll paint and they'll add depth and I was like that is so beautiful. That to just aim for everyone to be an artist and colour their voice is something that we should be aiming for you to do rather than just kind of get up and sing it That's That's great. It's lovely that can get up into it. But if you're not selling it to me and you're not colouring it

Participant 1: 55:43

and if you're not, you've got to find that connection. You have to find the reason for the fact that you're singing these words. And it disturbs me sometimes that someone can sing an entire song and look like they're totally disconnected from it. They're making the sounds that they want to make. And I go Yeah, that's fine, but I'm not getting anything you could be singing you know your shopping list from Tesco. I'm not getting anything from you.

Emily Lowe: 56:06

They just dead pan

Participant 1: 56:08

What are these lyrics? Like they're so scared to feel I think sometimes

Participant 1: 56:13

they're scared because it because then they have to open up then they have to make themselves vulnerable. You have to be vulnerable in order to find what you're looking for. And then produce it. We're all vulnerable as performers. Anyway, the fact that we put ourselves up on stage because it's vulnerable from the start. So you're dealing with that from the start, but you have to be able to, to allow yourself to open up everything to the deepest point of your soul in order to try and get a hint of what was what was being thought of when the thing was, was being written. Whether it's a modern thing or whether it goes way back hundreds of years, you know, it comes back to the same thing. It's all about a communication of something. And if you can communicate, you can be the best thing in the world. But if you don't communicate to your audience, it's nothing you've you've wasted you know your money, go and listen to somebody that can't communicate. If you hear a lesser singer, a lesser quality singer that manages to paint the picture and manages to give you the whole storyline and the character of what's going on in here. Then you feel like you've really got you've had an experience with them, you know? So I'm all for that.

Emily Lowe: 56:13

Yeah,

Participant 1: 57:22

Focus on teaching them to communicate and go from there

Participant 1: 57:26

yeah, but you see that anyway, Emily, when they have to stand up and introduce something. So oh, do I really have to do that? Yes, actually, you too. It's all part of your you can't just stand up and go i'm singing this song.

Emily Lowe: 57:41

Yeah

Participant 1: 57:42

we needed a bit more than that. We need a bit of you. This is where they can express themselves. Because there's a say they get very few other chances to actually just be themselves and not be a character is just to be able to talk to people, you know.

Emily Lowe: 57:58

Yeah. Thank you so much. I'm so passionate about this work.

Participant 1: 58:10

Me to

Emily Lowe: 58:11

I feel really strongly that that we need to move forward with how we're teaching our youngsters so that when they get to your kind of your part of learning, they're already well rounded and they already have those skills and teaching that lifelong learning like my my worry is that I don't want to send pupils out into the world who can't talk about

themselves and describe what they're doing and then they're not going to carry on because they'll get somewhere and someone will say something to them and they'll go oh, okay, well, I'll just won't sing anymore.

Participant 1: 58:43

And that's a shame. It's a tragedy.

Emily Lowe: 58:46

Yeah.

Participant 1: 58:47

It is. It is. Do you just I was just thinking about all the students that that I've taught over the years that still keep in touch with me and tell me what they're doing and you know, lots of them have gone off. Totally different singing tracks to what we were expecting, which is great, but they're making it all work. And they're they're always coming back and going. If you didn't have that faith in me, I would not be doing what I'm doing.

Emily Lowe: 59:13

I say this all the time about on you and Graham. Like I I have so many memories of being at university and unlocking parts of my voice and parts of me. That really made me love it again at a point where I had a great time at Sunderland. I definitely partied too hard and

Participant 1: 59:13

that's not a new thing, but

Emily Lowe: 59:17

I feel like I'm really it's really nice to have gotten those roots and to still so obviously, I live with Jack and Sean lives just down the road and it's really lovely to to be able to reminisce on it and go and now we've created this this business that we're really proud of, because of the foundations that we got in that time because my singing career up until that point had been very, very classical based and very, I'd always been made to feel inferior as the singer, rather than the instrumentalist and through a level there was only me and a double bass player and the double bass player was obviously favored and then coming into uni and realising that there were tutors that that valued it as a skill

that this is what's kind of spurred this on to go actually I want the teenagers to feel like it's a valid skill and that it is something that you you really can work out you can sing, but then you can.

Participant 1: 1:00:33
Musician I'm a musician.

Emily Lowe: 1:00:35
Yeah

Participant 1: 1:00:36
I love this thing of only if you play an instrument can you be a musician and singer such as singers? Singers, if they're good at what they do singers are musicians so,

Emily Lowe: 1:00:46
absolutely.

Participant 1: 1:00:47
Do you still sing? You still get a chance to sing?

Emily Lowe: 1:00:49
Yeah, yeah, definitely. So I tend to not perform very much anymore. Just purely because it turns out running a business having three children and doing a master's and they don't. Yeah.

Participant 1: 1:01:05
Oh my god Emily

15) Interview 2

Mon, Jul 15, 2024 12:05PM • 35:00

SPEAKERS

Interview 2, Emily Lowe

Interview 2: 00:03

Great. Should be recording now. I'm also just going to audio record it on my phone. If you are okay with that, also down by my feet chewing a stick so did you get chance to have a look at the email.

Interview 2: 00:23

Um hum

Emily Lowe: 00:23

Awesome. So what we'll do is we'll just run through these questions. I think I sent you a copy of them as well, but it's just mainly to see what your experiences are, both with voice teaching and also kind of drama, just in the performing arts studio in general, because I think it's not just something that affects, I think it's something that probably is kind of multidisciplinary, but also to see whether you feel like there's anything you could take from the framework, or whether there's anything that you think should be added into it, and then all of this information will be kind of coded and then looked at against other people's perspectives, and then also against my pupils perspectives who've had the framework just to see where we're hitting the mark and where we're not so first question, based on your experience, have you encountered students whose identities and voices don't align. Is this something that you'd feel comfortable addressing with your students, and if so, how would you approach it?

Interview 2: 01:27

Yes, I do have some children whose who are who identify as either non binary or different gender than the one they were born with in terms of their voice. I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead. So I have quite a number of students who are quite female students who identify as female students who are born female and who have very low pitch, which can be very difficult, especially if you're

following syllabuses for exam singing, because the pieces that are assigned to them aren't always appropriate for their range. And obviously at that age, you know when you're talking about this kind of age, children finding something that they can identify with themselves and also that fits within their pitch range. No matter what they think their pitch range is, can be very difficult.

Emily Lowe: 02:49

This is something that's come up in every interview that I've done. It's that it's not necessarily that teachers don't know how to handle that. It's that teachers are having to teach things that don't work because the exam board says so. And exam boards like ABRSM aren't very good in that they don't allow you to change the key of anything. I don't know what LAMDA ones are like. Do they let you change the key at all?

Interview 2: 03:17

Yes,

Emily Lowe: 03:18

okay, that's good. This is progress.

Interview 2: 03:21

Yeah, you can transpose tracks. You can also mix gender in Lamda

Emily Lowe: 03:28

Nice

Interview 2: 03:29

yeah, the the only thing that they require is that when you are answering the knowledge questions in LAMDA, that you answer the knowledge questions from from the gender that that character originally was and talking musical theater more than singing. Because LAMDA really have musical theater, you have to answer the knowledge questions in the gender that that character is within the piece. So for example, if you were playing, if you were singing Burn from Hamilton, you would have to answer those characters questions as a female, whether you were female or not yourself

Emily Lowe: 04:06

That's really good. I know that Rock School have recently just changed theirs as well, because previously they had female and male vocals and it was like urm, that, that's not how it should be done anymore. And actually they've just changed it, so they now just have a huge list of songs, and you can change the key. Also allowed for artistic interpretation of things as well. So if you want to put your own little riffs and embellishments in there, you can now do which is so different to ABRSM and London College of Music that are all still quite like, No, this is a piece. This is where you sing it. This is how you do it. And I guess that kind of like the question anyway, as in, like the barriers that you've faced. It comes to those things. I think me, personally, it is exams, and it's teaching that kind of the industry expectation of you, because it's fine to change all of this in your lesson. Then you go out into the industry, and you can't change the key of a song, opera or in a musical, because it's it's been written that way. So it's like, for you have you kind of, how are you setting people up for that?

Interview 2: 04:23

Sometimes you can, you know, I ask students that go to auditions all the time, and they will be asked for the key that they would like to sing that in, especially if it's going to be piano, because if you've got a pianist there, choose the key.

Emily Lowe: 05:27

Yeah, I agree you should be doing

Interview 2: 05:32

they, it used to be, you know, when, when I was a child and I was singing a musical theater at school, and I did do singing lessons as a child, you were asked when you went into an audition with your score, you were asked what key you were singing that in it never, it never changed that previously. And I think some, I think sometimes it is also things like the student expectation is that they struggle to understand that they don't have the pitch range, that there's something wrong with their voice, and there isn't anything wrong with their voice. That's just your personal pitch range. Yeah, and it might extend, and it might change, and it might go the other way, but there's nothing wrong with your voice, and you work with what is with your voice. I have loads of students, particularly teenage girls, that will come to being like I want to sing this, and I have to say to them, you we possibly can. Let's look at a few different versions of the music of this. And then let's see, because it's sometimes, even when you transpose it, it's not great, yeah, sometimes

Emily Lowe: 06:45

it just takes away something, doesn't it?

Interview 2: 06:48

Yeah, yeah. Especially you've got to go too low or too high. It doesn't really make sense. But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher. I know my performing arts includes vocal work, and it includes vocal work in terms of speech as well. And this is the same in terms of speech, because I teach a lot of children with speech delay, with born speech, delayed development issues that are from birth, some that have they've gained throughout their teenage life. So that could be if it's like a cleft palates that's changed. If they've got braces that have changed the way that they've, they speak, and in terms of, sometimes when they've got braces and they lose teeth, I've got a girl at the minute who's really struggling with that wind sound that she can't control yet. And there's, there's loads of factors that are, that are that they can that you facing against when trying to find suitable material, and there's not a lot of you can Google it, but there's not a lot there

Emily Lowe: 08:05

no

Interview 2: 08:06

to help you in terms of teaching.

Emily Lowe: 08:08

No, it's like, it's a complete minefield, really, and that's why this framework has kind of come about, because think a lot of teachers don't know, don't know the basic steps when they get a new pupil. I think everyone's got some kind of like, oh well, they must know something they might they can like, because you come as someone who can already put a tune together. Think teachers just assume that that means you can sing. So what I was trying to do was to come in at a base level, but to teach it through descriptive terminology and sensation rather than what you can hear, because a lot of singing is based on what you hear as a teacher, rather than asking your pupils what they feel. So did you find any of it that you found particularly really helpful, or any parts that you found less useful?

Interview 2: 08:57

Yeah, I was just looking at that actually. I thought that the actual framework I thought would work well, just in as a general case of things like new students, and not just in terms of enabling you to understand the range. Because normally, if I get a new vocal student, the first thing I ask is, can you come with a song, prepared that you feel comfortable singing that you already know really well, and I listen, and I literally just listen to them sing that

Emily Lowe: 09:27

Yeah,

Interview 2: 09:28

to then gauge what I need to do in terms of being a teacher. So I think something that this would work well in terms of having either a new member of staff or new new pupils to you, it would be really good framework, just as a base lesson, so you can start to figure out what that child's voice is, where it is placed within that. And I think the the format of it, it still has that, that formal, formality of a lesson, how a lesson flows, but they might not catch on that you're actually dressing certain things that you know as a staff member at the same time

Emily Lowe: 10:08

absolutely and like singing, teaching is just completely unregulated. And I know you will definitely have had pupils that have come to you and you've gone "Who taught you that that that isn't isn't safe, we shouldn't be doing that". And I think what my what my general goal is to be, is to have, like, some kind of standardized this is what we're all teaching. These are the foundations. I can then pass a pupil to you, and you'll be able to understand what I've done with them, where their voices are in real time, and that that is something that I just feel isn't happening right now. I feel like there isn't that standardized level of we're all teaching the basics, yeah, and then we're getting things I just don't think that's happening. Like, I've had pupils who can't describe the anatomy of their voice in any way, and they're like, oh, yeah, you sing for me, diaphragm, and your diaphragm should be, should be moving, and you should feel it. And I'm like, you can't physically feel it like that's not okay, okay, so this is the level that we're at, and I find that's what's really frustrating. But I think if I just hand someone a framework, I think it will be met with resistance.

Interview 2: 11:20

I don't know. I don't know if it would, as far as my experience in terms of other teachers, especially when I say, if I've got somebody covering my my lessons that are singing based so vocal or singing based the thing that they want the most is a lesson plan

Emily Lowe: 11:41

Okay, that's really interesting to know.

Interview 2: 11:44

Very rarely, large group singing classes or large classes or large group musical theater classes. Does anybody ask for a lesson plan. Everybody's like, oh, no, I'll be fine. It's only what theme they're doing or where they've got to when I'll get in there, when it's one to one, what they want is a lesson plan.

Emily Lowe: 12:04

Okay, that's really good to know, because I think,

Interview 2: 12:09

yeah,

Emily Lowe: 12:09

I think that's what's missing

Interview 2: 12:13

that's, that's what they want. Because a lot of people one, if you're, if you're new to teaching one to one, that is a weird experience,

Emily Lowe: 12:21

yeah, because no one checks anything.

Interview 2: 12:24

Yeah, 45 minutes on your own every single week for 10 years, who's checking what you doing?

Emily Lowe: 12:31

Yeah, no one has ever checked my credentials at all.

Interview 2: 12:36

Yeah, yeah. And it's in terms of unless you're following, unless you're definitely following a syllabus. So unless you are teaching the syllabus in terms of, this is what this child needs to know for this exam, then I enter into this exam. They pass this exam. Therefore I am good at my job. There's there's nothing in between that it's not like when you are a dance teacher and there's an expectation that a child who has been taught a dance style, this is where singing is separate as well, because they don't separate different styles. So, you know, I can book a dance class tomorrow, and I can book a street dance class. I can book a beat box class. So I can book a ballet class. I can book a tap class but I can't book, a pop singing class, or a classic class or a

Emily Lowe: 13:22

It's pot luck as which teacher you get?

Interview 2: 13:25

Like, yeah,

Emily Lowe: 13:26

As me being the only thing that goes into some of my schools as a singer, that's that's almost limiting the pupils to contemporary commercial music, because I'm not a classical teacher. I can teach it, but it's not my thing, and that's where this, again, could come into play, because I can teach then the foundations and then I can go right and just signpost you to another teacher who can specialize in that, you want to have some lessons, get the wider experience, because, again, I feel like there's so much gatekeeping that happens to singing. Singer teachers can be like, no, they're my people that whereas that just shouldn't happen, it should be people helping you find interest. You can teach good foundational skills, that is the foundation of everything. But from there, you need to be going to explore. Go and see what you want to do. I love musical theater. It might not be for you. Let's find you someone that you work well with,

Interview 2: 14:21

but even like you said, it's having that basic framework. I can do this, this and this and this, so I'm not necessarily examed but I'm at this level.

Emily Lowe: 14:34

Yeah,

Interview 2: 14:36

whereas I've taught some students from other teachers that have never done a singing scale. Now I'm not brilliant at piano. I don't have a piano at my house, but I also have recordings of piano scales. So my students do sing piano scales, and I also do ones where I sing they have to mimic it back and all this kind of stuff. But I know some that don't do any scale singing, unless they're doing ABRSM or something like that, and they have to if it's part of something they are doing

Emily Lowe: 15:13

just wild, isn't it? And like, do you get pupils that come to you and you go, what do you like to sing? What do you like? What suits your voice? Can you describe your voice to me? And they go, oh i dont know, and you're like, Okay, how do you not know? And you'll ask them to tell you about, like, the physical sensations that they're having, and they just can't do it. And I think it's all well and good listening. There has to be some element of self autonomy in there, and being able to go, actually, Emily today, I'm not going to sing that because my voice can't handle it, because I'm rough, or I'm really breathy, or I can't do it because my shoulder are tight and can't take in a breath big enough. And teaching them that autonomy surely should be the way that we should be moving forward, that they're not reliant on you

Interview 2: 16:03

Yeah. Well, that's just the same as in, if they attend the dance class and they come in and they go to, you know what, I pulled a muscle last week, and my thigh really hurts, so I'm a little bit wary of that today. And you're like, great, but nobody thinks about that in terms of her voice, and nobody thinks, I think some of it as well is the misunderstanding of how long your voice needs to be warmed up before you're ready to sing a to sing a song. And, I mean, sing a song like publicly sing. You would be happy to publicly sing this.

Emily Lowe: 16:31

Yeah, it's, it's a long process, and it can be quite boring. It doesn't. I think there's a lot of teachers out there that are like, making everything really fun, and we'll do this exercise. And I'm like, Okay, I don't know what the point of that exercise is, apart from that, it's

fun to sing, and sometimes singing is not fun. Sometimes we take out that riff that's driving you nuts and break it down and sing one note at a time, and then put it back together and put it back in and do some warm ups to get you there. And I think that is something that's not taken into account as much these days.

Interview 2: 17:07

Yeah. And I think there's, like you said, with things like singing exams. I think the differences, the drastic differences in terms of singing exams, across what is available for students can be quite different as well, in terms of like ABRSM, because they an ABRSM singing exam, for me, is a is not a singing exam, it is still a musician's exam. People who can't read music and don't play an instrument shouldn't be taking ABRSM. I don't teach it. I won't even dare. I am not a professional enough musician to be able to teach that. And I, one of the schools that I'm at currently has got a singing teacher. They have insisted that the children are taking ABRSM exams yeah,insisted.

Emily Lowe: 17:56

No

Interview 2: 17:57

And this is, this is a independent prep school.

Emily Lowe: 18:02

Oh, wow, oh my goodness,

Interview 2: 18:08

they've and not all of those singers. Some of them are new to singing this year. Some of them are not instrument players, and shockingly, one failed. Several just got pass, and they nearly all failed their sightsinging.

Emily Lowe: 18:27

I mean, completely understandable if you're not teaching how to read music alongside teaching how to sing the songs. That comes back to that whole argument of there are teachers out there that are just teaching to get through the grade like I don't believe that it's teaching enough content

Interview 2: 18:46

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them. They would be much better with LCM, or they're actually their voices more musical theater. They would be best, Nope.

Emily Lowe: 19:17

Wow. But when that is what we're having to fight against. What do we do, especially as people who are governed by the overarching schools that we're in? How do we as individuals change that? Because there's no there's no legislation on it, like there's just nothing to help

Interview 2: 19:35

But I think that's the problem. There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework. So the only thing that anybody else has got anything to measure that against these exams,

Emily Lowe: 19:44

yeah, it's so, so old fashioned that ABRSM is still on pedestal because the other exam boards, you still earn UCAS point. It is just that classical, elitist view of this one is better than another one. But then that leads to singers who think that they are better than other singers because of certain genres. It's like this just shouldn't be happening. It's not an equal playing field

Interview 2: 20:10

no cause all they can do is sing that one thing from that one piece, from that one syllabus.

Emily Lowe: 20:14

Yeah, and fail the sight singing, which hands up. I always used to fail my sight singing because I hated it. No one actually likes it

Interview 2: 20:24

because it takes practice and you've so much of it, I would fail sight singing. I absolutely would. I would fail sight singing now I think,

Emily Lowe: 20:31

oh, yeah, same I'd panic and be like, No, I just like singing. So is there anything else that you'd add into it? Is there anything you can think that you'd be like, I think this would be really good here, because it would help, or would you reorder it in any way?

Interview 2: 20:47

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

Emily Lowe: 21:15

Yeah, so that's, those descriptions have come from the speech and language therapist department, which I think is really interesting, because I think it really pulls on something that universally, you know, you could use that when you're teaching monologs, like, how are you going to do your monologs today? How do you feel? How are you doing this? I think it's really important to, again, look at, like, multidisciplinary areas, so that you're not just going, what are the words that singers use? you know, we want. We want something wider. And I think the Chris Johnson, vocal assessments, methods, works really well with kids, because it gets them out of their head, and the, the exercise that they do highlights any problems, but by continuing to do the exercise, it actually makes them better. So it just, it works really well.

Interview 2: 22:12

I think thinking of it is a learning process. Is not always what children do with their voice. They don't see it the same as an instrument that they're learning to play.

Emily Lowe: 22:20

Yeah,

Interview 2: 22:22

see it as something they've already got. And they're talking, look, I'm talking, so it works. And, oh, look, I can sing this one song. When actually realize they're not really singing that song, they're just mimicking that song.

Emily Lowe: 22:33

Yeah,

Interview 2: 22:35

they're singing what they think is the right notes

Emily Lowe: 22:35

yeah, yeah, especially on the younger end of lessons as well, when they haven't got that, that awareness of themselves, theres definitely like a lot of mimicking going on. And ask them, you know, what techniques did you do there? Like, what was your larynx placement? And they just don't know, because they're mimicking Ariana Grande. And you're like, Okay, well, it's a really high larynx position, and just whoosh over their heads,

Interview 2: 22:37

a lot of the key terminology in all of this does cross over into acting and drama technique in general.

Emily Lowe: 23:10

Yeah,

Interview 2: 23:10

you know, articulation, vocal registers, phonetic ability, intonation, all these kind of words all cross over and are part of use teaching and acting as well.

Emily Lowe: 23:25

Yeah, because voices use is voice use right? If you're using your voice, you should be using it safely anyway, and unless you are constantly speaking and singing at your fundamental frequency, you need to have awareness of what's going on. Because you, you, we all use our intonation to deliver things, and we use our pitches to display emotion. If that's not being done safely, then you're going to end up with kids with damaged voices. And that's that's the main concern, really, are we. Because a lot of the lecturers I've spoken to at university level are quite horrified by the spectrum of pupils that they get. They get into university, they've got their ABRSM, classically trained, can read music, and then they've got lots of, unfortunately, stereotyping here, but lots of like CCM musical theater kids coming through, who've got fantastic voices, but have got no idea about notation, reading, musicianship, no idea really, what is going on with their voice, but they can belt, you know, a top A, and that's fantastic. And it's like, if there's no standardization in there, how is then the university supposed to go from there? It just

Interview 2: 24:40

Yeah, and that that is true across the board. So in, when you're talking about LAMDA musical theater. So LAMDA musical theater, they call acting through voice.

Emily Lowe: 24:48

Nice.

Interview 2: 24:50

So yeah. So it's not, it's not necessarily. They do obviously require that you sing in the pitch of the music that you are singing to. You, There is no requirement for the constant you know your voice can cry for emotion, for your character, because you're acting that character. So especially when it's musical theater, in particular, they their higher focus is on your voice, the feeling and understanding and emotively expressing the emotion that that character is feeling. And they do, within their framework of syllabus, show that you do have to have explanations of breathing techniques for the voice, but it doesn't come, breathing techniques for voice doesn't come in until the later grades. So it doesn't actually come in on the knowledge questions until like grade five and above.

Emily Lowe: 25:40

Ah ok

Interview 2: 25:41

You do have to do key terminology before that, so you have to be able to vocally describe key terminology and what they mean and things like that. But there is the actual vocal techniques and breathing techniques. Singer as a, singer, that that question is across the board?

Emily Lowe: 26:03

Yeah,

Interview 2: 26:05

For all the syllabus that is a grade six question across the board.

Emily Lowe: 26:08

Wow.

Interview 2: 26:10

So that for acting, speaking verse and pros, public speaking and singing, you have to be able to explain breathing techniques that you as a performer have individually used yourself and developed across there, not only in your preparation of that performance, but what you in terms of techniques within the performance. So even if you're acting, it could be something as simple as shallow breaths to show that your character is out of breath, to something as complex as describing your full diaphragmatic breathing, the exercise that you do before you go on stage, and then how you're holding that diaphragmatic breath certain notes, and how that links to certain notes within the songs, or certain emotion in the songs.

Emily Lowe: 26:57

Wow. I mean, that's really good.

Interview 2: 27:01

It is, but there's no, like I said before, there's no requirement to read music. I personally always give if I've got sheet music available, I give sheet music,

Emily Lowe: 27:13

yeah, because it's not about reading every note. It's about looking at the shape and, you know, just having some general awareness about it and making them not uncomfortable. They're not expect to read every note,

Interview 2: 27:27

no, but you should know what a pause is, and you should know, you should know what the lengths of the notes mean,

Emily Lowe: 27:33

yeah, and where the climax of the music is. And you know, what are the, what are the dynamics that you're using, and just all of that, and that's really hard to do without sheet music.

Interview 2: 27:43

Yeah, like, what else is happening within the music that your voice is then fighting against as well? Because it could be that there's only one melody line happening behind it, or it could be that there's a full orchestration that you are supposed to be part of. And that is too many different things in terms of singing, like whether you're singing little, tiny melody line, or are you singing to a full orchestration of music that your voice has got to get over?

Emily Lowe: 28:08

Yeah, crazy. So I guess that kind of brings me to my last point really, because we've already talked about at what point you kind of put this framework in, and that it'd be really helpful with a new pupil to set some good housekeeping. What do you Foresee from this if people would start using it? Do you think people would find it exciting, or do you think they might find it a little bit overwhelming,

Interview 2: 28:38

overwhelming the teachers, or overwhelming the students,

Emily Lowe: 28:42

overwhelming the teachers. I would say, Do you think it's kind of because obviously it's worded in very much my way and what I understand?

Interview 2: 28:54

No, I mean, it shouldn't.

Emily Lowe: 28:58

Yes

Interview 2: 28:59

it's, it shouldn't. It's not worded. It's not using any words that I would consider to be above maybe new, maybe very new, teachers that have maybe only just qualified in either a vocal degree or a musical degree themselves, that are now just individually looking might be a bit like, oh, what does you know? What does you know? What does it mean in terms of implementing and things like that, sometimes that kind of framework, but anybody that's ever read a lesson plan should have been able to use it surely.

Emily Lowe: 29:43

I wish the audio recording could see your face there.

Interview 2: 29:51

Well, I just, I think it's, I think it's framed really nice as well. I think it's it. It's not as complicated as some lesson plans that I have witnessed myself previously because of formats that people require in specific educational requirements.

Interview 2: 30:07

I think it's, I think, do you know what actually, the only thing that I would maybe, that I can't see on there, but maybe I'm just missing it is to do with the length of time that things should be done for and things that should happen for, because obviously it's one, it's four weeks of lesson plans. Is that, can you condense that to be a 30 minute lesson? Is that 40 minute lesson is that an hour lesson is that,

Emily Lowe: 30:08

Yeah,

Emily Lowe: 30:43
yeah,

Interview 2: 30:46

Is that dependent on the student? Because I think sometimes I, especially in terms of, like you, I teach lessons are vastly different times. School lessons are 20 minutes, yeah, outside of schools, my lessons are 30/45, or an hour. Yeah, I don't allow any children under 12 to do an hour.

Emily Lowe: 31:20
Yeah.

Interview 2: 31:22

And I do that across for group singing as well. I don't think any child under 12 should be consistently using their voice for an hour.

Emily Lowe: 31:31
Yeah, I agree.

Interview 2: 31:33
Personally,

Emily Lowe: 31:34
Just too much for them

Interview 2: 31:37

Yeah, without, without any breaks, I just think you risk exploring too much in too little time for not a lot of reasons. So are these based on one to one sort of 20 minute lessons?

Emily Lowe: 31:50

Yeah, I think you're right. I'm just bringing it up now. I don't think that is clear on there. So you know, definitely, definitely something to put in. Because I think you right and I think there is scope for kind of changing that, and elongating it and making it..

Interview 2: 32:13

Well, it's just things like, you know, if you've got an expectation is to discuss aims of project. I mean, that could be an hour,

Emily Lowe: 32:21

yeah,

Interview 2: 32:21

with certain students, that could be five minutes, you know? And I think if there's an expectation, base of this should take around, dependent on your individual students, which is everything when you do one to ones, everything's based on those but,

Emily Lowe: 32:39

yeah, amazing.

Interview 2: 32:43

I think it's, I just, I think the whole, it's incredibly interesting to start a lesson asking a student how they view their voice. I think that's really interesting. And something that, although I've asked students across, you know, like when they're trying to sing a song and I'm discussing your voice sounds like this. I don't think I've ever overtly said to them, what do you think your voice sounds like? Because everybody's on that thing, Oh, I hate my recording of my voice, or, you know, I hate this or that. But having them say, what? How do you see your voice? What is? What is it about your voice that is that you want to work on?

Emily Lowe: 33:34

Yeah, it gets, it's been getting some really interesting results, because kids, at the end of the four weeks have been like, my goodness, I I wasn't able to describe my voice before, and now I feel like I can describe it, but I can also tell you when it doesn't feel right, which,

Interview 2: 33:54

yeah, this would work. This would work cross curricular as well, in terms of, music tuition in general because a lot of the sounds that you use to describe your voice are also used to describe for very younger children, the sounds of instruments or the sacks, you know what I mean. And that could be an interesting cross curricular situation.

Emily Lowe: 34:19

Yeah, definitely. Ah, thank you. I'm going to end the recording there, because that's really helpful. Please just let me know you are obviously welcome to withdraw your information at any point, like I said before, once my dissertation has been marked, then everything will be deleted. Thank you.

16) Interview 3

Tue, Jul 16, 2024 1:20PM • 46:52

SPEAKERS

Emily Lowe, Interview 3

Emily Lowe: 07:15

Hi, very punctual of you,

Interview 3: 07:25

my headphones haven't Connected naturally one second I

Emily Lowe: 07:28

I love it when that happened, and

Interview 3: 07:49

I'm so helpful in the middle of Costa as well,

Emily Lowe: 08:00

there's someone cleaning my drains outside. Sounds horrific.

Interview 3: 08:07

Oh, hello, Emily.

Emily Lowe: 08:09

Oh, there we are. Before you say anything, I've got otter AI running in the background, taking notes, if you're okay with that, just so I don't have to transcribe everything afterwards,

Interview 3: 08:21

makes life so much easier, doesn't it,

Emily Lowe: 08:24

don't, I interviewed someone the other day, and I didn't run it through zoom. I just did it on my phone, and our voices must have sounded really similar, because it just recorded everything as a monolog. And I was like, how are you?

Interview 3: 08:39

Yeah, I'm alright, mate, I'm ready for Friday, but I'm okay. Yeah.

Emily Lowe: 08:43

Are you teaching all the way up until Friday?

Interview 3: 08:45

I wasn't meant to be, but then School's not informing me of various things or having informed me and I missed it, whichever one. So I don't this morning, I've been in in XXX. Tomorrow afternoon, I'm in XXX. We've got a morning in the morning Thursday, I'm in XXX all day, so it's just bits and bobs, just tidying up.

Emily Lowe: 09:07

I know I've got like, two hours at XXX tomorrow that I'm like, because I've got so much catch up to do for this.

Interview 3: 09:19

Yeah, it's cool.

Emily Lowe: 09:21

Yeah. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for being available and accommodating. And there isn't someone trying to get in my house. They are just cleaning the gutters. But I avoid it because, like, he doesn't stop talking to me if I make

eye contact with him, so I'm kind of, like, positioned like this, yeah? So I'll jump right in. I'll try not to keep you too long, because obviously half an hour to 45 minutes is perfect. So have you had chance to look over everything

Interview 3: 09:54
briefly Yeah,

Emily Lowe: 09:56
awesome. Briefly is fine. So I guess the first question I want to ask you is, have you encountered pupils whose identity and voices don't necessarily align, and have you felt comfortable addressing this with them? And how did you approach it?

Interview 3: 10:10
Yeah, so there's one student in particular in mind who she came to me, and it was very transparent and made her kind of stance on it all. She was like, I'm trans and everything else. But also, then what came with that was, I want to sing X rep, because she was slightly older and she was doing a level music, so she knew, like, the those areas that go, call it vocal, vocal areas, voicing. So she knew that in in her head, she was like, I want to sing alto. Obviously, she isn't an alto, because she's not, she's not on any medication yet or anything like that. Yeah, so I, she's been with me 18 months now,

Emily Lowe: 11:02
okay

Interview 3: 11:04
And we spent probably the first eight months trying to just use without trying to label her voice and just saying, it's my voice. This is my voice. Let's explore my voice and let's see what it can do. So that was, that was quite interesting, quite exciting.

Emily Lowe: 11:27
It's a learning curve for you, right when you're kind of going through it together.

Interview 3: 11:30

Yeah, absolutely. And I was, I was, I think this is going to lead into one of your questions, but I was sort of very transparent with her, and I said, Look, I said, my knowledge on this is very limited. I said, however, I am in touch with the with the research side of the world. So I know all some papers. I know some papers are coming out, I said. And I said to her, I said, Look, I'm going to read them. And she went, can I read them? Absolutely if you want to read them soon, that's absolutely fine. So we've almost been on the journey together,

Emily Lowe: 12:01
yeah

Interview 3: 12:02
which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

Emily Lowe: 12:44
interesting

Interview 3: 12:47
which I thought was the schools I'm in that might perhaps not be the case, but she's, yeah, I've got, I've got a few sorts of female identifying students who have lower voices, but yeah, nothing, sort of out of the ordinary. You know?

Emily Lowe: 13:04
Yeah, I found it's a lot more, I'm getting a lot more non binary voices, I find really interesting, because I personally feel like that's slightly easier to navigate, because non binary, you can kind of work with everything, but when you get someone who is trans, I think you absolutely approached it in the most wonderful way of just like to just get you comfortable with what you sound like first, and then we'll go from there, and we'll take out those labels. I think she's really lucky to have you, because from what I have experienced, your view isn't necessarily the view that is wider, which is really sad, and

heart breaking, and I really hope that there is something that we can do to just change that, because I think if you aren't working with how the voice sounds, then you're not you're not a very good teacher. And if you're not taking into account someone's identity, then that person isn't going to lifelong sing. They're going to stop

Interview 3: 14:04

well this is it exactly, and, you know, as well as I do that, well, you know, I know, because that's the most part of my research. But yeah, you know, it's so you form that musical identity through your voice. So it's, you know, it's really, I felt for her in that instance, and I feel for these trans students, because it's so hard to not be like, well, I sound like this, so I am this. When we push all all on to our identity being by what our voice sounds like and like say it, then it breaks them. If that doesn't quite align up to the wider view, as we say,

Emily Lowe: 14:39

yeah. So it's upsetting. So I guess that kind of leads to the next question, really about barriers. So first instance that I had of a transgender pupil was a really negative one. The people came to me, I was his safe space. He came in. He was like, actually, I would like to be he/him now I would like to use this name. And obviously I was like, yeah, absolutely. Thank you for telling me it's really important with your voice, because obviously your gender is different to your biological sex, and we can navigate that together. So then I passed that on, because obviously that's a safeguarding concern that needs to be passed on. And the school absolutely told me off and marched me back through the school to go and tell that pupil that I wasn't under any circumstances, allowed to use that name or use he him, and that if I did, I would lose my position there, and that I was creating the safeguarding issue by doing it. And then three weeks later, the school turned around and said, Oh, you can do it now. It's fine. Don't worry. After I'd been like, frog marched through the school to tell that pupil I wasn't allowed to do that, and that led to, like, a really awful barrier, because from my perspective as a visiting teacher, my space is my space. The parents have a contract with me. I'm choosing what to do with that pupil. But I was, I was under the umbrella of the school, so it was, it was really conflicting. So have you had any barriers, or do you know of any circumstances like that that have made it difficult,

Interview 3: 16:03

as far as I'm aware with this student, No. So the school are very accepting the one just up the road. So you can imagine, in that circumstance, they are very urm, she's recently changed her name again and is now adopting a I'd say a fully feminine name, as opposed to sort of that in between name.

Emily Lowe: 16:26
Yeah.

Interview 3: 16:29
So, and that's, you know, been communicated across the board quite easily. And everything else, I can't say my experience has ever sort of been, no, I don't think I've ever really come across a like a barrier in that respect, from the school Fortunately, you know, fortunately,

Emily Lowe: 16:50
you can imagine what school I might have had that in. We aren't there anymore.

Interview 3: 16:57
Are you not, okay

Emily Lowe: 16:58
No, we pulled out and we pulled out guitar and bass,

Interview 3: 17:01
wow

Emily Lowe: 17:03
yeah, we did a, did a cold, hard extraction, because if you, if you don't align with their values, I don't believe you should be teaching there, and we didn't align with them, so we just, we shut it all down, which is hard on the kids, but We explained to the parents, and we said, look, we adore teaching you, but we can't do it under these circumstances anymore, which,

Interview 3: 17:27
Its not fair is it

Emily Lowe: 17:28

no, it's really not. But that's what kind of made me go actually, there needs to be something in place for those teachers that are like, this has happened, and I don't know what to do. And actually it does just come down to that foundational teaching again, which is what I've tried to cover, but from a non terminology point of view. So using only descriptors, so when you had a kind of look over the framework, was there anything in there that you were like, Oh, that's really useful, or anything that you were like, maybe not, I can't see how that would work.

Interview 3: 17:56

No, I think all of it was really useful. I think it's really it's really good that, you know, we're focusing on descriptors rather than labels. I try to as much as I can in all my areas, you know, use descriptors now I don't inquire as well; upper middle lowers, you know, where possible, rather than SATB or whatever the music calls for in that capacity, and like I, I swapped gender roles in music all the time with songs and things. You know, we don't they don't necessarily fix that unless the male key is just stupidly high for the female. And then it's like, well, this is not helpful. And if you just say, I can't justify singing this one at this moment in time. Let me go away and rearrange it, then maybe so yeah, but

Emily Lowe: 18:43

yeah

Interview 3: 18:43

we're not going to be squawking top G's in whatever it is today. You know exactly what I mean there, didn't you?

Emily Lowe: 18:51

Oh yeah,

Interview 3: 18:53

but no, I really like the use of, I smiled myself when I saw the Chris Johnson stuff and all of that. I was like, ah, yeah. Get that in there. It's really good they need to be like you say. It may, I think it's really good that we're that you're wanting to put the ownership of their voice on them, rather than it coming from us as a well, this is a professional for their your you know, you're under their care and everything. And you are, we are. We are

responsible for them, but giving them that freedom to be like, This is my voice. This is what it can do, and having them completely understand the sort of the limitations and and the things that actually we can do more for it eventually, is really important. So I really, I really thought it was really good, really like that.

Emily Lowe: 19:36

I think what I was aiming for was like, you know, when you leave school, and you leave your long term singing teacher, and then you go into university, or you go into you go into working. You are asked what you are capable of, what you can do, and it's up to you to know when you can do those things. And I remember being asked, and then feeling like I was boasting about what I could do, which is wild. And then also not owning up when I couldn't do things because I felt like it made me less of a singer, and being like, almost embarrassed to say that I can't do that so I would just try and do it anyway. And I think pupils shouldn't have to do that, like they should just be able to to walk out of your lessons and go to any other singing teacher and be like, I can do this. I can do this. Sometimes I get shoulder tension, sometimes I have a little bit of jaw tension. Sometimes I get a bit breathy on my upper register. But then the power is all on them, and they can, they can take that forward into whatever setting they're working with, and also, in theory, to any other teacher. But as we know, that isn't the case. Like we've all had those pupils that have come in and we've gone, oh God, where did you learn that? Who is teaching you that? And because it's unregulated, it's not like you can just hop along to the hub and be like, did you know that teacher is not teaching safe things?

Interview 3: 20:57

No, it's scary, isn't it?

Emily Lowe: 20:59

It's really scary. And I feel like, I think, like the next question is kind of irrelevant, really, because I know that we've talked about in the past the things that are in that framework. We've talked about Chris Johnson, we've talked about, like, speech and language therapy and how, like the GRBAS scale and stuff has all come from that field, and incorporating them in so that they've got a wider use of those words. But do you think there is, like, a need for something like this that that isn't enforced, but can just be accessed and used by people when they're feeling a little bit like, I don't know how to approach things like this?

Interview 3: 21:34

Yeah, I definitely think so. I mean, for example, we've talked about this. My speciality is classical, but that's my that is my bread and butter, you know, and that's where my

training comes from. And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal. It translates across. And then it's when you start focusing on the sort of more specifics that therefore, that knowledge then needs to, you know, needs to come in. But I think, yeah, definitely, there's definitely some, there's a need to have almost that little frameworks or things we can pull on and use as teachers, because you can't, you know, at my age, I can't just be like, I only teach classical cheers, thanks. That's all I do. And because I haven't got the time to find out any more information. But if we've got things to help or also what, what this framework does is just reinforce that actually, this sort of base level practice is transferable anyway. You're not saying this is just for popular contemporary music, sorry, or musical theater or classical practice, or whatever else, whatever else anybody wants to explore. You are, all this framework is just highlighting those, those beginning levels that we all wish everybody did in a really nice, healthy manner, and just solidifying that this is the, this is the basic approach that we should all take, you know, especially in this instance, with these with, you know, in your case, but across the board I feel,

Emily Lowe: 23:01
yeah

Interview 3: 23:01
you know, it's just highlighting those things that you say, input on that basis of that Chris, what Chris is doing, and GRBAS and all of that. You know, these are things that we should be using.

Emily Lowe: 23:13
Yeah

Interview 3: 23:13
anyway. So, yeah, I definitely think there's, there's space for this absolutely

Emily Lowe: 23:18
interesting. Because, like, I definitely look back on some of my, like, early teaching and cringe where I'm like, Oh, God, I was just teaching that because that's what I've been taught,

Interview 3: 23:30

yeah

Emily Lowe: 23:30

and, and that, that's not saying that that's right or wrong, but unless you are physically taught something, or you have access to something like when you're doing research and you find all of these wonderful things, and you're like, oh, this has been a lifesaver. I think there's a lot of people out there that gatekeep all of that information, and they get stuck in their ways, and they have what they've done since they started teaching 20/30, years ago, and they're just not willing to change it. And that's when I find you get the problematic pupils, because they're picking up on those unhealthy habits, and they're picking up on the things that maybe are slightly outdated now, like that whole, that whole diaphragm movement of you can feel your diaphragm moving, and it's like, and

Interview 3: 24:12

also, let's not forget, it's down in your pelvis. Let's get that Emily, like, you know, right way down here, not here. It's all the way down there.

Emily Lowe: 24:20

Yeah. Yeah. And when you take a big diaphragmatic breath, and your stomach is coming out, and that is your diaphragm, and you're just like, we know better than that now. But do you think that like, do you think that if it was handled sensitively, people would use something? Do you think it would be more of like a generational thing? Do you think it would be quite hard to roll out as because my worry is, I don't want to come in and be like, I have the golden goose, and people kind of think that. But I also, I also don't want to offend people by me going, I'm suggesting you use this which therefore might make me seem like I know better.

Interview 3: 25:02

Oh, I think there's definitely, there are definitely forums and pages where you can, shall we say, soft release it.

Emily Lowe: 25:09

Yeah

Interview 3: 25:09

Do a soft launch. Use the soft launch it. Soft launch

Emily Lowe: 25:17

in the XXX.

Interview 3: 25:18

And I don't but the or XXXXXXXX, or whatever it is,

Emily Lowe: 25:29

I'm a silent observer in those groups. Oh, yeah. I just can't meeting

Interview 3: 25:33

Me to, and and then yeah, and there's a, I think I'm in a changing voice as one as well.

Emily Lowe: 25:40

Yeah, same

Interview 3: 25:41

Yeah, I'm just in, but you could, you could, and those are the places where you could just gently, soft launch it. And yeah, especially if you've got, like, if you've got a few people who you know in those groups, like myself or whomever, and just kind of get to get the traction going that way, yeah. And then I think it might be generational. Yeah, I don't want to say it is, because I don't want to cast assertions that people who are like, 40 plus, they're not going to be open to that. But, yeah, you know, we, you do find that there is, there is almost that generational barrier, isn't there where? Yeah, perhaps, unless they're in a position, I'd say higher education teachers, not so much. They might be a little bit more open to it, but the ones that you want to hit, like school teachers and doing the peri work, they might just be like, well, I go and do my job and come home and it doesn't and it works for me. That's all that matters,

Emily Lowe: 26:41

A lot of that comes from exams. I find, a lot of the the resistance to open up to new things is because teachers teach what they need to teach to pass certain exams.

Interview 3: 26:53

Yeah

Emily Lowe: 26:53

And not really interested in anything around that. And I know that that isn't it's not exclusive to a lot of teachers that teach ABRSM, but I have found that that demographic of teacher is less willing to look at anything else. Yeah, I think that's because, I don't know if it's still the same now, but for a long time, ABRSM were not open to key changes or or anything like that.

Interview 3: 27:20

Oh, they are now that is massively, yeah, so there are some, so there are some songs that you have to do. I'm sure, I'm sure when I did. So I've just put my first kid through the through the musical theater. So that's what that's about, 18 months old now, isn't it something like that? And she's just been through a grade three. And I mean, there are flaws, because there are flaws with ABRSM anyway, but different conversation, but she there was some leniency within keys. And then not, it's not you have to use this edition anymore.

Emily Lowe: 28:00

Thats so good.

Interview 3: 28:01

You can use different editions. And there are some things that are not as lenient on things like the arias in the classical side, which kind of, yeah,

Emily Lowe: 28:13

Yeah, because you wouldn't be able to change it in a professional setting so..

Interview 3: 28:16

yeah. But there is definitely some leniency with like, just songs and things like that. Or there's a or it's, you can pick from these three keys, which is better than it was.

Emily Lowe: 28:27
That is much better.

Interview 3: 28:30
So, yeah, I've just had, yeah, the one, one, grade three musical theater, and then a grade two and a grade four. Great singing.

28:39

Oh, that's really good. Rock School have just taken out gender so their voice exams now are genderless.

Interview 3: 28:46
They are but, but the, I found with the male. This is going back to what I was saying about the horrible keys for the male voices.

Emily Lowe: 28:57
Really high,

Interview 3: 28:58
yeah, stupidly high. And I was like, Okay, fine, you've taken out the genders, but realistically, I have no kid who could sing this. Yeah?

29:06

And then by the time you put it down to where they can actually do it doesn't really sound like the same song anymore, no?

Interview 3: 29:11

Or it's too low, yeah, I found that if you shift it, there's no in between. So

29:17

yeah, I've got a wonderful, very, very young bass, like, year eight, but can his bass range is insane, but nothing, nothing in in the grade rep fits his voice, because now, now they are genderless. There's nothing focusing on the extremities, because, like, there's no soprano in there,

Interview 3: 29:40

no

Emily Lowe: 29:41

it's all alto,

Interview 3: 29:42

yeah its all mid.

Emily Lowe: 29:44

And like, London College of Music, I don't know if you've looked at their new ones, but they're a hot mess at the minute.

Interview 3: 29:49

Well, I haven't looked I've never done their musical theater exams. I mean, I've got a kid who wants to do it at the minute, and I'm just trying to be like

29:57

so the musical theater used to be dead easy. You used to do three songs, any key, any one had to be pre 1960 so one had to be legit. And then they would just ask you, can you tell me the genre? Can you tell me this? But they've now changed all of that. So they're singing for the actor and voice for the singer. And if you're doing the singing with acting

one, you have to still perform the three songs, but you have, they pick them. There's only a such one you can do. And then you have to perform one of them as a monologue. And then,

Interview 3: 30:28

yes, I have seen this. Yes, yes, yeah.

Emily Lowe: 30:30

But then they, they have also, so between this, they also released just the musical theater. They re released it, and then everyone went, This is insane. This is way too much. And now they've just done it in two.

Interview 3: 30:41

Yeah, yeah, it's so hard. I was looking at grade three, and I was like, I don't actually even know how I can teach you all of this.

Emily Lowe: 30:49

No, whereas it used to be the easier one, you know, it used to just be, we'll teach you songs, we'll teach you some skills. Yeah, they'll ask you about healthy breathing, they'll ask you about healthy belts. They'll ask you about technique, amazing. And that used to be like the one that I would go to if, if a child was kind of less musically inclined, but had a really great voice, really solid exam, great we can get you through that, whereas now it's really difficult.

Interview 3: 31:14

Yeah. Well, the ABRSM I don't know if you've looked at it. It is basically three songs, four songs, one unaccompanied, exactly the same as the classical exam and then oral site reading, but the only difference with the sight reading is that there's there's text. So in the early singing grades, you don't get text, but from grade one there's text, so you don't have to sing the text. You can still do vowels, but they provide they provide it with text. And then there is from grade six onwards, there is specific oral exams. So the oral exams this were at grade six onwards, but grade one to five is still the same oral as the other grades,

Emily Lowe: 32:03

that sounds really good. Actually, I genuinely haven't looked at them because I've just had really negative experiences with ABRSM

Interview 3: 32:10

Yeah, I mean, I mean you there's no need for costumes or anything like that, not in the early grades anyway. Whether you have to in the upper, I don't know, but in the early grades now, I mean, my kid, you know when they just turn up, and you just think, Oh, my God, she turned up that day. It was, like, it was that really hot Wednesday we had at the end of June. And then she was in, she was in, like, short shorts and a crop top. And I was like, why are you not coming for uniform? Anyway? Anyway, I digress. She went in the short term. Was 126

Emily Lowe: 32:48

Well

Interview 3: 32:55

I, thank you very much, was like, the feedback was really, I was really impressed with the feedback. It wasn't, I mean, the examiners are trained differently now as well. But it wasn't like, really technique based. It was sort of, it was in language she could understand and she, you know, and the things they commented on were not, it was nothing that I thought, Who are you on with? It was really sort of, Okay. Well, that's stuff we can work on, right? Really impressed. I was really impressed. I don't know if it just so happened she shouldn't get anything specialist or what, or whether they're training

Emily Lowe: 33:28

better.

Interview 3: 33:30

But Well, I have a I have a neutral friend with my partner, who's going through the training at the minute, and he said, he said that it's a lot better.

Emily Lowe: 33:40

Well, that's refreshing to hear this that, like, these are all really positive steps, I think, for the industry, because I think we've been stuck for a while. And I think post pandemic, there was a lot of, like, there was a lot of movement to change things that

hadn't been changed for a while. And I think people were generally starting to go, we can do better. Like, when I was in America, for example, I hadn't realized that the National Association of Teachers of singing only recognized musical theater as a genre four years ago. Yeah,

Interview 3: 34:15

oooooooo

Emily Lowe: 34:15

I was like, I'm sorry, what? Because obviously there was a huge like, singing competition while I was there, and everyone was like, this is only the second one that we've ever had musical theater at. And I was like, Oh my god. Guys like, sorry, What?

Interview 3: 34:30

What?

Emily Lowe: 34:31

Yeah. So it's like, there are steps happening to make the world of singing more inclusive and acceptable. But I think my my worry is that we're still really like letting kids down at the foundational level.

Interview 3: 34:48

Agreed, agreed

Emily Lowe: 34:49

because I think there are some phenomenal singers out there, but I don't think they're getting the pedagogy that they should.

Interview 3: 34:57

No.

Emily Lowe: 34:58

Is there anything like what are your What are your foundational needs? What do you think? What's like your I've got a new people coming in. This is what I'm going to go in with for the first term.

Interview 3: 35:09

They well, they get the full, MOT the first lesson, so that then means I can tailor it a little bit more specific. So a common thing is breathiness in the upper register. It doesn't matter that that's and that's not, that's not gender specific, either it's that, But I think, I have a theory, and there's a little bit of research that has about the sort they all do at the pitch we speak,

Emily Lowe: 35:36

yeah,

Interview 3: 35:36

and a lot of how we speak is, I mean, I know I speak low set anyway, I always have done,

Emily Lowe: 35:41

yeah,

Interview 3: 35:41

everything they hear, nothing's really up here. It's not, it's all sort of quite low set, even the American stuff now, isn't it's the pitch is coming lower and lower and lower and lower and lower,

Interview 3: 35:54

And so they're not using that part of the voice. So when, when I find when I start to access it, they just don't. They go, I can't do it. I get so much of something, it's not working. And I'm like, just, just try it. And they go, and it's like what are you doing?

Emily Lowe: 35:54

yeah.

Emily Lowe: 36:11
yeah.

Interview 3: 36:13

And I spend, I must spend, like, five minutes of going, just open your mouth, take a really good breath for me, and go, oh. And it's like, Oh, I've never made that noise before. And it's like, okay, I understand that, but it's so I'll stop. Otherwise I'll run forever in a day. Sort of the MOT will then sort of direct me towards whether we need to focus a little bit more on, like the breathing basics and making sure there's a good support system coming into place, and whether they understand breathing. I don't know about you, but I don't know how many kids have gone. I don't breathe into my chest. No, no, darling. That's not Yeah. Or you'll go, you'll go, put your hand on your tummy and breathe in. And they'll go, what? No, just, just, I want you to imagine the air going into your hands. Well, I can't do that. It's in my tummy, can you just try it please? Thank you very much. And they're like, oh my gosh, it works. I'm like, Yeah. And I'm like, I'll set you some homework. Now, when you're in bed later, just breathe.

Emily Lowe: 37:21
It's always the laid down breathing, right?

Interview 3: 37:23

Absolutely. My favorite homework is that. And they go, I can do it in bed. And I'm like, Yeah, you can five minutes. That's all you need to do

Emily Lowe: 37:30
when you're on your phone.

Interview 3: 37:32

Yeah? Absolutely, so funny. So, yeah, breathing,

Emily Lowe: 37:37

just the foundations, the very bare minimum of like, what singing teaching should be. But I would caveat that with I get a lot of singers that are doing external drama or performing arts groups, yeah, getting mild coaching, yeah. And I find a lot of them are the ones that are coming in with issues, because they're not I don't believe that you can teach singing in a group, not healthily, not safely. You can guide a group of singers,

Interview 3: 38:13

Yep

Emily Lowe: 38:13

but you cannot teach singing in a group, and that's where the bad habits are coming in, because I'm getting kids that are singing grease. And like, for example, I had one people that was Danny in Grease a while back, I taught him in school. Fantastic range singing like Maria, really beautiful, very camp voice was playing Danny so already a character that he was quite uncomfortable with playing, and he couldn't hit the last note in night. And the words that he'd been told were just force it for the show, it'll be fine. And I know the teacher that that came from, and I question that teacher's pedagogy quite a lot, because there are quite a few instances where that teacher has said something to a child, they've then come into lesson and said, Oh, well. They said, I should just force it, or they should that. They said that it's a bit strained that that's fine short term,

Interview 3: 39:12

and it's just like, it makes your skin crawl, doesn't it

Emily Lowe: 39:15

yeah, you're putting out fires that like, I'm so glad that they're involved in these things, and I'm a big supportive person for anyone wanting to do ensemble work, but you have to guide it safely, especially with changing voices. Yeah, yes, you

Interview 3: 39:32

do. It's wild across the board in it, yeah,

Emily Lowe: 39:40

but I feel like my main limitation with this is that the teachers that I know are the teachers that are wanting to change things, because you align yourself with people that

want to make change, right? And what I what I've struggled with, is finding someone to fight me on it, because everyone I've spoken to has been like, oh yeah, great. I'd love to try it. I'll definitely try some of the things like this is really helpful. I didn't know about this, and I'm like, yay. But also I want to challenge those teachers that I know are doing questionable things, and try to help them, help them do better. But it's kind of hard to get that demographic when the people that you align yourself with are, yeah, I'm aiming for better. Yeah,

Interview 3: 40:26

absolutely. I'm trying to think, if there's anybody, well, there are a couple, like you said, there are a couple of people you can think of, but whether they'd engage with something else, isn't it?

Emily Lowe: 40:35

I was really surprised. Obviously, I will be redacting all names from this anyway, but when we had the meeting with XXX, because I'd been told things about her in the past, and I've also experienced my pupils having been told, Well, I told you not to have, not to tell her that, that they were having lessons with me. And then when I spoke to XXX, she was like, so up for sharing pupils and signposting them to the right people. And I was like, this is so different to what I've been told about you. But maybe because she's getting to like, the end of her career, maybe she's finally starting to see the light in that the way that she's behaved in the past isn't appropriate.

Interview 3: 41:22

Well perhaps, so, I mean, she was, you weren't there last week at the meeting, and she was there again,

Emily Lowe: 41:29

was she?

Interview 3: 41:30

Yeah, same again, which I was surprised that anyway,

Emily Lowe: 41:34

yeah.

Interview 3: 41:35

And at the end of the meeting, I went over to her to tell her about the monster in the maze stuff, because you'll have a plethora of classically focused singers who might be up and might be wanting to, you know, join in and be part of This. Is this just solo? No XXX, I just told you, it was chorus, She was like, oh, right, so there's no thorough opportunity.

Emily Lowe: 42:11

It's that elitist view

Interview 3: 42:12

mate, that's not what we're doing here. No, dude, no. It's just chorus. She's like, Oh, just chorus. Like, yeah, just chorus

Emily Lowe: 42:23

God. She's just, it's, how do we, how do we move that forward? And is it even, like, is it even achievable? Like, there has to be change in the industry at some point,

Interview 3: 42:35

yeah

Emily Lowe: 42:36

like, when we are the elders, I would like to think that I will still be, like, wanting to change and keep my pedagogy updated, and do my CPD and try and make me the best teacher that I can be. And also admit that sometimes I've been a crappy teacher, like,

Interview 3: 42:52

Oh God,

Emily Lowe: 42:53

I'm I'm okay to say that, like,

Interview 3: 42:56

oh yeah, there's some days where I'm just not on and I know for a fact I've delivered some utter tosh

Emily Lowe: 43:00

yeah, where you've done those lessons where you just get the people to sing at you for for the 20 minutes, because you're you're just not vibing with it that day. But you still know that even on those days, you're not going to teach anything unsafe.

Interview 3: 43:12

That's and that's the key thing, isn't it? I can go in there, hand on heart and say, I've never delivered an unsafe Singing Lesson.

Emily Lowe: 43:18

Yeah

Interview 3: 43:20

So, yeah, and I'll tell you something else that happened as well in a video. Yeah, well,

Emily Lowe: 43:27

I think I have everything from you in terms of actual questions, because we've kind of talked about, like, where we'd implement it at the start of, like, a journey with a pupil, and talked about positive outcomes and stuff. So I'm happy to end the formal interview, and then you can spill some tea..

17) Coded data from interviews and focus groups

Exams and exam syllabus (5)

Interview 2

. I thought that the actual framework I thought would work well, just in as a general case of things like new students, and not just in terms of enabling you to understand the range. Because normally, if I get a new vocal student, the first thing I ask is, can you come with a song, prepared that you feel comfortable singing that you already know really well, and I listen, and I literally just listen to them sing that

Interview 2

And there's, there's loads of factors that are, that are that they can that you facing against when trying to find suitable material, and there's not a lot of you can Google it, but there's not a lot there

Interview 2

But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher.

Interview 2

you have to answer the knowledge questions in the gender that that character is within the piece. So for example, if you were playing, if you were singing Burn from Hamilton, you would have to answer those characters questions as a female, whether you were female or not yourself

Interview 2

Yes, I do have some children whose who are who identify as either non binary or different gender than the one they were born with in terms of their voice. I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead. So I have quite a number of students who are quite female students who identify as female students who are born female and who have very low pitch, which can be very difficult, especially if you're following syllabuses for exam singing, because the

pieces that are assigned to them aren't always appropriate for their range. And obviously at that age, you know when you're talking about this kind of age, children finding something that they can identify with themselves and also that fits within their pitch range. No matter what they think their pitch range is, can be very difficult.

Pupil autonomy (47)

Focus group

that really got me being able to feel where the tension actually was. I'd like to see more like, on things that can help you work with your technique, because I'm working on increasing my range, and I'd like to have particular exercises that, like I can follow that of going to actually work to increase my range, because my range is increased in getting lower, but it stayed at that high note, and I want to get higher than that high note, yeah,

Focus group

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Focus group

My class knows that I have singing lessons. So it's kind of like, oh, P1's going for singing lessons. So then they hear me singing sometimes, like, if I have, like, when I had like, my first Singing Lesson, or whatever, or like when I have them, like, sometimes, if I don't have them at 20 past and I have them at 10 o'clock, then my class is always like, was that you? I was like, Well, yeah, who else would it be? And I always, I always look forward to singing lessons on on weeks when I don't have singing lessons, I'm always like, really grumpy because I don't want to have to go to history. My singing lessons just make it more fun, then I can dawdle to history as well.

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one

thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

Certainly, I will list the first few reasons why I could list many more than this. First of all, I think that it's part of my personality, my voice, and when I sing, it shows me. And so I go up to people and I'm like, Oh, can you describe yourself? I'm a singer, that describes me with just it's built me in so many different ways. It built my confidence. It built the fact that I can literally, just last second, have 10 minutes to get a song for someone and then perform in front of an audience, like all of that I've it's built me as a person and how I react with people, and how confident I am to actually speak my mind, and it's also created just how I'm very much a forward person who's always volunteering for different things. So I think it's really just me as a person

Focus group

Well, I mean, we've talked about this before, quite a bit. Actually, it builds up at least more than half of my identity. I use it wherever I go. Like, if I'm out in public and the song comes on that I like, I'm I'm there, I'm not, I'm not singing it in my head. It's there. It's not, it's not somewhere else, it's in the room. Like you can, you can hear it, but like, sometimes I get nervous to show it off, but it's there. It's part of me, so I need to show off like the rest of me.

Focus group

Um, I think, like, describing it in a way that's saying, like, like, what P2 said, like, for a soprano voice, if you don't know, like, what kind of voice you have, like, if you It depends, like, how big of a range you have for your voice.

Focus group

Personally, I don't I don't know if I have a, I wouldn't know if I had a staccato voice, or what I actually had I just said that these are words that I'm not sure about, and I'm going to do what my teacher says,

Focus group

Um, I think it's like describing how the song is and like understanding your own voice at the same time can be helpful, because then you can think to yourself, can I do that?

Focus group

Um, I think I would like to probably explore the different things my voice can do, like, see what else I can do apart from, like, like, soft stuff,

Focus group

I feel like comfortable to, like, you know, go wrong.

Focus group

Like, I'm not trying to go wrong, but I know that there's not going to be any like shame if I do

Focus group

Like, especially like, when I start crying because my singing and stuff,

Focus group

You've got someone who's, like, professionally trained and like, you're not, you're not strict.

Focus group

I think, I think it means that I can probably communicate to you that maybe stuff that you didn't know, like maybe stuff I've done on my own when no one's there.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey.

Focus group

And then I had, like, a fun day today, because you went out with this group called rainbows, and then in bowling and like, jump, there was, like, songs on, so I was singing in front of people.

Focus group

Sometimes, remember, I have a specific idea of what a work means, like, kind of difficult, like, what I want to say, but the words don't really

Focus group

So my voice, it hasn't been bad, but, like, I haven't sung like a lot today, but like on Friday, I was in the car with my mum, and then we were singing like, Heathers and stuff,

Focus group

I feel like I'm one of the only people in the in in the entire year that's like, actually, my voice is still here.

Focus group

I feel like, even though, on sports day, I was like, cheering everyone on and stuff, and I was also, like, there was lots of music, so I was singing along to everything.

Focus group

But it's now a bit smoother and is quite easy to use, and I've been working my shoulder tension, which is really releasing my voice even more.

Focus group

Today, I've just recovered from a cold, so it's finally back to being as smooth as it used to be, but it was slightly hoarse like a few days ago because of sports day.

Focus group

urm, my voice is quite strong and very versatile, so I'm able to adapt to quite different styles.

Focus group

I've been I did various like in and out of primary school choir, which is quite fun, I've done school shows and being an ensemble.

Interview 3

This is what it can do, and having them completely understand the sort of the limitations and and the things that actually we can do more for it eventually, is really important.

Interview 3

We are responsible for them, but giving them that freedom to be like, This is my voice.

Interview 3

It may, I think it's really good that we're that you're wanting to put the ownership of their voice on them, rather than it coming from us as a well, this is a professional for their your you know, you're under their care and everything.

Interview 3

I think it's really it's really good that, you know, we're focusing on descriptors rather than labels.

Interview 3

which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

Interview 3

And I was, I was, I think this is going to lead into one of your questions, but I was sort of very transparent with her, and I said, Look, I said, my knowledge on this is very limited.

Interview 3

And we spent probably the first eight months trying to just use without trying to label her voice and just saying, it's my voice.

Interview 2

What is it about your voice that is that you want to work on?

Interview 2

Because everybody's on that thing, Oh, I hate my recording of my voice, or, you know, I hate this or that.

Interview 2

I don't think I've ever overtly said to them, what do you think your voice sounds like?

Interview 2

And something that, although I've asked students across, you know, like when they're trying to sing a song and I'm discussing your voice sounds like this.

Interview 2

I think it's, I just, I think the whole, it's incredibly interesting to start a lesson asking a student how they view their voice.

Interview 2

Yeah, like, what else is happening within the music that your voice is then fighting against as well?

Interview 2

When actually realize they're not really singing that song, they're just mimicking that song.

Interview 2

And, oh, look, I can sing this one song.

Interview 2

And they're talking, look, I'm talking, so it works.

Interview 2

see it as something they've already got.

Interview 2

They don't see it the same as an instrument that they're learning to play.

Interview 2

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

Interview 2

Yeah, and it might extend, and it might change, and it might go the other way, but there's nothing wrong with your voice, and you work with what is with your voice.

Interview 2

That's just your personal pitch range.

Peer to Peer comparison (1)

Focus group

P2 is, like, one of the most confident people that I know.

Pupil needs (60)

Focus group

Like, how do you not, how do you not feel the ick when you're listening exposure?

Focus group

still recording things at school for my mock GCSE recording and also the MOBO workshop, and I'm glad I did it, but both times I heard my voice, I wanted to punch whoever was singing.

Focus group

Because I think being a singer is one of the jobs that I might lean towards when I'm older, but that would mean recording, and I've not had much experience with microphones or any of that, and I think it would be good to learn like how my technique

Focus group

And I think it would be good to cover stage presence and just how to be on a stage and move around and interact with, like, if you were with an audience, yeah, and

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

Certainly, I will list the first few reasons why I could list many more than this. First of all, I think that it's part of my personality, my voice, and when I sing, it shows me. And so I go up to people and I'm like, Oh, can you describe yourself? I'm a singer, that describes me with just it's built me in so many different ways. It built my confidence. It built the fact that I can literally, just last second, have 10 minutes to get a song for someone and then perform in front of an audience, like all of that I've it's built me as a person and how I react with people, and how confident I am to actually speak my mind, and it's also created just how I'm very much a forward person who's always volunteering for different things. So I think it's really just me as a person

Focus group

I think it will be helpful so that, you know, people know it's not just a random person coming in and you have to listen to them like there is, like a specific thing that they should be doing and shouldn't be doing.

Focus group

Well, this is probably just due to my personality. I didn't really think anything of it, but I did get upset when I couldn't sing some particular wordy songs, and it was a lot more work to learn quiet from Matilda at first, because it had so much words.

Focus group

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Focus group

Today, I've just recovered from a cold, so it's finally back to being as smooth as it used to be, but it was slightly hoarse like a few days ago because of sports day.

Focus group

And I'm not the most confident performer as me, but when I'm playing a character, I'm way more confident.

Focus group

So music itself comes into a lot of aspects of my life, but I love to sing like wherever I am or whatever I'm doing.

Interview 3

and it's just like, it makes your skin crawl, doesn't it

Interview 3

And it's like, Oh, I've never made that noise before.

Interview 3

But it wasn't like, really technique based.

Interview 3

Yeah, yeah, it's so hard.

Interview 3

And I was like, Okay, fine, you've taken out the genders, but realistically, I have no kid who could sing this.

Interview 3

This is going back to what I was saying about the horrible keys for the male voices.

Interview 3

And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal.

Interview 3

I think it's really it's really good that, you know, we're focusing on descriptors rather than labels.

Interview 3

When we push all all on to our identity being by what our voice sounds like and like say it, then it breaks them.

Interview 2

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

And you're like, great, but nobody thinks about that in terms of her voice, and nobody thinks, I think some of it as well is the misunderstanding of how long your voice needs to be warmed up before you're ready to sing a to sing a song.

Interview 2

And I think some, I think sometimes it is also things like the student expectation is that they struggle to understand that they don't have the pitch range, that there's something wrong with their voice, and there isn't anything wrong with their voice.

Interview 2

Sometimes you can, you know, I ask students that go to auditions all the time, and they will be asked for the key that they would like to sing that in, especially if it's going to be piano, because if you've got a pianist there, choose the key.

Interview 2

I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead.

Interview 1

If you didn't have that faith in me, I would not be doing what I'm doing.

Interview 1

So you're dealing with that from the start, but you have to be able to, to allow yourself to open up everything to the deepest point of your soul in order to try and get a hint of what was what was being thought of when the thing was, was being written.

Interview 1

they're scared because it because then they have to open up then they have to make themselves vulnerable.

Interview 1

Or that's the sound that I meant to be making.

Interview 1

They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it.

Interview 1

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Interview 1

Things that should have been addressed way before that haven't been and it's getting to the point where you go this voice is getting stuck in rut a little bit and it's safe.

Interview 1

Well Graham, got this long, lengthy email from the teacher.

Interview 1

And what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

Interview 1

We need this, this, this, this and this, and then off we go and then we can explore all the other offshoots that come out of that class, but the basic thing has to be absolutely there and sometimes it's not very exciting, but they get, they do in the end get a lot of satisfaction because they can feel their voices are solid and and safe if you like and I'm all about a safe, safe environment for the voice especially at those young ages.

Interview 1

But listen to the whole thing of you know year on year on year you will notice change you'll notice changes in your voice probably from when you started singing, you're still noticing changes you will see them until you're 85/90 there will be changes in your voice and you know, and not and the changes are not a pattern they don't all happen the same way for everybody which again, is why we need to address the individual sound, not the clump if you like which is definitely kind of where I come from with my teaching in order to get the most confident student the most happy student with their voices.

Interview 1

Let's see where your actual where your voice actually is happy where a lies naturally where its natural limits are and then let's have a little look relook at your your repertoire, but that doesn't mean that they're not going to be things that they've done.

Interview 1

Of let's take it back to basics.

Interview 1

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

Interview 1

This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit.

Interview 1

And the more that that happens, the more analytical they will become of what they're actually hearing, but also giving them the tools to then if they don't like that, or if it doesn't feel comfortable, if it's not a sound that they think well, that's not a usable sound for me, giving them the tools to then go, right you can try A, B or C here to make an improvement.

Interview 1

I think the student awareness thing is very, very good of that.

Interview 1

Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing.

Interview 1

We need a set of things that we know work and that we pass on to the students will go if you do this, there's this this this and this that will make sure you achieve a healthy or a part of your healthy voice building if you like so

Interview 1

But if it's not actually producing the correct results, and if it's not actually aiding the student in the right way, then I think that also needs addressing, I like the fact that they get a chance to take control of the class if you like them to to show what skills they've got.

Interview 1

The word most worrying one was not being able to identify within a group that that's students voice doesn't go up there.

Interview 1

And they were also meant to listen for students who were maybe uncomfortable in any part of that exercise.

Interview 1

So they will take charge and I had to make sure that they explained what the exercise was, what it was for, what it was meant to achieve, how they do it.

Interview 1

And then it's quite startling, they can sing, but they've no idea how to look at something on a page or how to express what they're looking at how to how to group them together.

Interview 1

What's what's stopping them from, from putting themselves forward from being confident with what they've got.

Interview 1

Let's see what you're not happy with or what you would like to change because there is a whole gamut of stuff that can be altered through continuous practice and working in a way that the voice slightly changes if you like we're never going to get a massive kind of you know different voice but we can we can alter the way the perception of the voice for the student is kind of heard if you like yeah but yeah, I think probably the, I don't know.

Interview 1

It's a bit harder for them to find the language as you were saying, you know, it's finding the language to be able to express themselves.

Interview 1

This isn't working for us as a class or de de de de de whetheras I think probably when you're looking at the slightly younger ones, where the students are starting to just explore who they are and how they do things and stuff like that.

Interview 1

But my students actually because I'm obviously teaching all university age students that they are not afraid to come forward and you know, if I kind of prompt and say Look What's Missing, what do we need to what do we need to address and then you because by then they kind of have the vocabulary to be able to express I'd say, Look, this isn't working for us.

Interview 1

Whats there, What's good, what's still missing, maybe for individuals.

Empowering (18)

Focus group

that really got me being able to feel where the tension actually was. I'd like to see more like, on things that can help you work with your technique, because I'm working on increasing my range, and I'd like to have particular exercises that, like I can follow that of going to actually work to increase my range, because my range is

increased in getting lower, but it stayed at that high note, and I want to get higher than that high note, yeah,

Focus group

But like, what she said with, like, if friends do something or say something, then you don't feel as confident in front of them like I feel like that most of the time, but I'm glad that a lot of my friends from secondary school haven't done things like that. There's this, this one girl who I'm not quite friends with anymore because we had a little like argument. So it's, I don't feel as comfortable around her anymore, but like, yeah, that's,

Focus group

y class knows that I have singing lessons. So it's kind of like, oh, P1's going for singing lessons. So then they hear me singing sometimes, like, if I have, like, when I had like, my first Singing Lesson, or whatever, or like when I have them, like, sometimes, if I don't have them at 20 past and I have them at 10 o'clock, then my class is always like, was that you? I was like, Well, yeah, who else would it be? And I always, I always look forward to singing lessons on on weeks when I don't have singing lessons, I'm always like, really grumpy because I don't want to have to go to history. My singing lessons just make it more fun, then I can dawdle to history as well.

Focus group

eel like, when it's gone well, I feel like I can do it, but then sometimes I can't do it,

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

its how I feel, feelings.

Focus group

Certainly, I will list the first few reasons why I could list many more than this. First of all, I think that it's part of my personality, my voice, and when I sing, it shows me. And so I go up to people and I'm like, Oh, can you describe yourself? I'm a singer, that describes me with just it's built me in so many different ways. It built my confidence. It built the fact that I can literally, just last second, have 10 minutes to get a song for someone and then perform in front of an audience, like all of that I've it's built me as a person and how I react with people, and how confident I am to actually speak my mind, and it's also created just how I'm very much a forward person who's always volunteering for different things. So I think it's really just me as a person

Focus group

Well, I mean, we've talked about this before, quite a bit. Actually, it builds up at least more than half of my identity. I use it wherever I go. Like, if I'm out in public and the song comes on that I like, I'm I'm there, I'm not, I'm not singing it in my head. It's there. It's not, it's not somewhere else, it's in the room. Like you can, you can hear it, but like, sometimes I get nervous to show it off, but it's there. It's part of me, so I need to show off like the rest of me.

Focus group

Actually, it builds up at least more than half of my identity.

Focus group

Um, I think it's like describing how the song is and like understanding your own voice at the same time can be helpful, because then you can think to yourself, can I do that?

Focus group

I feel like comfortable to, like, you know, go wrong.

Focus group

Like, I'm not trying to go wrong, but I know that there's not going to be any like shame if I do

Focus group

I think, I think it means that I can probably communicate to you that maybe stuff that you didn't know, like maybe stuff I've done on my own when no one's there.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey.

Focus group

It just feels like I'm more in control of, like, how I'm expressing myself and things like that.

Focus group

I made up tons of different terms for different things in singing, we've got blobfish jaw, spider monkey jaw, all sorts.

Focus group

And then I had, like, a fun day today, because you went out with this group called rainbows, and then in bowling and like, jump, there was, like, songs on, so I was singing in front of people.

positive statements (23)

Focus group

My singing lessons just make it more fun, then I can dawdle to history as well.

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

So music itself comes into a lot of aspects of my life, but I love to sing like wherever I am or whatever I'm doing.

Interview 3

And everything else, I can't say my experience has ever sort of been, no, I don't think I've ever really come across a like a barrier in that respect, from the school. Fortunately, you know, fortunately,

Interview 3

So the school are very accepting the one just up the road.

Interview 1

If you didn't have that faith in me, I would not be doing what I'm doing.

Interview 1

So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly. It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

Interview 1

They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it.

Interview 1

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Interview 1

And I had a very, very good singing teacher when I first went to the RSA MD, who put me totally on the right lines and I've I've had different teachers and tutors since then, and I've taken bits from them that applied to me and ditch the other bits and so on.

Interview 1

Fortunately, I did get off to a very, very good start even with my teachers at school.

Interview 1

But listen to the whole thing of you know year on year on year you will notice change you'll notice changes in your voice probably from when you started singing, you're still noticing changes you will see them until you're 85/90 there will be changes in your voice and you know, and not and the changes are not a pattern they don't all happen the same way for everybody which again, is why we need to address the individual sound, not the clump if you like which is definitely kind of where I come from with my teaching in order to get the most confident student the most happy student with their voices.

Interview 1

This is what these are the things that I think would be lovely and your sound, try to find all of the mega positive things that you can do with this sound okay?

Interview 1

And the more that that happens, the more analytical they will become of what they're actually hearing, but also giving them the tools to then if they don't like that, or if it doesn't feel comfortable, if it's not a sound that they think well, that's not a usable sound for me, giving them the tools to then go, right you can try A, B or C here to make an improvement.

Interview 1

How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for.

Interview 1

I think the student awareness thing is very, very good of that.

[Interview 1](#)

So that part of it is extremely useful.

[Interview 1](#)

I found a lot of things very useful because it presents in a very calm and orderly way.

[Interview 1](#)

Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing.

[Interview 1](#)

Let's see what you're not happy with or what you would like to change because there is a whole gamut of stuff that can be altered through continuous practice and working in a way that the voice slightly changes if you like we're never going to get a massive kind of you know different voice but we can we can alter the way the perception of the voice for the student is kind of heard if you like yeah but yeah, I think probably the, I don't know.

[Interview 1](#)

So however you are identifying your voice is always going to be your way that you express yourself the way that communicate with people.

[Interview 1](#)

Maybe I've been a lucky teacher in that it has been a positive experience because as far as I'm coming from, what I work towards is a healthy voice.

[Interview 1](#)

I haven't experienced what you would call a problem or an issue with it.

[Emotional observation or statement \(42\)](#)

These can be used if any further anecdotal evidence is needed or some emotions

Interview 3

and it's just like, it makes your skin crawl, doesn't it

Interview 2

There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

I won't even dare.

Interview 2

I don't teach it.

Interview 2

People who can't read music and don't play an instrument shouldn't be taking ABRSM.

Interview 2

Because a lot of people one, if you're, if you're new to teaching one to one, that is a weird experience,

Interview 2

I don't know if it would, as far as my experience in terms of other teachers, especially when I say, if I've got somebody covering my my lessons that are singing based so vocal or singing based the thing that they want the most is a lesson plan

Interview 2

No matter what they think their pitch range is, can be very difficult.

[Interview 1](#)

If you didn't have that faith in me, I would not be doing what I'm doing.

[Interview 1](#)

You know, the successful ones are very good at getting their voices around loads, loads and loads of different styles of stuff, you know, from standard early opera to contemporary squeaky door stuff, you know, if you've got the technique and if your voice has the notes, get round it make it work.

[Interview 1](#)

It's just boring and we tune out.

[Interview 1](#)

It's good if you can produce it when it's necessary, when the lyrics demand it, but not the whole time.

[Interview 1](#)

And I think again, it comes back down to if you sing high you've got to sing soprano and a choir or you've got to, it identifies you as something almost classical, which when they're that age, and they're studying musical theatre, they don't want to be associated with that.

[Interview 1](#)

You have to be brave and you have to take the step out and with good guidance, obviously with good guidance and make sure that the techniques supports it.

[Interview 1](#)

Or that's the sound that I meant to be making.

[Interview 1](#)

And I got Why do you feel that you have to be pizzazzy all the time, fine for if you can do it, but let's have the other side of it that nobody practically nobody will have heard this before.

[Interview 1](#)

But she was picked out or singled out and felt like she was being ridiculed for not knowing this, you know?

[Interview 1](#)

Chances are there's a lot of singers, young those young singers that don't know, the musical theatre rep that probably you know, and I know from way back, you know, there's going to be lots of things that they don't know.

[Interview 1](#)

She kind of she said, Oh, she made fun of me for not knowing this song, which it was in standard musical theatre, but I know that this girl doesn't have a big history of musical theatre rep.

[Interview 1](#)

I don't want I don't want them to kind of feel like they have to pour out their heart to me but if there's a niggling issue that is going to stop them enjoying their half hour or their hour with me, then I need to know about it because sometimes it's detrimental to continue to try and get results if the head is not in the right place.

[Interview 1](#)

I think that's often missed in the in that kind of quest for the sound and so on.

[Interview 1](#)

I think also a bigger focus on what we want to achieve from lyrics.

[Interview 1](#)

And it's good that we're moving forwards with it.

[Interview 1](#)

Where's it going to give us the best results?

[Interview 1](#)

Where is it happy?

[Interview 1](#)

They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it.

[Interview 1](#)

Unfortunately, even now that we're in 2024 that's still kind of what linear it's, you are in this section you are in this section, you are in this section, because of the way your voice and I know that I've come across a lot of quiet and this is a very this is a very regular standard thing now where some women don't feel that they want to be in the Alto section, just because they've got a lower voice and they can sing low notes.

[Interview 1](#)

If it's radically different then obviously the chat has to come about, I don't think your mechanism will deal with a radical change but we can make this little alteration But coming back to the teachers, I think for people that maybe do a lot of work with choirs and so on, I think they're going to find that very tricky because the whole choir mentality is based on soprano, alto, tenor bass.

[Interview 1](#)

Whether they actually choose to use it or whether they think it's going to actually not impede but disturb the way that they get their results, I think you probably will find that the odd one will maybe go actually no this is the way I've always done it.

[Interview 1](#)

They all come in with the all these different things and going oh, that's great.

[Interview 1](#)

It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands.

[Interview 1](#)

It's strange, it's it's not a strange voice.

[Interview 1](#)

And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any

chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows what you know, what's being cast, he knows he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House.

[Interview 1](#)

He knows what he's listening for.

[Interview 1](#)

You know, we kind of work work together with our students and so she's very, very good.

[Interview 1](#)

My Greame had exactly the same experience in uni he he's not on staff at LCM although they desperately want them to be on staff but he just doesn't.

[Interview 1](#)

But when you're dealing with voices, if you lose it if it's damaged, you can't often get it back the way it was.

[Interview 1](#)

My student feedback for me has always been we love your warm ups.

[Interview 1](#)

An awful lot of things get missed.

[Interview 1](#)

Theres no check on it, there's absolutely nothing, nothing to say all this is fitting in with how to say I don't the majority of the kind of class singing and stuff like that is that other tutors that you need.

[Interview 1](#)

And I feel that its a shame that they should abandon that potential to express the song and to be performing and to be communicating a message from the song.

Gender, Identity and Language (19)

Interview 3

If that doesn't quite align up to the wider view, as we say,

Interview 3

So it's, you know, it's really, I felt for her in that instance, and I feel for these trans students, because it's so hard to not be like, well, I sound like this, so I am this.

Interview 3

which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

Interview 3

So she knew that in in her head, she was like, I want to sing alto.

Interview 3

But also, then what came with that was, I want to sing X rep, because she was slightly older and she was doing a level music, so she knew, like, the those areas that go, call it vocal, vocal areas, voicing.

Interview 3

Yeah, so there's one student in particular in mind who she came to me, and it was very transparent and made her kind of stance on it all.

Interview 2

Sometimes you can, you know, I ask students that go to auditions all the time, and they will be asked for the key that they would like to sing that in, especially if it's going to be piano, because if you've got a pianist there, choose the key.

[Interview 2](#)

So for example, if you were playing, if you were singing Burn from Hamilton, you would have to answer those characters questions as a female, whether you were female or not yourself

[Interview 2](#)

Because LAMDA really have musical theater, you have to answer the knowledge questions in the gender that that character is within the piece.

[Interview 2](#)

Yes, I do have some children whose who are who identify as either non binary or different gender than the one they were born with in terms of their voice.

[Interview 1](#)

So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

[Interview 1](#)

Just think your voice is on a transition the entire time.

[Interview 1](#)

Your whole body is on a transition the entire time.

[Interview 1](#)

And I think come back to that thing of Yeah, be your individual self or be your character be be what you want to be basically with your sound as long as the voice wants to go there.

[Interview 1](#)

That's the brilliance of what we do as performers that we get to be so many different people, if you like, and I think maybe a little bit more emphasis on that

aspect of it might help those that are maybe slightly struggling with where they fit in, especially in a class situation.

Interview 1

Unfortunately, even now that we're in 2024 that's still kind of what linear it's, you are in this section you are in this section, you are in this section, because of the way your voice and I know that I've come across a lot of quiet and this is a very this is a very regular standard thing now where some women don't feel that they want to be in the Alto section, just because they've got a lower voice and they can sing low notes.

Interview 1

What if my voice doesn't match what they're saying the male voice should be doing?

Interview 1

Yeah, because a lot of those those exam things although some of them are quite specific in that if this is written for male voice it has to be a male that sings it or de de de and again then we come into that grey area.

Interview 1

To try and take away from the fact that it's not going to be what they've picked up in their head, as their sound is not their sound, but somebody else's sound.

rep concerns (5)

Interview 3

which I thought was the schools I'm in that might perhaps not be the case, but she's, yeah, I've got, I've got a few sorts of female identifying students who have lower voices, but yeah, nothing, sort of out of the ordinary. You know

Interview 3

So she knew that in in her head, she was like, I want to sing alto.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

[Interview 2](#)

I think the differences, the drastic differences in terms of singing exams, across what is available for students can be quite different as well, in terms of like ABRSM, because they an ABRSM singing exam, for me, is a is not a singing exam, it is still a musician's exam.

[Interview 2](#)

And obviously at that age, you know when you're talking about this kind of age, children finding something that they that they can identify with themselves and also that fits within their pitch range.

[Low pitched female voices and rep concerts \(2\)](#)

[Interview 3](#)

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[Interview 2](#)

So I have quite a number of students who are quite female students who identify as female students who are born female and who have very low pitch, which can be very difficult, especially if you're following syllabuses for exam singing, because the pieces that are assigned to them aren't always appropriate for their range.

[mental health of pupils \(10\)](#)

[Interview 1](#)

She kind of she said, Oh, she made fun of me for not knowing this song, which it was in standard musical theatre, but I know that this girl doesn't have a big history of musical theatre rep.

Interview 1

And she said, Oh, well, there's the teacher that came last week.

Interview 1

There's this girl was sitting there and I said, Oh, you're looking a bit glum.

Interview 1

And sometimes it's just great, they can just go ah, i feel like I can breathe just for an hour, and then you know, enjoying what they're doing and then and then go out and I have to say again, I think I've been a very, very lucky teacher in that, I have I can't really I can probably only count on one hand, any resistance that I found from students, but a lot of my students only come voluntarily for one to one because in their four or certainly in foundation year and in level four, they don't get any one believers.

Interview 1

Because it is singings just therapy, isn't it?

Interview 1

But it's this encouraging this, let's just have a lovely almost like therapy.

Interview 1

Because so much of what we do is head based, you know, as you all know, it's sometimes there's more in the head that gets in the way than there is physically so if we can address that tiny little bit and just be there if they want to open up if they don't, that's absolutely fine.

Interview 1

I don't want I don't want them to kind of feel like they have to pour out their heart to me but if there's a niggling issue that is going to stop them enjoying their half hour or their hour with me, then I need to know about it because sometimes it's detrimental to continue to try and get results if the head is not in the right place.

Interview 1

And so I do always encourage students to I can, you can usually tell if they're in a great mood or if they're not in a great mood.

Interview 1

You can't if you're if you're not in the right headspace, you're not going to be able to to give out what's what's required.

teacher making a pupil uncomfortable (3)

Focus group

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Interview 1

You have to be very careful in case people take offence or the feeling of being picked on or which I never, ever would do anyway.

Interview 1

But she was picked out or singled out and felt like she was being ridiculed for not knowing this, you know?

Gender expansive experiences through a teachers eyes (5)

Interview 1

That's the brilliance of what we do as performers that we get to be so many different people, if you like, and I think maybe a little bit more emphasis on that aspect of it might help those that are maybe slightly struggling with where they fit in, especially in a class situation.

Interview 1

What if my voice doesn't match what they're saying the male voice should be doing?

Interview 1

And if we can find I think what you're coming down to is the fact that some students are still at that point where they don't really recognise themselves yet, as what they're fully fully grown person is going to be and therefore that we're in that kind of no man's land of what how do I see my voice portraying who I think I am?

Interview 1

We all have different voices.

Interview 1

What I do find and this is slightly related to what we're talking about, is sometimes there's a student that can't that doesn't equate the sound that comes out of their voice as their sound.

Examples of gender expansive pupils taking music lessons (11)

Interview 3

So you can imagine, in that circumstance, they are very urm, she's recently changed her name again and is now adopting a I'd say a fully feminine name, as opposed to sort of that in between name.

Interview 3

But also, then what came with that was, I want to sing X rep, because she was slightly older and she was doing a level music, so she knew, like, the those areas that go, call it vocal, vocal areas, voicing.

Interview 3

Yeah, so there's one student in particular in mind who she came to me, and it was very transparent and made her kind of stance on it all.

Interview 3

She was like, I'm trans and everything else.

Interview 2

I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead.

Interview 2

Yes, I do have some children whose who are who identify as either non binary or different gender than the one they were born with in terms of their voice.

Interview 1

What if my voice doesn't match what they're saying the male voice should be doing?

Interview 1

And if we can find I think what you're coming down to is the fact that some students are still at that point where they don't really recognise themselves yet, as what they're fully fully grown person is going to be and therefore that we're in that kind of no man's land of what how do I see my voice portraying who I think I am?

Interview 1

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Interview 1

So I have ended up teaching someone who is transitioning to be female instead of male.

Interview 1

And the people that I have worked with so far are either going through gender reassignment but they're but their vocal thing hasn't actually changed.

Language (75)

Focus group

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Focus group

But like, what she said with, like, if friends do something or say something, then you don't feel as confident in front of them like I feel like that most of the time, but I'm glad that a lot of my friends from secondary school haven't done things like that. There's this, this one girl who I'm not quite friends with anymore because we had a little like argument. So it's, I don't feel as comfortable around her anymore, but like, yeah, that's,

Focus group

I don't think I've been in a conversation with so many people who literally have almost the same brain as me. It's like, I I, like my mum thinks I'm probably, like, autistic, because I show some sides sometimes, but like, I feel like, obviously, okay. Is okay, Like, when we're saying, Oh yeah, I'm fine. I'm okay, it means we're not okay. When we say it, we say it as if we mean the complete opposite. So it's like, if people tell me, yeah, that was fine. It affects, I don't want to, like, repeat what P2 has been saying, because I feel like I literally, like, think the exact same as what P2 is thinking.

Focus group

Yeah, I would rather be told what I'm doing wrong instead of someone saying that was okay.

Focus group

And I think, you know, when teachers go, that was good, but like, just tell me what I did wrong.

Focus group

And it's like, you don't feel able to communicate,

Focus group

Sometimes it feels a bit like they don't really know exactly what you can do.

Focus group

So for me, okay is even worse.

Focus group

I am a perfectionist.

Focus group

It means that I don't feel confident to sing in front of them, because they put me down at one point because of just what they think about me.

Focus group

And it makes me feel really put down, and that does make my singing less good.

Focus group

It makes me think, Oh, what did I do wrong then?

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

I think singing is like a really interesting part of the person, because it's sort of an instrument that's also a part of you. And I do have it in my identity that I am a singer, but I don't tend to go out and say that,

Focus group

Certainly, I will list the first few reasons why I could list many more than this. First of all, I think that it's part of my personality, my voice, and when I sing, it shows me. And so I go up to people and I'm like, Oh, can you describe yourself? I'm a singer, that describes me with just it's built me in so many different ways. It built my confidence. It built the fact that I can literally, just last second, have 10 minutes to get a song for someone and then perform in front of an audience, like all of that I've it's built me as a person and how I react with people, and how confident I am to actually speak my mind, and it's also created just how I'm very much a forward person who's always volunteering for different things. So I think it's really just me as a person

Focus group

Well, I mean, we've talked about this before, quite a bit. Actually, it builds up at least more than half of my identity. I use it wherever I go. Like, if I'm out in public and the song comes on that I like, I'm I'm there, I'm not, I'm not singing it in my head. It's there. It's not, it's not somewhere else, it's in the room. Like you can, you can hear it, but like, sometimes I get nervous to show it off, but it's there. It's part of me, so I need to show off like the rest of me.

Focus group

I feel like comfortable to, like, you know, go wrong.

Focus group

Like, especially like, when I start crying because my singing and stuff,

Focus group

It does help a lot to have a teacher who's nice all the time.

Focus group

It's like most teachers have, like a strict side and like a soft side, but you'll always have the soft side.

Focus group

I think, I think it means that I can probably communicate to you that maybe stuff that you didn't know, like maybe stuff I've done on my own when no one's there.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Focus group

Sometimes, remember, I have a specific idea of what a work means, like, kind of difficult, like, what I want to say, but the words don't really

Focus group

I was able to sing psalm yesterday.

Interview 2

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

No matter what they think their pitch range is, can be very difficult.

Interview 2

I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead.

Interview 1

You know, the successful ones are very good at getting their voices around loads, loads and loads of different styles of stuff, you know, from standard early opera to contemporary squeaky door stuff, you know, if you've got the technique and if your voice has the notes, get round it make it work.

Interview 1

And I think again, it comes back down to if you sing high you've got to sing soprano and a choir or you've got to, it identifies you as something almost classical, which when they're that age, and they're studying musical theatre, they don't want to be associated with that.

Interview 1

Or that's the sound that I meant to be making.

Interview 1

And I got Why do you feel that you have to be pizzazzy all the time, fine for if you can do it, but let's have the other side of it that nobody practically nobody will have heard this before.

Interview 1

He seems to feel like he has to be the life and soul of the party.

Interview 1

But she was picked out or singled out and felt like she was being ridiculed for not knowing this, you know?

Interview 1

And sometimes it's just great, they can just go ah, i feel like I can breathe just for an hour, and then you know, enjoying what they're doing and then and then go out and I have to say again, I think I've been a very, very lucky teacher in that, I have I can't really I can probably only count on one hand, any resistance that I found from students, but a lot of my students only come voluntarily for one to one because in their four or certainly in foundation year and in level four, they don't get any one believers.

Interview 1

I don't want I don't want them to kind of feel like they have to pour out their heart to me but if there's a niggling issue that is going to stop them enjoying their half hour or their hour with me, then I need to know about it because sometimes it's detrimental to continue to try and get results if the head is not in the right place.

Interview 1

You know, the student was very, very pliable and willing to try different things but no point that they ever say I don't want this voice at the moment because I know things aren't going to change and

[Interview 1](#)

So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

[Interview 1](#)

And I think I think that way then they kind of find their journey to to be content with what's there at the moment because it will change and then ultimately it will change again and then it'll change again.

[Interview 1](#)

Just think your voice is on a transition the entire time.

[Interview 1](#)

Your whole body is on a transition the entire time.

[Interview 1](#)

Nothing stays still in your body anyway, so it doesn't, it doesn't really come down to if you're if you're thinking of doing a gender transition or whatever or you're not sure how you see your own self or your own body or whatever.

[Interview 1](#)

There are always options, so you're not stuck with one thing.

[Interview 1](#)

Sometimes they're not broared options, but there are options.

[Interview 1](#)

And knowing that you have options.

[Interview 1](#)

And I think come back to that thing of Yeah, be your individual self or be your character be be what you want to be basically with your sound as long as the voice wants to go there.

[Interview 1](#)

That's the brilliance of what we do as performers that we get to be so many different people, if you like, and I think maybe a little bit more emphasis on that aspect of it might help those that are maybe slightly struggling with where they fit in, especially in a class situation.

[Interview 1](#)

So we're always in effect whatever it is that we're saying, we're always being somebody else, if you like just for that short three minutes that we're singing the song or whatever, you know, then we can go back to being ourselves in between.

[Interview 1](#)

There's very few times where we are actually singing as ourselves, unless we write our own music, obviously and then it's things that are coming from our own hearts and things but there are very few occasions where we're actually communicating something that is ours.

[Interview 1](#)

I think also a bigger focus on what we want to achieve from lyrics.

[Interview 1](#)

And it's good that we're moving forwards with it.

[Interview 1](#)

So I think the wording and everything is very important.

[Interview 1](#)

Unfortunately, even now that we're in 2024 that's still kind of what linear it's, you are in this section you are in this section, you are in this section, because of the

way your voice and I know that I've come across a lot of quiet and this is a very this is a very regular standard thing now where some women don't feel that they want to be in the Alto section, just because they've got a lower voice and they can sing low notes.

[Interview 1](#)

If it's radically different then obviously the chat has to come about, I don't think your mechanism will deal with a radical change but we can make this little alteration But coming back to the teachers, I think for people that maybe do a lot of work with choirs and so on, I think they're going to find that very tricky because the whole choir mentality is based on soprano, alto, tenor bass.

[Interview 1](#)

One of the main ones that comes out is that way to describe your voice and not always saying and that high voice means that it's a soprano voice or a female voice and this thing of asking your students to to describe their own sound, how and how would they like it to be different?

[Interview 1](#)

It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands.

[Interview 1](#)

It's strange, it's it's not a strange voice.

[Interview 1](#)

And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows what you know, what's being cast, he knows he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House.

[Interview 1](#)

And what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

[Interview 1](#)

And I am quite picky and they get fed up with me banging on about you're not opening your mouth, you're not relaxing your jaw your your posture is not good.

[Interview 1](#)

My student feedback for me has always been we love your warm ups.

[Interview 1](#)

An awful lot of things get missed.

[Interview 1](#)

Theres no check on it, there's absolutely nothing, nothing to say all this is fitting in with how to say I don't the majority of the kind of class singing and stuff like that is that other tutors that you need.

[Interview 1](#)

What if my voice doesn't match what they're saying the male voice should be doing?

[Interview 1](#)

Yeah, because a lot of those those exam things although some of them are quite specific in that if this is written for male voice it has to be a male that sings it or de de de and again then we come into that grey area.

[Interview 1](#)

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

[Interview 1](#)

Your voice doesn't want to be there all the time.

[Interview 1](#)

Oh, do you feel after you've sung this, you know, you should be able to sing this five times and still feel fine because it's it's not about can I hit the notes, it's about how your whole technique deals with that.

[Interview 1](#)

" Yeah, it's not all about whether you can actually make a sound it's whether your voice is happy going there and happy sustaining and happy being there.

[Interview 1](#)

Urm, But what worries me sometimes is when a student comes to me and they go or I want to sing that song from The Magic Flute, the one that the Queen of the Night sings with all the high notes and I'm going well, actually, you know, given what you've already sung to me, maybe with some low to medium to low musical theatre stuff, I'd said it's unlikely that your voice will want to do that "oh but I can make these noises up there.

[Interview 1](#)

This can't be worked in with a bit of technical, er, kind of thought and trying out, you know, obviously, there are some things that some voices just won't do certain things, which is absolutely fine.

[Interview 1](#)

This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit.

[Interview 1](#)

How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for.

[Interview 1](#)

It might be expressed in a slightly different way, But it's still coming from the same building blocks if you like.

[sexuality being used in the vocal studio \(3\)](#)

[Interview 1](#)

And I got Why do you feel that you have to be pizzazzy all the time, fine for if you can do it, but let's have the other side of it that nobody practically nobody will have heard this before.

Interview 1

He seems to feel like he has to be the life and soul of the party.

Interview 1

But because he's extremely gay and he dresses in a very flamboyant way.

Misgendering of a pupil (3)

Interview 1

No, I haven't seen him since that's all happened.

Interview 1

So um so I'm not able to kind of comment on what were his his, what his journey was, if you like to that transition, and finding the finding of maybe a different sound or whatever.

Interview 1

And so far I haven't had any students that has said, Actually, what I'm thinking about myself, isn't this now, the person that I'm thinking about was going to be going through surgery to obviously remove Adam's apple and because he did have quite a pronounced Adam's apple and to address the vocal thing.

Identity (65)

Focus group

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Focus group

y class knows that I have singing lessons. So it's kind of like, oh, P1's going for singing lessons. So then they hear me singing sometimes, like, if I have, like, when I had like, my first Singing Lesson, or whatever, or like when I have them, like, sometimes, if I don't have them at 20 past and I have them at 10 o'clock, then my class is always like, was that you? I was like, Well, yeah, who else would it be? And I always, I always look forward to singing lessons on on weeks when I don't have singing lessons, I'm always like, really grumpy because I don't want to have to go to

history. My singing lessons just make it more fun, then I can dawdle to history as well.

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

its how I feel, feelings.

Focus group

But I feel like music is, like, very deeply ingrained within me.

Focus group

I think singing is like a really interesting part of the person, because it's sort of an instrument that's also a part of you. And I do have it in my identity that I am a singer, but I don't tend to go out and say that,

Focus group

Certainly, I will list the first few reasons why I could list many more than this. First of all, I think that it's part of my personality, my voice, and when I sing, it shows me. And so I go up to people and I'm like, Oh, can you describe yourself? I'm a singer, that describes me with just it's built me in so many different ways. It built my confidence. It built the fact that I can literally, just last second, have 10 minutes to get a song for someone and then perform in front of an audience, like all of that I've it's built me as a person and how I react with people, and how confident I am to actually speak my mind, and it's also created just how I'm very much a forward person who's always volunteering for different things. So I think it's really just me as a person

Focus group

Well, I mean, we've talked about this before, quite a bit. Actually, it builds up at least more than half of my identity. I use it wherever I go. Like, if I'm out in public and the song comes on that I like, I'm I'm there, I'm not, I'm not singing it in my head. It's there. It's not, it's not somewhere else, it's in the room. Like you can, you can hear it, but like, sometimes I get nervous to show it off, but it's there. It's part of me, so I need to show off like the rest of me.

Focus group

Um, I think it's like describing how the song is and like understanding your own voice at the same time can be helpful, because then you can think to yourself, can I do that?

Focus group

Well, this is probably just due to my personality. I didn't really think anything of it, but I did get upset when I couldn't sing some particular wordy songs, and it was a lot more work to learn quiet from Matilda at first, because it had so much words.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Focus group

Sometimes, remember, I have a specific idea of what a work means, like, kind of difficult, like, what I want to say, but the words don't really

Focus group

So my voice, it hasn't been bad, but, like, I haven't sung like a lot today, but like on Friday, I was in the car with my mum, and then we were singing like, Heathers and stuff,

Focus group

But it's now a bit smoother and is quite easy to use, and I've been working my shoulder tension, which is really releasing my voice even more.

Focus group

Today, I've just recovered from a cold, so it's finally back to being as smooth as it used to be, but it was slightly hoarse like a few days ago because of sports day.

Focus group

And I'm not the most confident performer as me, but when I'm playing a character, I'm way more confident.

Focus group

P2 is, like, one of the most confident people that I know.

Focus group

Um, with singing, I'm not very confident, like, like, with P2.

Focus group

So we've always been, like, a musical family.

Focus group

But I'm, I'm trying to work on it, but I think it's my confidence has been boosted with, like, being in year seven and stuff, and I've, like, sang a bit more in front of people,

Focus group

Um, so I'm P1, and with singing, I've been singing for like, my entire life, because my mom sings as well and stuff.

Focus group

I'm quite a confident performer, so I love to perform for people and sing awesome for anyone.

Focus group

I enjoy that and just being able to enjoy the whole feeling of it.

Focus group

So music itself comes into a lot of aspects of my life, but I love to sing like wherever I am or whatever I'm doing.

Interview 3

If that doesn't quite align up to the wider view, as we say,

Interview 3

When we push all all on to our identity being by what our voice sounds like and like say it, then it breaks them.

Interview 3

But yeah, you know, it's so you form that musical identity through your voice.

Interview 3

which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

Interview 3

So she knew that in in her head, she was like, I want to sing alto.

Interview 2

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to

understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

[Interview 2](#)

I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead.

[Interview 1](#)

they're scared because it because then they have to open up then they have to make themselves vulnerable.

[Interview 1](#)

You know, the successful ones are very good at getting their voices around loads, loads and loads of different styles of stuff, you know, from standard early opera to contemporary squeaky door stuff, you know, if you've got the technique and if your voice has the notes, get round it make it work.

[Interview 1](#)

And I think again, it comes back down to if you sing high you've got to sing soprano and a choir or you've got to, it identifies you as something almost classical, which when they're that age, and they're studying musical theatre, they don't want to be associated with that.

[Interview 1](#)

Or that's the sound that I meant to be making.

[Interview 1](#)

He seems to feel like he has to be the life and soul of the party.

[Interview 1](#)

I don't want I don't want them to kind of feel like they have to pour out their heart to me but if there's a niggling issue that is going to stop them enjoying their half hour or their hour with me, then I need to know about it because sometimes it's detrimental to continue to try and get results if the head is not in the right place.

[Interview 1](#)

You know, the student was very, very pliable and willing to try different things but no point that they ever say I don't want this voice at the moment because I know things aren't going to change and

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So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

[Interview 1](#)

And I think I think that way then they kind of find their journey to to be content with what's there at the moment because it will change and then ultimately it will change again and then it'll change again.

[Interview 1](#)

Just think your voice is on a transition the entire time.

[Interview 1](#)

Your whole body is on a transition the entire time.

[Interview 1](#)

Nothing stays still in your body anyway, so it doesn't, it doesn't really come down to if you're if you're thinking of doing a gender transition or whatever or you're not sure how you see your own self or your own body or whatever.

[Interview 1](#)

It might work because closer things will have adjusted by then, your whole body is changing.

[Interview 1](#)

And this reminder that if this song doesn't work for you this year, chances are two years down the line.

Interview 1

And I think come back to that thing of Yeah, be your individual self or be your character be be what you want to be basically with your sound as long as the voice wants to go there.

Interview 1

That's the brilliance of what we do as performers that we get to be so many different people, if you like, and I think maybe a little bit more emphasis on that aspect of it might help those that are maybe slightly struggling with where they fit in, especially in a class situation.

Interview 1

So we're always in effect whatever it is that we're saying, we're always being somebody else, if you like just for that short three minutes that we're singing the song or whatever, you know, then we can go back to being ourselves in between.

Interview 1

There's very few times where we are actually singing as ourselves, unless we write our own music, obviously and then it's things that are coming from our own hearts and things but there are very few occasions where we're actually communicating something that is ours.

Interview 1

And also, if it's something that's not from a musical or if it's not from an opera or not from a standard set thing, if it's just a song on its own, it still has character it still is somebody else's words.

Interview 1

I think also a bigger focus on what we want to achieve from lyrics.

Interview 1

Unfortunately, even now that we're in 2024 that's still kind of what linear it's, you are in this section you are in this section, you are in this section, because of the way your voice and I know that I've come across a lot of quiet and this is a very this

is a very regular standard thing now where some women don't feel that they want to be in the Alto section, just because they've got a lower voice and they can sing low notes.

Interview 1

One of the main ones that comes out is that way to describe your voice and not always saying and that high voice means that it's a soprano voice or a female voice and this thing of asking your students to to describe their own sound, how and how would they like it to be different?

Interview 1

It's strange, it's it's not a strange voice.

Interview 1

What if my voice doesn't match what they're saying the male voice should be doing?

Interview 1

Yeah, because a lot of those those exam things although some of them are quite specific in that if this is written for male voice it has to be a male that sings it or de de de and again then we come into that grey area.

Interview 1

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

Interview 1

To try and take away from the fact that it's not going to be what they've picked up in their head, as their sound is not their sound, but somebody else's sound.

Interview 1

This can't be worked in with a bit of technical, er, kind of thought and trying out, you know, obviously, there are some things that some voices just won't do certain things, which is absolutely fine.

Interview 1

This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit.

Interview 1

How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for.

Interview 1

The word most worrying one was not being able to identify within a group that that's students voice doesn't go up there.

Interview 1

I don't know what your experience of that is, but there yeah, there's something missing along the lines that would give them more confidence immediately.

Need for support and regulationfor teachers (55)

Interview 2

But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher.

Focus group

So they'll be like, Oh, I've been doing sing lessons for years, but actually, none of that has been anything that would help them for what they want to do in life.

Focus group

And if they want to go and sing classically, if they really do love singing, they may not have learned anything close to what they'll actually need.

Focus group

I think that there should be some sort of guidelines, because then you don't know what these people are learning.

Focus group

I mean, I think, I think that would probably be very beneficial, but also at the same time, they should have at least one rule that says that, like, you can teach how you want, but like, just stick to the rules.

Focus group

I think it will be helpful so that, you know, people know it's not just a random person coming in and you have to listen to them like there is, like a specific thing that they should be doing and shouldn't be doing.

Focus group

Well, this is probably just due to my personality. I didn't really think anything of it, but I did get upset when I couldn't sing some particular wordy songs, and it was a lot more work to learn quiet from Matilda at first, because it had so much words.

Focus group

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Interview 3

and it's just like, it makes your skin crawl, doesn't it

Interview 3

And I was like, Okay, fine, you've taken out the genders, but realistically, I have no kid who could sing this.

Interview 3

This is going back to what I was saying about the horrible keys for the male voices.

Interview 3

But I think, yeah, definitely, there's definitely some, there's a need to have almost that little frameworks or things we can pull on and use as teachers, because you can't, you know, at my age, I can't just be like, I only teach classical cheers, thanks.

[Interview 3](#)

And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal.

[Interview 3](#)

So it's, you know, it's really, I felt for her in that instance, and I feel for these trans students, because it's so hard to not be like, well, I sound like this, so I am this.

[Interview 3](#)

which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

[Interview 3](#)

So we've almost been on the journey together,

[Interview 3](#)

But also, then what came with that was, I want to sing X rep, because she was slightly older and she was doing a level music, so she knew, like, the those areas that go, call it vocal, vocal areas, voicing.

[Interview 2](#)

It's not using any words that I would consider to be above maybe new, maybe very new, teachers that have maybe only just qualified in either a vocal degree or a musical degree themselves, that are now just individually looking might be a bit like, oh, what does you know?

[Interview 2](#)

no, but you should know what a pause is, and you should know, you should know what the lengths of the notes mean,

[Interview 2](#)

So the only thing that anybody else has got anything to measure that against these exams,

[Interview 2](#)

There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework.

[Interview 2](#)

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

[Interview 2](#)

I am not a professional enough musician to be able to teach that.

[Interview 2](#)

And you're like, great, but nobody thinks about that in terms of her voice, and nobody thinks, I think some of it as well is the misunderstanding of how long your voice needs to be warmed up before you're ready to sing a to sing a song.

[Interview 2](#)

Because a lot of people one, if you're, if you're new to teaching one to one, that is a weird experience,

[Interview 2](#)

It's only what theme they're doing or where they've got to when I'll get in there, when it's one to one, what they want is a lesson plan.

[Interview 2](#)

I don't know if it would, as far as my experience in terms of other teachers, especially when I say, if I've got somebody covering my my lessons that are singing based so vocal or singing based the thing that they want the most is a lesson plan

[Interview 2](#)

to help you in terms of teaching.

[Interview 2](#)

And there's, there's loads of factors that are, that are that they can that you facing against when trying to find suitable material, and there's not a lot of you can Google it, but there's not a lot there

[Interview 1](#)

So you're dealing with that from the start, but you have to be able to, to allow yourself to open up everything to the deepest point of your soul in order to try and get a hint of what was what was being thought of when the thing was, was being written.

[Interview 1](#)

So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

[Interview 1](#)

They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it.

[Interview 1](#)

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Interview 1

Things that should have been addressed way before that haven't been and it's getting to the point where you go this voice is getting stuck in rut a little bit and it's safe.

Interview 1

And he got this email and she was very up in arms about, you know, basically how dare you try and take over one of my students wasn't he was trying to input into her experience of what she was going to be going on to do and she will go on and she will you know, she will do do well in classical but she can do better with different inputs.

Interview 1

Well Graham, got this long, lengthy email from the teacher.

Interview 1

And what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

Interview 1

So it's really important that we get the safety element in there as well, which again, sometimes is overlooked in the fact that there's so much to be done.

Interview 1

We need this, this, this, this and this, and then off we go and then we can explore all the other offshoots that come out of that class, but the basic thing has to be absolutely there and sometimes it's not very exciting, but they get, they do in the end get a lot of satisfaction because they can feel their voices are solid and and safe if you like and I'm all about a safe, safe environment for the voice especially at those young ages.

Interview 1

And I know from feedback from the students that shouldn't really be telling me these things when they're being taught by, these things by other tutors but they do they just blurt you know, as they do and then which shows that they actually they don't want any you know, it doesn't go any further to those bachelors tutors or anything it sticks with me, but they feel quite a lot of the time this person that's taking a song class with us doesn't warm us up.

Interview 1

No one No one has ever come into my class to see what I'm doing.

Interview 1

But listen to the whole thing of you know year on year on year you will notice change you'll notice changes in your voice probably from when you started singing, you're still noticing changes you will see them until you're 85/90 there will be changes in your voice and you know, and not and the changes are not a pattern they don't all happen the same way for everybody which again, is why we need to address the individual sound, not the clump if you like which is definitely kind of where I come from with my teaching in order to get the most confident student the most happy student with their voices.

Interview 1

Let's see where your actual where your voice actually is happy where a lies naturally where its natural limits are and then let's have a little look relook at your your repertoire, but that doesn't mean that they're not going to be things that they've done.

Interview 1

Of let's take it back to basics.

Interview 1

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

Interview 1

Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing.

Interview 1

We need a set of things that we know work and that we pass on to the students will go if you do this, there's this this this and this that will make sure you achieve a healthy or a part of your healthy voice building if you like so

[Interview 1](#)

The word most worrying one was not being able to identify within a group that that's students voice doesn't go up there.

[Interview 1](#)

But it all comes back to that thing of getting good basic technique, which drives me crazy sometimes because I think students are encouraged obviously, to enjoy singing, and therefore some of the exercises and things that they are given they are designed to be fun so that they'll do them.

[Interview 1](#)

It has had this big knock on effect to what we're expecting and even even looking at when people are accepted onto courses at university.

[Interview 1](#)

A lot of the time, it just comes down to they don't have a background in musicianship, they haven't ever been taught that, you know, and we come back to this thing about the lack of musicianship in schools now.

[Interview 1](#)

What's what's stopping them from, from putting themselves forward from being confident with what they've got.

[Interview 1](#)

So I find in some classes I will have students I'm like trying to work as very difficult in a class situation as well because you sometimes you miss things and you can't always hear but you can sense when there are confident students and when there are not confident students so it's trying to work out what's holding them back.

[Interview 1](#)

Let's see what you're not happy with or what you would like to change because there is a whole gamut of stuff that can be altered through continuous practice and working in a way that the voice slightly changes if you like we're never going to get a

massive kind of you know different voice but we can we can alter the way the perception of the voice for the student is kind of heard if you like yeah but yeah, I think probably the, I don't know.

Interview 1

But obviously there are still things that I feel like I'm a little not at sea with but just not in the loop with or universities not addressing it because I teach the LCM I teach some class work but a lot of one to one as well.

Exam (12)

Interview 3

But it wasn't like, really technique based.

Interview 3

But there is definitely some leniency with like, just songs and things like that.

Interview 3

And there are some things that are not as lenient on things like the arias in the classical side, which kind of, yeah,

Interview 3

You can use different editions.

Interview 3

Oh, they are now that is massively, yeah, so there are some, so there are some songs that you have to do.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

I am not a professional enough musician to be able to teach that.

Interview 2

I think the differences, the drastic differences in terms of singing exams, across what is available for students can be quite different as well, in terms of like ABRSM, because they an ABRSM singing exam, for me, is a is not a singing exam, it is still a musician's exam.

Interview 2

So for example, if you were playing, if you were singing Burn from Hamilton, you would have to answer those characters questions as a female, whether you were female or not yourself

Interview 2

Because LAMDA really have musical theater, you have to answer the knowledge questions in the gender that that character is within the piece.

Interview 2

yeah, the the only thing that they require is that when you are answering the knowledge questions in LAMDA, that you answer the knowledge questions from from the gender that that character originally was and talking musical theater more than singing.

Interview 2

You can also mix gender in Lamda

Barriers for teachers (11)

Interview 3

But, yeah, you know, we, you do find that there is, there is almost that generational barrier, isn't there where?

Interview 3

which I thought was the schools I'm in that might perhaps not be the case, but she's, yeah, I've got, I've got a few sorts of female identifying students who have lower voices, but yeah, nothing, sort of out of the ordinary. You know

Interview 3

which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

Interview 3

So we've almost been on the journey together,

Interview 3

And I was, I was, I think this is going to lead into one of your questions, but I was sort of very transparent with her, and I said, Look, I said, my knowledge on this is very limited.

Interview 3

And we spent probably the first eight months trying to just use without trying to label her voice and just saying, it's my voice.

Interview 2

no, but you should know what a pause is, and you should know, you should know what the lengths of the notes mean,

Interview 2

So the only thing that anybody else has got anything to measure that against these exams,

Interview 2

There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework.

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it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

I am not a professional enough musician to be able to teach that.

encouragement to use multiple teachers (11)

Focus group

I want to learn how to make my voice sound good recorded.

Interview 1

They all come in with the all these different things and going oh, that's great.

Interview 1

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Interview 1

Well Graham, got this long, lengthy email from the teacher.

Interview 1

It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands.

Interview 1

And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows

what you know, what's being cast, he knows he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House.

Interview 1

He knows what he's listening for.

Interview 1

So it's just, you know, feed off for what the opportunities are to really, really learn as much as possible from different sources.

Interview 1

And what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

Interview 1

Don't stick with one person because I don't think that's healthy.

Interview 1

Like I do encourage the students to do to work with as many people as possible to get all of those different views on how to how things work.

Need for regulation in the industry (59)

Interview 2

But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher.

Focus group

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Focus group

Yeah, I would rather be told what I'm doing wrong instead of someone saying that was okay.

Focus group

And I think, you know, when teachers go, that was good, but like, just tell me what I did wrong.

Focus group

She was just very much kind of half minded, and it put her down about her voice, and that kind of lowered her confidence slightly overall.

Focus group

Yes, one of my friends did do singing lessons, but instead of really bringing her up, it kind of pushed her down a bit, because she was, she was getting great comments, but it wasn't fully heartfelt comments.

Focus group

So they'll be like, Oh, I've been doing sing lessons for years, but actually, none of that has been anything that would help them for what they want to do in life.

Focus group

And if they want to go and sing classically, if they really do love singing, they may not have learned anything close to what they'll actually need.

Focus group

I think that there should be some sort of guidelines, because then you don't know what these people are learning.

Focus group

I mean, I think, I think that would probably be very beneficial, but also at the same time, they should have at least one rule that says that, like, you can teach how you want, but like, just stick to the rules.

Focus group

I think it will be helpful so that, you know, people know it's not just a random person coming in and you have to listen to them like there is, like a specific thing that they should be doing and shouldn't be doing.

Focus group

Well, this is probably just due to my personality. I didn't really think anything of it, but I did get upset when I couldn't sing some particular wordy songs, and it was a lot more work to learn quiet from Matilda at first, because it had so much words.

Focus group

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Interview 3

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Interview 3

And I was like, Okay, fine, you've taken out the genders, but realistically, I have no kid who could sing this.

Interview 3

But I think, yeah, definitely, there's definitely some, there's a need to have almost that little frameworks or things we can pull on and use as teachers, because you can't, you know, at my age, I can't just be like, I only teach classical cheers, thanks.

Interview 3

And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal.

Interview 2

It is, but there's no, like I said before, there's no requirement to read music.

Interview 2

There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

And you're like, great, but nobody thinks about that in terms of her voice, and nobody thinks, I think some of it as well is the misunderstanding of how long your voice needs to be warmed up before you're ready to sing a to sing a song.

Interview 2

But I know some that don't do any scale singing, unless they're doing ABRSM or something like that, and they have to if it's part of something they are doing

Interview 2

whereas I've taught some students from other teachers that have never done a singing scale.

Interview 2

There's there's nothing in between that it's not like when you are a dance teacher and there's an expectation that a child who has been taught a dance style, this is where singing is separate as well, because they don't separate different styles.

Interview 2

Yeah, 45 minutes on your own every single week for 10 years, who's checking what you doing?

Interview 2

And there's, there's loads of factors that are, that are that they can that you facing against when trying to find suitable material, and there's not a lot of you can Google it, but there's not a lot there

Interview 1

So you're dealing with that from the start, but you have to be able to, to allow yourself to open up everything to the deepest point of your soul in order to try and

get a hint of what was what was being thought of when the thing was, was being written.

Interview 1

And I think again, it comes back down to if you sing high you've got to sing soprano and a choir or you've got to, it identifies you as something almost classical, which when they're that age, and they're studying musical theatre, they don't want to be associated with that.

Interview 1

You have to be brave and you have to take the step out and with good guidance, obviously with good guidance and make sure that the techniques supports it.

Interview 1

And sometimes it's just great, they can just go ah, i feel like I can breathe just for an hour, and then you know, enjoying what they're doing and then and then go out and I have to say again, I think I've been a very, very lucky teacher in that, I have I can't really I can probably only count on one hand, any resistance that I found from students, but a lot of my students only come voluntarily for one to one because in their four or certainly in foundation year and in level four, they don't get any one believers.

Interview 1

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

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Things that should have been addressed way before that haven't been and it's getting to the point where you go this voice is getting stuck in rut a little bit and it's safe.

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And he got this email and she was very up in arms about, you know, basically how dare you try and take over one of my students wasn't he was trying to input into her experience of what she was going to be going on to do and she will go on and she

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[Interview 1](#)

And what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

[Interview 1](#)

But when you're dealing with voices, if you lose it if it's damaged, you can't often get it back the way it was.

[Interview 1](#)

So it's really important that we get the safety element in there as well, which again, sometimes is overlooked in the fact that there's so much to be done.

[Interview 1](#)

We need this, this, this, this and this, and then off we go and then we can explore all the other offshoots that come out of that class, but the basic thing has to be absolutely there and sometimes it's not very exciting, but they get, they do in the end get a lot of satisfaction because they can feel their voices are solid and and safe if you like and I'm all about a safe, safe environment for the voice especially at those young ages.

[Interview 1](#)

And I know from feedback from the students that shouldn't really be telling me these things when they're being taught by, these things by other tutors but they do they just blurt you know, as they do and then which shows that they actually they don't want any you know, it doesn't go any further to those bachelors tutors or anything it sticks with me, but they feel quite a lot of the time this person that's taking a song class with us doesn't warm us up.

[Interview 1](#)

An awful lot of things get missed.

[Interview 1](#)

There's no check on it, there's absolutely nothing, nothing to say all this is fitting in with how to say I don't the majority of the kind of class singing and stuff like that is that other tutors that you need.

[Interview 1](#)

No one No one has ever come into my class to see what I'm doing.

[Interview 1](#)

In all the teaching that I've ever done from starting at Ground Zero with Northumbria University this is looking at university teaching obviously I've done some kind of private teaching and stuff before that, but we're looking at the university kind of thing.

[Interview 1](#)

Coming from let's work with the tools they built the basic blocks that you've been given.

[Interview 1](#)

But listen to the whole thing of you know year on year on year you will notice change you'll notice changes in your voice probably from when you started singing, you're still noticing changes you will see them until you're 85/90 there will be changes in your voice and you know, and not and the changes are not a pattern they don't all happen the same way for everybody which again, is why we need to address the individual sound, not the clump if you like which is definitely kind of where I come from with my teaching in order to get the most confident student the most happy student with their voices.

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Let's see where your actual where your voice actually is happy where it lies naturally where its natural limits are and then let's have a little look relook at your repertoire, but that doesn't mean that they're not going to be things that they've done.

Interview 1

Of let's take it back to basics.

Interview 1

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

Interview 1

This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit.

Interview 1

Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing.

Interview 1

We need a set of things that we know work and that we pass on to the students will go if you do this, there's this this this and this that will make sure you achieve a healthy or a part of your healthy voice building if you like so

Interview 1

But it all comes back to that thing of getting good basic technique, which drives me crazy sometimes because I think students are encouraged obviously, to enjoy singing, and therefore some of the exercises and things that they are given they are designed to be fun so that they'll do them.

Interview 1

But actually, when I'm listening to them, do them a they don't actually understand what the outcome of those exercises is meant to be.

Interview 1

It might be expressed in a slightly different way, But it's still coming from the same building blocks if you like.

Interview 1

I don't know what your experience of that is, but there yeah, there's something missing along the lines that would give them more confidence immediately.

Interview 1

And then it's quite startling, they can sing, but they've no idea how to look at something on a page or how to express what they're looking at how to how to group them together.

Interview 1

It has had this big knock on effect to what we're expecting and even even looking at when people are accepted onto courses at university.

Interview 1

A lot of the time, it just comes down to they don't have a background in musicianship, they haven't ever been taught that, you know, and we come back to this thing about the lack of musicianship in schools now.

Framework feedback and ways to develop it using interviewee input (113)

Interview 2

But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher.

Interview 3

So, yeah, I definitely think there's, there's space for this absolutely

Focus group

Like, how do you not, how do you not feel the ick when you're listening exposure?

Focus group

Because I think being a singer is one of the jobs that I might lean towards when I'm older, but that would mean recording, and I've not had much experience with microphones or any of that, and I think it would be good to learn like how my technique

Focus group

I want to learn how to make my voice sound good recorded.

Focus group

And I think it would be good to cover stage presence and just how to be on a stage and move around and interact with, like, if you were with an audience, yeah, and

Focus group

as a dancer, I do musical theater as one of my dancers, but I hear what you're saying, because we have to sing while dancing full out, and it does mean that breath control becomes something really important, but I think that is a really hard one, because you're in a singing lesson, you're not in a moving lesson, yeah.

Focus group

also another thing maybe, like, because obviously, if I want to do musical theater and stuff, it's there's a lot of moving around with, like, walking while singing stuff, which I struggle with, the breathing aspect of it sometimes.

Focus group

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

Um, I think, like, describing it in a way that's saying, like, like, what P2 said, like, for a soprano voice, if you don't know, like, what kind of voice you have, like, if you It depends, like, how big of a range you have for your voice.

Focus group

Personally, I don't I don't know if I have a, I wouldn't know if I had a staccato voice, or what I actually had I just said that these are words that I'm not sure about, and I'm going to do what my teacher says,

Focus group

It's for a soprano voice that's very staccato and is very smooth and elegant and feminine, then I might think that might put me off the song at first, but also that might not be suited to my voice.

Focus group

So they'll be like, Oh, I've been doing sing lessons for years, but actually, none of that has been anything that would help them for what they want to do in life.

Focus group

And if they want to go and sing classically, if they really do love singing, they may not have learned anything close to what they'll actually need.

Focus group

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Focus group

I think, I think it means that I can probably communicate to you that maybe stuff that you didn't know, like maybe stuff I've done on my own when no one's there.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey.

Focus group

I made up tons of different terms for different things in singing, we've got blobfish jaw, spider monkey jaw, all sorts.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Focus group

I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages.

Interview 3

So, yeah, breathing,

Interview 3

And they go, I can do it in bed.

Interview 3

My favorite homework is that.

Interview 3

Sort of the MOT will then sort of direct me towards whether we need to focus a little bit more on, like the breathing basics and making sure there's a good support system coming into place, and whether they understand breathing.

Interview 3

And I spend, I must spend, like, five minutes of going, just open your mouth, take a really good breath for me, and go, oh.

Interview 3

It's not, it's all sort of quite low set, even the American stuff now, isn't it's the pitch is coming lower and lower and lower and lower and lower,

Interview 3

So a common thing is breathiness in the upper register.

Interview 3

They well, they get the full, MOT the first lesson, so that then means I can tailor it a little bit more specific.

Interview 3

But it wasn't like, really technique based.

Interview 3

Yeah, yeah, it's so hard.

Interview 3

yeah its all mid.

Interview 3

And I was like, Okay, fine, you've taken out the genders, but realistically, I have no kid who could sing this.

Interview 3

This is going back to what I was saying about the horrible keys for the male voices.

Interview 3

Or there's a or it's, you can pick from these three keys, which is better than it was.

Interview 3

But there is definitely some leniency with like, just songs and things like that.

Interview 3

And I mean, there are flaws, because there are flaws with ABRSM anyway, but different conversation, but she there was some leniency within keys.

Interview 3

You are, all this framework is just highlighting those, those beginning levels that we all wish everybody did in a really nice, healthy manner, and just solidifying that this is the, this is the basic approach that we should all take, you know, especially in this instance, with these with, you know, in your case, but across the board I feel,

Interview 3

But if we've got things to help or also what, what this framework does is just reinforce that actually, this sort of base level practice is transferable anyway.

Interview 3

And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal.

Interview 3

So it's, you know, it's really, I felt for her in that instance, and I feel for these trans students, because it's so hard to not be like, well, I sound like this, so I am this.

Interview 3

which has been great. And also have like, sort of slowly started to introduce the idea of like trans opera singers and that kind of side of things. That's what I know. And there are obviously a couple out there who are really starting to break into the young artist field, and they've been really slowly, sort of saying to her, Look, you can identify this, but your voice can be doing these things as well. And that's and that's totally okay. They're not synonymous anymore. It's not as black and white as we thought it once was, and the world is starting to accept it. So, yeah, that's been really exciting. So, and she's the only one weirdly

Interview 3

So we've almost been on the journey together,

[Interview 3](#)

So she knew that in in her head, she was like, I want to sing alto.

[Interview 3](#)

But also, then what came with that was, I want to sing X rep, because she was slightly older and she was doing a level music, so she knew, like, the those areas that go, call it vocal, vocal areas, voicing.

[Interview 2](#)

I don't think any child under 12 should be consistently using their voice for an hour.

[Interview 2](#)

What does it mean in terms of implementing and things like that, sometimes that kind of framework, but anybody that's ever read a lesson plan should have been able to use it surely.

[Interview 2](#)

Yeah, like, what else is happening within the music that your voice is then fighting against as well?

[Interview 2](#)

no, but you should know what a pause is, and you should know, you should know what the lengths of the notes mean,

[Interview 2](#)

I personally always give if I've got sheet music available, I give sheet music,

[Interview 2](#)

So that for acting, speaking verse and pros, public speaking and singing, you have to be able to explain breathing techniques that you as a performer have individually used yourself and developed across there, not only in your preparation of that performance, but what you in terms of techniques within the performance.

[Interview 2](#)

So even if you're acting, it could be something as simple as shallow breaths to show that your character is out of breath, to something as complex as describing

your full diaphragmatic breathing, the exercise that you do before you go on stage, and then how you're holding that diaphragmatic breath certain notes, and how that links to certain notes within the songs, or certain emotion in the songs.

[Interview 2](#)

But there is the actual vocal techniques and breathing techniques.

[Interview 2](#)

Singer as a, singer, that that question is across the board?

[Interview 2](#)

You do have to do key terminology before that, so you have to be able to vocally describe key terminology and what they mean and things like that.

[Interview 2](#)

So it doesn't actually come in on the knowledge questions until like grade five and above.

[Interview 2](#)

And they do, within their framework of syllabus, show that you do have to have explanations of breathing techniques for the voice, but it doesn't come, breathing techniques for voice doesn't come in until the later grades.

[Interview 2](#)

So especially when it's musical theater, in particular, they their higher focus is on your voice, the feeling and understanding and emotively expressing the emotion that that character is feeling.

[Interview 2](#)

You, There is no requirement for the constant you know your voice can cry for emotion, for your character, because you're acting that character.

[Interview 2](#)

They do obviously require that you sing in the pitch of the music that you are singing to.

Interview 2

you know, articulation, vocal registers, phonetic ability, intonation, all these kind of words all cross over and are part of use teaching and acting as well.

Interview 2

a lot of the key terminology in all of this does cross over into acting and drama technique in general.

Interview 2

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

Interview 2

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

Interview 2

And you're like, great, but nobody thinks about that in terms of her voice, and nobody thinks, I think some of it as well is the misunderstanding of how long your voice needs to be warmed up before you're ready to sing a to sing a song.

Interview 2

I don't have a piano at my house, but I also have recordings of piano scales.

Interview 2

But I know some that don't do any scale singing, unless they're doing ABRSM or something like that, and they have to if it's part of something they are doing

Interview 2

And there's, there's loads of factors that are, that are that they can that you facing against when trying to find suitable material, and there's not a lot of you can Google it, but there's not a lot there

[Interview 2](#)

And then let's see, because it's sometimes, even when you transpose it, it's not great, yeah, sometimes

[Interview 2](#)

Let's look at a few different versions of the music of this.

[Interview 2](#)

I have loads of students, particularly teenage girls, that will come to being like I want to sing this, and I have to say to them, you we possibly can.

[Interview 2](#)

Sometimes you can, you know, I ask students that go to auditions all the time, and they will be asked for the key that they would like to sing that in, especially if it's going to be piano, because if you've got a pianist there, choose the key.

[Interview 2](#)

I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead.

[Interview 1](#)

You have to be brave and you have to take the step out and with good guidance, obviously with good guidance and make sure that the techniques supports it.

[Interview 1](#)

And sometimes it's just great, they can just go ah, i feel like I can breathe just for an hour, and then you know, enjoying what they're doing and then and then go out and I have to say again, I think I've been a very, very lucky teacher in that, I have I can't really I can probably only count on one hand, any resistance that I found from students, but a lot of my students only come voluntarily for one to one because in their four or certainly in foundation year and in level four, they don't get any one believers.

[Interview 1](#)

It might be nice calm energy, it might just be replacing for the rest of the day if they've got a load of stuff lined up for their afternoon or whatever which they often do on their busy schedules.

[Interview 1](#)

And you go right, let's get let's get a little bit of energy back in the body in some form.

[Interview 1](#)

You know, the student was very, very pliable and willing to try different things but no point that they ever say I don't want this voice at the moment because I know things aren't going to change and

[Interview 1](#)

So but yeah, I'm probably they'll probably be lots more teachers that you speak to that have got much more individual experience of difficulties in that area, which I'm sorry I'm not able to all my experiences have been quite positive ones, even though they've been slightly It's very odd to be hearing music of the night come out of someone that is very much looking forward to being female and is fully in the whole female thing with full makeup and the hairdo and everything and is relishing when it's all going to be the thing but still is able to knock out brilliant bass notes.

[Interview 1](#)

Where's it going to give us the best results?

[Interview 1](#)

They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it.

[Interview 1](#)

But it needs her repertoire needs broadening out and also she's she's from Lithuania, so she naturally has that quite far back so far back in promo and for traditional you know, your Italian repertoire and things like that.

[Interview 1](#)

It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands.

[Interview 1](#)

And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows what you know, what's being cast, he knows he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House.

[Interview 1](#)

And I am quite picky and they get fed up with me banging on about you're not opening your mouth, you're not relaxing your jaw your your posture is not good.

[Interview 1](#)

Always do your warmup before you get to uni,

[Interview 1](#)

Yeah, so they do a bit of voice, but then somebody has to stand up and sing a song that they need top G's or top A's for, Well, I wasn't warmed up to there and that's and that's why I try and instil in them there's taking on board your personal responsibility for your voice.

[Interview 1](#)

There should be a little bit more relaxation around the key that you sing something because sometimes there can be a very beautiful song that the student really relates to the lyrics of that they feel they can express well, but it's just not in a good key for them.

[Interview 1](#)

It's not like if you were actually singing a show or if you're in an opera, there is less opportunity to change stuff, just the way that the whole thing the whole machine.

[Interview 1](#)

I think er I think I think there should be more freedom in certainly in the exams.

[Interview 1](#)

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

[Interview 1](#)

This can't be worked in with a bit of technical, er, kind of thought and trying out, you know, obviously, there are some things that some voices just won't do certain things, which is absolutely fine.

[Interview 1](#)

This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit.

[Interview 1](#)

And the more that that happens, the more analytical they will become of what they're actually hearing, but also giving them the tools to then if they don't like that, or if it doesn't feel comfortable, if it's not a sound that they think well, that's not a usable sound for me, giving them the tools to then go, right you can try A, B or C here to make an improvement.

[Interview 1](#)

How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for.

[Interview 1](#)

And if we can find I think what you're coming down to is the fact that some students are still at that point where they don't really recognise themselves yet, as what they're fully fully grown person is going to be and therefore that we're in that kind of no man's land of what how do I see my voice portraying who I think I am?

[Interview 1](#)

And they were also meant to listen for students who were maybe uncomfortable in any part of that exercise.

[Interview 1](#)

So they will take charge and I had to make sure that they explained what the exercise was, what it was for, what it was meant to achieve, how they do it.

Interview 1

Part of their thing was that part of their class work was that individually, they had to provide the warm up for start of class.

Interview 1

Sometimes you just literally have to do an exercise which actually sounds very boring, but gets you a very good result over time.

Interview 1

But it all comes back to that thing of getting good basic technique, which drives me crazy sometimes because I think students are encouraged obviously, to enjoy singing, and therefore some of the exercises and things that they are given they are designed to be fun so that they'll do them.

Interview 1

If you want to get good it doesn't always have to be fun.

Interview 1

But actually, when I'm listening to them, do them a they don't actually understand what the outcome of those exercises is meant to be.

Interview 1

Let's see what you're not happy with or what you would like to change because there is a whole gamut of stuff that can be altered through continuous practice and working in a way that the voice slightly changes if you like we're never going to get a massive kind of you know different voice but we can we can alter the way the perception of the voice for the student is kind of heard if you like yeah but yeah, I think probably the, I don't know.

Interview 1

Let's see what you've got.

Interview 1

So I do kind of try and promote this.

Interview 1

You will never be satisfied with the end result of that, because it's not the way your mechanics work.

Interview 1

It won't do that.

Interview 1

I want to sing like this singer and then I go, your voice doesn't like singing like that.

Interview 1

sounds that have been given to maximise its potential if you like.

Interview 1

I'm always banging on about you have to sing with your sound

Interview 1

Maybe I've been a lucky teacher in that it has been a positive experience because as far as I'm coming from, what I work towards is a healthy voice.

Framework feedback (49)

Focus group

also another thing maybe, like, because obviously, if I want to do musical theater and stuff, it's there's a lot of moving around with, like, walking while singing stuff, which I struggle with, the breathing aspect of it sometimes.

Focus group

So maybe, like, could work on the movement with the singing at the same time.

Focus group

that really got me being able to feel where the tension actually was. I'd like to see more like, on things that can help you work with your technique, because I'm

working on increasing my range, and I'd like to have particular exercises that, like I can follow that of going to actually work to increase my range, because my range is increased in getting lower, but it stayed at that high note, and I want to get higher than that high note, yeah,

Focus group

I think sometimes the words I'm describing maybe could be a bit more like descriptive, so I can say like my voice feels like, because sometimes I can't really find the right words, like my weird brain.

Focus group

Um, I think, like, describing it in a way that's saying, like, like, what P2 said, like, for a soprano voice, if you don't know, like, what kind of voice you have, like, if you It depends, like, how big of a range you have for your voice.

Focus group

It's like most teachers have, like a strict side and like a soft side, but you'll always have the soft side.

Focus group

You're really, like, it's like, you're never strict.

Focus group

You've got someone who's, like, professionally trained and like, you're not, you're not strict.

Focus group

I mean, I don't want to sound like I'm like, copying what P2 said, but I feel like you're a really good singing teacher.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even

though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Focus group

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Interview 3

Sort of the MOT will then sort of direct me towards whether we need to focus a little bit more on, like the breathing basics and making sure there's a good support system coming into place, and whether they understand breathing.

Interview 3

You are, all this framework is just highlighting those, those beginning levels that we all wish everybody did in a really nice, healthy manner, and just solidifying that this is the, this is the basic approach that we should all take, you know, especially in this instance, with these with, you know, in your case, but across the board I feel,

Interview 3

But if we've got things to help or also what, what this framework does is just reinforce that actually, this sort of base level practice is transferable anyway.

Interview 3

But I think, yeah, definitely, there's definitely some, there's a need to have almost that little frameworks or things we can pull on and use as teachers, because you can't, you know, at my age, I can't just be like, I only teach classical cheers, thanks.

Interview 3

So I really, I really thought it was really good, really like that.

Interview 3

It may, I think it's really good that we're that you're wanting to put the ownership of their voice on them, rather than it coming from us as a well, this is a professional for their your you know, you're under their care and everything.

Interview 3

but no, I really like the use of, I smiled myself when I saw the Chris Johnson stuff and all of that.

[Interview 3](#)

I think it's really it's really good that, you know, we're focusing on descriptors rather than labels.

[Interview 2](#)

This would work cross curricular as well, in terms of, music tuition in general because a lot of the sounds that you use to describe your voice are also used to describe for very younger children, the sounds of instruments or the sacks, you know what I mean.

[Interview 2](#)

yeah, this would work.

[Interview 2](#)

School lessons are 20 minutes, yeah, outside of schools, my lessons are 30/45, or an hour.

[Interview 2](#)

Yeah, I don't allow any children under 12 to do an hour.

[Interview 2](#)

Because I think sometimes I, especially in terms of, like you, I teach lessons are vastly different times.

[Interview 2](#)

Is that 40 minute lesson is that an hour lesson is that,

[Interview 2](#)

Is that, can you condense that to be a 30 minute lesson?

[Interview 2](#)

I think it's, I think, do you know what actually, the only thing that I would maybe, that I can't see on there, but maybe I'm just missing it is to do with the length of time that things should be done for and things that should happen for, because obviously it's one, it's four weeks of lesson plans.

[Interview 2](#)

It's not as complicated as some lesson plans that I have witnessed myself previously because of formats that people require in specific educational requirements.

[Interview 2](#)

It's not using any words that I would consider to be above maybe new, maybe very new, teachers that have maybe only just qualified in either a vocal degree or a musical degree themselves, that are now just individually looking might be a bit like, oh, what does you know?

[Interview 2](#)

What does it mean in terms of implementing and things like that, sometimes that kind of framework, but anybody that's ever read a lesson plan should have been able to use it surely.

[Interview 2](#)

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

[Interview 2](#)

There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework.

[Interview 2](#)

I can do this, this and this and this, so I'm not necessarily examined but I'm at this level.

[Interview 2](#)

but even like you said, it's having that basic framework.

[Interview 2](#)

Because a lot of people one, if you're, if you're new to teaching one to one, that is a weird experience,

[Interview 2](#)

I don't know if it would, as far as my experience in terms of other teachers, especially when I say, if I've got somebody covering my my lessons that are singing based so vocal or singing based the thing that they want the most is a lesson plan

[Interview 2](#)

And I think the the format of it, it still has that, that formal, formality of a lesson, how a lesson flows, but they might not catch on that you're actually dressing certain things that you know as a staff member at the same time

[Interview 2](#)

So I think something that this would work well in terms of having either a new member of staff or new new pupils to you, it would be really good framework, just as a base lesson, so you can start to figure out what that child's voice is, where it is placed within that.

[Interview 2](#)

I thought that the actual framework I thought would work well, just in as a general case of things like new students, and not just in terms of enabling you to understand the range.

[Interview 1](#)

If it's radically different then obviously the chat has to come about, I don't think your mechanism will deal with a radical change but we can make this little alteration But coming back to the teachers, I think for people that maybe do a lot of work with choirs and so on, I think they're going to find that very tricky because the whole choir mentality is based on soprano, alto, tenor bass.

[Interview 1](#)

One of the main ones that comes out is that way to describe your voice and not always saying and that high voice means that it's a soprano voice or a female voice

and this thing of asking your students to to describe their own sound, how and how would they like it to be different?

Interview 1

Whether they actually choose to use it or whether they think it's going to actually not impede but disturb the way that they get their results, I think you probably will find that the odd one will maybe go actually no this is the way I've always done it.

Interview 1

Theres no check on it, there's absolutely nothing, nothing to say all this is fitting in with how to say I don't the majority of the kind of class singing and stuff like that is that other tutors that you need.

Interview 1

How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for.

Interview 1

I think the student awareness thing is very, very good of that.

Interview 1

So that part of it is extremely useful.

Interview 1

I found alot of things very useful because it it presents in a very calm and orderly way.

Interview 1

It might be expressed in a slightly different way, But it's still coming from the same building blocks if you like.

Interview 1

I mean, there's going to be odd things that people maybe haven't come across from looking at your framework.

Standardisation of lessons (5)

Interview 2

But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher.

Interview 3

And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal.

Interview 2

no, but you should know what a pause is, and you should know, you should know what the lengths of the notes mean,

Interview 2

There's no legislation, and there's no framework, and there's no base framework.

Interview 2

Yeah, 45 minutes on your own every single week for 10 years, who's checking what you doing?

Making Changes (25)

Acknowledgement that changes need to happen in the industry

Focus group

And if they want to go and sing classically, if they really do love singing, they may not have learned anything close to what they'll actually need.

Focus group

I think that there should be some sort of guidelines, because then you don't know what these people are learning.

Focus group

I think it will be helpful so that, you know, people know it's not just a random person coming in and you have to listen to them like there is, like a specific thing that they should be doing and shouldn't be doing.

Focus group

It's not someone else just deciding what my singing journey needs to look like.

Focus group

I feel like I'm in control of kind of what I want from my own singing journey.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Interview 3

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Interview 2

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Interview 2

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Interview 2

And I think some, I think sometimes it is also things like the student expectation is that they struggle to understand that they don't have the pitch range, that there's something wrong with their voice, and there isn't anything wrong with their voice.

Interview 2

Sometimes you can, you know, I ask students that go to auditions all the time, and they will be asked for the key that they would like to sing that in, especially if it's going to be piano, because if you've got a pianist there, choose the key.

Interview 1

If you didn't have that faith in me, I would not be doing what I'm doing.

Interview 1

And I think I think that way then they kind of find their journey to to be content with what's there at the moment because it will change and then ultimately it will change again and then it'll change again.

Interview 1

They want to sing a tenor line, okay, and there's no worry, as long as they've got the notes I'm up for that you can be whatever you want to be as long as your voice accommodates it.

Interview 1

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Interview 1

Things that should have been addressed way before that haven't been and it's getting to the point where you go this voice is getting stuck in rut a little bit and it's safe.

Interview 1

We need this, this, this, this and this, and then off we go and then we can explore all the other offshoots that come out of that class, but the basic thing has to be absolutely there and sometimes it's not very exciting, but they get, they do in the end get a lot of satisfaction because they can feel their voices are solid and and safe if you like and I'm all about a safe, safe environment for the voice especially at those young ages.

Interview 1

And the more that that happens, the more analytical they will become of what they're actually hearing, but also giving them the tools to then if they don't like that, or if it doesn't feel comfortable, if it's not a sound that they think well, that's not a usable sound for me, giving them the tools to then go, right you can try A, B or C here to make an improvement.

Interview 1

I think the student awareness thing is very, very good of that.

Interview 1

Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing.

Interview 1

We need a set of things that we know work and that we pass on to the students will go if you do this, there's this this this and this that will make sure you achieve a healthy or a part of your healthy voice building if you like so

Interview 1

needs to be thought put in there needs to be it just needs addressing.

Interview 1

I agree that something needs to be cranked up a little bit there.

Pupil responsibility as well as teacher (12)

Focus group

Well, this is probably just due to my personality. I didn't really think anything of it, but I did get upset when I couldn't sing some particular wordy songs, and it was a lot more work to learn quiet from Matilda at first, because it had so much words.

Interview 3

And it's like, Oh, I've never made that noise before.

Interview 3

We are responsible for them, but giving them that freedom to be like, This is my voice.

Interview 3

And you are, we are.

Interview 3

It may, I think it's really good that we're that you're wanting to put the ownership of their voice on them, rather than it coming from us as a well, this is a professional for their your you know, you're under their care and everything.

Interview 3

I think it's really it's really good that, you know, we're focusing on descriptors rather than labels.

Interview 2

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

Interview 1

They all come in with the all these different things and going oh, that's great.

Interview 1

It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands.

Interview 1

And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows what you know, what's being cast, he knows he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House.

Interview 1

And what works for one doesn't work for everybody.

Interview 1

So so it's I just I can't instil in them the importance of taking on board their own responsibility for their own body they do if they had dance lessons, they will do it at home

Teaching in real time, working with the voice as it sounds today (69)

Interview 2

But think the, I think the hardest thing is just trying to find things that are appropriate for everyone, and I don't think that comes to somebody that's not I'm not a trained just individual singing teacher.

Interview 3

It doesn't matter that that's and that's not, that's not gender specific, either it's that, But I think, I have a theory, and there's a little bit of research that has about the sort they all do at the pitch we speak,

Focus group

as a dancer, I do musical theater as one of my dancers, but I hear what you're saying, because we have to sing while dancing full out, and it does mean that breath control becomes something really important, but I think that is a really hard one, because you're in a singing lesson, you're not in a moving lesson, yeah.

Focus group

And I think, you know, when teachers go, that was good, but like, just tell me what I did wrong.

Focus group

okay, I'm gonna speak. Um, yeah, definitely. It's kind of built into everything that I've been saying. But I think that my lessons have made me even more confident that I am a singer. I could sing. Before that anyone can sing. But I've told people I like I do sing lessons, and this shows them a lot about me, and it kind of is one thing I can tell people that I'm proud of, that I can just use willingly to show people part of me.

Focus group

It's for a soprano voice that's very staccato and is very smooth and elegant and feminine, then I might think that might put me off the song at first, but also that might not be suited to my voice.

Focus group

Back in primary school, we had one teacher, she was really nice, called XXXXX, but she taught us quite open jawed singing. And that worked for soft songs, but when it came to then more wordy songs I was trying to sing with my jaw quite open, and it meant that the words weren't coming out properly. And then it meant that I tightened my jaw. And then it meant it was hard in the future to have my jaw loose again for the long notes.

Focus group

this is quite brutally honest. I really like your teaching style, and I feel like I've become like you're a friend to me now, in a way, like I've known you for ages. But the main thing, I really want to cover some more things that would enable me to sing classically, because I want to cover scales, I want to cover like practicing my range, so that I have a choice to become a classical singer or a pop singer, even though I prefer pop right now, I might prefer classical in the future, and to build on that

Interview 3

So a common thing is breathiness in the upper register.

Interview 3

They well, they get the full, MOT the first lesson, so that then means I can tailor it a little bit more specific.

Interview 3

Yeah, yeah, it's so hard.

Interview 3

yeah its all mid.

Interview 3

Or there's a or it's, you can pick from these three keys, which is better than it was.

Interview 3

And I mean, there are flaws, because there are flaws with ABRSM anyway, but different conversation, but she there was some leniency within keys.

Interview 3

You are, all this framework is just highlighting those, those beginning levels that we all wish everybody did in a really nice, healthy manner, and just solidifying that this is the, this is the basic approach that we should all take, you know, especially in this instance, with these with, you know, in your case, but across the board I feel,

Interview 3

But if we've got things to help or also what, what this framework does is just reinforce that actually, this sort of base level practice is transferable anyway.

[Interview 3](#)

And yes, I believe that primarily, the beginning practice that you teach in singing is universal.

[Interview 2](#)

I personally always give if I've got sheet music available, I give sheet music,

[Interview 2](#)

So that for acting, speaking verse and pros, public speaking and singing, you have to be able to explain breathing techniques that you as a performer have individually used yourself and developed across there, not only in your preparation of that performance, but what you in terms of techniques within the performance.

[Interview 2](#)

So even if you're acting, it could be something as simple as shallow breaths to show that your character is out of breath, to something as complex as describing your full diaphragmatic breathing, the exercise that you do before you go on stage, and then how you're holding that diaphragmatic breath certain notes, and how that links to certain notes within the songs, or certain emotion in the songs.

[Interview 2](#)

When actually realize they're not really singing that song, they're just mimicking that song.

[Interview 2](#)

No, I really like the idea of the descriptions of the voices, because I think that gives ownership of what their voice sounds like, and also give students an ability to understand on a day when their voice is not doing what they wanted to do, that actually their voice is different from what it normally sounds like, or they've got a little bit of a cold that's remaining in their throat, or they ate a lot of dairy products that day.

[Interview 2](#)

it isn't and it's not what they want to do either, but they but the school had insisted that only ABRSM are status enough for that school, and she actually went to several of the different like types manager, her line manager and then the assistant head, and then the head, and said, three of these students, this exam is not accessible for them.

[Interview 2](#)

And you're like, great, but nobody thinks about that in terms of her voice, and nobody thinks, I think some of it as well is the misunderstanding of how long your voice needs to be warmed up before you're ready to sing a to sing a song.

[Interview 2](#)

But I know some that don't do any scale singing, unless they're doing ABRSM or something like that, and they have to if it's part of something they are doing

[Interview 2](#)

It's only what theme they're doing or where they've got to when I'll get in there, when it's one to one, what they want is a lesson plan.

[Interview 2](#)

And there's, there's loads of factors that are, that are that they can that you facing against when trying to find suitable material, and there's not a lot of you can Google it, but there's not a lot there

[Interview 2](#)

I have loads of students, particularly teenage girls, that will come to being like I want to sing this, and I have to say to them, you we possibly can.

[Interview 2](#)

Sometimes you can, you know, I ask students that go to auditions all the time, and they will be asked for the key that they would like to sing that in, especially if it's going to be piano, because if you've got a pianist there, choose the key.

[Interview 2](#)

I think the hardest thing is not necessarily, even with students that are non binary or who are not identifying as the gender they were born with is more to do with the differences in voice and how you actually teach those based on what it is instead.

Interview 1

And I think again, it comes back down to if you sing high you've got to sing soprano and a choir or you've got to, it identifies you as something almost classical, which when they're that age, and they're studying musical theatre, they don't want to be associated with that.

Interview 1

You have to be brave and you have to take the step out and with good guidance, obviously with good guidance and make sure that the techniques supports it.

Interview 1

And sometimes it's just great, they can just go ah, i feel like I can breathe just for an hour, and then you know, enjoying what they're doing and then and then go out and I have to say again, I think I've been a very, very lucky teacher in that, I have I can't really I can probably only count on one hand, any resistance that I found from students, but a lot of my students only come voluntarily for one to one because in their four or certainly in foundation year and in level four, they don't get any one believers.

Interview 1

And you go right, let's get let's get a little bit of energy back in the body in some form.

Interview 1

And so I do always encourage students to I can, you can usually tell if they're in a great mood or if they're not in a great mood.

Interview 1

You know, the student was very, very pliable and willing to try different things but no point that they ever say I don't want this voice at the moment because I know things aren't going to change and

Interview 1

So again, we just come back down to let's get the best out of this voice as it is at the moment.

Interview 1

Where's it going to give us the best results?

Interview 1

Where is it happy?

Interview 1

So that kind of teacher, and I'm you know to I go yes, go and sing with a special go and go and work with this with this person that will help you to use your lyrics in the right way and go and go and just take what you can take all the experiences, you know, no top musicians ever just stuck with one person

Interview 1

It's a very unique sort of sound, which needs very careful attention, which this teacher has been giving it, very careful attention and very safe pair of hands.

Interview 1

And they had a great session with him and really enjoyed his approach and how it worked them and that one of the students had come forward and said, Is there any chance that I could have just the kind of lesson with Graham or whatever, just to just to get a different input and because Graham's in the industry as well, he knows what you know, what's being cast, he knows he's casting for for Fribourg Opera House.

Interview 1

He knows what he's listening for.

Interview 1

And what there's a singing teacher that that I work with with the upper class and so on.

Interview 1

And I had a very, very good singing teacher when I first went to the RSA MD, who put me totally on the right lines and I've I've had different teachers and tutors since then, and I've taken bits from them that applied to me and ditch the other bits and so on.

Interview 1

So it's really important that we get the safety element in there as well, which again, sometimes is overlooked in the fact that there's so much to be done.

Interview 1

And I am quite picky and they get fed up with me banging on about you're not opening your mouth, you're not relaxing your jaw your your posture is not good.

Interview 1

My student feedback for me has always been we love your warm ups.

Interview 1

And I know from feedback from the students that shouldn't really be telling me these things when they're being taught by, these things by other tutors but they do they just blurt you know, as they do and then which shows that they actually they don't want any you know, it doesn't go any further to those bachelors tutors or anything it sticks with me, but they feel quite a lot of the time this person that's taking a song class with us doesn't warm us up.

Interview 1

Coming from let's work with the tools the built the basic blocks that you've been given.

Interview 1

But listen to the whole thing of you know year on year on year you will notice change you'll notice changes in your voice probably from when you started singing, you're still noticing changes you will see them until you're 85/90 there will be changes in your voice and you know, and not and the changes are not a pattern they don't all happen the same way for everybody which again, is why we need to address the individual sound, not the clump if you like which is definitely kind of where I come from with my teaching in order to get the most confident student the most happy student with their voices.

Interview 1

There should be a little bit more relaxation around the key that you sing something because sometimes there can be a very beautiful song that the student really

relates to the lyrics of that they feel they can express well, but it's just not in a good key for them.

[Interview 1](#)

Let's see where your actual where your voice actually is happy where a lies naturally where its natural limits are and then let's have a little look relook at your your repertoire, but that doesn't mean that they're not going to be things that they've done.

[Interview 1](#)

Of let's take it back to basics.

[Interview 1](#)

And mixed with something that kind of needs a bit of chest voice and a bit of and then I hear the student and I go these don't marry up just because there are on the syllabus that doesn't mean that they work for you.

[Interview 1](#)

Oh, do you feel after you've sung this, you know, you should be able to sing this five times and still feel fine because it's it's not about can I hit the notes, it's about how your whole technique deals with that.

[Interview 1](#)

" Yeah, it's not all about whether you can actually make a sound it's whether your voice is happy going there and happy sustaining and happy being there.

[Interview 1](#)

Urm, But what worries me sometimes is when a student comes to me and they go or I want to sing that song from The Magic Flute, the one that the Queen of the Night sings with all the high notes and I'm going well, actually, you know, given what you've already sung to me, maybe with some low to medium to low musical theatre stuff, I'd said it's unlikely that your voice will want to do that "oh but I can make these noises up there.

[Interview 1](#)

This can't be worked in with a bit of technical, er, kind of thought and trying out, you know, obviously, there are some things that some voices just won't do certain things, which is absolutely fine.

[Interview 1](#)

This is very, very, very good for my body, but it doesn't mean that this style doesn't suit.

[Interview 1](#)

How would you rate this, that puts the control back to them, mix them listen carefully to what they're doing and not just regurgitating what they think that you're looking for.

[Interview 1](#)

Yeah, I just come back to the whole thing of if we maximise the potential of whatever voice the student is working with, then I think that's already going to make them feel that they're in control of things a little bit more, and that they're not trying to be something that they're not, and it's all comes back down to the identity thing.

[Interview 1](#)

We need a set of things that we know work and that we pass on to the students will go if you do this, there's this this this and this that will make sure you achieve a healthy or a part of your healthy voice building if you like so

[Interview 1](#)

But if it's not actually producing the correct results, and if it's not actually aiding the student in the right way, then I think that also needs addressing, I like the fact that they get a chance to take control of the class if you like them to to show what skills they've got.

[Interview 1](#)

It's great to give them control.

[Interview 1](#)

Now there are quite a lot of those things being missed along the line.

Interview 1

But it all comes back to that thing of getting good basic technique, which drives me crazy sometimes because I think students are encouraged obviously, to enjoy singing, and therefore some of the exercises and things that they are given they are designed to be fun so that they'll do them.

Interview 1

But actually, when I'm listening to them, do them a they don't actually understand what the outcome of those exercises is meant to be.

Interview 1

Let's see what you've got.

18) Links to Government Policies and Legislation

The Power of Music to change lives - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education>

National Curriculum for Music key stage 3 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-music-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-music-programmes-of-study>

Full National Curriculum for music
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4>

Model Music Curriculum - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6061f833d3bf7f5ce1060a90/Model_Music_Curriculum_Full.pdf

A framework for progression in musical learning - https://www.musicmark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/peer-to-peer_progression_framework.pdf

19) Links to online consent forms

<https://form.jotform.com/241551345394356>

<https://form.jotform.com/241612444298357>

<https://form.jotform.com/241892765118061>

<https://form.jotform.com/241964298561367>