BMPF 7010

Work-Based Learning Project

Navigating the Fog: How Learners Experience Agency, Clarity and Pedagogical Plurality in Contemporary Voice Pedagogy

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Part A – Project Proposal

1. Context and Positioning

My professional practice is situated within contemporary voice pedagogy, with a focus on musical theatre and commercial contemporary music (MT/CCM) training contexts. I work with singers across stages of development, from advanced students to early-career performers and professional voice users, and engage with teachers navigating evolving pedagogical frameworks. Within these contexts, singers are expected to demonstrate stylistic flexibility, technical reliability, and psychological resilience in demanding learning and performance environments.

Through my previous work on Teaching Between Pressures and Permissions: *A Reflexive Practitioner Inquiry into Voice Teaching, Agency, and Reflective Diagnostics,* I critically examined how institutional expectations, pedagogical norms, and tacit assumptions shape learner experience. That inquiry identified recurring tensions between efficiency and sustainability, authority and autonomy, and clarity and ambiguity within studio-based voice teaching. While practitioner-focused and reflexive in nature, it raised questions that could not be answered through reflection alone, particularly concerning how learners themselves experience and interpret these tensions within contemporary voice pedagogy.

This project therefore marks a shift from practitioner self-inquiry to primary, participant-informed research. Rather than developing or testing a new pedagogical model, the study explores the lived experiences of singing teachers, student singers, and early-career performers, attending to perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within contemporary vocal pedagogy.

The inquiry is situated within a landscape characterised by the coexistence of multiple explanatory frameworks, including anatomically informed “evidence-based” approaches alongside heuristic or metaphor-driven traditions. While such plurality can be productive, a lack of epistemological clarity or reflective integration may contribute to confusion or diminished learner agency (Schön, 1983; Finlay, 2008).

By foregrounding experiences of clarity, confusion, agency, and trust, the study positions itself as a listening exercise intended to inform more reflective and adaptive pedagogical development. In doing so, it aligns with constructivist and grounded approaches that view knowledge as co-constructed, situated, and responsive to lived experience (Charmaz, 2014).

2. Justification

The study is justified by converging pedagogical and epistemological concerns within contemporary voice education. Despite advances in vocal science, psychology, and performance research, a persistent gap remains between what is known, how it is taught, and how it is experienced in practice. This gap often manifests not as technical deficiency, but as inconsistency, ambiguity, or a lack of coherence in how pedagogical knowledge is framed and interpreted.

Within MT/CCM contexts, singers are frequently exposed to multiple pedagogical approaches, including anatomically informed explanations, technique-specific systems, stylistic conventions, and experiential or metaphor-based strategies. While such plurality can be productive, research in music and performing arts education suggests that unresolved inconsistency may undermine learner confidence, agency, and trust when not accompanied by reflective integration or transparent sense-making (Bowman, 2009; Carey et al., 2021). In such circumstances, learners may become dependent on external authority rather than developing adaptive understanding.

From a learner-centred perspective, agency is closely linked to motivation, resilience, and wellbeing. Environments that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness are more likely to foster sustained engagement (Deci and Ryan, 2000). When pedagogical explanations are experienced as contradictory or insufficiently contextualised, learners may struggle to evaluate information critically or take ownership of their development. This is particularly salient in voice training, where embodied experience and identity intersect with technical instruction (Finlay, 2008; Dayme, 2009).

Although reflective and holistic approaches are increasingly advocated, literature often prioritises the promotion of particular methods over examination of how pedagogical conditions are received by learners. Reflective practice is frequently framed as an individual responsibility of teachers rather than as a relational and systemic feature of pedagogical design (Schön, 1983; Finlay, 2008). Consequently, learner perspectives remain comparatively underrepresented.

This project therefore seeks to foreground participant accounts of perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs, illuminating how pedagogical practices are interpreted in situ. A qualitative, grounded approach is appropriate for this purpose, enabling the emergence of participant-led themes and prioritising lived meaning-making (Charmaz, 2014). In doing so, the study contributes an experience-led perspective that may inform more reflective and learner-responsive pedagogical development.

3. Intended Impact

The intended impact of this project is pedagogical and developmental. By examining how contemporary vocal pedagogy is experienced by singing teachers, student singers, and early-career performers, the study seeks to inform reflective dialogue within the field rather than promote a specific method.

At a practitioner level, the project aims to increase awareness of moments where learners experience confusion, diminished agency, or uncertainty in response to pedagogical explanations or expectations. By articulating these experiences, the study may prompt teachers to reflect more critically on how knowledge is framed, how authority is communicated, and how autonomy is supported within the learning relationship (Schön, 1983; Carey et al., 2021).

For learners and early-career performers, the study seeks to legitimise experiences that are often privately held but rarely acknowledged within formal discourse. Recognising confusion or unmet need as meaningful data rather than personal failure may support greater agency and self-trust, aligning with perspectives that view understanding as co-constructed rather than transmitted (Vygotsky, 1978; Finlay, 2008).

At a broader disciplinary level, the project contributes to conversations about epistemological clarity within voice pedagogy. By examining how participants navigate tensions between evidence-informed and experiential approaches, the study may highlight areas where greater transparency and integration could support sustainable and ethical teaching practice (Bowman, 2009; Charmaz, 2014).

4. Outlined Intention

This project involves a small-scale qualitative practitioner research study exploring how singing teachers, student singers, and early-career performers perceive and interpret gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within contemporary vocal pedagogy.

The study adopts a qualitative, constructivist approach informed by grounded theory principles to support the inductive development of insight from participant accounts (Charmaz, 2014). The focus is experiential and interpretive, attending to how participants describe clarity, confusion, agency, and trust within their learning or teaching contexts.

Data are generated primarily through semi-structured interviews with singing teachers, student singers, and early-career performers. This method provides sufficient structure to address the research questions while allowing participants to foreground aspects of their experience they consider most significant (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Semi-structured interviewing is particularly suited to exploring relational and embodied dimensions of pedagogical experience.

Supplementary survey or written reflection prompts are incorporated as supportive tools to map patterns of experience at a descriptive level and broaden participation. These elements contextualise and enrich the qualitative analysis without displacing its central role.

Analysis is iterative and reflexive, involving cycles of coding, constant comparison, and memo-writing to identify recurring themes, tensions, and divergences across accounts (Charmaz, 2014). Particular attention is given to how participants describe the coexistence of pedagogical approaches, the negotiation of authority and autonomy, and the impact of pedagogical communication on understanding and agency.

Throughout the project, reflexivity is maintained in relation to my dual role as practitioner and researcher. Positionality is acknowledged as an integral feature of insider practitioner research, supporting ethical transparency and analytic accountability (Finlay, 2002). The project seeks to generate grounded insight that informs future pedagogical reflection while remaining proportionate to the scope of the study.

5. Expected Learning Outcomes

Through this project, I expect to develop a more critically informed understanding of how contemporary vocal pedagogy is experienced within MT/CCM contexts. In particular, the study extends my awareness of how gaps, tensions, and unmet needs are perceived by participants, and how these perceptions may differ from pedagogical intentions.

Methodologically, the project strengthens my competence in designing and conducting qualitative practitioner research. This includes refining the use of semi-structured interviews to explore complex experiential phenomena, integrating supplementary data coherently, and deepening my understanding of inductive analysis through iterative coding, memo-writing, and reflexive sense-making (Charmaz, 2014).

The project also enhances my reflexivity as an insider researcher. By critically engaging with my dual role as practitioner and researcher, I have developed greater sensitivity to power dynamics, assumptions, and interpretive influence within the research process (Finlay, 2002; Schön, 1983).

In relation to pedagogical practice, the study informs more reflective decision-making. Engagement with participant accounts of clarity, confusion, agency, and trust supports a more responsive and ethically attentive approach to teaching that foregrounds epistemological clarity without defaulting to prescriptive models.

Completing the full cycle of practitioner research consolidates skills transferable to future inquiry and professional dialogue within voice education.

Beyond immediate methodological and pedagogical development, this project strengthens my capacity to engage critically and responsibly within contemporary voice education. By synthesising participant insight with theoretical perspectives, I am better positioned to contribute to ongoing conversations about agency, epistemological clarity, and pedagogical plurality. The research process has reinforced the importance of relational trust, adaptive communication, and reflective integration in sustaining ethical and effective teaching practice. These outcomes extend beyond the scope of this study and inform my continued development as a practitioner-scholar.

Part B – Project Report

1. Introduction

This project investigated perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within contemporary vocal pedagogy, drawing on the experiences of singing teachers, student singers, and early-career performers working within musical theatre and commercial contemporary music (MT/CCM) contexts. The study emerged from a recognition that, despite significant developments in vocal science, pedagogy, and performance research, singers and teachers often report uncertainty, confusion, or difficulty integrating multiple pedagogical frameworks within their learning and teaching experiences.

Voice pedagogy within MT/CCM training environments is characterised by stylistic plurality, technical hybridity, and high performance demands. Singers are commonly expected to move flexibly between genres, vocal qualities, and expressive demands while maintaining vocal health, consistency, and employability. Within this landscape, pedagogical explanations may draw variously on anatomical and acoustical models, stylistic conventions, experiential metaphors, or lineage-based traditions. While such diversity can offer rich learning opportunities, it may also generate tension when frameworks are presented without clear epistemological positioning or reflective integration (Bozeman, 2013; Carey et al., 2021).

Existing literature in music and voice education has increasingly acknowledged the complexity of learning processes that involve embodied experience, identity, and relational dynamics (Gaunt and Westerlund, 2013; Nijs et al., 2017). However, much pedagogical discourse continues to focus on advocating specific methods or systems, often emphasising technical outcomes rather than examining how pedagogical conditions are experienced by learners and teachers. As a result, the voices of students and early-career performers are frequently underrepresented in discussions of pedagogical development, particularly in relation to agency, trust, and sense-making within the studio environment.

This project was informed by concerns raised in my prior reflexive inquiry *(Teaching Between Pressures and Permissions: A Reflexive Practitioner Inquiry into Voice Teaching, Agency, and Reflective Diagnostics.)*, which examined how institutional expectations, professional norms, and pedagogical assumptions shape teaching practice. That work highlighted recurring tensions between efficiency and sustainability, authority and autonomy, and clarity and ambiguity in voice teaching contexts. While reflexive practitioner inquiry provided insight into my own assumptions and practices, it also revealed the limitations of self-reflection as a sole source of pedagogical

understanding. In response, the present study extended the inquiry to include participant perspectives, recognising that pedagogical knowledge is co-constructed and situated within relational contexts (Schön, 1983; Finlay, 2008).

The study was guided by the overarching research question:
RQ1: What perceived gaps, tensions, or unmet needs are experienced by singing teachers and learners within current vocal pedagogy, and how might these insights inform future pedagogical development?

To explore this question in greater depth, three subsidiary questions addressed experiences of clarity, confusion, and agency; perceived tensions between evidence-based and heuristic approaches; and pedagogical features that influence autonomy, understanding, and trust within learning relationships:
RQ2: How do student singers and early-career performers describe experiences of confusion, clarity, and agency when engaging with different approaches to vocal pedagogy?
RQ3: What tensions or contradictions do participants perceive between more “evidence-based” and more heuristic/experiential approaches to voice teaching across MT/CCM styles?
RQ4: Which pedagogical features are experienced as enhancing or constraining autonomy, understanding, and trust within the learning relationship, and how might these insights inform more reflective and adaptive models of contemporary voice pedagogy?

Together, these questions positioned the inquiry as exploratory rather than evaluative, prioritising participant interpretation over the validation of predefined pedagogical claims.

Conceptually, the project sits at the intersection of voice pedagogy, reflective practice, and learner-centred education. Educational research suggests that learner agency and autonomy are closely linked to motivation, wellbeing, and sustainable engagement, particularly in creative and performance-based disciplines (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Niemiec and Ryan, 2009). Within voice training, where learning is embodied and emotionally invested, pedagogical approaches that obscure agency or undermine trust may have significant consequences for both vocal development and performer identity (Dayme, 2009; McCoy, 2012).

Recent scholarship has increasingly called for greater epistemological clarity and reflexivity within music and performing arts education. Carey et al. (2021) argue that pedagogical traditions often persist through tacit transmission rather than critical examination, leading to contradictions that

learners must navigate independently. Similarly, Gaunt, Creech, and Hallam (2017) highlight the importance of explicitly addressing learning processes and power dynamics in one-to-one teaching contexts, noting that unexamined authority can limit student agency and critical engagement.

In voice pedagogy specifically, debates continue regarding the relationship between scientific explanation and experiential learning. While evidence-informed approaches have contributed valuable insight into vocal function and health, several authors caution against over-reliance on technical language that may not align with learners' embodied experience (Bozeman, 2013; Titze, 2021). Conversely, purely heuristic or metaphor-based teaching, when unanchored from shared understanding, may leave learners uncertain about causality, applicability, or transferability. The present study does not seek to resolve this tension, but rather to examine how it is perceived and negotiated by those working within it.

Methodologically, the project adopted a qualitative, practitioner-research orientation, recognising that experiences of pedagogy are subjective, contextual, and meaning-laden. By engaging directly with participant accounts, the study aimed to surface patterns of experience that may otherwise remain implicit or normalised within studio culture. Such an approach aligns with constructivist perspectives that view knowledge as emergent through interaction rather than as an objective entity to be transmitted (Charmaz, 2014; Nijs et al., 2017).

The intended contribution of this project lies not in proposing a new pedagogical model, but in offering a grounded account of how contemporary vocal pedagogy is experienced from multiple perspectives. By identifying perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs, the study seeks to inform more reflective and adaptive approaches to voice teaching that attend to learner agency, epistemological transparency, and relational trust. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing conversations about ethical, sustainable, and learner-responsive practice within MT/CCM voice education.

2. Literature Review

The literature was identified through a purposive and iterative scoping process, drawing primarily on peer-reviewed research in voice pedagogy, music education, and educational theory. Searches were conducted using academic databases including Google Scholar and ERIC, alongside targeted journal searches and citation chaining from key texts within the field. Literature was selected for its conceptual relevance to pedagogical practice, learner experience, and epistemological framing rather than for exhaustive coverage. This approach reflects the study's

qualitative, exploratory orientation and its aim to surface tensions, gaps, and contested assumptions within contemporary voice pedagogy, rather than to synthesise findings or evaluate pedagogical effectiveness.

2.1 Voice Pedagogy as a Plural and Hybrid Field

Contemporary voice pedagogy, particularly within musical theatre and contemporary commercial music (MT/CCM), is characterised by plurality rather than consensus. Unlike Western classical singing, which has historically developed within relatively stable stylistic, aesthetic, and institutional parameters, MT/CCM voice training operates across shifting stylistic demands, performance contexts, and professional expectations. As a result, the pedagogical landscape is populated by a range of coexisting approaches, drawing variably on vocal science, somatic practices, experiential heuristics, stylistic traditions, and individual teacher lineages (McCoy, 2012; Dayme, 2009; Bozeman, 2013).

This plurality is not inherently problematic. Indeed, many scholars argue that stylistic diversity and pedagogical flexibility are necessary responses to the demands of contemporary performance practice (Titze, 2021; Nijs et al., 2017). However, the absence of a shared pedagogical language or agreed epistemological framework means that voice pedagogy often functions as a hybrid field in which different explanatory systems coexist without clear articulation of their underlying assumptions. As Carey et al. (2021) observe, music and performing arts education frequently draws upon overlapping traditions of craft knowledge, scientific explanation, and experiential learning, yet rarely makes explicit how these forms of knowledge relate to one another.

Within this context, pedagogical authority is often located in the perceived expertise or embodied success of the teacher, rather than in transparent models of learning. One-to-one studio teaching remains the dominant mode of voice instruction, particularly in professional and pre-professional settings, and is frequently characterised by high levels of trust, emotional investment, and relational intensity (Gaunt et al., 2017). While such environments can support deep learning and artistic growth, they may also obscure the epistemic basis of pedagogical decisions, leaving learners reliant on imitation, compliance, or faith in the teacher’s judgement rather than on personal understanding (Dodsworth, 2025).

Educational research suggests that learning environments which prioritise transmission of expert knowledge without supporting learner sense-making may inadvertently constrain agency and autonomy, even when outcomes appear successful (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Niemiec and Ryan,

2009). In voice pedagogy, this risk is compounded by the embodied and affective nature of vocal learning, where sensations, metaphors, and imagery are often privileged over explicit explanation (Dayme, 2009). While such approaches may be effective in facilitating immediate vocal change, they do not necessarily support long-term learner independence or epistemological clarity.

At the same time, attempts to formalise voice pedagogy through scientific models and anatomical description have introduced their own challenges. Vocal science has generated increasingly detailed accounts of phonation, resonance, and motor coordination, offering valuable descriptive insight into vocal function (Titze, 2021; Bozeman, 2013). However, the translation of these models into pedagogical practice is neither straightforward nor value-neutral. Learners may encounter technically accurate explanations that remain experientially opaque, particularly when scientific terminology is presented without pedagogical mediation or contextualisation (McCoy, 2012).

As a result, contemporary voice pedagogy often involves the simultaneous presence of multiple, and sometimes contradictory, explanatory frameworks. Teachers may alternate between scientific, metaphorical, and experiential modes of instruction within a single session, without explicitly signalling the epistemological status or purpose of each. From a practitioner perspective, this hybridity may be experienced as pragmatic flexibility. From a learner perspective, however, it may generate uncertainty about what constitutes understanding, progress, or reliable knowledge.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to reflective practice and learner-centred education within music training (Schön, 1983; Finlay, 2008; Gaunt and Westerlund, 2013), relatively little research has examined how singers themselves navigate this plural pedagogical environment. In particular, there remains a lack of empirical insight into how learners and early-career performers experience the coexistence of divergent pedagogical approaches, how they interpret conflicting explanations, and how these experiences shape their sense of agency, trust, and autonomy within the learning relationship.

2.2 Evidence-Based Approaches and Their Pedagogical Translation

Over the past several decades, advances in vocal science have significantly reshaped understandings of vocal function, offering increasingly detailed descriptions of phonation, resonance, registration, and motor coordination. Research grounded in acoustics, physiology, and motor learning has contributed valuable insight into how the voice operates, challenging long-held assumptions and myths within traditional singing pedagogy (Titze, 2021; McCoy, 2012). Within MT/CCM contexts in particular, evidence-based approaches have been positioned as a means of

addressing the technical demands of contemporary repertoire while promoting vocal health and sustainability across diverse performance styles.

The growing influence of vocal science has also been accompanied by calls for greater pedagogical rigour and accountability. Proponents of evidence-based voice teaching argue that anatomically and acoustically informed instruction can provide singers with clearer explanations, reduce reliance on ambiguous imagery, and support more consistent outcomes (Bozeman, 2013). From this perspective, scientific models offer a corrective to pedagogical traditions that rely heavily on metaphor or tacit knowledge, enabling teachers to articulate *why* particular coordinations occur rather than simply demonstrating *that* they do.

However, the pedagogical translation of vocal science is neither straightforward nor unproblematic. While scientific descriptions may be technically accurate, they do not automatically function as effective learning tools. Educational research consistently distinguishes between expert knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, noting that the ability to explain a phenomenon does not guarantee that learners can meaningfully integrate that explanation into embodied practice (Shulman, 1986). In voice pedagogy, this distinction is particularly salient, as learning is mediated through sensation, proprioception, and affect as much as through conceptual understanding.

Several authors have noted that singers may encounter scientific explanations that feel abstract, overwhelming, or disconnected from lived vocal experience, particularly when terminology is introduced without adequate scaffolding (McCoy, 2012; Titze, 2021). Concepts such as formant tuning, inertive reactance, or laryngeal tilt may offer descriptive precision, yet remain experientially opaque for learners who lack the conceptual or sensory frameworks required to apply them. In such cases, evidence-based language risks functioning as an authoritative discourse rather than an empowering one, reinforcing dependence on expert interpretation rather than fostering learner agency.

This tension reflects a broader challenge within professional education, where the privileging of technical knowledge can inadvertently marginalise experiential understanding. Schön (1983) famously distinguishes between “technical rationality” and “reflection-in-action”, arguing that professional practice involves forms of knowing that cannot be fully captured by formal theory. Within voice pedagogy, attempts to translate scientific models directly into instructional language may therefore overlook the situated, adaptive, and relational nature of vocal learning.

At the same time, critiques of evidence-based pedagogy risk oversimplification if they frame scientific approaches as inherently restrictive or alienating. Empirical research in music education suggests that clarity, structure, and explanatory coherence can support learner confidence and autonomy when appropriately mediated (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009). The issue, then, is not the presence of scientific knowledge per se, but how it is framed, contextualised, and integrated into pedagogical relationships.

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasised the need for epistemological reflexivity in arts education, calling for greater attention to how different forms of knowledge are positioned, legitimised, and communicated within teaching practices (Carey et al., 2021). From this perspective, evidence-based voice pedagogy may be understood not as a neutral application of scientific fact, but as a pedagogical choice that carries implications for authority, trust, and learner participation. When scientific explanations are presented as definitive or incontestable, they may inadvertently foreclose dialogue and inquiry; when presented as provisional tools for sense-making, they may instead support collaborative learning.

Despite these theoretical discussions, there remains limited empirical research examining how singers themselves experience evidence-based instruction in practice. In particular, little is known about how learners interpret scientific explanations, how such explanations influence their sense of clarity or confusion, and how they shape perceptions of agency within the studio environment. This reminder of the gap between pedagogical intention and learner experience reinforces the need for participant-led inquiry into how evidence-based approaches are actually encountered and understood within contemporary voice training.

2.3 Heuristic, Experiential, and Metaphor-Based Traditions

Alongside the growth of evidence-based approaches, heuristic and experiential traditions remain deeply embedded within contemporary voice pedagogy. These approaches emphasise embodied exploration, sensory awareness, imagery, and metaphor as primary tools for facilitating vocal change. Within MT/CCM contexts in particular, such strategies are often valued for their immediacy, accessibility, and responsiveness to individual learners, enabling singers to achieve functional results without requiring explicit technical explanation (Dayme, 2009; Estill et al., 2005).

Heuristic pedagogies draw upon tacit knowledge developed through practice, often privileging *what works* over *why it works*. In studio teaching, metaphors, imagery, and analogical language are commonly used to cue coordination, release habitual tension, or reframe sensation in ways that

bypass cognitive overload. Educational theorists have long recognised the pedagogical value of such approaches, noting that metaphor can function as a powerful bridge between abstract concepts and embodied understanding (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). In vocal learning, where proprioceptive feedback is subtle and difficult to verbalise, metaphor may offer an efficient means of supporting change where literal description falls short.

However, the effectiveness of heuristic strategies does not necessarily equate to epistemological clarity. Because metaphor-based instruction often operates implicitly, learners may experience vocal improvement without developing an explicit understanding of the processes involved. While this may be sufficient for short-term goals, it can also leave singers uncertain about how to reproduce, adapt, or troubleshoot vocal coordinations independently. From a learner agency perspective, reliance on tacit or opaque instruction risks reinforcing dependency on the teacher as interpreter and arbiter of correctness.

This concern echoes wider debates within professional education regarding the limits of experiential learning when divorced from reflective articulation. Schön's (1983) account of reflection-in-action acknowledges the centrality of tacit knowing, yet also emphasises the importance of reflective dialogue in making professional knowledge examinable and transferable. In voice pedagogy, where lessons often prioritise outcome over explanation, opportunities for such reflection may be constrained by time pressure, performance demands, or assumptions about how learning occurs.

At the same time, critiques of heuristic pedagogy must be approached with caution. Metaphor and imagery are not inherently anti-intellectual, nor do they preclude understanding. For some learners, experiential approaches may offer greater clarity than scientific explanations, particularly when aligned with individual learning preferences or neurodivergent processing styles. Research in embodied cognition suggests that understanding can emerge through action and sensation, rather than through propositional knowledge alone (Gallagher, 2005; Nijs et al., 2017). The issue, therefore, is not whether heuristic strategies are valid, but how they are framed, contextualised, and integrated within a broader pedagogical ecology.

Problems arise when heuristic approaches are positioned as self-sufficient or immune to scrutiny. In such cases, pedagogical effectiveness may be conflated with pedagogical transparency, and learner confusion may be reframed as resistance, lack of trust, or insufficient commitment. This dynamic can be particularly acute in one-to-one studio settings, where power asymmetries and

affective investment may discourage learners from questioning instructional language or expressing uncertainty (Gaunt et al., 2017).

The coexistence of heuristic and evidence-based traditions within voice pedagogy thus produces a complex pedagogical landscape in which learners are asked to navigate multiple, sometimes incompatible, explanatory systems. Teachers may move fluidly between metaphorical and technical language without explicitly signalling the purpose or status of each mode, leaving learners to infer meaning retrospectively. While such hybridity may reflect pragmatic responsiveness on the part of teachers, it may also contribute to experiences of confusion, epistemic insecurity, or reduced autonomy.

Despite the prevalence of heuristic teaching practices, there remains limited empirical research examining how singers experience metaphor-based instruction, how they interpret its effectiveness, and how it shapes their sense of understanding and agency over time. Much of the existing literature is practitioner-authored or instructional in nature, offering valuable insights into teaching strategies but providing limited access to learner perspectives. This absence reinforces the need for research that attends explicitly to how heuristic and experiential pedagogies are encountered and made sense of by those engaged in vocal learning.

2.4 Learner Agency, Autonomy, and Trust in One-to-one Pedagogy

Learner agency has become an increasingly prominent concern within contemporary educational theory, particularly in relation to professional and creative learning contexts. Broadly understood, agency refers to the learner's capacity to act intentionally, make informed choices, and participate meaningfully in the construction of their own learning (Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson, 2015). Within one-to-one pedagogical environments, agency is not merely an individual attribute but a relational achievement, shaped by power dynamics, communicative practices, and the implicit values embedded within teaching interactions.

In voice pedagogy, the question of agency is especially complex. Vocal learning involves intimate engagement with the body, identity, and emotional expression, often within high-stakes performance cultures. As a result, studio teaching relationships are frequently characterised by heightened trust, vulnerability, and asymmetry of authority (Gaunt et al., 2017). While such conditions can enable transformative learning, they may also constrain learners' willingness or ability to question pedagogical language, challenge instructional assumptions, or articulate confusion.

Self-determination theory offers a useful framework for examining these dynamics, emphasising autonomy, competence, and relatedness as core psychological needs underpinning motivation and wellbeing (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Niemiec and Ryan, 2009). From this perspective, pedagogical practices that support learner choice, explanation, and collaborative meaning-making are more likely to foster sustained engagement and self-regulation. Conversely, approaches that prioritise compliance, authority, or outcome over understanding may undermine agency, even when technical progress is achieved.

Research in music education suggests that one-to-one teaching can oscillate between enabling and constraining autonomy, depending on how authority is enacted and negotiated. Gaunt and Westerlund (2013) argue that traditional master–apprentice models, while still prevalent, may limit opportunities for learner voice and reflexivity unless deliberately reconfigured. In voice pedagogy, where progress is often evaluated subjectively and through teacher feedback, learners may struggle to differentiate between trust in expertise and uncritical dependence.

Trust itself functions as a double-edged construct within pedagogical relationships. On one hand, trust in the teacher can create psychological safety, allowing learners to experiment, take risks, and engage fully in embodied exploration. On the other hand, excessive reliance on teacher authority may inhibit the development of independent evaluative skills, leaving learners uncertain about how to assess their own progress outside the studio environment. Educational literature cautions that when trust is decoupled from transparency and dialogue, it may obscure rather than support learner understanding (Biesta, 2017).

The issue of clarity is central to these dynamics. Learners who do not understand the rationale behind pedagogical interventions may comply without comprehension, particularly in contexts where questioning is implicitly discouraged or framed as resistance. In voice teaching, this risk may be heightened by the use of metaphor, imagery, or scientific terminology that is presented as self-evident rather than negotiable. While such language can facilitate change, it may also function as a barrier to shared meaning if learners are not supported to interrogate or reinterpret it.

Reflective practice has been widely promoted as a means of addressing these challenges, encouraging teachers to examine their assumptions, adapt to learner needs, and engage in ongoing professional inquiry (Schön, 1983; Finlay, 2008). However, much of the literature on reflective practice focuses on the teacher’s perspective, with relatively little attention given to how

reflection is experienced or enacted by learners themselves. This imbalance risks positioning agency as a teacher-led attribute rather than a co-constructed process.

Recent work in arts education has begun to emphasise the importance of dialogic pedagogy, learner voice, and shared epistemic responsibility (Carey et al., 2021; Biesta et al., 2015). From this standpoint, agency is supported not through the removal of structure or expertise, but through pedagogical practices that make knowledge claims explicit, provisional, and open to negotiation. In voice pedagogy, such an approach may involve articulating the purposes of different instructional strategies, acknowledging uncertainty, and inviting learners to participate actively in sense-making.

Despite these theoretical advances, empirical research examining how singers experience agency, autonomy, and trust within voice lessons remains limited. In particular, there is a lack of qualitative research capturing how learners interpret pedagogical authority, how they navigate moments of confusion or clarity, and how these experiences influence their confidence and independence over time. This absence underscores the need for participant-centred inquiry that foregrounds learner perspectives and attends to the relational conditions under which agency is either supported or constrained.

2.5 Reflective Practice, Epistemological Clarity, and Pedagogical Responsibility

Reflective practice has long been positioned as a cornerstone of professional education, offering a means by which practitioners interrogate their assumptions, adapt to contextual complexity, and respond ethically to the needs of learners (Schön, 1983). Within music and voice pedagogy, reflective discourse is frequently invoked as a marker of good teaching, emphasising flexibility, responsiveness, and ongoing professional development. However, while reflection is widely endorsed in principle, its enactment in practice (particularly in relation to epistemological clarity and learner experience) remains under-examined.

Much of the literature on reflective practice centres on the teacher's internal processes: how practitioners think about their actions, learn from experience, and refine their approaches over time (Finlay, 2008). While such accounts are valuable, they risk framing reflection as a private or unilateral activity, rather than as a relational process that unfolds within pedagogical interactions. In one-to-one voice teaching, where learning is co-constructed through dialogue, sensation, and interpretation, reflection that remains invisible to the learner may do little to support agency or understanding.

This raises questions about epistemological responsibility in pedagogy: that is, the responsibility teachers hold not only for *what* they teach, but for *how knowledge is framed, justified, and made accessible*. Educational theorists have argued that teaching inevitably involves normative decisions about what counts as valid knowledge, whose understanding matters, and how uncertainty is managed (Biesta, 2017). In voice pedagogy, these decisions are often implicit, embedded within instructional language, repertoire choices, and evaluative feedback, rather than explicitly articulated or negotiated.

Epistemological opacity may arise when pedagogical rationales are assumed rather than explained, or when multiple explanatory frameworks are employed without clarification of their purpose or limits. As discussed in earlier sections, teachers may alternate between scientific, metaphorical, and experiential modes of instruction, each of which carries different epistemic assumptions. Without reflective articulation, such hybridity may be experienced by learners as inconsistency, contradiction, or confusion, rather than as intentional pedagogical flexibility.

The literature on reflective and reflexive practice suggests that making assumptions explicit (including uncertainty, provisionality, and pedagogical choice) can support deeper learning and shared understanding (Finlay, 2008). Reflexivity, in particular, extends reflection beyond technique to encompass power relations, positionality, and the impact of teaching practices on learners' sense-making. Within voice pedagogy, reflexive engagement may involve acknowledging the limits of particular models, inviting learner interpretation, and creating space for dialogue around meaning rather than compliance.

Despite these theoretical developments, there remains limited empirical research examining how reflective or reflexive pedagogical practices are experienced by singers themselves. While practitioner-authored literature often advocates for reflective teaching, it rarely captures learner perspectives on whether such practices enhance clarity, trust, or autonomy. As a result, reflection risks functioning as a professional ideal rather than an accountable pedagogical practice, evaluated primarily through teacher self-report rather than learner experience.

Recent work in creative and arts education has called for greater attention to epistemic justice and learner voice, arguing that students should be recognised as legitimate contributors to knowledge-making within educational contexts (Carey et al., 2021). From this standpoint, reflective pedagogy involves not only adapting teaching strategies, but engaging learners as partners in sense-making,

capable of articulating uncertainty, questioning assumptions, and contributing to pedagogical understanding.

In the context of voice pedagogy, such an approach foregrounds the ethical dimensions of teaching. Given the embodied, affective, and identity-laden nature of vocal learning, pedagogical practices that obscure epistemic assumptions or discourage inquiry may have consequences beyond technical development. Learners who experience persistent confusion, dependency, or mistrust may internalise these experiences as personal inadequacy, rather than as indicators of pedagogical mismatch.

Taken together, the literature suggests that while reflective practice is widely endorsed within voice and music education, its relationship to epistemological clarity, learner agency, and pedagogical responsibility remains insufficiently explored. In particular, there is a need for research that examines how pedagogical choices are experienced by learners and teachers in practice, and how reflection is enacted (or perceived) within the relational dynamics of the studio. Addressing these gaps requires participant-centred inquiry that attends to lived experience, meaning-making, and the negotiation of knowledge within contemporary voice pedagogy.

2.6 Summary and Implications

The literature highlights a pedagogical landscape characterised by plurality, hybridity, and unresolved epistemological tension. While both evidence-based and heuristic approaches offer valuable contributions to voice pedagogy, their coexistence often lacks explicit articulation, leaving learners to navigate multiple explanatory frameworks without clear guidance. Educational theory underscores the importance of agency, autonomy, and trust within one-to-one learning environments, yet existing research offers limited insight into how these constructs are experienced by singers in practice. Reflective practice is widely advocated, but its impact on learner sense-making and epistemological clarity remains under-explored. These gaps point to the need for qualitative, participant-centred inquiry capable of examining how pedagogical choices are experienced, interpreted, and negotiated within contemporary voice teaching. The following section therefore outlines the methodological framework and research design adopted to investigate these issues empirically.

3. Methodology & Methods

In this section, I outline the methodological framework, research design, and methods adopted to investigate the research questions set out in Chapter 1. Building on the literature review, which highlighted unresolved tensions within contemporary voice pedagogy and a lack of empirical insight into learner experience, the study employs a qualitative, exploratory design centred on participant meaning-making. This approach reflects an interpretivist orientation and positions the research within professional practice inquiry, prioritising depth, reflexivity, and contextual understanding over generalisability or evaluative comparison.

Given the study's focus on how pedagogical practices are experienced, interpreted, and negotiated by singers and teachers, I adopted a qualitative approach as the most appropriate means of engaging with the complexity and subjectivity of individual perspectives. Rather than seeking to assess the effectiveness of specific techniques or pedagogical models, the research attends to participants' lived experiences of clarity, confusion, agency, trust, and pedagogical coherence within voice teaching and learning contexts. This emphasis aligns with the overarching aim of identifying perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within current vocal pedagogy.

Methodological decisions were also shaped by ethical considerations and my positionality as an insider practitioner within the field. I was mindful of the relational dynamics inherent in voice pedagogy and of the potential influence of familiarity, authority, and trust on participants' responses. Consequently, I selected one-to-one data generation methods designed to support

open reflection and psychological safety, and to minimise pressures toward conformity or impression management that may arise in group-based research settings.

This chapter therefore sets out my research paradigm and epistemological position, followed by a detailed account of the research design, participant group, research instruments, and procedures for data generation and analysis. Ethical considerations and insider researcher positioning are addressed explicitly, alongside a rationale for methodological adaptations made in relation to the approved ethics framework.

3.1 Research Paradigm and Epistemological Position

This study is situated within an interpretivist research paradigm, informed by a constructivist epistemological stance. From this perspective, knowledge is understood as socially and relationally constructed, shaped by context, interaction, and interpretation rather than existing as a fixed or objective entity. Such a stance is appropriate for research concerned with how pedagogical practices are experienced, understood, and negotiated by individuals within specific professional and educational contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Creswell and Poth, 2018).

My interest in this research is not in establishing universal truths about vocal pedagogy, nor in evaluating the efficacy of particular techniques or teaching models. Instead, the study seeks to explore how singers and teachers make sense of their pedagogical experiences, including moments of clarity, confusion, trust, and uncertainty. An interpretivist approach allows these experiences to be examined as meaningful in their own right, recognising that different participants may construct divergent understandings of similar pedagogical encounters.

The constructivist orientation of the study aligns closely with its focus on learner agency and meaning-making. Learning is understood not as the passive acquisition of knowledge transmitted by an expert, but as an active process in which individuals interpret, test, and integrate pedagogical input in relation to their own embodied experience, prior learning, and professional identity. This view is consistent with contemporary educational theory, which emphasises the co-construction of knowledge within relational learning environments, particularly in one-to-one professional practice settings (Biesta et al., 2015).

The study is also positioned as practitioner research, acknowledging my role as an experienced voice teacher working within the same professional field as the participants. My professional practice has shaped both the focus of the inquiry and the interpretive lens through which the data

are examined. Rather than attempting to bracket or neutralise this insider perspective, I adopt a reflexive stance that recognises my positionality as an integral component of the research process (Schön, 1983; Finlay, 2008). Reflexivity is therefore treated not as a limitation to be eliminated, but as a methodological resource that requires ongoing critical attention.

This epistemological positioning has implications for how claims are made within the study. Findings are presented as situated and interpretive, grounded in participant accounts rather than as generalisable conclusions. The aim is to generate insight into perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within contemporary voice pedagogy, and to contribute to reflective pedagogical dialogue, rather than to prescribe definitive solutions or best-practice models.

3.2 Research Design and Rationale

The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory research design, selected to align with the interpretivist and constructivist epistemological position outlined in Section 3.1. Qualitative inquiry is well suited to research concerned with meaning-making, interpretation, and lived experience, particularly where the aim is to understand how individuals construct understanding within specific professional contexts rather than to test hypotheses or measure outcomes (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

An exploratory design was considered appropriate given the literature review's identification of unresolved tensions and conceptual gaps within contemporary voice pedagogy. While existing scholarship offers extensive theoretical and practitioner-oriented accounts, there remains limited empirical research examining how pedagogical approaches are experienced and interpreted by singers and teachers in practice. Exploratory qualitative research allows space for participants to articulate perspectives that may not yet be fully theorised or captured within existing frameworks (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

The research design is intentionally non-evaluative. Rather than seeking to assess the effectiveness of specific pedagogical techniques or to compare teaching models, the study focuses on participants' experiences of clarity, confusion, agency, trust, and pedagogical coherence. This approach reflects an ethical commitment to avoiding deficit framings of participants or pedagogical practices, and instead recognises lived experience as a legitimate and meaningful source of insight (Biesta, 2017).

Data generation was designed around one-to-one research conversations, combining reflective prompts with semi-structured interview dialogue. One-to-one formats were considered most appropriate for supporting open reflection on potentially sensitive experiences, including uncertainty, confusion, or pedagogical disagreement. Qualitative researchers have noted that individual research conversations can provide greater psychological safety and depth when participants are invited to reflect on personal or professionally sensitive topics (Finlay, 2008).

While focus groups were initially outlined during the ethics approval process, I decided not to include them in the final research design. Group-based methods can introduce pressures toward conformity, impression management, or professional self-censorship, particularly within small and interconnected professional communities. Such dynamics may inhibit candid reflection and obscure dissenting or ambivalent perspectives, which are central to the present study's aims (Biesta et al., 2015).

The integration of reflective survey-style prompts within semi-structured interviews was adopted to support participant engagement and parity. Likert-style statements were used not as quantitative measures, but as orienting devices to support reflection and to guide subsequent qualitative exploration. This approach allowed participants to locate their experiences before elaborating on them in dialogue, while also enabling the exploration of apparent tensions or contradictions within individual accounts (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

Overall, the research design reflects a commitment to methodological coherence, ethical sensitivity, and alignment between epistemological stance, research questions, and methods. By adopting a qualitative, exploratory, and participant-centred approach, the study seeks to generate nuanced insight into perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within contemporary voice pedagogy, rather than to produce prescriptive or generalisable claims.

3.3 Participants and Context

I recruited participants from within my professional network, including individuals engaged in contemporary voice pedagogy as learners and/or teachers. The participant group was **heterogeneous**, in the sense that it included people occupying different roles and career stages within the field: early-career professional performers, recent graduates, and singing teachers with varying levels of experience, from those in the early years of practice to those with extensive teaching careers. This range was intentionally selected to capture varied perspectives on voice pedagogy across different professional positions, learning histories, and teaching contexts.

The inclusion of both learners and teachers reflects the study's interest in pedagogy as a relational and situated process. Many participants occupied overlapping identities as performers, teachers, and ongoing learners of voice. This reflects the reality of contemporary vocal practice and aligns with the study's interpretivist and constructivist stance, allowing pedagogical experiences to be explored across shifting positions of authority, vulnerability, and agency within the learning relationship (Biesta, 2017).

All participants were known to me prior to the study, either as current or former students, professional colleagues, or collaborators. This insider positioning was acknowledged explicitly within the research design and ethics approval process. Insider research within professional practice contexts can offer particular advantages, including shared language, trust, and contextual understanding, which may support depth of reflection and nuanced data generation (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). However, it also raises ethical considerations relating to power dynamics, role boundaries, and informed consent.

To address these considerations, participation was strictly voluntary, and all participants were informed that their decision to participate, decline, or withdraw would have no impact on any existing or future professional relationship with me. Particular care was taken in relation to the inclusion of a current student participant, with explicit emphasis placed on the voluntary nature of participation and the separation of the research context from any pedagogical or evaluative processes. These measures align with ethical guidance for insider research within educational and professional practice settings (BERA, 2018).

3.4 Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

As a practising voice teacher within the same professional ecosystem as several participants, I occupied an insider position in relation to the field under investigation. This afforded contextual fluency and shared vocabulary, but also introduced potential relational dynamics that may have shaped what participants felt comfortable disclosing. The inclusion of a current student required particular reflexive awareness of pedagogical authority and perceived evaluation. While procedural safeguards were implemented, insider research does not eliminate such influences but necessitates ongoing attention to them. Throughout data collection and analysis, I remained attentive to assumptions arising from familiarity, seeking to privilege participants' articulated meanings within the interpretive process.

Participants were invited to reflect on their experiences of voice teaching and learning across a range of contexts, including higher education, private studio teaching, conservatoire or drama school training, and professional performance preparation. Rather than limiting the study to a single institutional or stylistic setting, this broader framing was adopted to explore how perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs manifest across contemporary vocal pedagogy.

The sample size was intentionally small, consistent with qualitative exploratory research that prioritises depth and richness of data over breadth or representativeness. The aim was not to achieve statistical generalisation, but to generate sufficiently detailed and reflective accounts to illuminate patterns, tensions, and areas of resonance across participant experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

3.5 Research Instruments

Data were generated using a combined research instrument consisting of reflective Likert-style prompts integrated within semi-structured one-to-one research conversations. This hybrid approach was designed to balance structure and openness, supporting both consistency across participants and depth of individual reflection, while remaining aligned with the study's qualitative, interpretivist orientation.

The research instruments were developed through an iterative process informed by the literature review and the research questions. Constructs discussed in Chapter 2 (including clarity and confusion in learning, learner agency, trust and authority within pedagogical relationships, and perceived tensions between evidence-based and heuristic approaches to voice teaching) were treated as **sensitising concepts** rather than fixed variables (Blumer, 1954; Charmaz, 2014). These concepts informed the thematic focus of the prompts and later analytic interpretation, but were not named explicitly within the participant-facing materials. This decision was taken to minimise theoretical priming and to support participants in articulating their experiences in accessible, experience-oriented language (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

3.5.1 Reflective Likert-Style Prompts

The first component of the instrument comprised a set of Likert-style statements designed to support participant reflection on experiences of voice teaching and learning. These statements were not intended to function as quantitative measures or to produce statistically generalisable findings. Instead, they acted as orienting prompts, enabling participants to locate their experiences

along dimensions relevant to the research questions and to use these positions as starting points for qualitative exploration (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Statements addressed themes such as perceived clarity of pedagogical instruction, understanding of the purpose of vocal exercises, comfort with uncertainty, and experiences of agency within lessons. For example, participants were invited to reflect on the extent to which they felt clear about *why* particular exercises were used, or comfortable questioning pedagogical instruction. Several items were intentionally reverse-worded to encourage attentiveness and to surface potential tensions or ambivalences within individual accounts.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Research Conversations

The Likert-style prompts were embedded within semi-structured research conversations, allowing responses to be explored, contextualised, and elaborated upon through dialogue. Follow-up questions were used flexibly and responsively, informed by participants' responses rather than by a fixed interview schedule. Where participants expressed strong agreement or disagreement, or where response patterns appeared contradictory, these moments were treated as opportunities for reflection and sense-making rather than as inconsistencies to be resolved.

This conversational approach supported participant agency and depth of engagement, allowing individuals to foreground experiences they perceived as most salient. One-to-one research conversations were considered particularly appropriate given the potential sensitivity of reflecting on confusion, trust, or pedagogical disagreement, and the insider nature of the research context (Finlay, 2008).

3.5.3 Integration, Transparency, and Ethical Considerations

The integration of reflective prompts and semi-structured dialogue was intended to support participant parity and psychological safety. Beginning with structured statements provided a clear and accessible entry point into the research conversation, while the subsequent open-ended dialogue allowed participants to guide the depth and direction of discussion according to their comfort and interest. This design aligns with ethical guidance for qualitative research in professional practice contexts, particularly where participants may be known to the researcher (BERA, 2018).

The full set of Likert-style statements, interview prompts, and participant instructions is provided in **Appendix C**, ensuring transparency and enabling readers to examine the research instrument in detail without disrupting the methodological argument presented here.

3.6 Procedure and Data Generation Process

Data were generated through individual research sessions combining reflective prompts and semi-structured conversation, as outlined in Section 3.4. All participants were contacted individually and provided with a participant information sheet in advance of taking part. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data generation, including consent for audio recording, with participants reminded of their right to withdraw at any point without explanation.

Each research session took place in a one-to-one format, either online or in person, depending on participant availability and preference. Sessions followed a broadly consistent structure while allowing flexibility to respond to participant needs and the flow of conversation. At the beginning of each session, participants were invited to speak openly about their experiences of learning or teaching singing. This opening invitation was used to establish rapport, situate the participant's context, and allow them to foreground aspects of their experience that felt most salient to them.

Participants were then invited to respond to a series of reflective Likert-style statements relating to experiences of voice teaching and learning. These prompts were completed either verbally or in writing, depending on the format of the session. The statements were used as orienting devices rather than as a standalone survey instrument, providing a shared reference point for subsequent discussion. Participants were encouraged to take their time and to ask for clarification if needed.

Following completion of the reflective prompts, the session moved into a semi-structured research conversation. Follow-up questions were used flexibly and responsively, informed by participants' Likert responses and the issues they had already raised. Where participants expressed strong agreement or disagreement with particular statements, or where response patterns appeared ambivalent or contradictory, these moments were explored through open-ended questioning. Participants were also periodically invited to reflect on whether there were aspects of their experience that felt important but had not yet been discussed.

Throughout each session, I remained attentive to ethical considerations related to insider research, power dynamics, and participant wellbeing. Participants were reminded that they were free to decline to answer any question or to redirect the conversation. Care was taken to maintain a clear

boundary between the research context and any pedagogical or professional relationships, particularly in relation to the inclusion of a current student participant.

All research sessions were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were anonymised at the point of transcription, with all identifying information removed or replaced with pseudonyms. Audio files and transcripts were stored securely in accordance with data protection requirements, accessible only to the researcher. Any reflective notes made during or after sessions were treated as supplementary material to support analytic reflexivity rather than as primary data.

The procedure described above was designed to support depth, openness, and participant agency, while maintaining consistency across sessions. By combining structured reflective prompts with flexible, participant-led conversation, the data generation process aimed to capture nuanced accounts of how voice pedagogy is experienced, interpreted, and negotiated in practice.

3.7 Data Analysis Approach

The analysis for this study was qualitative and interpretive, informed by a constructivist epistemological stance and situated within practitioner research. The aim of the analysis was not to produce generalisable claims, but to develop a nuanced understanding of how participants experienced, interpreted, and made sense of voice pedagogy, particularly in relation to perceived clarity, confusion, agency, trust, and pedagogical approach. This orientation aligned with qualitative approaches that prioritise meaning-making, context, and participant perspective (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Analysis proceeded iteratively alongside data generation, allowing early insights to inform subsequent questioning and reflexive attention. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, with identifying information removed at the point of transcription. Transcripts were read multiple times to support familiarisation with the data and to attend to both explicit content and underlying patterns of meaning, consistent with established qualitative analytic practices (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

An initial phase of open, inductive coding was undertaken, focusing on participants' own language and framings. Codes were applied to segments of text that captured experiences, perceptions, tensions, or evaluative judgements relating to voice teaching and learning. At this stage, coding remained deliberately expansive and provisional, allowing multiple interpretations to coexist rather than forcing early categorisation (Saldaña, 2016).

Following this initial phase, codes were reviewed and organised into broader thematic groupings. These themes were developed through constant comparison both within and across participant accounts, attending to areas of convergence, divergence, and contradiction. Although the study did not adopt a formal grounded theory methodology, elements of constant comparative analysis were used to support analytic depth and coherence, particularly when refining and relating emerging themes (Charmaz, 2014).

While the analysis remained primarily inductive, it was also sensitised by concepts emerging from the literature review. This allowed participants' accounts to be considered in relation to existing pedagogical narratives without imposing a priori theoretical categories onto the data. In this way, the analysis remained open to both resonance and tension between lived experience and established theory.

Participants' responses to the reflective Likert-style statements were used as contextual anchors within the analysis rather than as quantitative measures. These responses helped to highlight areas of strong agreement, disagreement, or ambivalence, guiding interpretive attention during coding and theme development. The Likert data were not subjected to statistical analysis, but instead supported analytic triangulation by providing an additional lens through which to interpret participants' spoken accounts (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey, 2012).

Reflexivity was maintained throughout the analytic process. As an insider researcher with extensive professional experience in voice pedagogy, I engaged in ongoing critical reflection to examine how my assumptions, values, and professional positioning may shape interpretation. Reflexive notes were used to document analytic decisions, emerging questions, and moments of uncertainty, supporting transparency and methodological rigour in line with qualitative guidance on reflexive practice (Finlay, 2008).

The outcome of the analysis was a set of thematically organised findings that addressed the overarching research question and its subsidiary questions. These findings illuminate how contemporary voice pedagogy was experienced in practice, where tensions or gaps were perceived, and how such insights might inform more reflective and adaptive pedagogical models.

Given the small, purposively selected sample, the study did not seek statistical saturation but rather analytic sufficiency within a constructivist framework. As coding progressed, new data

increasingly elaborated existing categories rather than generating substantively novel conceptual directions. Cross-case comparison revealed convergence around recurring tensions relating to clarity, agency, and pedagogical plurality. While alternative interpretations remain possible, the relative stability of these patterns suggested that further data collection was unlikely to significantly alter the emergent analytic framework within the scope of this study.

4. Findings

4.0 Chapter Orientation and Analytic Pathway

This chapter presents the findings from ten semi-structured interviews (P1–P10), analysed through an interpretivist qualitative lens with constructivist grounded theory (CGT) sensitivity. The findings are organised to address the overarching research question (RQ1) and subsidiary questions (RQ2–RQ4), while also reflecting the way the analysis evolved iteratively across the dataset. In keeping with a constructivist stance, the findings are presented as interpretive constructions grounded in participants' accounts rather than as objective discoveries, and are offered with disciplined attention to context, variation, and limits of inference.

Analysis progressed from micro-level, participant-led coding towards a stabilised focused framework. Early transcripts (P1–P2) were coded inductively at a fine grain to remain close to participants' language and evaluative framings. Through constant comparison, analytic memoing, and axial sensitivity (conditions–interactions–consequences), provisional codes were iteratively consolidated into a refined focused framework consisting of nine categories (01–09). This framework was then applied across the dataset (P3–P8) to support consistency and cross-case comparison, and subsequently tested through later analytic work (P9–P10) to evaluate robustness and refine theoretical properties without requiring new core categories.

The early analytic draft submitted at proposal stage is provided in Appendix E2. The stabilised coding framework (01–09) is presented in Appendix E3, with cross-case distribution patterns detailed in Appendix E4. Participant-level analytic summaries are included in Appendix E5, followed by the axial integration memo (Appendix E6) and the final cross-case theoretical integration memo (Appendix E7). Together, these appendices document the iterative development, refinement, and integration of analytic categories, providing a transparent audit trail for the interpretive claims presented in this chapter.

Although the study was guided by the research questions, the findings are not presented as a simple "answer set" to each RQ in isolation. Instead, the chapter is structured to reflect the

relational and process-oriented nature of participants' accounts. Across cases, participants rarely spoke about "technique" as a neutral set of exercises; rather, they described learning as shaped by explanatory clarity, relational alignment, epistemic orientation (how knowledge is framed and justified), and the social dynamics of authority, evaluation, and trust. Accordingly, the sections that follow move from instructional clarity and epistemic framing, into experiences of confusion and evaluative pressure, then into authority and compliance, and finally into pedagogical plurality and learners' strategic navigation of contradictory systems. A short integrative section then draws these patterns together, remaining analytic rather than fully conclusive, to prepare the ground for the final chapter.

4.0.1 Likert Prompts as Catalytic Anchors

In addition to interview narratives, participants responded during the interviews to a set of 15 reflective Likert-style statements designed to elicit positions on clarity, confusion, authority, trust, modality, and agency. These responses are treated here as descriptive contextual anchors rather than as quantitative outcomes. The purpose of including them is not to claim statistical generalisability, but to offer a concise overview of where participants tended to converge, diverge, or hold mixed positions, and to support interpretive attention during qualitative analysis.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the Likert prompts (mean and standard deviation). Two broad observations are useful at the level of orientation. First, several prompts show high agreement with relatively low variability, particularly those relating to the importance of feeling understood by a teacher, trusting expertise, and developing the ability to make informed training decisions. Second, prompts concerning internalisation of confusion ("it must be me"), strategic compliance, and contradictory pedagogical experiences show markedly higher variability across participants. This patterning aligns with the qualitative accounts that follow, in which confusion and agency appear to be experienced not simply as technical states, but as context-dependent and relationally mediated phenomena.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for Likert-style prompts (n = 10).

Prompt #	Prompt	Mean	SD	Interpretive Note
1	I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.	3.89	1.23	Moderate–high agreement; some variability in perceived clarity of purpose.
2	I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.	4.44	0.70	Strong agreement; low variability regarding exercise clarity.
3	I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.	2.67	1.32	Mixed responses; notable variability in unexamined participation.

4	I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seemed to contradict each other.	4.11	1.32	Broad endorsement of contradictory pedagogical experiences.
5	When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.	3.11	1.70	High variability; divergence in internalisation of confusion.
6	I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.	4.44	1.06	Strong agreement; moderate variability in tolerance of uncertainty.
7	I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.	4.11	1.03	General endorsement of ability to question; some variation.
8	In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.	2.89	1.41	Mixed orientation toward strategic compliance.
9	I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.	4.67	0.71	Strong agreement; consistent sense of developing agency.
10	I trust my teacher's expertise.	4.56	0.71	High trust endorsement; low variability.
11	Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.	1.78	0.92	Broad rejection of unquestioning trust.
12	Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.	4.78	0.63	Near-universal importance placed on relational understanding.
13	Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.	3.89	1.16	Moderate agreement; variability in preference for technical explanation.
14	Imagery, metaphor, or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.	4.22	0.79	Strong endorsement of imagery-based teaching.
15	I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.	1.56	1.03	Low endorsement; epistemic switching not widely destabilising.

Importantly, the Likert responses did not function as a separate "results stream". Rather, they served as a structured entry point into the interview conversations, often prompting elaboration, examples, or counter-examples. For this reason, the analysis prioritises participants' spoken accounts and the meanings they attributed to their experiences, while using the Likert patterning only to contextualise and orient the reader at the beginning of the chapter.

4.0.2 Conventions for Presenting Qualitative Evidence

Findings are supported through verbatim excerpts identified by participant number (P1–P10). Excerpts have been lightly edited only where necessary for readability (e.g., removal of repeated filler words) without altering meaning. Analytic commentary is kept close to the data, with attention to cross-case variation rather than assuming uniform experience. Where tensions, exceptions, or

negative cases appear, these are explicitly noted as part of the analytic account rather than treated as noise.

4.1 Instructional Clarity and Epistemic Orientation

Across participants, instructional clarity emerged as a consistently valued feature of voice pedagogy. Most participants described understanding why they were asked to complete particular exercises as central to engagement, motivation, and skill transfer. Clarity was rarely framed as merely procedural; rather, it was associated with orientation, coherence, and perceived purpose.

Several participants articulated this directly. P7 reflected that their teachers “do a really good job in explaining the concepts and the actual usefulness of what they’re teaching me,” noting that when explanation was clear, it made “an absolute night and day difference.” Similarly, P6 stated, “I usually understand why I’m being asked to do something,” and described explicitly linking exercises to song-based challenges in real time: “we’ll be doing a song and then I will get them to do an exercise then and there… so then I think they would understand that because it’s, you know, it’s like right in their face.” In these accounts, clarity functioned not simply as explanation, but as visible correlation between action and outcome.

The absence of clarity was described in contrasting terms. P5 reflected that earlier training involved exercises that were “never explained… We just warm up,” while P4 recalled teachers who “taught me some technique, but I never understood why.” In such accounts, exercises appeared detached from articulated purpose, and understanding was retroactively sought rather than built into the instructional process.

Importantly, clarity was not experienced as uniform across teachers. P8 described significant variability: “For some it was because that’s what we always do… in some cases, I just didn’t know, I did it because they told me.” This suggests that clarity was not an assumed pedagogical norm, but a contextual feature dependent on individual teacher approach.

4.1.1 Epistemic Positioning: Technical, Imagery, and Modality

While clarity was widely valued, participants differed markedly in how they preferred explanation to be framed. These differences were not superficial stylistic preferences; they reflected distinct epistemic orientations. That is, differing assumptions about what constitutes meaningful understanding.

For some participants, technical or scientific explanation enhanced comprehension. P7 described being given “a whole small anatomy lesson,” and noted that “being taught the actual anatomical reason… really helped me to understand both my voice and what it does for me.” P6 similarly expressed preference for specificity: “I like scientific, I like technical, I like physically do it like this and then you’ll hear it.” For these participants, anatomical or acoustical explanation appeared to increase tangibility and replicability.

However, technical language was not universally facilitating. P3 described being told they were developing their “mix” and immediately experiencing tension: “Immediately, I’m like… ‘Oh, the mix. What is the mix?’” They later added that such explanation “doesn’t feel tangible to me,” even while acknowledging “a greater understanding of anatomy and technique.” In this case, conceptual framing appeared to generate cognitive load rather than clarity.

Imagery-based teaching was similarly variably received. P2 described significant progress following metaphorical instruction: “I’ll think of that note in your left ear lobe… and it worked for me.” They characterised themselves as “a practical, literal, physical… doer,” suggesting that embodied experimentation supported learning more effectively than theoretical framing.
Conversely, P8 stated that purely imaginative prompts did not work well: “If it’s just, imagine this or that sort doesn’t work so well for me.” For this participant, visualisation through notation or frequency charts was more effective.
Across cases, a recurring pattern was the perceived need for integration rather than exclusivity. P6 argued that “the technical and the imagery… have to go hand in hand otherwise it’s too dry or it’s too airy-fairy,” while P4 stated, “You need both of them in order to really thoroughly understand something.” Similarly, P7 described requiring “a combination of essentially logic and imagery.”

Taken together, these accounts suggest that clarity is not reducible to the presence of explanation, but is mediated by epistemic fit. What constitutes meaningful understanding appears to depend on how explanation aligns with the learner’s cognitive preferences, embodied tendencies, and prior knowledge structures.

4.1.2 Clarity as Orientation Rather Than Certainty

Notably, clarity was sometimes described as directional rather than total. P3 offered a nuanced account: “I know the direction, but I don’t fully understand,” likening their learning to having “a compass.” This distinction between orientation and full conceptual mastery recurred in subtle forms

across participants. Clarity did not necessarily eliminate uncertainty; rather, it appeared to provide a sense of trajectory.

In several accounts, the ability to understand why something was being done enabled transfer beyond the lesson. P8 expressed wanting to understand “how I can take this knowledge outside of this lesson,” and rejected what they described as “magic,” stating: “I don’t want it to be magic… I want to understand.” Here, clarity was associated with autonomy and durability rather than immediate performance gains.

At the same time, some participants described limits to explanation. P2 noted that “if I get too much information then I’ll think about it too much and then I back away from what I was doing,” suggesting that over-elaboration can impede embodied learning. Similarly, P3 reported that technical framing sometimes triggered tension rather than facilitation. These accounts indicate that clarity may be optimal within a certain threshold and that excess conceptualisation can destabilise action.

4.1.3 Section Summary

Across participants, instructional clarity was widely endorsed as valuable. However, clarity did not appear to operate as a single, universally defined construct. Rather, it functioned as epistemically situated orientation dependent upon alignment between explanation style and learner preference, and mediated by the relational and pedagogical context in which instruction occurred. Where exercises were linked transparently to purpose and adapted to learner modality, participants described increased engagement and perceived transfer. Where explanation was absent, overly abstract, or misaligned, exercises were experienced as detached, confusing, or mechanistic.
The following section examines how experiences of confusion and evaluation intersected with these instructional dynamics.

4.2 Confusion, Evaluation and Cognitive Dissonance

If instructional clarity was widely valued, its absence was rarely experienced as neutral. Across participants, confusion was not described simply as a lack of understanding, but as something evaluative, personal, and often emotionally charged.

Several participants internalised moments of not understanding. P2 described confusion as triggering immediate self-blame: “It’s me… I’m the one who’s not understanding this.” This reaction was linked to earlier insecurity about intelligence and competence. Similarly, P4 reflected that

when encountering disagreement or uncertainty, their default assumption was, “I must be wrong, because you know more than I do.” In both cases, confusion was embedded within assumptions about hierarchy and expertise.

P6 expressed a comparable pattern: when something did not work, the immediate interpretation was “I’m obviously doing it wrong.” Even when occupying the role of teacher, this participant noted that the instinct was still self-critique. Confusion therefore appeared less as a shared epistemic puzzle and more as an individualised deficit.

4.2.1 Confusion Under Assessment and Scrutiny

Context intensified these responses. Group classes and assessment settings were described as environments where confusion became more acute. P3 noted that in larger groups there is “objectively more judgment,” and described being more prone to panic in such situations. Technical thinking during performance was experienced as disruptive: “as soon as I’m thinking technically, I’m not acting.” In this sense, cognitive monitoring itself could interfere with performance identity.

Assessment pressure also constrained questioning. P2 described being highly conscious of limited lesson time when assessments were looming, making it difficult to pause and clarify. P5 recalled earlier training contexts in which students would “just focus on doing what I’m told,” suggesting that compliance became a pragmatic response to institutional pressure.

Confusion in these contexts was therefore entangled with time scarcity, performance evaluation, and fear of exposure.

4.2.2 Emotional Responses to “not getting it”

For many participants, confusion carried strong affective consequences. P4 described feeling “stupid” and “subpar,” recounting episodes of crying in lessons. P3 similarly reported breaking down during singing sessions and described experiences of “low-key failure.” P8 articulated perfectionistic distress, becoming “cross” and “stressed” when not getting something right immediately.

In some cases, confusion triggered more existential questioning. P6 reflected on the difficulty of identifying as a singer when things did not work: “Am I a singer or can I?” P2 described a high-stakes response to imperfection: “If I’m not perfect… why am I here?” These reactions suggest that misunderstanding was not merely technical but implicated in broader self-concepts.

4.2.3 Contradiction and Destabilisation

Confusion also arose through perceived inconsistency across teachers or approaches. Participants described the difficulty of navigating conflicting messages and differentiating what was “right” or “wrong.” While some occasionally externalised this as scepticism toward a particular teacher, more commonly it generated uncertainty about one’s own competence.

Exercises that appeared disconnected from purpose were described as frustrating or “stupid,” and improvement without explanation did not always resolve uncertainty. Where rationale was absent or contradictory, learners were left to reconcile competing frameworks independently.

4.2.4 Section Summary

Confusion in vocal pedagogy was frequently experienced as evaluative rather than neutral. Participants often interpreted misunderstanding as evidence of personal inadequacy, particularly within hierarchical or assessment-driven contexts. Emotional responses ranged from frustration to panic and self-doubt, and in some cases extended to questioning one’s identity as a singer.

These findings suggest that uncertainty operates at the intersection of cognition, evaluation, and relational positioning. The following section explores how authority and hierarchy shape learner responses within these dynamics.

4.3 Authority, Hierarchy and Strategic Compliance

Across participants, pedagogical relationships were frequently structured by implicit hierarchies. Authority was often assumed rather than negotiated, and questioning could be experienced as inappropriate, inefficient, or disloyal.

Several participants described defaulting to compliance. P3 reflected, “I would just kind of go along with it,” noting discomfort with verbalising uncertainty and reluctance to “waste a minute of this lesson with a question.” Time pressure and perceived expertise reinforced this stance: “Oh, well, you’re the teacher. Just help me.” Similarly, P2 described having been “drummed into” respecting teachers and “doing what they say,” even when something seemed “a bit daft.” Compliance was sometimes framed pragmatically: one could “just do it” and “judge it later.”

This orientation was not always passive. For some, compliance functioned as a strategic choice. P2 described consciously suspending judgement in order to test an exercise experientially. However, this strategy depended on the ability to evaluate retrospectively. Where questioning felt structurally disallowed, the dynamic shifted from experimentation to submission.

Hierarchy was particularly visible in accounts of institutional training. P5 described contexts in which “the teacher is right” and where authority was rarely challenged. Some educational environments were characterised as rigid or “machine-like,” emphasising standardisation and compliance. In such settings, questioning could feel either futile or risky. P4 articulated this tension clearly: challenging an idea felt like implying “I know more than you,” thereby destabilising the relational order.

Not all participants accepted hierarchy uncritically. P6 explicitly reframed trust as something that “means you can question what they say,” suggesting that relational safety alters how authority is enacted. P7 similarly distinguished between moments where explanation was possible and contexts in which they felt “I’m just there to shut up and listen.” These variations indicate that hierarchy is not fixed but relationally contingent.

Across cases, strategic compliance appeared as a common adaptive response. Learners often complied to protect lesson time, avoid appearing ignorant, maintain relational harmony, or preserve access to opportunity. However, where compliance replaced dialogue, agency narrowed and epistemic uncertainty persisted.

4.4 Agency and Relational Trust

If authority structures the conditions of learning, agency describes how participants move within them. Across accounts, agency was neither constant nor uniformly distributed. Rather, it appeared relationally contingent and developmentally acquired.

Several participants described growing confidence in asking questions and making decisions about their own training. P2 reflected that feeling “allowed to ask a question” was a relatively new development, linked to greater professional self-assurance. P3 similarly described having “gained a lot more agency,” though still acknowledging moments of withholding questions due to time or uncertainty. P4 framed responsibility as increasingly “50–50,” suggesting a shift from passive reception toward shared ownership.

Agency was often described as the ability to make informed decisions. Participants spoke of “trying both and seeing what works,” “cherry picking,” or combining terminology and exercises across teachers. This evaluative stance marked a departure from earlier compliance. Rather than simply doing what was instructed, learners described assessing, adapting, and selectively integrating material.

However, agency was rarely exercised in isolation from trust. Trust appeared to function as a prerequisite for exploratory risk-taking. P3 noted being able to “sit with uncertainty” when the lesson environment felt safe and non-performative. P8 described lessons as “a safe space to explore,” while P7 emphasised that being able to ask a question without being “looked down on” was central to their experience.

Trust was not described as blind acceptance. Multiple participants explicitly rejected “blind trust,” instead defining trust as relational understanding and professional credibility. P6 articulated this most clearly: trusting a teacher “means you can question what they say.” In this framing, trust expands rather than restricts agency.

Conversely, where learners did not feel understood, agency contracted. Participants suggested that if a teacher “doesn’t understand me,” learning becomes blocked. Feeling liked, recognised, or “zoned into” was repeatedly associated with progress. Relational alignment therefore appeared to mediate whether uncertainty was experienced as generative or destabilising.

Agency, then, was not simply an individual trait. It emerged through relational conditions that permitted questioning, acknowledged vulnerability, and supported autonomy. Where these conditions were present, participants described increased ownership of their learning. Where absent, compliance re-emerged as the safer option.

4.5 Pedagogical Plurality and Inconsistency

Participants consistently described vocal pedagogy as plural, varied, and at times contradictory. Differences in terminology, technique, metaphor, and aesthetic priorities were widely acknowledged. However, the meaning attributed to this plurality varied across individuals.

Some participants framed variation as normal and even beneficial. P2 described encountering “two different approaches to the same goal,” and suggested that over time it became possible to “pick up a few nuggets here and there.” P7 similarly articulated a preference for combining modalities, noting that technical language and imagery could work in complementary ways. For these participants, plurality became a resource once interpretive capacity had developed.

Others experienced plurality as destabilising, particularly earlier in training. P2 described the difficulty, when younger, of distinguishing between “one is right and one is wrong.” P8 reflected on

teachers being “completely the opposite” in advice regarding breathing or posture. Contradictions in terminology were also highlighted, including disagreements over concepts such as chest, head, and mix. In these instances, plurality produced uncertainty rather than enrichment.

Participants also identified variability in teacher expertise. Some described encountering teachers whose knowledge was perceived as outdated, narrow, or overly rigid. Others framed divergence as a matter of taste or stylistic orientation rather than correctness. P5 observed that different approaches may be “a matter of preference,” suggesting that plurality may reflect aesthetic diversity as much as technical disagreement.
Importantly, plurality was not inherently confusing. Several participants indicated that it became manageable once they could contextualise differences. P3, for example, described being able to understand “both sides,” even when approaches differed. The capacity to hold multiple frameworks appeared linked to confidence and relational trust, rather than simply exposure.

Plurality therefore functioned ambivalently. It could destabilise identity and generate confusion when learners lacked interpretive scaffolding. Yet it could also expand repertoire and autonomy once epistemic security was established. The following section examines how participants navigated this terrain through strategic decision-making.

4.6 Strategic Decision-Making and Training Choices
Participants did not merely experience plurality; they actively navigated it. Across cases, learners described processes of selection, adaptation, and boundary-setting in relation to teachers, techniques, and training environments.

Several participants articulated a shift from passive reception to deliberate decision-making. P7 described “making a decision about my own voice and training,” noting that this would not previously have felt comfortable. Similarly, P8 reflected on becoming “increasingly able to make informed decisions,” contrasting this with earlier experiences in which teachers had not supported such autonomy. These accounts suggest that agency evolves alongside interpretive capacity.

Strategic choice was evident not only in formal teacher selection but in everyday practice behaviours. P6 described “cherry picking” exercises from different sources and drawing from multiple methods, while still valuing “another pair of ears.” P3 similarly spoke of taking terminology and exercises from different teachers and placing them under ongoing “exploration.” These

examples indicate that plurality did not automatically produce fragmentation; instead, learners curated and synthesised across frameworks.

Importantly, strategic decision-making was not synonymous with rejection of authority. Rather, it appeared relationally contingent. Participants described evaluating whether a teacher was “the teacher for me,” and, if not, choosing not to continue that working relationship. Others highlighted the importance of being “equipped” to take knowledge beyond a single lesson. Decision-making thus functioned as a protective mechanism against dependency as well as confusion.

Professional participants also described reflexive shifts in their own teaching. P5 reflected on challenging previous assumptions after beginning to teach, and on fostering “ownership” and informed choice among students. Here, strategic decision-making extended beyond personal learning to pedagogical philosophy.

Taken together, Node 09 reveals that learners do not simply endure pedagogical plurality; they negotiate it through selective adoption, relational evaluation, and boundary-setting. The capacity to make such decisions appears closely linked to epistemic clarity and identity security. Where these are absent, plurality risks being experienced as destabilising. Where they are present, plurality becomes navigable.

4.7 Negotiating Coherence and Preserving Self Within Pedagogical Plurality

Across the preceding sections, participants described not only experiences of clarity, confusion, hierarchy, plurality, and decision-making, but an underlying effort to maintain psychological stability within a fragmented pedagogical landscape. While agency and strategic choice were frequently discussed, these appeared to function within a broader regulatory process.

Participants navigated plurality through active negotiation. They selected teachers, adopted and discarded terminology, experimented with techniques, and recalibrated goals. This negotiation was not purely cognitive. It was relational and affective. The presence of trust, dialogic openness, and permission to question appeared to moderate the destabilising effects of contradiction. Where questioning was permitted, plurality could be contextualised. Where authority was rigid, divergence was more likely to be internalised as personal inadequacy.

Relational safety therefore functioned as a stabilising mechanism. Participants consistently linked trust with the freedom to explore, clarify, and make decisions. In such contexts, confusion did not

automatically translate into shame. Instead, it could become part of developmental process. Conversely, where relational trust was absent, contradiction was more likely to provoke panic, cognitive overload, or withdrawal.

Identity stability emerged as a recurring but often implicit theme. Several participants described early training periods in which disagreement between teachers was interpreted as evidence that they themselves were “not understanding.” Others reflected on reaching stages of confidence in which they could tolerate divergence without self-doubt. The capacity to hold multiple frameworks appeared to increase as self-concept strengthened.

Agency, in this sense, operated as a regulatory mechanism rather than a purely emancipatory one. Learners exercised choice in order to protect coherence. Strategic decision-making, selective adoption, and boundary-setting enabled participants to preserve continuity in their sense of self, even while engaging with diverse pedagogical inputs.

Pedagogical plurality was therefore not inherently problematic. Its impact depended on the learner’s relational context and degree of epistemic security. For some, plurality enriched understanding. For others, particularly earlier in training, it threatened stability. Across cases, the central tension was not simply between evidence-based and heuristic approaches, nor between clarity and confusion, but between fragmentation and coherence.

The findings suggest that learners are engaged in an ongoing process of negotiating coherence within plural pedagogical systems, while attempting to preserve a stable and competent sense of self. This process appears dynamic, relational, and developmentally contingent.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Returning to the Research Questions

This study set out to explore perceived gaps, tensions, and unmet needs within contemporary vocal pedagogy, with particular attention to experiences of clarity, confusion, agency, and plurality. Through constructivist grounded theory analysis of ten semi-structured interviews, supported by indicative Likert scale responses, the findings reveal a relational and identity-mediated process underpinning learner experiences across diverse pedagogical contexts.

In relation to RQ2, participants described fluctuating experiences of clarity and confusion, often contingent upon relational safety and explanatory coherence. Confusion was not merely technical; it frequently intersected with self-doubt and perceived inadequacy. Conversely, clarity was

experienced not only as technical understanding but as a sense of being grounded and competent within one's own learning process.

RQ3 asked what tensions participants perceived between evidence-based and heuristic approaches. The data suggest that learners rarely framed tensions in explicitly epistemological terms. Rather, divergence between teachers was experienced through its impact on trust, coherence, and identity. Pedagogical plurality was not inherently problematic; its destabilising potential depended on whether learners felt equipped to interpret and integrate contrasting frameworks.

RQ4 examined which pedagogical features enhanced or constrained autonomy, understanding, and trust. Participants consistently highlighted dialogic openness, permission to question, contextualised explanation, and relational attunement as enabling conditions. Authoritarian or opaque teaching practices, by contrast, were associated with compliance, silence, and internalised confusion.

5.2 Integrative Process: Negotiating Coherence While Preserving Self

Across cases, learners appeared engaged in an ongoing process of negotiating coherence within plural pedagogical systems. Agency, strategic decision-making, and modality preference functioned not only as developmental achievements but as regulatory mechanisms.

Participants described "cherry picking," "taking nuggets," or selectively adopting terminology and exercises. These strategies were not expressions of resistance alone; they were means of preserving continuity in self-concept. Where contradiction between teachers was interpreted as personal failure, identity destabilisation followed. Where relational trust permitted exploration and questioning, plurality became navigable.

The findings therefore suggest that learner agency is inseparable from identity security. The capacity to tolerate ambiguity, hold multiple frameworks, and make informed training decisions appears developmentally contingent. As participants gained confidence, they reported greater comfort with divergence. Earlier stages were marked by greater vulnerability to fragmentation.

This reframes pedagogical plurality not as a problem of method alone but as a relational and developmental phenomenon. The central tension is not simply between clarity and confusion, nor between evidence-based and heuristic paradigms, but between fragmentation and coherence.

5.3 Repositioning the Literature

The literature reviewed in this study identified tensions between evidence-based and heuristic traditions, between reductionist and holistic framings, and between teacher-led authority and learner-centred autonomy. Much of this discourse positions disagreement as epistemological: a question of method validity, scientific grounding, or pedagogical legitimacy.

The findings suggest that learners do not primarily experience these tensions as abstract epistemic debates. Instead, divergence between teachers is filtered through relational and developmental lenses. Where pedagogical plurality is encountered without sufficient explanatory scaffolding or relational safety, learners are more likely to internalise contradiction as personal inadequacy. Conversely, where dialogue, contextualisation, and questioning are normalised, plurality can be integrated without identity threat.

Calls within the literature for greater learner agency may therefore require further nuance. Agency does not emerge in a vacuum. It appears contingent upon epistemic security and relational trust. The capacity to evaluate methods, tolerate ambiguity, and make informed training decisions develops alongside a stable sense of competence.

In this respect, the study extends existing discussions of pedagogical plurality by foregrounding its psychological and relational dimensions. Rather than resolving debates between methodological camps, the findings reframe the issue: the critical question is not which pedagogical model prevails, but how learners are supported to construct coherence within diversity.

The findings may also be read through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000), which emphasises autonomy, competence, and relatedness as foundational psychological needs within learning environments. Participants' accounts suggest that autonomy was supported when questioning and selective integration were legitimised; competence was strengthened when explanations scaffolded understanding without overwhelming; and relatedness was fostered through relational safety and identity affirmation. Where any of these conditions were compromised, agency appeared constrained. In this respect, the study extends SDT into the specific relational ecology of voice pedagogy, suggesting that epistemic clarity and dialogic flexibility function as practical mediators of motivational stability.

5.4 Contribution to Professional Practice

This study contributes to contemporary voice pedagogy by foregrounding the relational and identity dimensions of learner experience within plural systems. While debates often focus on technical accuracy or epistemic legitimacy, the data suggest that learners are primarily concerned with whether they can make sense of what they are being asked to do without undermining their sense of competence.

For practitioner-researchers, this highlights the importance of epistemic transparency, dialogic flexibility, and scaffolding that enables learners to contextualise difference. Teaching approaches that position questioning as legitimate, and that acknowledge plurality explicitly, may reduce the likelihood that divergence is internalised as personal deficiency.

Rather than advocating for homogenisation of pedagogical approaches, the findings support the cultivation of interpretive agency and relational safety as protective factors within diverse training ecologies.

A recurring pattern across accounts was the experience of pedagogical misalignment not as technical inadequacy but as relational incongruence between learner goals and instructional emphasis. Where teachers and learners were not “on the same page,” motivation and practice adherence diminished, reframing misalignment as both an educational and practical cost. This suggests that contemporary voice pedagogy may benefit from foregrounding ongoing alignment checks, negotiated aims, and responsiveness to developmental stage, while remaining attentive to institutional constraints such as assessment pressures and curriculum rigidity.

5.5 Limitations and Future Directions

This study was conducted within a specific professional context and reflects interpretive analysis shaped by the researcher’s insider position. While the constructivist grounded theory approach allowed for iterative refinement and cross-case integration, the sample size limits generalisability.

Future research could examine developmental trajectories of agency across training stages, or explore how institutional structures influence relational dynamics in conservatoire versus community settings. Quantitative instruments measuring perceived epistemic coherence or identity security may also extend these findings.

5.6 Closing Reflection

Participants did not simply describe learning how to sing. They described learning how to remain intact while doing so. Within systems marked by plurality, hierarchy, and divergence, learners appear engaged in the ongoing work of negotiating coherence not only to improve technique, but to preserve a stable and competent sense of self.

In contemporary vocal pedagogy, the question may not be which method is correct, but how learners are supported to construct clarity without compromising identity.

> “To learn to sing within pedagogical plurality is, ultimately,
> to negotiate coherence while preserving self.” (Dodsworth, 2026)

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Appendix A – Ethics Approval Documentation

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS
This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH 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.

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.

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.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Peter Dodsworth			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR
4	Campus:	Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	peterdodsworth@yahoo.com/ 2224781@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07432 688 967
	For students:	
7	Student Number:	2224781
8	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Julie Crossman/Debbie Winter

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): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other: 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, location-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. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3	*[List any other relevant documents here]*	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
7		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
8	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**	☐
9	Has 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

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	"What Are We Missing?": Investigating the Need for New Reflective and Adaptive Models in Contemporary Voice Pedagogy		
2	Proposed start date:	14th July 2025	Proposed end date:	2nd March 2026
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below:** *Purpose of Research Activity* *Proposed Research Question* *Aims of Research Activity* *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* *How it addresses an area of importance.*			
3	**Purpose of Research Activity**			

	This research investigates perceived gaps and tensions within contemporary voice pedagogy, particularly as experienced by singing teachers and learners working across multidisciplinary or performance-focused training contexts. The study adopts a grounded theory approach to allow themes to emerge from participant insight, rather than beginning with pre-determined models or hypotheses. As the demands placed on vocal performers become increasingly diverse — stylistically, psychologically, and professionally — questions arise about whether current pedagogical frameworks remain fit for purpose. The research explores how practitioners and learners articulate what is working, what feels lacking, and how they navigate challenges that extend beyond traditional technique-based training. Through qualitative data collection, this study will examine participant reflections on their vocal training experiences, educational assumptions, and emerging needs. Rather than evaluating specific models, the focus is on surfacing shared themes, insights, and contradictions that may inform future developments in pedagogical thinking. This inquiry builds on previous critical reflection and practitioner research but seeks to hold space for new and potentially unexpected findings. It aims to offer a grounded map of perceived needs, barriers, and opportunities within current voice education, contributing to the wider discourse on reflective, adaptive, and learner-centred practice in the performing arts. While this builds upon prior investigations into holistic pedagogy, the study is intentionally not framed around a specific institution or practice-type. This helps avoid pre-imposed bias and supports grounded theory's inductive aim: to let new, practice-informed understandings emerge from participant perspectives.
4	**Research Question** What perceived gaps, tensions, or unmet needs are experienced by singing teachers and learners within current vocal pedagogy, and how might these insights inform future pedagogical development?
5	**Aims of Research Activity** • To explore practitioner and learner perceptions of strengths and limitations within current vocal training. • To identify emerging themes around needs, frustrations, and pedagogical blind spots. • To contribute to a grounded understanding of what is missing or desired in contemporary voice pedagogy.
6	**Objectives of Research Activity** • Conduct semi-structured interviews with a small, diverse sample of participants (teachers and learners). • Use open-ended questions and reflective prompts to allow unfiltered experiences to surface.

	• Analyse the data thematically, using a grounded theory lens to allow meaning to emerge from the data itself. • Present key findings as a thematic map or narrative summary to inform future research and development.
	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. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	This project will use qualitative, exploratory methods grounded in participant reflection. The aim is to gather rich, first-person insights into how singing teachers and learners experience current vocal pedagogy, especially in multidisciplinary or performance-focused contexts such as musical theatre, conservatoire training, or freelance teaching. The primary data collection method will be **semi-structured interviews**, conducted either online or in person depending on the participant's availability. Each interview will last approximately 45–60 minutes and will be guided by a flexible question schedule designed to encourage open discussion. Questions will explore experiences of vocal training, moments of frustration or breakthrough, perceptions of pedagogical gaps, and reflections on what participants feel is missing or most needed in their learning or teaching environments. Participants will be invited to **bring a memory or story** from their teaching or learning journey that illustrates a time when they felt something was missing or unresolved. This narrative prompt will help access deeper reflections and avoid leading the participant toward predefined themes. Interview recordings will be transcribed and thematically coded using grounded theory principles. In some cases, a **short written reflection** may be invited post-interview to capture any thoughts the participant may have wished to add after the initial conversation. This is optional and intended to support richer data, particularly from those who process ideas over time. Thematic coding will follow an inductive approach, allowing patterns, contradictions, and categories to emerge from the data itself rather than being imposed in advance. Early analysis will inform the development of subsequent interview questions, allowing for iterative depth and exploration. The sample size will be small (approximately 5–8 participants) to allow for meaningful engagement with each narrative. Participants will include a mixture of early-career performers, experienced voice teachers, and postgraduate singing students. All data will be anonymised and stored securely. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw at any stage and will have the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy if desired. This method allows for rich, authentic insight into how voice pedagogy is currently experienced — and where it may fall short — without biasing the data toward any single

	proposed solution. The goal is to listen, notice patterns, and lay the groundwork for future applied research and pedagogical development.
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	The research will take place remotely via secure online platforms (e.g. Zoom) and/or in neutral public meeting spaces such as libraries, rehearsal rooms, or professional studios, depending on participant preference and geographic proximity. All interviews will be arranged with participant comfort and privacy in mind. Written reflections, if submitted, will be collected via email or secure form. Data will be stored securely on encrypted and password-protected cloud storage.
	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. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	*(this box should expand as you type)*

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐
11	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 the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	**YES**	**NO**
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒

17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	**YES**	**NO**
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☒	☐
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☒	☐
	Details of any other primary data collection method: Although no additional primary data collection methods are currently planned beyond interviews, questionnaires, participant diaries, audio/video recording, and participant observation (with knowledge), this study adopts a grounded theory framework, which may evolve responsively. Therefore, ethical approval is sought for the full range of listed methods to allow for flexibility should themes emerge that warrant methodological expansion. This		

	could include combining structured reflection prompts with questionnaires, refining focus groups into dyadic conversations, or analysing computer-generated usage logs if digital tools (e.g. online reflective platforms, practice diaries, or video lesson review tools) are introduced during the research process. All such adaptations would remain within the scope of reflective, qualitative inquiry, and any substantial methodological changes would be discussed with the supervisor and, if needed, submitted as an amendment to this ethics application.		

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

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

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

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	Approximately **6–10 participants** across a range of roles within the voice education ecosystem. This includes singing teachers, professional vocalists, and student performers. Focus groups may contain 3–4 participants per session, and interviews may be individual or paired depending on participant comfort.

11	Who will the participants be?	• Professional singing teachers with experience in conservatoire, drama school, or freelance settings. • Postgraduate or advanced-level singing students. • Early-career performers actively navigating vocal demands across diverse contexts. • A small number may be staff or students at UWTSD, while others will be recruited externally to provide wider industry perspective.
12	How will you identify the particip	• Existing professional networks and contacts in the voice education and musical theatre sectors. • Personal invitation based on relevant experience (e.g., reflection-rich studio work, diverse stylistic practice). • Snowball sampling: asking early participants to suggest other relevant contributors. • Where relevant, a short eligibility and interest form will be sent to screen for alignment with project aims. Participants will receive a clear information sheet outlining the purpose, format, and voluntary nature of the research, and all consent will be confirmed in writing prior to data collection.

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

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐

26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	I will be using a MacBook Pro, along with a digital interface and external microphones to record the interviews. *(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	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.		
1	**Full risk assessment completed and appended?**	**Yes**	☐
		No	☒
2	**Risks to participants** For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: This is a low-risk study; however, there is a minimal risk that participants may experience mild emotional discomfort when reflecting on past frustrations or unmet needs in their learning or teaching journeys. There is also a slight risk of perceived reputational exposure, especially if participants are known within small professional communities.	*How you will mitigate the risk to participants:* • Participants will be informed that they may decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time, without providing a reason. • All responses will be anonymised and pseudonyms used in reporting. • Interview data will be handled confidentially and securely. • A reflective and non-judgmental tone will be used during all interviews, and participants will be encouraged to prioritise their comfort. • Participants will be given the opportunity to review and approve their transcript excerpts before inclusion in the final project.	

3	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	
	There are no planned questions on sensitive topics (e.g. trauma, illegal activity). However, should a participant express distress, they will be offered the opportunity to pause or stop the session. Participants will also be provided with a short list of general support contacts (e.g. Mind, BAPAM) as part of their information sheet.	
4	**Risks to the investigator** For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: • Emotional impact when hearing participant frustrations or critical reflections. • Risk of perceived impropriety if interviewing former students or colleagues.	*How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:* • Emotional reflections will be supported through personal journaling and supervision check-ins. • Where power dynamics exist (e.g. former students), explicit statements of voluntary participation and no impact on current/future relationships will be made in writing. • Where possible, participants who do not have a close relational history with the researcher will be prioritised.
5	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Minimal. Potential reputational risk exists if participants misunderstand the study as critical of UWTSD specifically.	*How you will mitigate the risk to the University:* • All documentation will clarify that this is an independent academic inquiry and not an evaluation of any specific institution. • No institutions will be named unless participants explicitly consent to this and it is ethically justified.
6	**Environmental risks** For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: None. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to environment:* Not applicable. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**

	and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.			
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write “Pending”; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

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 be offered the opportunity to receive a summary of the findings once the research is complete. This will be made available via email in the form of a short thematic summary or overview report. Participants may also request a copy of their own interview transcript or any specific excerpts used in the final report. Additionally, any participant wishing to offer follow-up reflections or feedback after the interview will be welcome to do so.
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.
	All participants will receive a written **Participant Information Sheet** detailing the purpose of the study, what participation involves, their right to withdraw, how their data will be used and stored, and assurances of confidentiality. Consent will be obtained via a signed **Consent Form** (digitally or physically) prior to any data collection. If participating in a group session or focus group, additional information will be provided about the collective nature of the conversation and shared responsibility for respecting confidentiality within the group. For optional written reflections submitted after interviews, consent will be reconfirmed in the format provided (e.g. text or email).
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.
	Participants will remain anonymous in all publications and outputs unless they give explicit, separate written consent to be identified. All names, institutions, and identifying features will be replaced with pseudonyms or removed. Recordings and transcripts will be stored securely and labelled using anonymised participant codes. Only the researcher and (if required for academic review) the supervisor will have access to full raw data. Quotes used in analysis will be presented in a way that protects individual identities.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	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**

1	***"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 more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.*	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Personal data collected will include participants' voice recordings, interview transcripts, and any written reflections voluntarily submitted. These are necessary to explore participant perspectives on vocal pedagogy in a detailed, context-rich manner. Names and contact information will be collected only for consent and communication purposes and will not appear in the final research outputs.		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**
3	***"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),*	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	*(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	**YES**	**NO**
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be stored on encrypted, password-protected cloud storage via the researcher's Office		

	365 Business account, compliant with GDPR regulations. Audio files and transcripts will be labelled with anonymised participant codes. Consent forms will be stored separately from research data. Any USB sticks or portable drives used will be encrypted and wiped after transfer. Data will be backed up regularly to secure encrypted storage. Only the principal researcher will have access to identifiable data.

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	Data such as transcripts may be sent to participants for verification via secure email. No data will be published in identifiable form without written consent. Personal contact details will only be used for study communication and will be deleted after project completion.		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Only the **principal researcher (Peter Dodsworth)** and, if needed, the supervisor will have access to raw data. Transcripts and excerpts will be anonymised before any sharing.		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The **principal researcher** will have sole control of and responsibility for all data generated during the study.		
24	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.		
	Data will be stored securely until the conclusion of the project and the assessment process. After that, all identifiable data will be deleted or destroyed. Audio files will be erased, and USBs wiped. Consent forms will be retained securely for the duration of the project but not archived. No long-		

	term data archiving is planned, as this is a Level 7 MA project.		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	No — Not applicable for this project.		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	☒
27	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**	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	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/		
1	**Signature of applicant:**	Peter Dodsworth	**Date:** 9th June 2025

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Christian Felices	**Date: 5.11.25**
3	Signature:	Christian Felices	

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
5	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 (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.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY
Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

RESEARCH 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.

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.

Appendix B – Organisational Approval Letter

To Whom It May Concern,
This letter confirms that How to Sing Ltd grants approval for Peter John Dodsworth to undertake the work-based research project entitled:

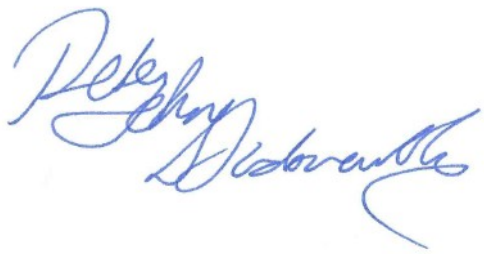
Navigating the Fog: How Learners Experience Agency, Clarity and Pedagogical Plurality in Contemporary Voice Pedagogy.

The organisation has been fully informed of the nature, purpose, and scope of the proposed study. The project involves qualitative research exploring the experiences of singing teachers, student singers, and early-career performers in relation to contemporary vocal pedagogy. The research activities include interviews and supplementary survey instruments conducted in accordance with the approved ethical framework.

As a sole trader and director of How to Sing Ltd, Mr Dodsworth has ensured that the project does not compromise professional responsibilities, confidentiality obligations, or safeguarding requirements. Participation in the study is voluntary and does not impact any professional relationship.

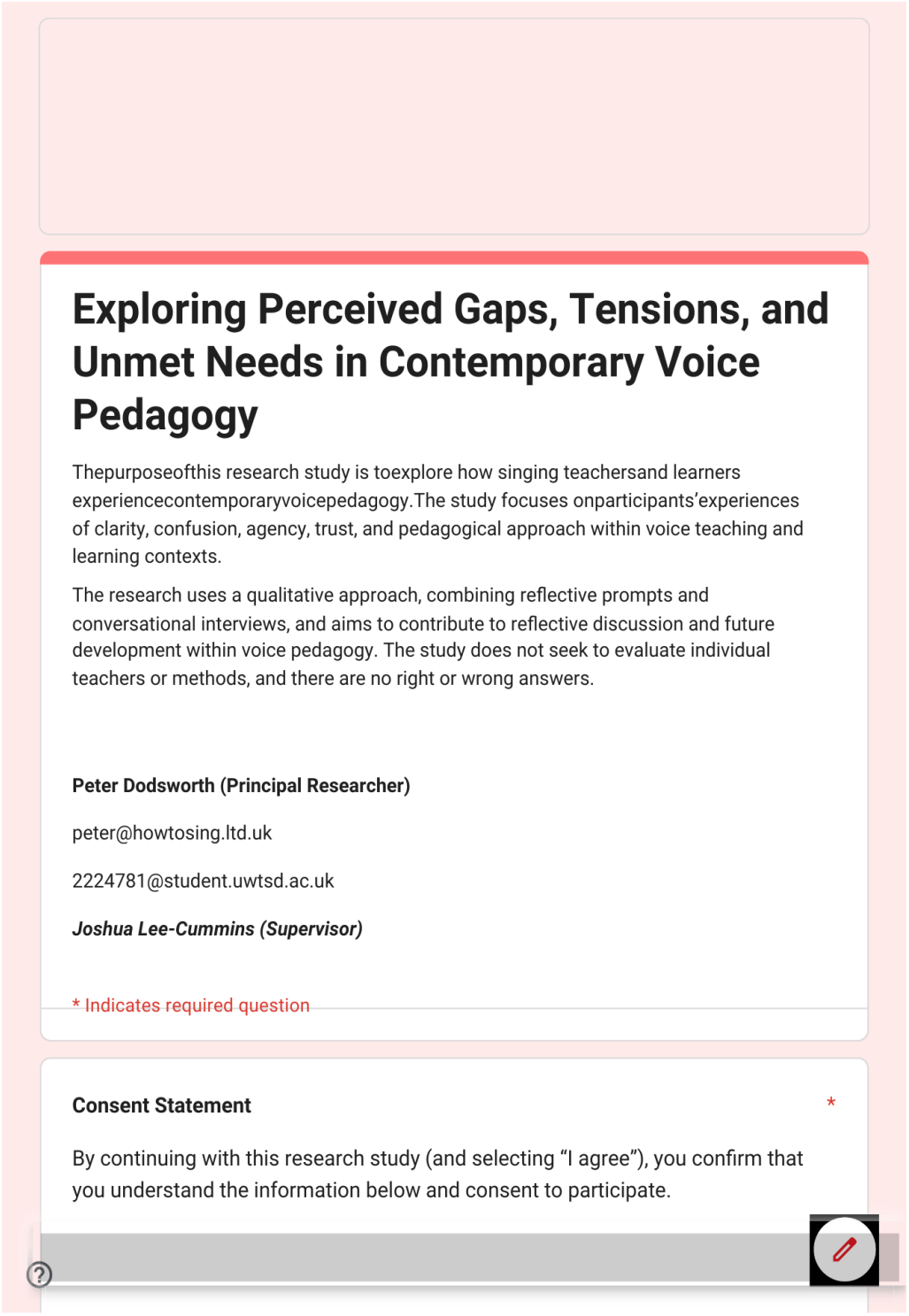
The organisation understands the purpose of the project and supports its completion as part of Mr Dodsworth's Master's programme.

Signed,



Peter John Dodsworth
Director, How to Sing LTD

Appendix C – Participant-Facing Materials (Google Form)



Exploring Perceived Gaps, Tensions, and Unmet Needs in Contemporary Voice Pedagogy

Thepurposeofthis research study is toexplore how singing teachersand learners experiencecontemporaryvoicepedagogy.The study focuses onparticipants'experiences of clarity, confusion, agency, trust, and pedagogical approach within voice teaching and learning contexts.

The research uses a qualitative approach, combining reflective prompts and conversational interviews, and aims to contribute to reflective discussion and future development within voice pedagogy. The study does not seek to evaluate individual teachers or methods, and there are no right or wrong answers.

Peter Dodsworth (Principal Researcher)

peter@howtosing.ltd.uk

2224781@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Joshua Lee-Cummins (Supervisor)

* Indicates required question

Consent Statement *

By continuing with this research study (and selecting "I agree"), you confirm that you understand the information below and consent to participate.

- [ ] I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- [ ] I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without any negative consequences.
- [ ] I understand the purpose and nature of the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions about it.
- [ ] I understand that I may decline to answer any question during the research session.
- [ ] I understand that participation involves an audio-recorded research conversation conducted online or in person.
- [ ] I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- [ ] I agree to my research session being audio-recorded.
- [ ] I understand that all information I provide will be treated as confidential.
- [ ] I understand that my identity will be anonymised in all written work and presentations arising from this research. This will include the use of pseudonyms and the removal or alteration of any identifying details where necessary.
- [ ] I understand that anonymised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation, academic publications, or conference presentations.
- [ ] I understand that if, during the research, I disclose information that suggests I or someone else may be at risk of harm, the researcher may be required to take appropriate action. This would be discussed with me wherever possible.
- [ ] I understand that consent forms and original audio recordings will be stored securely in a password-protected, cloud-based location accessible only to the principal researcher.
- [ ] I understand that anonymised transcripts will be retained securely until 9 February 2026, after which they will be deleted.
- [ ] I understand that I may request access to the data I have provided while it is being stored, in line with data protection legislation.
- [ ] I understand that I am free to contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information or clarification.
- [ ]

Confirmation *

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information above and agree to take part in this research study.

Experiences of Voice Teaching and Learning

The following statements invite you to reflect on your experiences of voice teaching and/or learning.

There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond honestly based on your own experience.

Response scale

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seemed to contradict each other. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what* is happening.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I trust my teacher's expertise.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

Imagery, metaphor, or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

Untitled section

Thank you for taking the time to complete this part of the study.

Your responses will help inform a broader understanding of how voice teaching and learning are experienced in practice. There are no right or wrong answers, and your reflections are valued for what they are.

If you are taking part in a research conversation today, we will now use your responses as a starting point for discussion. If you have any questions or concerns at any point, please feel free to raise them.

Thank you again for your time, openness, and contribution to this research.

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Appendix D – Researcher Prompt Guide for Semi-Structured Conversations

Participant Instructions

Thank you for taking part in this research study.

This activity explores experiences of voice teaching and learning. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your personal experiences and perspectives.

You will be asked to respond to a series of statements using a rating scale. After this, I may ask you some follow-up questions to explore your responses in more detail. You are free to decline to answer any question, pause the conversation, or withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

Part A: Reflective Statements

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement based on your own experiences of voice lessons or voice teaching.

Response scale:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Understanding and Clarity

1. I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.
2. I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.
3. [reverse Likert] I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.

Confusion and Uncertainty

4. I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seemed to contradict each other.
5. [reverse Likert] When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.
6. I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.

Agency and Autonomy

7. I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.
8. [reverse Likert] In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.
9. I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.

Trust and the Learning Relationship

10. I trust my teacher’s expertise.
11. [reverse Likert] Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.
12. Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.

Teaching Approaches and Explanations

13. Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.
14. Imagery, metaphor, or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.
15. [reverse Likert] I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.

Part B: Researcher Prompt Guide for Semi-Structured Conversations

The prompts below were used flexibly by the researcher to guide one-to-one research conversations. They were not shown to participants and were not followed as a fixed interview schedule. Prompts were selected responsively in relation to participants' Likert responses and the direction of the conversation.

Opening Open-Ended Invitation (before Likert prompts)

- To begin, can you tell me a little about your experiences of learning or teaching singing
- What stands out to you most when you think about your voice training or teaching so far?

(Used to establish context, rapport, and participant priorities.)

Follow-Up Prompts Linked to Likert Reflections

These prompts were used selectively, depending on participant responses.

Understanding and Clarity

- Can you describe a moment when something in a voice lesson felt particularly clear or helpful?
- Have there been times when you weren't sure why you were being asked to do something?

Confusion and Uncertainty

- You indicated some experiences of confusion or contradiction — can you tell me more about that?
- How do you usually respond when something in a lesson doesn't make sense?

Agency and Autonomy

- How comfortable do you feel asking questions or expressing uncertainty in lessons?
- Has your sense of control or agency over your voice changed over time?

Trust and Authority

- What does trust in a voice teacher mean to you?
- Have you ever felt tension between trusting a teacher and trusting your own experience?

Teaching Approaches

- Do you tend to prefer technical explanations, imagery, sensations, or a mixture?

- How do you experience shifts between different teaching styles or types of explanation?

Mid-Conversation Open Prompt (used as appropriate)

- Is there anything about your learning or teaching experience that feels important here, but that we haven't touched on yet?

(Used to re-centre participant priorities and allow emergent themes.)

Closing Open-Ended Reflection

- Looking back on your experiences, what kinds of teaching or learning moments have stayed with you most?
- Are there aspects of voice teaching or learning that you feel are often missing, overlooked, or not talked about enough?

(Used to support synthesis, reflection, and participant-led emphasis.)

Appendix E – Data Corpus (Redacted)

This appendix provides the data corpus and analytic artefacts supporting the study's findings. In keeping with constructivist grounded theory principles, materials are presented to demonstrate the iterative development of categories, cross-case comparison, and theoretical integration. The corpus includes full interview transcripts (P1–P10), an early provisional findings draft developed during initial single-case analysis, the codebook, focused codebook (Nodes 01–09), a cross-case coding matrix, participant-level analytic summaries, and key analytic memos documenting axial consolidation and cross-case theoretical integration. Collectively, these materials provide an audit trail illustrating how interpretive claims in Chapter 4 were generated, refined, and stabilised.

Contents

E1 – Interview Transcripts (P1–P10)
E2 – Early Provisional Findings Draft (P1 Stage)
E3 – Focused Codebook (Nodes 01–09)
E4 – Cross-Case Coding Matrix
E5 – Participant-Level Analytic Summaries
E6 – Axial Consolidation Memo
E7 – Cross-Case Theoretical Integration Memo

Appendix E1 – Transcripts

Participant 1 – Interview Transcript

Researcher:

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. So it will start now. First of all, thank you so much for taking part in my research study. It basically explores experiences of voice learning and teaching and all things kind of like that. So there are no right or wrong answers. All I'm interested in is your personal experience and your perspectives. So I've got a list of survey-like questions that we're going to go through at the same time. So I think the easiest thing is if I share my screen; you can actually read the whole entire sentences now, so that's useful. I'll just start clicking them on your behalf if I may.

Participant 1:

Can you scroll?

Researcher:

I can.

Participant 1:

Great, lovely.

Researcher:

So I'll tick that for you and that's recorded and then no one else will see that. So all the questions, they're basically on a scale of one to five. Strongly agree. Like a, you know, like a satisfaction survey after you've ordered something online. So this is the first one. “I usually understand why my teacher asked me to do particular vocal exercises.” So would you... And anything that you're thinking, please verbalise. So anything that you're thinking, you're like, what is this? Then so the whole point is to just gain your perception and experience on everything.

Participant 1:

I'd say I'd be a three there, because sometimes I'm like, oh yes, I understand why you've asked me to do that, because it's helped me do that. And then sometimes I'll do things where I think, why am I sitting here humming for four hours? Sometimes I'm like, it's because usually you're working towards a specific thing, like I'm trying to learn this music at the moment for tomorrow. So yesterday I saw my friend who came and played and she was giving me pointers which helped me with certain parts of the song. And then there's other things where you think oh I don't know why

I'm doing that or whatever and I think sometimes it's difficult then to pass stuff on, isn't it? If you need to breathe there, I think you should breathe here.

Researcher:
And I guess also you may have worked with lots of different either teachers, coaches, MDs over the time, so you've probably got a lot of instances where people have given advice. So I think that can probably play a part as well.

Participant 1:
Yeah, definitely. Because I think everybody has ways of teaching, coaching, advising.

Researcher:
And so sometimes you take from lots of different people that you've worked with before, you've trained with before, absolutely to arrive at your own way of doing something and then can be quite difficult sometimes if you're working with somebody new or someone that works in a particular way to switch…

Participant 1:
Yeah, absolutely.

Researcher:
...something in a certain way it's almost like a different language in a way maybe yeah you've got and then maybe there's somewhere like a dictionary or a glossary you know when X says this that means for me it means that yes yeah interesting. Our second prompt: “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve”. We can also chat about the actual… so say someone in any of those contexts has said, hey, do this. Are you clear about why they've said that? What the aim is?

Participant 1:
Yeah, I'd say four on that. Because I think once you're in and you're doing something, doing an exercise with someone, you know, it's like any kind of vocal warm-up or exercise often pertains to what you're about to do. So it's like, you know, you don't just suddenly start doing things that have got no context to what you're about to perform.

Researcher:
Hopefully not.

Participant 1:
Hopefully not.

Researcher:
Have there been any times when you weren't sure why you were being asked to do something? So maybe the opposite of that, when you've been made like...

Participant 1:
Yeah, a couple of days as well. I mean, you know, I've done some shows. I've done a particular show, which will remain nameless. You know, and we had a musical director who wasn't really a musical director, if that makes sense. It's like they were a musician from a band and there was no structure to the warm up. And then suddenly, obviously you've learned another one off YouTube this morning. And so I think in those instances as well, it's like, it's not useful because you just because you think this isn't helping me with what I'm about to do, so...

Researcher:
And did that have any effects with, like, the rest of the group as well? If you were kind of feeling, oh...Someone's been on YouTube whilst eating their breakfast...

Participant 1:
I mean, I'm the kind of person that tries to stand there and remain engaged so as not to be rude, you know? But you can see, like, how others just switch off and then sort of start divvying off into little groups and basically not taking part at all. And the reason for that is because it's, it doesn't help. So, absolutely. So therefore, and then you find people go off and they're doing their own, their own warm ups and exercises that they need to do at that time, I think.

Researcher:
I guess there's always some kind of need for that because people, everyone's in and everyone has their own specific things they want for like general preparation and stuff. But yeah, I guess it can be a bit disengaging.

Participant 1:

If I was to ask this question to that person, they wouldn't be able to answer. Like if I would say, so what is this? What is this for? What is this helping with? Yeah, I'm pretty certain that they wouldn't be able to answer. And it was just by, you know, when you work with people that you have, you get to know like what their exercises are, what their warm ups are, you know, it's pretty similar, all the time, you might have additions, but when you're then doing suddenly, suddenly, you're seven weeks in and you start doing something new, you're like, Oh, you've not done that one before, you know, it just becomes, it can become a bit, I guess, a bit unsettling.

Researcher:

Like, are we changing the pattern?

Participant 1:

Yeah, it's like, yeah, so I mean, I remember on that particular, I mean, you know, me personally, I have one that I always use, which I've kept from a long time ago. But I always, I always feel that that works really well for me, that one. So I just always do that one myself anyway. And then like sort of going to a, you know, often these things are compulsory, aren't they? So the only reason you're there is for that reason. You know, you've already, I think it quickly becomes apparent whether you need to look after yourself or whether you're going to be looked after. I mean, I think obviously there's a bit of both in there, but like, you know, you sort of think, no, I have to do my own thing because I'm not getting anything out of that. And because it's not explained as to why, why you're doing a certain thing, you sort of think, you know, I'm just running around, walking around, walking around the stage, doing a load of rhymes.

Researcher:

And how does that make you feel about yourself, them, and the whole experience?

Participant 1:

Personally, I just, I mean, you know, you know what it's like, you just suddenly start, you start resenting doing something if it has no purpose. Yeah, for sure. So, and like when you're trying to get ready to perform and stuff like that, you're thinking this is wasting my time. I could be doing, I could be getting ready at this point.

Researcher:

Yes, you could be getting ready, going over lines, whatever.

Participant 1:
Yeah, all that sort of thing.

Researcher:
Okay, shall we move on to the next one? “I often do exercises (so it could be in lessons or rehearsals. I mean, this kind of links to maybe what you were saying.) without fully understanding what are the they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 1:
Yeah, I would say that was quite true. I mean, this one that I do, yeah, I think it's just because I have been doing it for a long time. But I don't think I would know the exact point of each exercise within that.

Researcher:
Do you feel that it still does something though? It obviously has benefit?

Participant 1:
Yeah, because you know, like the wordy thing, you'll do it, you know, to get the mouth going, all that, you know, obviously I understand all that, obviously scales and things like that, but I'd say there's other, there's parts of it that I still don't know why I'm doing it, but I've worked, but I've used it so much that it's now like a, it's a thing now that if I don't do that one, then I don't feel like I've done anything.

Researcher:
So it's really part of your habit and your preparation?

Participant 1:
Yeah, and that's like, I mean, it doesn't matter when I do, you know, I'm not saying I'd be standing in the space doing it, I'd do it in the car or, you know, but it's one of those, it's like you get into your head where if you go in one day and you've not done it, and then all of a sudden something goes wrong, you're like, it's because I didn't do that.

Researcher:
Yeah, absolutely. So do you think that, as a kind of tangent related, so as long as you feel it's adding value? Do you need to understand it fully? That's a bonus question.

Participant 1:

I mean, the thing is, I think the answer to that is no, because I do it. I've been doing it for so long, this one where there were a bit where I don't know, so I would say no. It's just, it's so in my routine when I'm working that it's like, I feel like up and I feel like I'm ready then once I've done it.

Researcher:

So what number should we give that prompt?

Participant 1:

Four, I guess.

Researcher:

Let's move on. “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 1:

Well, five.

Researcher:

Five.

Participant 1:

I think that goes back to everyone's different. One person will say one thing and one person will say another. It's like, when I did this song yesterday, I'm now doing it how I've been instructed to do it. But I might come and sing this song with you later, and you might say, well, why sing it? Why don't you sing out on that bit? And then also, yeah, there's like, even in exercises and things like that, people say different things for different, you know, like,

Researcher:

Absolutely, yeah. And make sense of that? So take the example you led with, which was preparing this song. So you've rehearsed it through your eyes, then you've had some influence from someone else. So immediately you've got things that may be opposite ends of the spectrum and contradicting each other, how do you then deal with that in your head?

Participant 1:

I think sometimes, I think, for me, I would, you know, if I'm, you know, you always start off, don't you, by singing something through. For sure. And then, and then we go, okay. So this is what you did here. And this is what you did there. But actually, if you do this, this and this, So for me, in my head, I think, well, I mean, the reason I asked my friend to come here in the first place to help me with; because I wanted that guidance. So for me, it's having an open mind to change it, to change what you're doing, because there's no point in asking someone to come and help you if you're just going to do your own thing. What's the point? If you're just going to stick to what you were doing? And, you know, and there are things that, you know, sometimes you don't know that you're doing something until someone else points it out.

Researcher:

And then what about if the person that's helping or coaching you or whatever, suggests something that you're quite passionately opposed to?

Participant 1:

I think what I've tended to do with stuff is agree at the time and then just...

Researcher:

Do you know what I mean? That's important for balance, isn't it?

Participant 1:

It's like, I'm not going to spend half an hour having an argument about it, we'll just...

Researcher:

And I guess that depends on the person, doesn't it? Because you might be working with someone where actually the spirit of the debate is kind of like an exploration in itself, versus someone else where you kind of judge, no, this is just going to be a loggerheads. Yeah, thank you so much. Let's move on.

Participant 1:

And also, there's things like you might think to us, you know, like, different approaches. So for instance, like listening to a recording, or without a recording. I'm now working with a different MD and I'm doing what I've heard on the recording, because obviously that was at one point a production. But then you're working with this other person who's telling you to do things different

than what you've heard, so the contradiction comes in where it's like, it just shows that actually there's not a right or wrong way of doing something, there's different approaches to it. But I think, sometimes in like exercises and stuff like that. Yeah, I mean, I remember this guy as well. I mean, it was just like, he'd always start off and be like, get everyone to lie down on the floor, looking at the ceiling and breathing in and out. I mean, to me, I just go, I know how to breathe. I've been doing it for 46 years. I don't need to lie on the floor for five minutes looking at the ceiling, and I don't know what that achieves. And I've worked with other people who don't do any of that kind of stuff. You know, and it's like, so, and it's like, oh, this will just get you into the, you know, and I think, well, I'm in the zone. I've come into work. I don't know. But I think it's opinions, isn't it? And they think it adds value, someone else doesn't. I personally don't think that adds value. But at the same time, you're there in the room with that person, so you do what they say.

Researcher:

OK, do you feel ready for the next prompt? Here we go. “When I feel confused in lessons (or rehearsals or coaching sessions, we can synonym-ise those) I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.” Let's explore that.

Participant 1:

I don't know what that is with me, but if something, if I don't understand something, because usually you're in a group of people. So often you feel like everyone around you is doing it because they're doing the same thing. Or if something goes wrong, I always go, it's me. And I don't know whether that's a confidence thing or... I mean, there have been instances where they go, “No, no, that's right.” And I'll go, “Oh.” You know, and... And is that normal?

Researcher:

So the compliments are received with surprise?

Participant 1:

Yes, I'm like, oh, because I automatically think that it's to do with me. Understanding or, and it doesn't mean it's always true, but...

Researcher:

Do you think that's something, I mean, it's hard because I'm asking you to reflect on yourself and you are yourself, but do you think that's something inherent within you or is it kind of musical theatre and theatre in general that everyone feels a bit that way?

Participant 1:

I think a lot of people feel different degrees of this, I think, in that environment. But for me personally, I always think, you know, I've never been someone that just sort of thinks, oh, here I am, and I'm the dogs, you know. I always feel that, like, perhaps I'm not as good as some of the people in the room or you know for whatever reason or maybe I haven't had as much training or as in-depth training as some people and you know sometimes people are better singers that's all there is to it.

Researcher:

Yeah and I guess the art form is you know it's just so competitive at every stage isn't it? It's competitive in training, it's competitive getting the jobs and so I guess there's always a lens.

Participant 1:

And it's competitive still once you've got the job.

Researcher:

Which is crazy because you're all in it together then.

Participant 1:

You're all in it together then but then there's pressures come from other places then as well it's like you know you might be doing something with You might be doing a song, a duet, and the other person's all over it and you're not quite there yet. So, and it's like this added pressure, which then actually makes it worse. Because you either continue to do it wrong or you continue to do it even more wrong than you were doing it before because you're adding all this pressure. And then there's other pressures as well. Suddenly you've got people sitting in front of you who you've potentially already met them before you got the job anyway, but now the pressure is on to deliver. It's like, you don't want anyone to regret their decision. Or the pressure of future employment and that sort of thing. You're always constantly thinking, oh god, are they going to think I'm not having him again? You sort of thing.

Researcher:

Because it's so hard getting the gig, I guess, to begin with, isn't it?

Participant 1:

Yeah, so, but yeah, I think it's much easier if you're doing something on your own, as in, you know, a solo moment, because you don't have somebody else relying on what you're doing. It's like, it's back to you.

Researcher:

And how do you feel that the MDs or vocal coaches react in those moments? I mean, obviously, this is if you vocalise those moments, if you keep them to yourself, that's a different thing. Are there any instances that you can recall?

Participant 1:

Yeah, I think I always people try to make it, I think usually MDs, coaches are, they don't try to make it worse by going, why don't you know it? You know, I think, you know, actually, I actually find people in those positions usually should be on stage, comedians. You know, because you get things like, you know, you'll get to the end of something and someone will go “Hmm interesting, so let's do it again and this time...” I mean this is an example of my mate yesterday, um, she once said “yeah that was great but we'll do it again and this time is there any chance of you singing the notes that are written in the music?”

Researcher:

And how does that make you feel Obviously you have a rapport because you're friends as well as colleagues.

Participant 1:

Yeah, but it makes it light, but it still adds pressure. Because there is an element of truth in what they're saying. They're like, seriously, can you sing the right notes?

Researcher:

If you'd be so kind. Okay, let's move on to the next prompt.

Participant 1:

I sometimes wanted you to sing my darling, I wanted you to sing this that's written down here.

Researcher:

So, I think this moves on nicely. “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons or rehearsals or whatever, without panicking.”

Participant 1:

No, I do panic.

Researcher:

And how much would one panic? On my scale of one to five?

Participant 1:

I think it kind of I think it depends on how far along you are with something.

Researcher:

And does the panic get less through time or more through time?

Participant 1:

I think it gets less, but I always have this kind of moment where I suddenly go, hang on. I don't know what I'm doing. But then you start, so you're there with this panic and then all of a sudden, obviously you do know it and it comes out of the mouth.

Researcher:

Do you think that's maybe related to the previous prompt?

Participant 1:

Oh yeah, definitely. I think it's all linked, I think.

Researcher:

I would think that as well.

Participant 1:

But I don't think, you know, I think I used to be a lot more confident with things when I was much younger. But I think as I get older, and it's, I don't know, I just...

Researcher:
Is that specifically about singing or performing, acting, doing the job, whole world?

Participant 1:
It's the singing, because I think I've had like... I've had instances before with the same person I was talking about from yesterday, where once I remember she really knocked me out. Because, you know, she's not to be crossed, this woman. And I'm not saying that what she said was wrong or incorrect, she's trying to teach me a better thing, but I remember from doing that specific project that after that, I've always been a bit like, whereas before I'd just go in and open my mouth and start singing, whereas now I'm like, um, you know, and I think that can be quite restrictive. Because actually you're suddenly closing everything up you know you're, and then you don't, that gets better over time I think but I do remember a specific thing and having a stand-up argument actually okay so quite a high emotionally staked moment yeah because also because also it was in front of the whole room.

Researcher:
Oh gosh, that's a lot.

Participant 1:
So, and it's like, you know, it's a long time ago now, but I do second guess and everything now and think, oh god, are they gonna, how shall I do this? How shall I sing that? How shall I, is this right? Is it, instead of like, Obviously there is a right and a wrong way to sing a song, but you know what I mean? Like, style or whatever, just go for it and then shape and refine. Now I'm like, oh, I don't know if they're going to like this version of me, the way he's singing it like this. Perhaps I should do it like that, or maybe I should do it like that. Oh, I don't know. If I go back to doing that and all these things, I find they roll through my head all the time.

Researcher:
That's a lot of busy stuff.

Participant 1:
So it's like, and then this all links to, you know, you might be, you know, then this might lead to the being confused about something or not understanding something because actually you're thinking about 26 different things as well at the same time. Well, you know, wondering what people think at

what you are doing. Yeah, sometimes when you go, why am I doing this to myself? Why have I put myself here?

Researcher:
When you re-evaluate those life choices, maybe.

Participant 1:
I've just done a 10 hour flight over to the Maldives and beyond the beach now, but no, here we are.

Researcher:
On my scale of one to five, with one being strongly disagree, how able to sit with uncertainty and confusion are you without panicking?

Participant 1:
I'm going to say three on that, because it's in the middle.

Researcher:
In the middle, lovely. Shall we move on to prompt seven, I think? So it's total of 15: “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons, rehearsals, coaching sessions.”

Participant 1:
Yeah, I would agree. I feel able to ask questions, definitely. I do question things.

Researcher:
That's good because that helps understanding on multiple levels. Doesn't it?

Participant 1:
Yeah, so I'm not afraid to say, oh, can I just check blah, blah, or, or I might, or sometimes I've challenged something because I've gone, I know that's how you would sing this, but the character, you know, because actually, sometimes I've found that in the past, where sometimes it's like, it's not marrying up. And it's like, you've got someone sitting there that wants you to ‘sing out Louise’. But you're like, yeah, but I don't feel that as a character choice, that's what we would do. And then, you know, what inevitably ends up happening is they go, why don't you try both and let's see what happens.

Researcher:

And then how in control of that do you feel in those kinds of instances?

Participant 1:

I think...

Researcher:

Because at the end of the day, you're the person that's going to have to do it.

Participant 1:

Yeah, so I think at the end of the day, like, if it's a character choice, then actually then that comes from... It comes from you, yourself. It's like, no, this is the character choice. This is in line with how I am doing the rest of it. And then often I find that will be supported from a director, for instance. So yeah, I think I would, I do strongly agree with that.

Researcher:

And as a number five?

Participant 1:

I think locked in. And I go, you know, and I'll say, I'll kind of, you know, and if I'm not sure about something, I'll say, can we just go back over this? Because I don't know what I'm doing.

Researcher:

That's good. Here we are. “In lessons or rehearsals, I mostly focus on doing what I'm told rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 1:

Yeah, I mean, I could contradict myself here, couldn't I?

Researcher:

It's part of the research design.

Participant 1:

Well, I mean, the thing is, I do, I do focus on doing what I'm told. Unless I disagree.

Researcher:

I mean, it does say I'm mostly focused. It doesn't say always.

Participant 1:

Rather than understanding what is happening. I don't know, because I think understanding comes from challenging.

Researcher:

So interesting.

Participant 1:

So I think really, I would focus on doing what I'm…Yeah,.. I would do focus. I'd say I'm going to say four on that. I do focus on what I'm doing. But because you it's because you would feel that you understand why you're doing it. And if you didn't, then you would say I don't understand while I'm doing this okay

Researcher:

Absolutely let's let's move on number nine, I think. “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 1:

I think I'll be in the middle with that one. Because sometimes, you know, circumstance means that you do have to make decisions about what you're going to do without that having gone and got any advice but drawing on everything that you have from the past. That you've learned. It depends what it is and what I think. It's like I was saying to you, I want to start doing and getting a new folder together and all of that. And that's about seeking advice and trying out new and different things. But in other circumstances, you go, right, I need to do this. For my thing tomorrow I'm like I feel like I should take a new another song even though they've only sent this yeah, um, you know and I've just decided that I'm doing an Elton John one because I know Elton John and Gary Barlow he's influenced by Elton John so I'm gonna do that song and is it so you know it's similar vibe of the it, that sort of thing. And so therefore, you know, I'm making that decision. And then with training, it's like, you know, I've, as you know, I've already said I want to start doing that. You know, it's you make those decisions, don't you? Like I've, since Christmas time, I've decided actually, I think it would work well if I came to you. You know, for past experience of working together and me getting, you know, we had those sessions where I was like, I can't do that. I can't get this and I

can't do that. And we were upstairs in that room and you were like, what about this, what about... And suddenly I felt comfortable with your style and approach. So therefore it's like, well, that's my informed decision about my future training. And I'm not going to just go to somebody because they go well they're the best yeah you know they might you know they might be very good but they might not be the best for me that's the most important thing yeah let's move on oh I trust my teacher's expertise so this could also be musical director vocal coach on a show blah blah I would say mostly yes for the odd odd time, as I discussed earlier, where.

Researcher:
Yeah, it's good to laugh as we reminisce. The next prompt is: “I trust my teacher’s expertise.”

Participant 1:
Yeah, most of the you know that the person sitting in front of you is an expert at what they do. And that we're all working towards the same goal. And actually I think there's a mutual trust and if you build those relationships you know, it's like a teacher or music director is going to, is trusting that you're going to sing the songs for a start. You're trusting that they're going to teach you and how they want it delivered. And, you know, you make this, this bond really, an unsaid bond that...

Researcher:
Yeah. That you're working towards a common good almost. Yeah, exactly.

Participant 1:
So I would say, yeah, most of the time, yes, I do.

Researcher:
So the next prompt is related, but kind of spins it on its head slightly. “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 1:
I don't know, I think I would disagree because, well, you do until I mean...

Researcher:
Is there something that you're feeling? Are you remembering a tension before where maybe you had like what someone was saying versus your own experience?

Participant 1:

Yeah, I think it goes back to the questioning and challenging certain things. It's like, you know, there's always going to be, there'll always be a kink somewhere maybe where actually something needs to be discussed. So it's not that you're not trusting their expertise, but you're merely questioning to come to a common answer as to what you're doing and why. And, you know, sometimes It's not very often that you have someone sitting there going, no, I'm right, you're wrong, I'm big, you're small. Sometimes people will go, actually, yeah, hadn't thought of that or whatever. Because at the end of the day, we're all people working together. I would say, too, with that, I think you go along with the teacher's expertise, so you don't.

Researcher:

I like that, that's very poetic. Let's continue. “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Participant 1:

Yeah, definitely. A five, definitely. I think it's really important that, it goes back to what I was just saying a minute ago, it's like that comfortable knowing each other, knowing what I'm doing, knowing how I'm singing, why I do it like that, what I've chosen, how my voice, you know, I think it's really because otherwise you're always going to be on different tracks, I think.

Researcher:

And is it also important for the teacher to understand what you want?

Participant 1:

Yeah, definitely.

Researcher:

Because that's why you're in that position, isn't it?

Participant 1:

Yeah, it's like you've gone there for a reason, so they need to understand what that, whether that is to do a new rep folder or to, you know, you say I've gone there to do a new rep folder and suddenly you're spending the whole hour doing strengthening or whatever. That's not why I'm here.

Researcher:

And I guess maybe the ideal, like you've you've said for previous prompts, is that common ambition and actually discussing it and going, right, we're here to do this. How are we going to do it?

Participant 1:

Yeah, exactly. Like coming up with a plan rather than... I remember I went to someone before and I didn't really last very long going there. I mean, he was very, very nice and everything. But like, and I knew what he was trying to do and he wants to go all the way back to the beginning and wants to go all the way back, to classical, and all that sort of stuff. And it's like, yeah, I get it, but I'm not here to do, like, I'm not at the beginning of, you know, this is what I want to achieve. And he just wasn't. On the same page, maybe. Yeah, it was like, no, no, you've got to do this and do that. And the thing is, it's like, actually, you know, those lessons did not interest me. So then I wasn't doing the work in between. So therefore, you know, it was a waste of time, waste of money, like, because it's important to have the interest and to want to go and to want to...

Researcher:

And maybe you felt that you weren't in charge and you had no control over what was occurring.

Participant 1:

Yeah yeah so yeah I think it is yeah definitely really important.

Researcher:

Great we're on the last three now: “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.” Agree or disagree?

Participant 1:

I would disagree with that because half the time I don't understand what they're talking about.

Researcher:

Okay, so is that a strongly number one disagree?

Participant 1:

Maybe a two. I mean some things I do understand.

Researcher:

Let's move on to the other one because there's a pair. “Imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.” So the opposite, the antithesis of that.

Participant 1:

I would agree with that.

Researcher:

How much would you agree?

Participant 1:

Four, yeah. I think you always will have a little technical understanding from drama school training and stuff like that. And some people are very, very into it and know the ins and outs of the voice and how it's, what it's made up of, you know, everything. Whereas I, I mean, it's hard to think of an example, but that's not me, you know. But yeah, imagery, metaphor and sensation-based teaching, definitely, you know. Oh, think of it like you're coming out of, you know.

Researcher:

You're a flower blooming...

Participant 1:

That sort of thing definitely lands better with me. It helps me create those shapes of what, you know, rather than going, oh, you need to do this and quench that and twist this. Yeah, definitely.

Researcher:

So the final one which brings both of those together is: “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.” So maybe an example is, clench your, you know, clench your, whatever, thyro-arytenoid muscle and then imagine that you're a mushroom blooming from the ground.

Participant 1:

Well, I mean, actually, isn't, I suppose that, I mean, if they're linked, like, I'm assuming what you just said is linked.

Researcher:
Who can say? I was just plucking two different things from...

Participant 1:
Yeah, well, then I suppose it could be more confusing if it was two things you know the one thing you understand what's being asked to be the other one you don't so there's a danger there that you're thinking that those two things mean the same thing when maybe they don't.

Researcher:
Or the opposite maybe. Or the opposite yeah. You may think they may be different things but actually you know the mushroom and the thyro-arytenoid muscle are the same thing if they could be.

Participant 1:
I mean I've never heard that in my life. Yeah, I would say, for me, when I'm singing, it's all about, and actually story-based, is what comes out of my mouth, I think, rather than standing there thinking about technicalities that, frankly, I don't understand.

Researcher:
I guess the focus is different in performance as well, isn't it? Because then it's about storytelling rather than, hopefully, rather than anyone standing or sitting there thinking, how do I do this bit?

Participant 1:
Yeah, exactly. And I think it's all those things help with actually the way in which a song is sung as well. Actually, you can just stand there thinking about technical aspects. I'm not saying that that is not useful or helpful, but actually, from the work that I do, you know, people stand there and you get nothing, because their singing, and it sounds wonderful and beautiful, but actually, where's the...

Researcher:
Where's the story?

Participant 1:
But I think in all songs are stories, I think, so.

Researcher:
So where are we going to sit on this scale?

Participant 1:
I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery. I will say four, not five, because sometimes I do understand stuff. But yeah, I'm not a technical person at all, so.

Researcher:
That's the end.

Participant 1:
And that's it.

Researcher:
That's the end of the prompts. Are there anything else you feel like you want to add or that's made you think about stuff where you might feel is important that we haven't touched upon in all the cyclic prompts?

Participant 1:
I don't think so. But actually, you know, it's like it's actually just made me realise what I do. I've never thought in my head, oh, imagery and metaphors. And now I think, that is what I do. I've just never thought of it in that way before. But actually, that is exactly what I do.

Researcher:
And how does that make you feel thinking about that now?

Participant 1:
Well, I'm just thinking about this song that I've been doing this morning and I'm like, Yeah, this is what I'm... There's a lyric that's like, I think I'd know it by now since I've got to sing it tomorrow.

Researcher:
There's a whole day between now and tomorrow.

Participant 1:

“Angry school kids texting, don't appreciate the mist that's hovering on the river.” And I'm like, well, when I'm doing that, actually, I'm like, there's the river, I can see the mist on it. I can see these lot, they're waiting for their bus. It's, you know, it's like I can actually see it when I'm doing it and it's interesting. Like, oh, I'm actually telling a story. I can see it, they can see it too. That's it.

Researcher:

Someone pay this person.

Participant 1:

So yeah, it's great. What a good thing.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for taking part. I enjoyed it. And giving up your time.

Participant 1:

My pleasure.

Researcher:

Thanks so much. Have a great rest of your day.

Participant 1:

Thank you very much.

Participant 2 – Interview Transcript

Researcher:
Hello, hello.

Participant 2:
Good morning, afternoon. Afternoon.

Participant 2:
Sorry I'm late, I was fighting with the internet.

Researcher:
Thanks for taking part. So it's basically, so it's like, I mean, technically it's an interview, but it's more like a chat about stuff. And I've got some prompts, which I'll ask for you to rate one to five, but I will share screen and then we can go through it together at a leisurely pace. There we go. Cool. I'll let you just read this bit.

Participant 2:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Yeah. So it's basically, I'm investigating tensions, gaps, and unmet needs: Exploring, do they exist in the teaching of voice and singing…? So that's the information. And then this is your consent statement, which I will tick on your behalf if that's all right. But I'll give you time to read through them. But in essence, everything we discuss will be anonymised. You can withdraw at any time with no reasons if you're just like, hey, Do you know what? I'm not happy with that being shared anonymously. So I'll just mosey on and tick through those.

Participant 2:
Agree to everything. Yes.

Researcher:
Yes, yes, yes. Hang on a minute. We're almost there.

Participant 2:

Agreed, agreed. I understand.

Researcher:

Okey dokey. So there's 15 prompts and then I'm going to ask you to answer those on a scale of one to five, whether you strongly agree or disagree, like an Amazon feedback survey, basically. And then anything that you want to add, chat about, we can as we get to it. But before we start, here's an open-ended research question: “So what's your experience of learning singing or teaching singing?”

Participant 2:

So my experience learning singing was, is, was, when I was a kid, my mum had a dancing school and I've been doing dancing school things all my life. And then at primary school, I started piano lessons and my piano teacher was like, “she's got a very musical ear, maybe she should do singing because she is also a bit of a class clown and likes to yell about and make noises with her mouth.” So that kind of encouraged my mother to find a singing teacher. And I used to do little singing comps and singing at Stedfords and things like that. And I was always a musical theatre fan. And yeah, I used to do song and dance dance competitions and would always do much better in those things than the actually technical dancing stuff. I would always get the reports of, “she's got a great personality, she's got a great voice” and nothing about my dancing. What else? I always, my mother fed me a diet of MGM musicals and Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand and Liza Minnelli and all that, all the camp divas. Who I grew up loving. And yeah, so I did singing in high school for year 12 in Australia. We called it the HSC and you pick how many, like five songs for your final showcase. And then I was like, what am I going to do after school? And I got into a university for psychology and drama and I hated it. I did not like it. It was all very theoretical and it wasn't me. And all I wanted to do was perform, but I didn't get into any of the major institutions in Australia. They're called WAPA and NIDA and VCA. And then halfway through the year, I left that first university. I handed in my last assessment. I was like, I'm out, bye. And then my dancing teacher found the Australian Institute of Music, which was a Bachelor of Music, and it majored in musical theatre. And I did two years of that. And, uh, I eventually came out with a bachelor's degree. The hardest part being theory for me. And then I went to a performing arts school called Brent Street, which is more of a dance focused one-time, four-year dance thing, but they also had singing as well. So it was kind of like at AIM, I was the dancer kid and at Brent Street, I was the singer kid and I didn't really know where I fit, but I was just happy to do it all. And then I just kind of started working after that and doing musicals and mostly doing the alto mezzo section and yelling as best I could. And then I found the best singing teacher I had who kind of, after *‘A Chorus Line’*, I

found her through a friend of mine and she was brutal, but she was great. Not too brutal that it was like, you know, whiplash vibes, but she found things for me that really worked, really odd things like, I'll think of that note in your left ear lobe. And I don't know what the method was, if it was

distraction, or if it was placement, or if it was what, but it worked for me. And from then I found I progressed the most singing wise, and was like, “Oh, I can actually do this. It wasn't just a fluke, as in that first gig wasn't just a fluke that I got.” And it wasn't just about after having a full time. And I really like this. So, yeah.

Researcher:
I just missed that last sentence with the internet connection.

Participant 2:
Oh, sorry. I think I just said, is that too long-winded of an answer?

Researcher:
Absolutely not. So the whole purpose of the study is for me as the researcher to try to not have any presumptions or any biases and just to really work from the ground up and be like, “What do people feel about their own journeys, basically?” So, would you say that that final, that the most recent teacher is what stands out to you most when you think of yourself as the learner singer?

Participant 2:
Yeah, I think that was when I really noticed. It was also when I started driving. Okay. I would hate practicing, but in the car, anytime I would drive, I would sing. And my teacher was always like, “You, you've really improved in these last few months. What's changed?” I was like, “I'm driving. So I get to sing in the car.” Whereas at home, I was still living with my parents and my family. I was always a little bit too shy to practice when everybody was at home. Um, and I found that when I started driving and working around, um, that was my mobile singing studio. And I was always practicing as anytime I would drive. And I guess, you know, you've got that freedom of nobody, you know, you've got no judgment around you. You've got the freedom in the car and, you know, nearly causing accidents. It's not a thing we need to worry about. Cause she lived out, she, I was living in the city and she lived out in my old suburb which was called Oatley. And it was like a, how long was the drive? Like a 50 minute drive. And then I was also teaching at dancing schools out there. I was doing a lot of driving, so I was doing a lot of singing. And I was like, “Oh, practice does help.” Who'd have thought?

Researcher:

Indeed. Shall we move on to our first prompt? Yeah. So anything you're thinking when you see and hear these, just verbalise it all. That would be great.

Participant 2:

Uh-oh.

Researcher:

There were no right or wrong answers. So this is our first prompt or statement or research prompt: “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.”

Participant 2:

I would say I'm verging on a two or a three. I would say.

Researcher:

You can just explore that.

Participant 2:

Right now I would say um I wouldn't really know why. And then they you know it would be like your scales are like your pliés you just have to do them and they will build a solid technique and you will get that better by doing that. Oh, is my internet okay? It's saying it's...

Researcher:

I would agree with that statement, that your internet seems unstable.

Participant 2:

Okay. I'm going to hotspot my phone because I think it's something to do with... Sorry. This one. Hello.

Researcher:

Hello. There we go.

Participant 2:

Okay, I think this should be better. Hopefully, let me know if it's not.

Researcher:
Okie dokie.

Participant 2:
Sorry. Um, yes. Now I, I can kind of, uh, either, you know, I have enough of a background of lessons and technique behind me that I know why we're doing a certain exercise or what a certain exercise is for. Um, when I first started, it wasn't always that clear. Um, and I'd just be like, “Well, it's to make me a better singer”, but it was pretty general. And sometimes like the example I gave with my singing teacher, she'd be like, “Think of that in your left earlobe.” I'd be like, “Why? I don't know why, but I'll do it anyway.” And then when it would be, you know, when the proof is in the pudding, I would go, “Oh, okay. I don't need to know why I just need to do it.” And that's a lot that is actually something about me is that I do put trust in my teachers and I do put a lot of trust in the people who are guiding me. And I'll go, I might not understand why, but I'm just going to do it. And I'm such a practical person. I like to do things practically and literally and physically. And I'm a better learner that way. So if I just do it, I'll either feel what that's meant to feel like, or I'll understand what it's meant to be like because of how it feels or sounds and how that sound feels. I don't know. Does that make sense?

Researcher:
Yeah, absolutely. And that internal, “Why am I doing this? Going to do it anyway.” Did you ever verbalise that or how did you reconcile it; making the full circle moment?

Participant 2:
Both. Sometimes I would and sometimes I wouldn't. Sometimes I'd be like, “I'll just do it,” I don't need to know why. And sometimes I'd be like, “Why are we doing this? Why on earth would I need to go, yeah, yeah, what is that? How is that helping?” And then I would either get an explanation or I'd get a, “Just do it. Just do it, I promise, just do it.”

Researcher:
Just do your pliés.

Participant 2:
Pretty much. “Shut up and do them. We don't need to know why. Do it.”

Researcher:

So are we sticking with the number three on that one, did you say?

Participant 2:

Yeah, well, if the prompt is for like right now in my life where I am right now when I do vocal exercises now, yeah, go three.

Researcher:

I think we're here and we're right now, so let's go with that.

Participant 2:

That makes sense.

Researcher:

So all of these prompts are exploring within, like, subdomains, so there will be some crossover, so just keep verbalising as you're doing as we go, it will be great.

Participant 2:

Okay.

Researcher:

The next one; “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 2:

Isn't that, like, the first one? I feel clear about... Okay. Yeah. I would agree.

Researcher:

How strongly would you agree?

Participant 2:

I would go... Yeah, I'd go a five. Go on.

Researcher:

So would you want to explain your thought process on that? Because I can see you visually kind of relating it to the first prompt...

Participant 2:

Now I'm kind of like... I'm just trying to... Honestly, I'm just trying to differentiate the two because I feel like they're the same kind of... Question.

Researcher:

So I think the first one is maybe more teacher-led. So is the teacher going, we need to do X, Y, Z. But the second prompt is how your understanding of how it's going to help you be a better singer.

Participant 2:

Oh, OK.

Researcher:

So maybe they can be similar or completely opposites.

Participant 2:

Sure, let's make that a four then.

Researcher:

Okay, so why is it a four now and not a five?

Participant 2:

Because of what I explained before I think relates to this prompt. I think I, whatever I do.

Researcher:

It's all part of the same “soup” so don't worry.

Participant 2:

Yeah, so like I feel clear most of the time and then sometimes I don't but I'll go, “Well I might not be clear yet but, I will be soon.” That's the point of learning.

Researcher:

How much do you think of that is teacher led or then led by yourself?

Participant 2:

It's probably, that feeling is probably led by me because I could just ask for clarity. I could ask a question to be clear on each vocal exercise, but sometimes I just want to do so much more practically that I don't want to slow a lesson down by talking too much. Sometimes I'm just like, “I just want to learn by feeling this or learn by hearing this rather than talking”. Hmm. Yeah, I think that's...

Researcher:

Absolutely. Shall we move on to the third one? “I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 2:

Yes, strongly agree. As we've discussed.

Researcher:

Any other thoughts on that or those three prompts as a section, how that's making you think about what you're thinking about?

Participant 2:

I think because I'm also a teacher now, sometimes you know you give a student something to do just to get them to do, just to get them to the doing part, to get them out of their head you know, if they can just commit, even if something's so silly, making a silly sound or singing bad on purpose or sounding like a fruit bat or I don't know what, but just to commit to the bit, to just go. I think it's because I'm so, I'm such a practical, literal, physical, and I'm such a doer, that if we can build an amount of trust, And it's just the whole Mr Miyagi of it all. It's the paint the fence, it's the wax on, wax off. And I go, well, if you can just paint the fence, not know why, you're going to find out why. Having the patience is going to pay off later. Does that make sense?

Researcher:

Yes. And you mentioned now that you're teaching, how do you find any parallels or opposites between you as a student versus you as a teacher?

Participant 2:

Yeah, yeah. I mean, for me, it's always, as the teacher, it's just seeing how people learn is the best way that you're going to teach, or that I'm going to teach, I find. If they're a practical learner, if

they're more of a theoretical learner, if they're visual, if they're, you know, if they've got an interest in something or not, or just kind of finding the key to how they learn best, I think is what helped me. So if my way was physical and tactile and practical, another person's is not going to be like that. So I want to make sure that they're getting the best lesson tailored to them and their needs and the way that they're going to open parts of their mind that will understand what we're doing.

Researcher:
Absolutely. Let's move on to prompt four, I think we're on: “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 2:
Number 5.

Researcher:
So even though, I mean, it says teachers, this could also be musical directors and it could also be in your own teaching and working with other teachers. So your whole life.

Participant 2:
Yeah.

Researcher:
And how does that make you feel?

Participant 2:
It makes me laugh. It's funny. It makes me feel old when I talk about it because I go, I'm now thinking of all the different teachers I've had, of all the different courses I've done, of all the different shows I've done with different musical directors, vocal teachers, and musical directors who are not vocal teachers, and give you the, you know, stock standard response of what they think we should be doing, or, you know, “use your diaphragm”, or “use all the air that you can”, or, you know, all these things that either used to be true, or we used to believe, or we used to like, you know, you know, you can only know what you know. And at the time, we knew a certain thing, or we believed a certain technique or, you know, and there's no, for lack of a better term, there's no shade on that. But they clearly have not kept up with vocal technique and practices and, science and, the evolutions of how we know the voice and all that stuff. Um, uh, yes. So I've had MDs run a warmup with a lot of diaphragm work and a lot of, um, not saying that you shouldn't do any, I'm just saying

I've had some of those and then I've had some that are like, don't be attacking your diaphragm like that. What are you all doing? Chill out. Um, some that love a vocal fry warmup and some that are like, what you're, you're giving yourself nodules. What are you doing? So, um, and then some that just go, you, you know what you need. You, you, you're all here cause you're all trained and you all are professionals. You do you, here's a scale, do whatever you need. Um, Does that make sense?

Researcher:
Absolutely. Is there maybe one specific example within kind of like this, the same space or close to each other? Maybe it was when in training where you've got, you know, one person here going, do this and one person, no, do the exact opposite.

Participant 2:
Oh, yeah. Like at AIM, you'd go from class to class and that would happen. You'd go, you'd be in your private singing lesson to be called technique, whatever it was. And, you know, I'd have, I have this, um, I had this teacher called [Teacher name] and he was an opera, mostly an opera, um, singer and teacher. And I loved him. I adored him. He, but he did a lot of, um, deep breathing and a lot of burping and said, “If you were burping in my class, you're doing the right thing.” And I was like, “Cool, let's burp.” Um, and then go to another lesson and they'd be like, “Why are you abusing all your air this much?” What, What do you, “Where did that come from?” I was like, “[Teacher name], it came from [Teacher name].” “Don't look at me. I don't know what to think anymore.”

Researcher:
And then how, if you reflect on that now, how aligned with either of those or neither of those are you now?

Participant 2:
Well, only kind of pretty recently actually that I have been doing my own very research, aka Instagram, research on the amount of air a belter should and shouldn't be using, when they should and shouldn't be using it. Wait, what was your question?

Researcher:
On reflection, how do you feel about that example with those two teachers now? Do you align to them? Do you agree with them?

Participant 2:

I do agree with them, even though they contradict each other. I think everyone's got their own method, everyone's got their own way, and everyone is going to sing differently. I mean, there's like, you know, obvious things of, I don't know, don't yell and don't constrict and don't push in your throat and don't, I don't know, those obvious things that we can all agree on. There are, I guess, two different approaches to the same goal, and that's okay. But when you're young, trying to differentiate that it's that and it's not, one is right and one is wrong is hard, because you don't know, you don't know, you don't know, you're learning for the first time. You're assuming that what you're

being told is gospel, or pretty much more so than I do now. It is hard to differentiate the two and just go, well, this teacher likes to use this method or this technique. This teacher uses the opposite. I can try both and see what works for me, or I can ask them questions about why they use them and see whose response is best.

Researcher:

I don't know. And I guess that depends on the relationship you have with either as well, doesn't it? And that trust element we were talking about earlier.

Participant 2:

Yeah. Yeah. Um, it also can be, I guess with, there are two teachers I'm thinking of that were opposing to each other. And I, it wasn't so much with, with some of them, I wasn't so much uncomfortable to ask them, but I was always so conscious of the amount of time we had, which was limited and how much actual singing we were going to do. So I was like, if I stop and ask, we are going to be talking for half an hour and I'm not going to get to sing my song. And I have to do that tomorrow. And I need to just sing it. I need to get feedback on the song, on the whole entire piece and not just talk about one thing for a literal half an hour, which would happen. So we, as students were always so conscious of, if you've got this teacher, it means don't ask them questions because you're never going to sing. If you've got this teacher, you can ask them a question and you'll get, you'll get a nice concise response. And you'll get back on with the lesson. They're really good at keeping on track. Not that the first person was a bad teacher. It's just, they really like to talk about it. And if you had the time and if you didn't have the stress of this looming assessment, you'd have a sit in a chat and want to learn, but you know, you've got, you've got five songs you've got to do tomorrow and you just want to get one more practice in. Um, yeah, I used to save my questions for very specific times in the term.

Researcher:
Lots of interesting things there. So how does that affect you as a teacher now? Are you more like teacher A or teacher B? And if there was such a construct as right or wrong way to do it, which one would may be preferable?

Participant 2:
I think what's preferable is the middle ground. Talking about it, talking it out so that you're not just saying, just do what I tell you. But you also go, this is, here's a bit of an explanation. Now let's try it practically. If we're still not understanding, we can go back and talk about it more. If that's the best way you learn. But if the best way you learn is physically, we're going to start with this nugget of

information, try it practically, go come back and talk a little bit more, see how we go then. But if it's, if somebody is, like my partner is a very, she learns by talking and even if she's gonna say something that she doesn't mean or doesn't intend or doesn't think or is wrong, she'll only learn by having said it. So those kinds of people need to talk more. Those kinds of students need to learn by talking. It out and understanding verbally and having a conversation about why we're doing what we're doing.

Researcher:
So maybe it depends on the learner?

Participant 2:
I think so. I always do. Yeah. But I think my answer would be a middle ground between the two of we're not just going to sing the whole time if you're singing wrong. Or singing that you're hurting yourself, or if we're not getting anywhere. We're not just going to sing songs for half an hour. It's clearly something wrong there. So we do need to stop and talk about it, reassess and try something new or try something else or not even something else or something new, but just stop and go, okay, are we on the same page here? Are you understanding? Is there something else I can help you with? Is there something else I can give you? Let's try a different tactic or let's talk about what you're or how you're responding to what we're doing.

Researcher:
Absolutely. Do we feel ready for the next prompt?

Participant 2:
Ready as I'll ever be.

Researcher:

“When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.”

Participant 2:

Majority of the time I would say a five. There are a few instances where I'd go, this guy's a crackpot. When I feel confused in lessons.

Researcher:

So let's just explore those two things there. It looks like there may be a memory surfacing.

Participant 2:

Oh, how did you know? I don't hate that. I did a singing course in Milan, which was amazing. And this teacher was and I won't name and shame.

Researcher:

It would all be anonymised anyway, so don't worry.

Participant 2:

Right, right. He was incredible. He was amazing. It was a very, again, I use the term a lot, but a very Mr Miyagi moment. And I did this course with my best friend and after every session with him, I'd be like, “God, I'm just, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not picking up what he's putting down yet. I know it's going to come and I'm patient at the moment”, but, but I'm also like, “It's me, isn't it? It's me. I'm, I'm, I'm the one who's not understanding this, you know, this new fangled way of singing or, you know, his technique of open drop lean flow. And I'm not, I'm not getting it, am I? I'm only getting two of the five things here. It's me, it's me” And my friend who took the course before was like, “No, this is what he does. This is his way. He, he spouts all of this information out at you, makes you feel like you're the idiot for not understanding straight away. And by the end, you're going to, it's going to click” And it did not so much. Parts of it did, but what I did appreciate about him was like, he was like, “You're either going to love this or you're going to hate this, or you're going to pick up some things along the way. And not other things, and that's great. You don't have to walk away having agreed with everything that I'm teaching you or every way of singing. But if you want to pick up a few nuggets here and there”. That's what I did.

Researcher:
Maybe that's an example of what you said earlier about sometimes you just need to do something and then reflect on it later.

Participant 2:
Totally. Yeah. Yeah. Um, I also have a thing, which I've always had since I was a kid that I have always had this, um, uh, what do you call it? Um, my God, once I find this word, this is, this is going to be really funny. Um, not, not finding it. Um, but I've always had this insecurity that I am dumb. So, you know, I've had teachers be like, “Well, at least she can sing”, or “At least she can kick a leg” or “Good luck to her with school.” So when I feel confused, I'm like, “Well, this is pretty normal. I'm cause I'm, you know, it's me, it's clearly my fault that I'm not understanding. Cause I'm not very smart.” So when I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it’s because I'm doing... Yeah, I do. I

don't go, “This is weird. How am I not understanding?” I go, “Well, this is pretty normal. I'll learn eventually. But at the moment, I'm not understanding because I'm not very smart.”

Researcher:
And as you get older and reflect upon those moments, how true do you think that that first, that automatic thought is?

Participant 2:
Oh, it's not true. I'm very smart, but that's my insecurity. And that's my, you know, my five-year-old me who was told she was dumb. That's still in there. That's still battling the new me that knows she's intelligent and knows what she's doing and knows that she's a professional and has been hired in this area multiple times. So I know that that's all insecurity and, you know, the little me that's like struggling be smart and all of that.

Researcher:
Brains are interesting but tricky, right? So, we're going with a strong 5 on that?

Participant 2:
Yeah, go on.

Researcher:
Okay. “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons (rehearsals, whatever) without panicking.”

Participant 2:
Yeah, go on, five.

Researcher:
Very quick response.

Participant 2:
Well, kind of as we, as we kind of, we kind of came into that with the previous one, um, cause that feels normal to me. Cause that is, it's funny. I have, I have an older sister who's two years older than me and you know, we danced together our whole lives and, um, but we're very different people. She was the older sister. She was the, you know, very intelligent, A++ student, that kind of

person. And when she, she did a year of full-time dance, And then we, we'd started, um, auditioning for things at the same time, but she didn't last very long because she was like, “If I'm not perfect and if I don't get it straight away, and if I am not the best of the best, why am I here? I shouldn't be here. It means I need to go.” So she didn't last very long, um, auditioning for things because she didn't like that feeling of getting rejected, getting cut, feeling like she was wrong or sitting in uncertainty or confusion or, or this at the other, whereas I've a whole lifetime of that. I was like, “This is pretty normal. Yeah. Something will happen...”

Researcher:
Interesting. And they may be two sides of the same coin, in fact.

Participant 2:
Totally. Absolutely.

Researcher:
“I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons (or musical rehearsals or group coaching)?”

Participant 2:

I do now. There was a time where I was like, “Oh, I'm gonna, I'm just not gonna stop.”

Researcher:

I don't wanna stop. So what's changed?

Participant 2:

Age. I think, no, I'm allowed to ask a question as much as the next person and, or challenge ideas in voice lessons.

Researcher:

Even if it's, you know, maybe like, “Hey, why the left ear and not the right ear?”

Participant 2:

Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher:

Absolutely. Yeah. Definitely.

Participant 2:

That's definitely a very, pretty new feeling of feeling like I want to. Not that I, not that I didn't want to. I think I was just always so drummed into me to respect your teachers and let them teach and do what they say. Because then when you do, you're getting more out of it. But it's funny because, you know, I still, you know, I grew up in a very French Italian household where you would talk over the table over dinner. You would just debate, you would, you know, and my parents would always say, you know, like, “Ask your teachers questions, talk to them,” blah, blah, blah. So it wasn't like I was, I was taught don't ever ask a question. It was, I was always, I think I was just always so concerned about the time that we had and making the most of that.

Researcher:

And, where do you think that comes from, that philosophy?

Participant 2:

I really don't know. I think because I would have singing lessons where, you know, when I, when I first started with this amazing, um, teacher of mine, some of the first few lessons, she wanted to

get to know me, which is fair. And I, you know, was just a little bit like scared. So I just, you know, did what she told me to and asked, answered her questions and had a chat and whatever. And my mother was paying for my singing lessons at the time and they were very expensive and I'd come home and she'd be like, “What'd you do today?” I'd be like, “We had a really good chat.” She'd be like, “I paid an hour for a chat.” And then I would feel pretty bad. But also I'd be like, “Oh yeah, you're right. I didn't sing. How do I?” Yeah, I became very concerned about how much literal singing I was doing in a singing lesson.

Researcher:
There's a lot to unpack in that.

Participant 2:
So much. There's so much. You want me to keep going?

Researcher:
If you want to.

Participant 2:
I mean...

Researcher:
So there was maybe there you were, you verbalised, but it's a singing lesson, I need to be do singing. But then on the other side of the coin, is the chats part of the trust building and the figuring out what the singer wants and how the teacher's going to do that. And then there's also maybe, it links back to what you were previously saying of “I'm always wrong. I need to do that...” Do you know what I mean? So there's like lots of spokes (of a wheel) maybe there that you touched upon. Not to say that either one is, that any of those are right or wrong, but it's interesting... So like the philosophy of like, yeah, “But we're here to do this, we've got to do this, we've got this to do this.” Where that originates from is interesting. And what helps you the most as a singer and now a teacher and what maybe can be retired...

Participant 2:
Totally. I guess it was knowing that I didn’t learn the best by reading, I wasn't a person who learnt the best by writing, I was the person who learnt the best by doing, and I was told that my whole life, so I went, “If I'm not doing, then I'm not learning.”

Researcher:

And what we're told, we believe?

Participant 2:

Absolutely. This is deep.

Researcher:

So are we going with what number for that one?

Participant 2:

I'm going to say a four.

Researcher:

Lovely.

Participant 2:

There are still moments where I'm like, “I don't know about that and I'm going to wait.” But at the time now, I'm like, “I'm too old for this shit. I'm going to ask the question.”

Researcher:

“In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 2:

What do you think? After everything we've just discussed.

Researcher:

It's not about what I think, it's about what you think. And then my afternoon is then thinking about what you thought.

Participant 2:

Number five, please. Thank you. Absolutely.

Researcher:

We happy to go on to the next one?

Participant 2:

Yeah, I think we are. I think we definitely are.

Researcher:

OK, so “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training”.

Participant 2:

Yeah, now for sure, definitely. Yeah, five.

Researcher:

Five.

Participant 2:

Increasingly able to make decisions. I mean, I have to. Who else is going to do it?

Researcher:

Absolutely. And maybe that's part of the natural order of getting older and growing up as well and things like that.

Participant 2:

Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher:

None of us are at drama school anymore with 30 contact hours with teachers arguing about which way to do or whatever.

Participant 2:

Totally.

Researcher:

“I trust my teacher's expertise.”

Participant 2:

I'm going to say a four, because even with everything I've said, I, as a teacher as well, now know not all teachers know what they're doing. That's not a dig at myself. I know what I'm doing. But, you

know, some teachers expertise, um, either not up to date, or they only work for a certain group of people, or maybe they shouldn't be teaching that, you know, those who can't-do, teach kind of vibe from some teachers. It's the worst when you find that out about a teacher. You're like, “Oh, you just want to be doing.” That's sad. I mean, don't we all? There's the whole *Cassie ‘A Chorus Line’* moment of it all. What does she say? “What I really don't want to be doing is to teach other people how to be doing what I should be doing myself.” And that's, I, I love teaching, but I'm not doing it full time because of that, because I would go, I have been like, maybe I need to teach full time. You know, I'm in my thirties now. In catering and, you know, working at a coffee shop in London is exhausting. And I don't know if I can, how much longer I can do this. Maybe I need to be teaching full time, but I still have this, urge in me that wants to perform myself. And I don't want to be that teacher that is just there to get money. And it's just teaching, but would rather be performing. I mean, there are teachers who have an element of that, and that's fine. And they're still amazing teachers because they love performing. But there are the teachers that they take it out on their students that they're not performing and it's just sad.

Researcher:
Absolutely. This is one of my favourite prompts. “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 2:
I mean, sometimes… Asking a teacher sometimes means...

Researcher:
It's interesting because it's all your take on what I'm asking.

Participant 2:
Yeah. I think the key word for me there is sometimes. I know that I can do that. I know that... I can go, “All right, this seems a bit daft. I'm not going to question it, and I'm just going to do it. And then I can judge it later.” But I know that a lot of people are not like that. And I know that a lot of people, you're going to lose their trust if you do that, which is fair. And everybody's different.

Researcher:
So even though it seems a specific state it's very, there's a lot of open air around it.

Participant 2:
Yeah, totally.

Researcher:
So it's not saying, within one lesson, and it's not saying, maybe your thoughts on what it's not saying rather than what it is saying, if it's saying anything at all.

Participant 2:
Yeah, yeah. Yeah, you're right. Yeah, because if it's one lesson or one exercise or I don't know even one term I'm gonna have a lot more patience than if it's the entire time where I can't ever ask why or it's funny because I've said a lot of things that would lead me to a five here, but I don't want to say that.

Researcher:
Why don't you want to say that?

Participant 2:
Because if someone wants to ask why, or question what they say, I think they should be allowed to. And still means that their trust is in a teacher, they just need to know why for them. It's not about the teacher, it's about their learning. But I know that I'm very capable of casting in the process and going, okay, this is a bit silly, but just go with it. But you're right, it does, the amount of time really matters, the amount of, the degree of what they're saying, or the, you know, what they're how silly, you know, whatever they're saying is.

Researcher:
And maybe the context, you know, maybe a regular technique teacher versus a masterclass where you get 15 minutes.

Participant 2:
Absolutely. Absolutely. Because I'd sooner question a, like a masterclass, because it's more performance based and obviously you'll probably never see them again.

Researcher:
That too.

Participant 2:

And performance based things are so much more, you know, to the individual's taste, rather than a technique is a technique, and you're either going to hurt yourself or not. And you're either going to, it's either going to work or it's not, or it's, you know, a studied thing that we know to be true, or we know to be somewhat true. Rather than a, here's some feedback, here's what I think, here's what I gathered, here is my one critic's opinion. I don't know how to answer this. Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning.

Researcher:

We can come back to it if you like,

Participant 2:

It's these moments where I go, I just want to go right in the middle, just because I don't agree with it.

Researcher:

There's no right or wrong answers.

Participant 2:

I'll go number three, please. Lock in number three, please.

Researcher:
It's your first number three: “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.” This could also be about you as a teacher with your students.

Participant 2:
Understood. Yeah. Yeah, because if you're not understood, even if that understanding is I'm not understanding. Does that make sense?

Researcher:
It makes total sense. I mean, it's a little bit like a mirror in front of a mirror. It's never ending, but yeah.
Participant 2:
Yeah.

Researcher:
How much of a yeah?

Participant 2:
Well, feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning. I'm going to learn best if they understand me, yeah. Five.

Researcher:
Five, there we go.

Participant 2:
If they understand me, I have... I mean, a level of understanding is a form of trust. It's a mutual... Understood. I guess, let me think of the opposite. If a teacher doesn't understand me, is confused by me, am I going to learn? There's going to be a roadblock, so we're going to come up against something, so I guess not. At least not as well as I could if they understood either the way I learn, or that I've got blocks about certain things, or that I gravitate towards other things. Yeah, leave it as five.

Researcher:
Lovely. “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

Participant 2:
I'm interested and I like it. I don't think it helps me understand my voice better, but I like to hear it.

Researcher:
OK.

Participant 2:
Sometimes I'll be like, oh, why did, I don't know, I could sing that in one song, sing these certain notes in one song and I can't sing them in another song or they're harder in another song. Why is that? The teacher will give me a technical or scientific explanation. And then I guess that will unlock something in my head. That's like, well, you sung those notes in that song. You can sing them in this one. You're just doing something different, not wrong, but different. Or there's one element here. Different or you're just in your head about it and you've created this block so you can't sing these same notes because you've told yourself you can't sing this song for some reason. Helps me understand my voice better. It doesn't not. But it... No, it... I see, I think I'm struggling because sometimes if I get too much information then I'll think about it too much and then I back away from what I was doing.

Researcher:
So maybe number three is the sometimes agree, sometimes disagree.

Participant 2:
Yeah, yeah, go on, number three.

Researcher:
Which is a totally valid answer. It's not non-committal. It's a totally valid one. “Imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 2:
Yeah. Five.

Researcher:
There we go. Somewhere off the scale. Right. As previously discussed. The last prompt: “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 2:
No.

Researcher:
How much of a no?

Participant 2:
No, because imagery, well, it should be that the technical explanation and the imagery match up.

Researcher:
Ah, that's interesting.

Participant 2:
Shouldn't it?

Researcher:
It should be. That would be, sorry, not should be, that would be useful. But experience may give us opposite data.

Participant 2:
Yeah, that's true.

Researcher:
But also on the other side of the three-sided coin, if it produces the outcome desired, Does it matter?

Participant 2:
Not to me. I feel more confused. Explanation switch. No, I don't.

Researcher:
A number one no? A number two no? A number one no. There we go.

Participant 2:
Yeah, go on. Look, a lot of that could be contradictory to each other, but there we go.

Researcher:
That's part of the exploration. So, looking back on your experience of that, do you have any thoughts?

Participant 2:
Oh, it was so interesting. It was so...

Researcher:
What made it interesting for you?

Participant 2:
Well, it was funny how certain teachers and certain moments and certain things were jumping to my mind that I haven't thought about in years that clearly have impacted me more than I realised and how I can stop the show now, yeah.

Researcher:
Stop the show? Yeah.

Participant 2:
Just how... It just seems to me... I'm about to say something that could be controversial, but...

Researcher:
You can say it. You can say anything you want.

Participant 2:
I've had way more singing teachers that have way more differentiations, varieties, different approaches, different methods and techniques. Then I have a bunch of dance teachers that have like, it seems that my dance, my experience, my dance teachers have agreed on, you know, a plié makes you jump. The bigger plié makes you jump better or a tight core is going to help you with this or spotting when you turn is ace. Whereas in singing, it's like, “We want tension there.” “We don't want tension there.” A total, “We want to completely release and feel completely free and relaxed.” And then, “Oh, but not all the, but no, we want to have tension sometimes.” And in some places of your body and I have way more, it seems to be way more mysterious and varied in my singing teachers experience than my, does that make sense?

Researcher:
It does. Any thoughts on why that may be? Because, I mean, I guess voice compared to playing the piano is different because it lives within us, so it's more living and like blood-fuelled tissue rather than just fingers on a piano. But in essence, if we take it to its constituent parts, whether you're doing a plié or a Chaîné turn is pretty much the same as whether you're singing an E flat or an F maybe. So any thoughts on why maybe there is that difference between dance and singing training?

Participant 2:
I don't...

Researcher:
I don't know. I really don't. That'll have to be my next dissertation.

Participant 2:
Yeah, go on, please. Thanks.

Researcher:
Because even within the communities, exactly as you said, the dance teachers accept a plié is a plié, a spotting is a spotting, you know, an entrechat is an entrechat, that's what it is. In voice world, it's like, you know, teachers can't even agree what the difference between *head, chest* and *mix* is.

Participant 2:
I was just going to say that. I was just going to say that I had a teacher that was like, you only have one voice, stop using this language. And I had another teacher that was like, *chest, mix, head.* And I had another teacher that was like, um, there's even more than that. And I'm like, “Wait, what? Can, what? What do you mean? Why can't you all agree? Why is there so many different?”

Researcher:
Maybe, I don't know. So maybe when, you know, when you're jumping or being lifted, you need to contract your core. Maybe that's the umbrella term, but voice teachers maybe get too bogged down with like the intricate muscles. You know, you're not like, when you're contracting (obviously

I'm not a specialist dancer) you know you're probably not thinking “Oh these are my internal obliques that I'm contracting as well as maybe...” A useful aim for the voice community would be everyone needs to take a step back and look at generalised stuff you know is this person coughing

up blood when they sing that's probably what would not be healthy everything else is just maybe a subjective choice.

Participant 2:
Yeah. Yeah. As long as, yeah, as long as you're not hurting yourself.

Researcher:
As long as we're not haemorrhaging.

Participant 2:
That's the aim. Don't haemorrhage. You got the job.

Researcher:
Maybe. Because singing is a physical activity. You know, you go to dance class, you're going to hurt afterwards.

Participant 2:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Maybe we're in a world where we're too like, that's going to damage your voice. It's actually, it's a physical activity. You're going to feel like you've done some physical activity. What we need to do is step back and go, okay, what is within the realms of normal and what is you've just broken your leg doing a Chaîné?

Participant 2:
Yeah. Yeah. What is, you had chilli for dinner last night, then laid down and you've got reflux. And you know, what is, you were yelling.

Researcher:

Yeah. Directly. Yeah.

Participant 2:

Yeah.

Researcher:

Interesting. Thank you so much for taking part.

Participant 2:

Anytime. I hope it was somewhat helpful and not just a bunch of babble.

Researcher:

It absolutely was. Yeah. There we go. Have a great afternoon. Thank you so much for your time.

Participant 2:

No, it was very, very intriguing. Very interesting. Loved it. All the best. Good luck.

Researcher:

Thank you so much. Have a great day.

Participant 3 – Interview Transcript

Participant 3:
Hello. Hello. How are you?

Researcher:
I'm all right, how are you?

Participant 3:
Good, thank you.

Researcher:
Just chilling in the airport?

Participant 3:
Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher:
So this is all the information that you need to read about taking part and all of that. So we're basically talking about, and there are no right or wrong answers, so my whole study is about how people feel about the whole of learning how to sing. So it's sufficiently vague. So I've got 15 prompts for us, well for you, having a chat about what you feel, basically. So that's basically what... we're having a little, it will all become clear. So these are just all the consent statements. I'll let you read them if you want. You can withdraw at any time with no penalty. Everything we talk about, obviously if it's something, it will all be anonymised, absolutely. And if we talk about anything sensitive, then I will obviously redact that from it.

Participant 3:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Basically. Are you happy for me to just continue scrolling and ticking through all of these?

Participant 3:
Absolutely.

Researcher:
There we go. Absolutely. Marvellous. So all the questions are on a scale of one to five, strongly disagree to strongly agree. But anything you're thinking or anything you want to say, feel free just to just to talk, basically.

Participant 3:
Okay, yeah.

Researcher:
So this is our first prompt: “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.” So this can be about teachers you've had in lessons, it could also be maybe like in a group setting, it could also be in a work setting, MDs. So within the act of learning, shall we say. Okay.

Participant 3:
I think, could I ask, I mean, I know there's no right or wrong, which is great. So, obviously, while I've had different teachers over the years, and I've gotten very, or like, experience builds, knowledge builds, you grow up as a person. I started learning singing as a child, and then kind of had a break as a teenager, went back to it as an adult. Kind of with these questions, am I thinking about it more, more professional singing teaching I've had?

Researcher:
It's whatever you think and it's supposed to be, forgive me for not answering your question, it's supposed to be kind of what sticks with you and so these prompts; you'll find that they are very open to your interpretation and that's also the whole point of the study as well, which is all about language and how people interpret that and maybe if you've got, you know, teacher on one side learner on the other side if it's like, that is, you know, and yeah kind of the agency between it and how in control a learner is of what they're learning. Yeah so right now we're exploring everything so whatever comes to your mind, if it's you at seven or you now, or 21 at drama school. All data is valid.

Participant 3:
Yeah, cool. Okay, I'm gonna settle around a four for this question, I think. Mainly because, so it's the understanding of why a teacher would ask me to do a particular exercise. I usually feel in any kind of lesson or singing, learning, is I feel that I am asked to do a vocal exercise in response to

what I am trying to get at, if that makes sense. So, like, while I've had different singing teachers and they've had, like, different models in terms of how they run a session, more often than not, I'd say majority would ask me, “So what do you want to sing, first of all, what are we singing? What are you struggling with/what do you want to work on with it?” And usually it's from those questions, where even an exercise, and then we obviously might sing through it, work on some exercises to get certain sounds, certain tones or placements or whatever, whatever we're trying to do. For me it's usually under the frame of the lesson of, this is what I said at the start that I want to do and this is a sort of trust, I guess, in my teacher that any vocal exercise given to me is hopefully trying to get at that in response to what I wanted to get from the lesson and from my personal development. I guess from this lesson, if I'm working with this teacher over a more extended period of time, I kind of trust that, yeah, we're kind of on the same page, I guess. So, yeah, so the usually, I usually understand why my teacher asked me to do a particular vocal exercise is, yeah, I'd say I would agree with that four because, yeah, I guess a bit of trust and kind of hoping that the teacher, well, doesn't know better than me, but is possibly trying to get at something that obviously I haven't been able to get in my own practice or needed a different way of thinking about it or getting out of my own head about it. So, yeah.

Researcher:
Great, thanks. So if we just hold a mirror up to that, have there been any times where you weren't very clear on why you're being asked to do something, maybe technically or in a vocal exercise, where you're maybe like, “Why are we doing this? I feel like the objective has got skewed.”

Participant 3:
Yes, yeah. I'm trying to think.

Researcher:
You don't have to name anything, but maybe if there's a memory of like being in a lesson or something where you're like, “I don't know why we're doing this.”

Participant 3:
Yes, I think mainly at the start of kind of drama school training or the first few lessons I had with my singing teacher, who like is fantastic. And by the end of the year, I was like, OK, this is great. But I think in the first two lessons, and the first lesson was an hour lesson, and then we went to half an hour. So I say in the first hour and a half of my singing, of the first hour and a half of my singing experience at a drama school, I think I sang like a song once, like at the start. And then, so what is

that, like barely five minutes? And then like all the other time was making sounds and not technical sounds to me either at the time. What I think now, reflectively, looking back is like, okay, it was just about one, getting to know each other as teacher and student, two, really just trying to get a bit of, I'd say, like, loosen up and make sounds that aren't pretty or in my own way of singing. Because I did enter training late as well, I'd say, or later, where I was very, I'd been singing for a few years at that point. So I kind of was like, in terms of my brain, my muscle memory, it was like, “This is how I sing.” And this is, yeah. And it was, I guess, about maybe not breaking it, because it definitely wasn't breaking, but it was about, I guess, opening, broadening horizons. But at the time, I remember coming away from those lessons, those first two, and just being like, “Why am I not singing in my singing lessons?”

Researcher:

Why haven't I sung a song yet? Why has ‘G*o The Distance’* not been worked on yet?

Participant 3:

Yeah, yeah. And it was in those, and it was at that time as well where being a bit newer, well being new and also like, basically it was an introduction wasn't it? I didn't feel at that point comfortable, I'd say, in a lesson to be like, “What are we doing here?” So I would just kind of go along with it, which I think also was like a disservice, I guess, slightly to myself, because if I'd asked that a bit sooner, which by the end of the year, as I say, when I was very comfortable with talking about, okay, but what exactly are we trying to get out here? Yeah, it was very much, “I'm not exactly sure what we are trying to do here.” And I don't feel too comfortable enough to just verbalise that. But I'd say as well, there is a flip side to that of always, yes, knowing how I said, like, oh, the vocal exercises, I would always assume to be given to me to kind of get at what or kind of what I said that I wanted to work on or that I felt was challenging. And, you know, fair play to teachers, sometimes students. I've not always been very clear when in a response to that question, especially questions of like self-reflection, especially after you've sung a song or done a bit of a bit of a song and they are You know, I'm finishing and thinking like, okay, well, they're going to tell me how to make it better now. And instead of saying like, “Okay, let's try this”, they go, “Well, how do you think that went? Or how did that go for you? How do you feel?” Sometimes I find that like the most difficult question to answer because it's like, and I've gotten better at it than just like not switching, not switching off the brain almost, critical thinking, but it's like, I do think I can get comfortable sometimes in that teacher-student relationship of just being like, “Oh, well, you're the teacher. Just help me. Tell me how to make it better. I don't know how I feel about it kind of thing.” So, yeah.

Researcher:
That's really interesting. And in your exploration, you've touched on lots of answers that we're going to find in the next prompt so that's great, which is the whole purpose of this, is that it's the whole swirly mix of cyclic things our next prompt for you is “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 3:
I would go with a five on this one.

Researcher:
Great.

Participant 3:
Because I think for me and in my experience, I'm always told why, or I'm always told what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve. So, kind of, yeah, disregarding any frustrations about whether it does or not, or whether I feel like it's a good exercise or not, I do always feel, yeah, this vocal exercise, this is what we're trying to do here. I feel like almost every, most instances, a teacher will give a vocal exercise with some context of what we're trying to do. And sometimes it's before, and sometimes it's after. But it's always very clear. So I did have a teacher who would get me to do vocal exercises, to mimic sounds, to do things. With no context, first of all, but with some context, obviously, we've maybe done a bit of a lesson so far, but it wouldn't be until after that they'd be like, “Okay, this is what I was trying to hear here, or this is what I was trying to gauge for you. And then what I liked about that is then I was always given the opportunity to then do the exercise again, with the knowledge of what it's trying to explore. Because I do get it oftentimes. It's like the observer's paradox or whatever. If I know what I'm trying to look for just before I try a vocal exercise, then it's like, in the pursuit of it, I change, I tense up. The factors are not possibly as, what's the word, as normal or as comfortable as they would be because I'm actively trying to search for something.

Researcher:
Absolutely. And that's the same for everything, isn't it? How you frame what you're about to do, knowing what you're about to do and why, does that change the outcome?

Participant 3:
Yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

And which is more preferable?

Participant 3:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think as well, there's so much goes into that of like terminology and yeah, because I think, I think I can, you can be, you can have such a relationship to different terminology that it can really have that effect. Like if I, I don't know, if I get told, okay, we're going to do this vocal exercise because we really want to develop your mix here. Immediately, I'm like, not fight or flight, that's a bit dramatic, but I'm a bit like, “Oh, the mix. What is the mix? What am I trying to look for here? Is this a head mix or a chest mix?” Personally, I find it's such a common term. For my own personal, and the thing is, this is a lot of, I guess it's ignorance. Part of it is ignorance. But I don't identify with mix very well, because I still don't feel like I fully grasp what mix is. In theory, I do, absolutely. But in my own voice and my own singing, I'm like, yeah, I could be producing a sound. And I personally wouldn't think it's a mix, but it is clearly a mix to some other people. And I'm just like, yeah, so I think getting told, “Okay, we're going to try this vocal exercise to explore your mix or whatever here”, I think would be a bit more daunting to me than just the reframing terminology or wording of just like, “Okay, we're going to try this.” I don't know. I don't know what an equivalent would be, but depending on my character, I guess, if it was like to embody this part of the character more or, yeah, or to help you not strain as much or to feel like you can sing that a bit more sustainably. Like, I think there's, yeah, it's weird. And everyone is so different as well. That's just so individual. Because I know for other singers, it's like, you have such like a mastery and such a clear mental image of their vocals. And what would you call that? Like placements, I guess, like chest to their chest mix, to their balance.

Researcher:

I think anatomy, the mechanics of it, stuff like that.

Participant 3:

Yeah, but sorry, back to it. I feel clear about what vocal exercise is meant to help me improve. I feel like I've diverted slightly, but yes, I do feel very clear on what it's meant to do, but emphasis on meant.

Researcher:

I guess. That's why the word ‘meant’ is in the statement.

Participant 3:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Let's move on to the next one. So, as I said, these are cyclic and very mirror prompts. “I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 3:
I go for a three on this.

Researcher:
Oh, in the middle? Yeah?

Participant 3:
Yes, yeah, yeah. Just because I was I was between like, disagree and no, I'm, I'm, I'm torn between the words often and fully. Often possibly not, but more than like never. So often is okay, and the fully is like, I'm focusing more on the fully here, it's like, do I ever fully understand what I'm fully doing?

Researcher:
Does anyone?

Participant 3:
Yeah, I would say there's an element to me of not full understanding, just because I feel like, again, we're going very hyperbolic here, but if I fully understood, then I'd be amazing and perfect. I wouldn't be trying to learn and, I guess, explore what I need to do. And I think I even find that in my own practice of like, okay, so I come across a bit in a song or in my own practice or like practicing something for rep or something, anything like that. And it's like, it's not sounding quite how I want it to sound. It's not feeling how I quite want it to feel. And it's like, “Okay, now I know steps. I know some steps I can take to help me change that or get around it.” But all of it is always under exploration and trying. And I never feel like, “No, I know if I do this exercise and I do it on this vowel, and then I go to that vowel”, it's not, I've never felt objective about it. I always feel slightly subjective about it. I mean, it is, like, it does, it does ride that, I was about to be like, and it's art, and art is subjective, but it's also, it is also science, like, just with the anatomy and the muscle. So it's, and that is subjective, but then I'd argue, well, objective, I mean, sorry, with like, muscle and

anatomy, but then obviously everyone's anatomy is different. So it does then bring back in that subjectivity of, okay, so what works for maybe the majority, even the majority, what works for them might not work for me, or there might be something better for me. So...

Researcher:
And maybe it's not two disparate things. Maybe it's more of a Venn diagram with an overlap between those two worlds.

Participant 3:
Yeah. Exactly, yeah.

Researcher:
And then observing yourself and someone observing you, that's two more circles in our Venn diagram as well.

Participant 3:
Yeah. No, yeah, it's very, it's very, very nuanced. So I often do exercises in lessons to achieve... So I feel like, I feel like I always kind of going back first question of like, what are they meant to do? Yes, I agree. And then in this question, I'm in the middle because I do think I'm quite clear on the direction we're going. It's like, we've got a compass. And I know we're headed somewhere between North and east. And it might be more north-northeast. But I know the direction, but I don't fully understand. I can't be like, we're going 20 degrees right of north. And that's what I would interpret fully understanding to be. So yeah, in the middle there.

Researcher:
Lovely, great. Here we go, number four. “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 3:
Yes, I would go with five on this.

Researcher:
OK.

Participant 3:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Any memories or thoughts that are specifically having your reaction of, “Yes, definitely”?

Participant 3:
Yeah. I think a lot of it comes from more from, I guess, artistic choice, artistic license, in terms of song choice. How to sing a song, or how to sing a moment in a song. And, yeah, so, I mean, I can think of a specific example. There was kind of a moment in a song that I was doing with one teacher, and we were really trying to... It was really high and hard for me. And I was straining, or it just felt, it didn't feel very good. And I don't know where I was trying to put it necessarily, because I wanted this big sound. And it just felt unstable. And I worked with it on, I worked on it with one teacher for about two lessons, trying different things, trying different practices to try and get this sound. I had another session with another teacher on it, and they said, “But why does it need to be this big sound kind of thing? And, okay, so you've been trying it this way, but why don't you just literally try it like head voice, like falsetto, just to see how it works.” It might feel really wrong, but at the moment, you're just, yeah. And it was kind of one of those things of like, I can understand both sides. And I did, I went back to the teacher, who is my regular teacher, and I kind of did what we were doing. And they were just like, “Okay, but, see, I know you can sing it that way, but that's how you want to sing it, though, is it?” And I was just like, it was just one of those things of like, I guess where ability meets storytelling a little bit. Because at some point you do just have to be like, especially, I guess there's a difference between practice and kind of what you're practicing for and kind of goals in terms of short-term goals, long-term goals, really, really, really long-term goals. And I mean, this was in an, it was for an assessment. So I'd say relatively short-term goals. And it was like, it was like, “Yeah, I just don't, I just don't have the time, it felt like”, And kind of was like, “I don't have the time to develop my voice to a point where I can sing it the way I want, healthily and in a nice, nice way to me.”

Researcher:
So how did you kind of, how did, what was your outcome from these two polar opposites? How did you regulate and fix that?

Participant 3:
Yeah, I end up changing the song.

Researcher:
It's a valid outcome, yeah?

Participant 3:
Yeah, so yeah, not I think it was one of those things of... It was just getting very... Yeah, it was very stressful. And I think having explored it with the one teacher who, with the two lessons, where we were trying to achieve a sound that I, at the time, could not create. And certainly not in a healthy way. And it was kind of just the feeling of like, low-key, like just failure. Like I failed to do what I wanted. And yeah, and with the other teacher, it was like, I think they were very much for, that's not necessarily because you do the song your way, and it's you playing the character. And you... I completely understood, it was like, “You're playing the character, you can't sing it that way, so the character can't sing it that way, so the character will sing it the way you sing it.” But it was just like... But then again, I just wanted it to sound Like, I just wanted it to sound like the cast recording, basically. I know, terrible, like, yeah.

Researcher:
No, it's all good when we take these moments back to observe and reflect. It's all... There's no right or wrong. Everything is worth observing. Sometimes not when we're in those moments, because it's highly charged and emotional and can be stressful with deadlines and assessments.

Participant 3:
Yeah. No, I think, I mean, even touching on that of the, what is it, what I just said about cast recording, I had, in terms of like different approaches, I had a teacher who like hated when I would say, oh, this person seems like this, or play a part of the cast recording and be like, in terms of like trying to replicate a sound or a placement. And they, not in like a terrible way, but I would get scolded for being like, “This is how I want to sound because they sound like this.” And yeah, they were just like, “You need to take more, I don't know what you call it, artistic agency, artistic...”

Researcher:
Ownership, maybe?

Participant 3:
Ownership, yeah, of your singing and of songs themselves, because...

Researcher:
How do you get that without exploring the world outside you?

Participant 3:
Yeah, well, this is the thing, yeah. And then I had I had other teachers who were absolutely fine with it. I would be like, “Yeah, this is cool. And would also geek out with me over a certain performer's performance of a song or something”. I was like, “This is so cool.” Yeah.

Researcher:
Right. Our next prompt is, “When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because doing something wrong.”

Participant 3:
I'm gonna go with a one. I disagree with that. Yeah. Interesting.

Researcher:
Strongly. What was going in the mind then as you were processing?

Participant 3:
It was, firstly, when do I feel confused in lessons? And that's usually when, usually when I what I want to be producing. And, and, or, yeah, a feeling of stagnating, or, or trying a certain exercise, being able to, a lot of the time, is like, vocal exercise is great. You know, “This is the sound I want, this is where, where I'm putting it. I can, I can, this is that placement. Got it. I'm amazing. This is where I'm going to put it in the song.” And then just putting the two together, “It’s just like awful. And it just doesn't work.” And it's like, “I just wish, you know, I could just sing this song. Why does this song need lyrics? You know, I could just sing this whole song on a I'm like an “ooh” and it'll be fine.” But yeah, and in terms of like those kind of confusing moments and yeah, or not being able to produce what I want to produce or anything like that, it's not, I'm not doing something wrong. I just can't, I just can't do it. Do you know what I mean? And it's like, I can't. Also, I am of the mindset of, I can't do it yet. But yeah, of the mindset of, I can't do it yet. Because I think that would be pretty harsh on myself to just be like, “Oh, I'm doing it.” Also, the doing it wrong implies that I'm actively doing something against, or going in the opposite direction of where I want to be going. Whereas I'd argue, almost all exploration you try and do, or I try and do in lessons, in trying to produce a sound that I can't produce, to get to a place where I can't get to just yet. I'm still headed in the right direction. So in a way, sometimes when I feel confused in lessons, that means I'm doing the right

thing. Or at least headed in a good direction. And then there was another flip side to that of like, if I'm actually really confused in a lesson and I don't know what's going on, And I mean, part of it is on me to communicate that, obviously, which I would feel very comfortable doing now. But if I'm still confused and we don't really know what's going on, at that point, I'd be like, well, maybe it's something the teacher is doing or something the teacher is not communicating in a way that I can understand. In which case, I'm still not doing wrong.

Researcher:
I love how you're exploring the linguistics of how I phrase the prompts

Participant 3:
Yeah, sorry, I'm really focusing on them.

Researcher:
I'm really enjoying it because that's why it took me days to write them, yeah.

Participant 3:
But yeah, I'd say that. I strongly disagree because I feel like almost you can do no wrong.

Researcher:
Interesting. I love that. Our next prompt is, “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.”

Participant 3:
I'm going to go with a four. Yeah, I'm going to go with a four. And that is because... And this one is very much, I think, a time development. And I would say I am at a four now. In my practice and how I work. Because there have definitely been some wobbles in the past. Yeah. Like, and I would say it's something of like, yet, and I've always tried to be quite positive in terms of, “Oh, I can't do this yet”, or “I don't sound like that yet”, or Yeah, and an element of me is always like, like, “It's fine, you can be hard on yourself.” I don't think, I know it's like, I know it's a good thing to not be hard on yourself, but I also think it's a good thing to be hard on yourself. As long as, as long as you know, as long as I tell myself that practice, intentional good practice will, I can trust, and it will lead me eventually to where I want it to go. And if it's not going the way I want it to go, or developing the way I want it to develop, that's not me necessarily, that's the practice and what I'm choosing to do. And I think it's important to me to have a separation of me. Because I think it's really hard to

separate me from my voice. I think a lot of work, just a lot of work in general, it's easier and very important, I think, to separate yourself from the work. Separate, like, you know, you can't place, like, worth, like, self-worth on work that you do, because I think once those, when the lines blur, they can get dark quite quickly, of not feeling good enough, of insecurity, and it's moments like those that do happen. They have happened to me. And I think for me, it's when the practice blurs with my, when I say like me, I mean like, I think, yeah, in terms of like, do you know what I mean when I'm saying me? I guess like my identity/ego/all of me, my brain. So yeah, and I think the times what I've had, well I've probably like broken down two times in a singing lesson of just like not feeling good enough, feeling really frustrated and that has been the result of, I think, for me, when the practice and me have blurred. And I'm not able to produce that. I'm not able to replicate that. I'm not able to do what I want with my instrument, has then turned into, I'm not good enough. I will never be good enough. “Why can other people do this and I can't?” I need to be able... A big one for me, I think, is I need to be able to do this to do what I want to do, to be successful or to feel confident in an audition room or whatever it is. It's like, I need to be able to do this. I have to. I want to. And I can't. And it's just, yeah, it's just the framing. As much as I'm like, as much as it is like, I'd say like, “Oh yeah, no, I can”, I feel like I do have a good sense of perspective and that kind of insightfulness. And it's easy to say as well. Not easy to say, but it's like, yeah, when I'm not in a singing environment, as soon as I'm in a singing environment, whether that's one-on-one with a teacher, in a class, listening back to it on a voice recording, in a show, in front of lots of audiences, I think it becomes a lot easier for that to blur. A lot easier. So, yeah, in voice lessons particularly, and I'm treating voice lessons here as one-on-one, with, I'd say, yes, I'm able to sit with uncertainty or confusion. Because it's in an environment where I know that that is safe and encouraged, or at least I hope it is. But with all teachers I've had, I've felt that level of, this is not a performance product, and we're not trying to achieve that right now, which is why I feel like it is easier for me to sit with uncertainty or confusion. Even broadening that out to uncertainty or confusion in a rep class or a singing technical class, say, of 15 people. That already starts... I'm more... I would be more prone to panic because there's more people, there's objectively more judgment. And I have no idea what that judgment is. I could be sat there, or I could be singing, and the be really positive judgments, or just not that many. Or people might not have that strong of an opinion. But it's very easy for the mind to go, oh, they're judging me really hard and really negatively. Yeah.

Researcher:

Great, that's very insightful. Our next prompt is, “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.”

Participant 3:
[Researcher name], they're so different.

Researcher:
The whole point is not necessarily, well a point is the number you give, but the greater point is how you explore the statement and the prompt. My aim is a study within a study within a study. You're probably getting the flavour of that now.

Participant 3:
Oh, I'm going to go with two on this. Okay. I disagree. Yeah. Yeah. I think mostly because I've never had a voice teacher... The longest voice teacher say that I've had, is a year. Okay. And that's longer than... And that year, that teacher, that was longer than, like, any other teacher. And I don't know whether it's just a personal... Well, it's definitely personal. But... Yeah, I wouldn't feel... I don't know, it's that idea of getting to a point where you feel comfortable to ask questions, challenge ideas. I don't know, I just don't really do it, and I don't do it as much as I want to either. Okay, that's interesting. And that is something that I need to work on myself, but I will ask... I will have questions in my head. That I will not ask in a voice lesson. One, because in any context, voice lessons are really expensive. It's in the back of my head, and I get slightly like, “I don't want to waste a minute of this lesson with a question” that, one, possibly might lead us astray from what we're actually trying to do. Two, I might answer myself listening back to this voice lesson, because I always try and record a voice lesson. But yeah, but then maybe I'm probably missing out on some juicy stuff in voice lessons. But on the whole, I'd say I sense for myself a little bit. And in terms of challenging, I just, I wouldn't, unless I know the voice teacher really well, I probably would just accept whatever they, whatever idea I'd say that they were presenting, or I was exploring with them. I think, yeah, if I, in the moment, trying it was like, “I don't think this will work for me." Or, I don't know, there's a bit of self-doubt there where I'm like, “Well, have you given it enough chance?” Or “What are you trying to...” Yeah, I don't know.

Researcher:
Interesting, isn’t it?

Participant 3:
I know, I'm learning something about myself while I'm speaking. Yeah, yeah, too.

Researcher:

Okay.

Participant 3:

Which, like my initial, when I first saw that, question, I was like, “Sure, I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas.” Oh, but, oh no, because it says feel able to.

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 3:

No, I'll stick with two. I think, yeah, from what I've said, because I certainly don't. So if it was like, ‘do you’, then it would be, Yeah. But, yeah, let's... Lovely.

Researcher:

Let's move on: “In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 3:

Oh, this kind of leads on, doesn't it?

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 3:

Yeah, yeah, with a four on this. I agree with that. Kind of leading on from what I was saying. I just feel... I mean, it's not that it's all about money, and it's not, but the voice lessons I pay for at the moment, it's expensive, they're short, not a lot of time. I will do what they think is... I will try and explore, do what we in the time that we have. And as I say, I record all my voice lessons with the permission of the voice teacher. And then that understanding, I hope, is what will come after when I'm going through it in my own practice, which, like I would say, usually does come. When I go over something, it is... It does happen as well, it's frustrating when things will crop up and I'm practicing something because that's what we did in the lesson and I'm practicing it and I'm like, “Nope, this isn't sticking. Maybe I should have said in the lesson”, but then if it's something huge, that's when I take it to the next lesson. But yeah. I'm such a sheep.

Researcher:

Okie dokie. And then evolving from that one; “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 3:

Yeah, four, four, four. Increasingly able. Yeah, I feel like I'm, I mean, it's always gonna be a journey, isn't it? It's always gonna be a development, always an improvement. And I feel like all of these answers that I'm giving now would, I think, be quite different a year ago to now. Years ago. Do you know what I mean? I definitely feel increasingly able to make informed decisions and I think also as time goes on I work with different voice teachers and I take exercises and terminologies even from different exercises, different wordings, different games even, from different teachers. And I feel like that holistic kind of looking at, yeah, from like all aspects helps. And it makes sense to me that that will continue to help.

Researcher:

So, well, I mean, even if you have the same voice teacher for 10 years, you as the person, you're the only person that's going to know you as holistically as can be. Completely. Because you are the person.

Participant 3:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think on that as well, just becoming, I think I've gotten a lot more confident and a lot more secure in myself as a person over the last three years, since coming out of university and that kind of thing. And I think that has an effect on my practice. And yeah, I mean, decisions about my voice and training, I feel like I've gained a lot more agency. Over that. And agency, I think that you're right, parallels agency just in adult life, I guess as well. So yeah, it makes sense that it would affect all forms of my life, all things in my life, as well as voice and training. Yeah.

Researcher:

Absolutely, lovely. Here's our next one, nice and short. “I trust my teacher's expertise.” I think you began answering this question in the first one...

Participant 3:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'd strongly agree with that.

Researcher:

A five, strongly?

Participant 3:

Five, strongly agree. Yeah.

Researcher:

Lovely.

Participant 3:

Because even for teachers, I'd say if I'm getting a new voice teacher or a singing teacher or anything, I will do quite a bit of research, first of all. If I know someone with that teacher, I will message them about their teacher or how they found lessons with them, how they like to work, which arguably, I should probably maybe message the teacher themselves and ask, “How do you like to work? What do you do?” But I do like to get an opinion from someone who's not that, I guess, as well. And yeah, it's always like an explorer. The first lesson, obviously, for both the teacher and the student is always, “Can we work together? Will we work well together? Do I think you're the teacher for me? Do they think I’m the student for them?” Kind of thing. And if it's from that, if I don't ever get a good vibe or yeah, then I won't book another lesson with them kind of thing. And in which case I wouldn't say that they're, I wouldn't say that they're my teacher, do you know what I mean? It's like, “Oh, I just had a lesson with this person.” So for like saying, I trust my teacher's expertise is always, almost always I've chosen my teacher apart from drama school. Where I didn't choose my teacher but I personally felt like I got quite lucky with who I got at drama school because I had peers who were not happy with their teacher and yeah I do trust my teacher's expertise and now I think I would trust myself too if I didn't to like not continue that to not continue that working relationship, specifically. Yeah. Does that make sense?

Researcher:

It makes absolute sense.

Participant 3:

And what I said at the start of that helps me in a lesson. I need to trust my teacher because oftentimes I just go along with things and clearly don't challenge ideas. Trust my teacher, that's the problem.

Researcher:
So on the other side of the coin; “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 3:
Oh, in summary, trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say. In practice, yes, because that is what I've said. I trust you, so I'm not gonna question what you're doing. But I don't think it's an essential of trust. I don't think it's a requirement of trust. I guess what we're talking about here is blind trust, isn't it? Just like, I'll go along.

Researcher:
Maybe. Might be a difference between, you know, if you're questioning what they say, that might be in the lesson, literally, you verbalise it, it might be in your head, or it might be three days later when you're practising, you've agreed to something, and then you're thinking, actually, it could be any or all of those.

Participant 3:
Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say. Sometimes means not questioning what they say. But I guess it's, yeah, the sentence is predicated on trust in the teacher. So I'm gonna say... I'm gonna say two. I disagree with that. Because sometimes it means not questioning what they say. Oh, no, I'm sticking with disagree, because I disagree with that statement, even if that means I'm contradicting myself from earlier.

Researcher:
That's completely human and completely justifiable.

Participant 3:
Yeah, something doesn't sit right with me about that. Yeah, I think not questioning what they say, even sometimes. What is it about this that is making me uncomfortable? I think is it the notion that... Is it like who is performing the action of not questioning? Maybe. Possibly. I think for me, it's like I make a decision or I feel active in the action of not asking a question. Okay this is getting, sorry [Researcher name], this is getting very...

Researcher:
I love it, I love it. This is exactly the reason why I'm doing what I'm doing.

Participant 3:

I feel, yeah, kind of what I was thinking and saying about before was like I feel, I feel like that is me making an active decision and I guess taking a bit of ownership, a bit of ownership and agency in that of... like this, “This is my lesson. I'm not going to ask a question because of time, because I know this is what we both want to get together.” So then do I agree with that? Maybe you should move it to three. I would move it to three. And yeah, I'm completely conflicted.

Researcher:

That's okay. We truly learn stuff. Yeah. Is the space in between. Our next prompt “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Participant 3:

Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning. I'm going to go with five. Strongly agree on this.

Researcher:

Oh. A strong answer, yeah.

Participant 3:

Which I, for slightly selfish reasons, I'd say, of just that. Yeah, I think I just need to feel in an environment is where I am vulnerable. I do feel vulnerable as a voice student in a singing lesson. I'd say it is a vulnerable environment for me. And I need to feel like the teacher understands that and they understand how I'm feeling about something, possibly unfairly so, of how much they understand it. Do you know what I mean? But I think just in a quite human way of just like, yeah, feeling understood. Whether they like truly, truly understand is kind of a different thing. But I guess for me, that feeling understood is kind of reassurances. They're questions, you know, again, maybe this is terrible, but if I'm not asking questions, just checking in, like, okay, so you're fully on board with this. But then do I want more ownership of my own learning? So maybe I should be asking. Oh, God.

Researcher:

Maybe the bigger question is, is there a need to feel whether you should be doing something or not, if there's no right or wrong?

Participant 3:

Yeah, but for the feeling understood, I think it's really important to me. And I think just on the, just looking at, it's not a binary, but just looking at the binary of that, if at any point in a singing lesson, I feel misunderstood by a teacher, or they don't they don't understand how I feel about something that to me is like “Oh I'm not going to be making great progress in this lesson or possibly moving forward if you don't if I don't feel like you understand me.” I'm going to be less open and less exploratory in this environment, which is possibly like my own fault in my own insecurity. But if I don't feel fully, if I don't feel understood, it's not going to be as productive of an environment as it could be. So I'd say, yeah, for my learning, I strongly agree.

Researcher:

Lovely. We're in the last leg now. We've got three prompts to go. OK. Here's the next one: “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.” We saved the juicy ones for last.

Participant 3:

Maybe. I'm going with two on this, disagree.

Researcher:

Okay.

Participant 3:

And I've really, I've really tried. I've tried, [Researcher name]. I went to vocal anatomy every week. I made my notes. I visualise my anatomy. I... I don't know. It doesn't... Maybe it helps me understand my voice better. May I?

Researcher:

What's the dichotomy that you're thinking about?

Participant 3:

It helps me understand my voice better in the sense of I... I'm now more knowledgeable. I hold more knowledge than I did of how sounds are produced, what muscles might be working when I'm doing certain sounds. But I just don't feel like I understand my voice. I think I understand the voice better.

Researcher:

I would argue it may be an abstract concept, yeah.

Participant 3:

Yeah, or just like, I understand the human vocal anatomy better, but I'm taking this, I'm sorry, I'm focusing on the, my voice. I don't understand, I don't, it doesn't, technical scientific explanations don't help me understand my voice better, I don't think. And it doesn't, maybe it has subliminally, but I personally don't think it has helped my practice. If anything, no, I feel, when it becomes scientific, I think it's good in a way, and again, I'm about to contradict myself there, but it really separates, if we're focusing in on anatomy or I, like, tilt, what is it, thyroid tilt or false vocal fold closure, like, it really, really becomes alien to me, like, at the distance. It doesn't feel, it doesn't feel tangible to me, which, yeah, so it doesn't help me understand my voice better, and it personally, I don't think, has helped my practice at all. I'm glad I know it. And I have had teachers who really like to not focus on it, but explain what is happening while we go through. So it's like, okay, we make a sound or we do something in a song and they're like, “Great, that's really good. Do you know what you're doing there?” And it's gotten to a certain point where I'm like, “Oh, I am putting less, there is less airflow, or there is better vocal fold closure to achieve that sound.” But I mean, you can tell even as I'm saying it, I don't fucking know what that means, sorry for swearing, cut, cut that, you can tell even as I'm saying it, Do you know what I mean? It's like, yeah. And it annoys me slightly because it's like, if maybe that connection was stronger or that visualisation or that mind anatomy connection was stronger, then I'd be like *Whitney Houston*. Do you know what I mean?

Researcher:

One would hope not dead in a bath, but yeah.

Participant 3:

Yeah. Yeah, so I disagree that it helps me understand my voice better, but I do have a greater understanding of anatomy and technique, but in terms of understanding my voice, yeah, I'd say it hasn't, yeah, positively or negatively, yeah.

Researcher:

So, on the opposite side of the spectrum; “imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 3:

I do like an image... I do like imagery. Yeah, imagery, sensation based. Can I add action to that?

Researcher:

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Like action.

Participant 3:

Yeah.

Researcher:

Yeah. Yeah, getting... So it's sensation in terms of your whole body experience, how you map your proprioception, that kind of Exactly, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Participant 3:

Yeah, no, I'd give that a four, I'd agree with that.

Researcher:

Lovely.

Participant 3:

It doesn't, I wouldn't say, it's not 100% effective, so I'm not going to say five, but it really, yeah, I guess it's just that thing of like, in different ways, isn't it? For sure. Yeah, the imagery, metaphor, sensation side of things helps me understand my voice better than the technical, scientific. I mean, yeah. And it's that thing... of what does that then... result in a less informed singer? Which isn't a bad thing. There's not a right or wrong thing.

Researcher:

What defines an informed singer?

Participant 3:

I don't know. Someone who can be like, “I'm going to close my vocal folds with 10% more effectiveness” I mean, I'm being silly, but you know what I mean? To be fair, I've never met a singer who... I've never met a singer. Have you met a singer who is really technical and scientific, of like, you'll just work with them and...

Researcher:
I've met lots of singers that feel like they are, but once we explore it, we realise that what they identify with is absolutely not what's happening.

Participant 3:
Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher:
Yeah, I think, I think, yeah, just in terms of like, I think there's lots of questions in the world, you know, if you know, if you decide in your brain, I'm going to raise my right arm, that's about as anatomical as the decision gets, you don't actually consciously raise each muscle group or contract each muscle group to make that happen. No. So maybe we don't even need to know what all those different muscle groups within your biceps and your triceps and your traps are. All that matters is, I'm going to raise my right arm at this angle.

Participant 3:
And therefore, so there's lots of interesting discussion. And even in that, you can create, yeah, create your own imagery or metaphor of like, okay, so you say to someone, raise your right arm, they might do it. You say to someone else, I don't know, pick that apple. They'll do the exact same action. But they did get told quite different things. One I'd argue is more intentional, more beautiful.

Researcher:
Absolutely, all it's, you know, it's what is the construct? What is the intention? And what is the easiest, most reliable way of actioning that.

Participant 3:
Yeah and I think as well in terms of specifically for performance you're not going to be thinking, well I'd hope you wouldn't be thinking technically because...

Researcher:
As a vocal technician I would agree 100%.

Participant 3:

Because if you are, I would say I'm as soon as I'm thinking technically at a performance. I mean, I'm not saying it doesn't happen, obviously it happens, but as soon as I'm thinking technically, I'm not acting, I'm thinking technically. So yeah.

Researcher:

You're thinking, where is this apple? Where is this mixed voice? Where has it gone? Our final question in summary is; “I feel more confused when between technical language and imagery?”

Participant 3:

I disagree. I'm going to put two. I don't feel more confused. Because, as I say, I think sometimes it's just like the technical feels far away or separate from me at a distance. And then trying to like... And then imagery really helps me.

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 3:

And if we're trying to achieve and we flip between those two... Yeah, it doesn't confuse me. I know exactly what we're trying to get. I just would say, I just find the imagery more effective. Yeah. If anything, it's kind of nice, I'd say, to know both sides, because I'm more informed. I know kind of what is going on with my body. I think knowledge is great, and knowledge is power, and I don't have to do anything particularly, you know, with that knowledge of technique. But I think I'd always rather have the knowledge of it than not. I'm not going to sit here and be like, “No, don't tell me the technique. It will ruin it. I don't want to know.” Which maybe contradicts what I said earlier about mix. But it doesn't confuse me, if you know what I mean. Yes. Yeah. It might make me feel if it's a bit of technique that I have had issues with in the past or something like that, then it might make me feel a bit more vulnerable or a bit more nervous. But that is a different story. That's not confusion, if you know what I mean. Yeah, on the whole, I like to know both. And if I'm only going to know one, it would be the imagery for me. Because, yeah. Yeah.

Researcher:

Great. Anything else you want to add? Thanks for exploring all those things with me. And thanks for...

Participant 3:

That's okay. No, I loved it. Oh, God. I'm so sorry, [Researcher name]. Just give me one second. I'm just checking in.

Researcher:

I love that. I feel like I've been on a journey not only about pedagogy, but through the airport, literally.

Participant 3:

Yeah. I'm really sorry about this. I thought I was almost timed so well. Almost. But it's been really, really insightful for me, actually, just even like talking and answering these questions. So thank you. Like it's, yeah, it's really, it's really made me think about asking questions in a singing lesson. And I think I want to ask more questions. Yeah.

Researcher:

And that's where true learner autonomy and agency lives, I believe.

Participant 3:

Yeah. Yeah, and I think from answering the questions, it's kind of like, “Oh, I kind of know this.” And in my head is how I possibly perceive myself to be a bit more, to have more ownership than I think I did when I actually think about, do I challenge ideas? Do I ask questions? Yeah. I'm possibly missing a trick there, you know?

Researcher:

We're all growing and evolving, so there's only the present moment and then what we choose to do with tomorrow's present moment.

Participant 3:

Absolutely. But yeah, no, thank you so much for this.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for your time.

Participant 3:

I'm a new singer.

Researcher:

And have a great flight. Thank you.

Participant 3:

Yeah. All right.

Participant 4 – Interview Transcript

Participant 4:
How are you?

Researcher:
I'm very well. How are you? Yeah, I'm okay.

Participant 4:
Well, apart from this, but yeah. Other than this, I'm good.

Researcher:
Your Instagram post this morning or last night, whenever it was, it was like, yeah, she's got no voice, but she's feeling fine...

Participant 4:
I'm good. I'm all... Do you know what? It's been quite interesting. I had to do a choir last night with it, with no voice. And I sing, so I can't help myself, I just sing all the time with my choir. And it was really good, because I couldn't. It was like, oh, you know more than I know, than I thought you did, which was great. So yeah, you know, lessons in everything. It's all good. That's good.

Researcher:
May I share my screen with you?

Researcher:
You may.

Researcher:
Here we go. So this is what talking about today. I love this. So the whole purpose is just to explore different people from different backgrounds. Some are only performers, some are performers and teachers, some are only teachers, all that, just to explore people's experience of clarity, confusion, agency. So whether things are teacher-led or student-led and that kind of balance within kind of all the world of voice teaching. So there will be, once we crack on, there'll be 15 prompts, and then I'll ask you to, you know, like a survey style, how strongly do you agree or disagree?

Participant 4:
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:
So there are no right or wrong answers. The design of the statements are deliberately interesting to make you think, so the language that I use and the language I don't use. So anything you think is absolutely valid. So I'm not, I'm not in this research, I'm not answering anything. I'm just exploring what people think about it all. So it's right. So anything is game. Obviously, everything we talk about will be anonymised 100%. If there's any potentially squiffy, then I will absolutely redact that, so there's no worries there. This is the massive consent statement, but I'll just tick on your behalf.

Participant 4:
That's fine, that's good, go on, just tick away.

Researcher:
So as I say, there's no right or wrong answers, the questions are kind of cyclic within themselves, and together. So whatever happens is valid data and then that's my job to go through the transcript.

Participant 4:
Oh, that's exciting.

Researcher:
So let's jump in. Thank you so much for doing this. So when the prompts say things about like when my teacher that can be you and when you're a learner but because you're also a teacher it can be how you feel the relationship goes the other way as well. Any answer is data and all data is valid. Here's our first one: “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.”

Participant 4:
From me, as a pupil, I go two. From my pupil’s perspectives, we're talking about teenagers now. No, I think I get a lot of resistance quite often from some teenagers. I'd go for, oh hang on, I'm going the wrong way. Strongly disagree. From me, four. These are four. The other ones are two for

the kids. Because they don't get it at all why I make them do things. They're just like, “I don't want to do that, I just want to sing a song.”

Researcher:
And how does that make you feel?

Participant 4:
I'm frustrated. Because I know I can make it better, but I know that they need to do certain, you know, things like, or for example, I had a year seven yesterday who's got, who can't sing below a middle C. She can. She just thinks she can't and she just, and they won't open up to do, do you know what I mean? And no matter what I do, I'm like, it's really frustrating. Because you're like, I know you can do this, just you won't let me fix it.

Researcher:
And thinking in the most non-biased way possible, but it's also okay because I used to teach you and that's all declared. So and that's actually valuable data in itself because then I'm an insider researcher. So you as a student, if you think about the different teachers you've had through time.

Participant 4:
So I, right, so this is an interesting one really. You taught me a lot of technique. [Teacher name] taught me some technique, but I never understood why. So he never, he used to be all just about that... It feels, just go with how it feels. And I was like, “No, I kind of need to know why. I need to understand why I'm doing this.” So it would be very different answer for him. And then all my other, honestly, all conservatoire teachers I've had, have taught me bugger all, if I'm totally honest. They basically played the piano while I sang, and every so often, come out with the word support.

Researcher:
So if you think about your whole journey to this date at the moment, would you say you usually understand why all of these teachers have been asking you to do stuff or not?

Participant 4:
I understand you're one. [Teacher name], to some extent, Now I'm back in a bit of classical world doing, singing like, I'm an alto now, pop obviously, always bloody was, but you know what I mean, like doing actual alto choral stuff, which is so much easier than soprano ever was. I can now see the whole soft palate business and all that, but he never called it a soft palate. He was like, just,

“Just go”, you know what I mean? So now I can see the theory behind it, but it's still, I still think if I went to him for a lesson, I still probably wouldn't understand what he was trying to get me to do.

Researcher:
And how do you think that informs your approach as a teacher now?

Participant 4:
So I think, I think I am like that. I'm going to ring my little bell now because I think I'm actually a really good teacher because I've had all those experiences. Because I need to understand it in order to be able to teach it. So I do now, I really genuinely do. And I might not be, I am not the best singer at all. I'm decent, but I'm not the best. I couldn't be professional. I couldn't do that. But I do understand what a voice needs to do to do that. Do you know what I mean? So I really, I feel like I am absolutely the sum of all that, those poor teachers. Honestly, until I had you, where I genuinely learned and understood and now understand so much more. Yeah, that's what that's made me do.

Researcher:
And then it's maybe also interesting that when you start, the act of teaching makes you think about your own stuff as well, doesn't it?

Participant 4:
Massively, yeah. Just the whole like... I remember saying to [Teacher name], because I was doing musical theatre, I was in lots with [Theatre Company name], and I said, I want that mix-y sound. And he was like, “It's just, it's bollocks. It doesn't, just ignore that. Just don't know. Your voice doesn't do that. Just stay in your head voice.” Do you know what I mean? And so it wasn't until you had me in *Crush*, and you were like, “You can sing that in a mix”. And I'm like, “No, I can't. My voice doesn't do that.” And then you were like, “Well, then you need to see me.” Because it absolutely does. And now I'm like, I use mix when I'm singing flipping Handel’s *Messiah*. Do you know what I mean? Because the richness of the quality of the tone is so much better than just using my head voice on a bloody D above middle C, which is never ever gonna be what I need it to be, you know? And it's, yeah.

Researcher:
Or what you want it to be.

Participant 4:

And I only, do you know, because you've said that to me many times. It's about having the choice. You learn all these different ways of doing it so that you have the choice when you make the sound to go, how do I want the sound to be? Not what's right, what's wrong. “How do I want it to sound?” So you learn the different ways of doing it.

Researcher:

And that may change, you know, if you're doing two Handel *Messiahs* on next door days, you may decide to do it a completely different way.

Participant 4:

Yeah, no, exactly.

Participant 4:

Yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

Shall we move on to our next one? “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 4:

So, same as before, I would say, yes. I did with you, but previous teachers, absolutely not. And for my kids, no, it'd be a two again, I reckon. I'm just doing them a disservice? My older ones, my sixth formers, they know.

Researcher:

And sometimes it takes a while for understanding to bed in as well, doesn't it?

Participant 4:

Yeah, my adult. So I'm teaching a woman at the minute across the road. She's doing grade 8 pop. Great voice. And I think she sometimes doesn't understand it at the beginning. And I'll say, “Do this.” Like, so I was doing with her *Man-on-a-Swing,* your exercise, with her the other week. And she was just like, “I hate this one, I don't know why.” And I'm like, “No, no, no.” And then we did it. And then she sang, I can't remember what she was singing, but it was something where she had to go into her head voice at the top. And I was like, look at the glide, look at how you can smooth

between the two now. And she was just like, “Right, I get it.” So, yeah, maybe it's once they've done it, then they maybe reflection is the is the key.

Researcher:
So then how is you as the singer, the performer, the teacher? How clear do you feel about the explicit statement and then within your kind of like teaching this as well?

Participant 4:
So for me, the explicit statement. So, for example, for example, if I did a vocal exercise on a like ‘wah’ or a ‘wee’ or a ‘wah’, just to get it kind of here, buzzy, I would be five on that. I know what that's meant to make me. I know that's meant to put my voice in the right place so that I can place it correctly. Yes, but my pupils, maybe three then.

Researcher:
So then how should we rate that?

Participant 4:
Well, let's go four. Let's go in between the two.

Researcher:
There we are. Our next one. And this is really interesting with your duality of roles as well, having the discussion and it's all really interesting data. “I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 4:
It does happen. But usually then you see afterwards. I'm just trying to think, it's interesting this, because you're my most recent teacher. So that's obviously my most recent memories. I remember you doing, you taking out consonants. I remember thinking this is just bloody hard. My brain just can't process this. “What is this doing?” But then I do that practically every single time I have a pupil doing it, because I want them to sing through a vowel a bit more. And they're probably the same as me going, “I don't know what this is meant to do.” So probably a three. But actually, in hindsight, I totally get it.

Researcher:

This is going to be a good one for you. Maybe: “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 4:
One gazillion trillion percent. A hundred percent. I don't think anybody has ever told me about breathing in, like, and made it make, like, the same way. Do you know what I mean? Some people are like, you know, when you take your breath in, then as you're singing, expand your ribcage, push your ribcage out. Other people are like, oh, absolutely not. No, you should be relaxing, and it should be. It's yes I strongly agree with that.

Researcher:
And then thinking about all those experiences if you know think back to conservatoire days; teachers; do they agree do they not agree and then how does that make you feel as someone honing your own craft?

Participant 4:
I think it makes you feel a bit stupid. It makes you feel subpar, like you must not understand. You know what I mean? “I must not be understanding it correctly. It must be.” And I don't know if that's just me being word of the world on my shoulders, but I would always go for “It's me that's the problem, not the teacher. It's me. I just don't understand. I'm not bright enough for this.”

Researcher:
What would happen if you had two of those teachers, like, you know, team teaching or something?

Participant 4:
I'm like, yeah! Because I had, a couple of years ago at Tring, I had a girl who was, she did year 13 with me and then she was going for conservatoire in Oxford, and we were doing classical diploma. And then she went and joined [Vocational school] one day a week, whatever their course thing was that they did for Sixth Form, where [Teacher name] basically didn't show up quite often. And she was like, “So I'm having you both teach me.” So it's me and [Teacher name], which was just hilarious, because I'm like, “Oh, of course, of course, [Teacher name]’s your other teacher. And I was just like, “this is...” and she was going, “Oh, but [Teacher name], [Teacher name] said I should do this, you know.” She'd have an audition next week. “[Teacher name] said I should do this piece.” And I'm like, “Have you sung it before?” “No, but I can learn it.” And I'm like, and it was just, yeah, I, no, no, it never worked. I think one teacher at a time and not...

Researcher:

And I mean, yeah, I think generally I would agree with that. I think you've got to, the learner has got to be, if they're going to have two, they've got to be in a really good place where they're like, I'm taking everything maybe with a pinch of salt and I'm finding my own path. But yeah, that's unusual to have someone like that.

Participant 4:

But absolutely, because you don't, because that's the whole point of you getting lessons is you're going, “I don't know something.”

Researcher:

“When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it's because I'm doing something wrong.”

Participant 4:

I mean, without a doubt.

Researcher:

And why do you think that is?

Participant 4:

Oh, I think that's just the kind of person I am. I think I just assume that it must be me and it can't possibly be anyone else and everybody else must be better than me. That's just a personality thing.

Researcher:

And how do you think that's affected your singing learning journey throughout your whole, your whole life?

Participant 4:

I think I've definitely not maybe progressed, certainly early on, where I could have done, I could have done more earlier on in sort of in my, you know, late university kind of early 20s time. So when I, I was going to go for a masters at RNCM and I had about 18 months worth of lessons when I was sort of 23 to 25. And yeah, I do think then my voice was brilliant, but I didn't ask the questions and I didn't, and if I didn't understand, you know what I mean? And where maybe I've

done a disservice saying these concepts, because that was a concept to our teacher, saying, you know, they just play the piano and do whatever, but maybe actually there needs to be onus on that, on the student at that age, certainly, and at that level, to be saying, “Actually, I don't get that. How do I do this? Actually, how do you breathe? Explain it to me like I'm a five-year-old.”

Researcher:
Or how do you think I breathe?

Participant 4:
Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:
And I've got two questions as a spin-off of that. How important do you think that learner-centred stuff (or agency) is? That the learner's in control of learning. And my second question is, why didn't you ask those things?

Participant 4:
Right, so I think once you get past sort of under university level, I think up to university level, I think it's on a teacher, I think the teacher has to explain these things as much, you know, because you're learning the basics, really, even up to grade eight, I still think you're learning the basics, you're not learning you know, the other stuff. But then I think, from then on, it is the responsibility, 50-50, I would say, of the teacher and the learner. And I don't know what conservatoires are like now, or music college or whatever, but I don't know that they teach that and explain that to people. Do you know what I mean? I think in general, regardless of singing, in general, we live in a society now where we spoon feed like never before to get kids through exams. We literally give them on a plate, you know, there is no, “You go find out, if you don't, you'll fail.” There's none of that anymore. It's all very, very, very much the teacher is in control and will make you pass that exam. So I think that certainly those young ones training now, they just don't, they don't know the questions to ask. They don't have the confidence to ask those because they've never had to do it before. And they just want to do as well as they can. And they know that their teacher will do their best to get them to do as well as they can. And I'm not sure it's such a good thing, because I don't think it makes you critically assess and think.

Researcher:
So then if you think back to when you were a conservatoire student.

Participant 4:

So I was never a conservatoire student. I was a university with conservatories.

Researcher:

So when you were there, what were the reasons for you not asking the questions?

Participant 4:

I didn't want to look stupid. I wanted to do well, but I don't know whether this is just because it was university. So performing class, my performing tutors, who would assess us every week when we stood up on stage and performed. One was a clarinetist and one was, I think, a trumpet player. And I remember thinking, “You haven't got a flipping foggy about how to sing. You don't know. As long as I make a nice sound, it doesn't matter.” Do you know what I mean? It didn't matter. I knew I'd do well because I had a good voice. Which is terrible, isn't it? But it's, yeah, wasted.

Researcher:

Do you think that you then and you now ask different questions?

Participant 4:

Oh God, yes. Yeah, but that's just maturity though, I think. And I know a hell of a lot more now than I ever did then. So I know the questions to ask. If you don't understand things to the right level, you don't have the vocabulary to ask the questions that you need to to get the answers. I think as well, That's the whole purpose. We live in the world of social media now, and I don't know about you, but I follow so many people who are singing teachers online and do little reels about how to get this and get this and this technique and this technique, and that's definitely made me question, not necessarily follow them, but question it and go, “Oh, why is she doing that? Right, okay, let me try and do that.” Do you know what I mean? So it's...

Researcher:

I think the bigger question with all of that stuff and singing pedagogy as a whole, which is, you know, this is a plan for me later in the year when I finally launch my take on all of that, is “Why are there 150 different ways of doing the same thing?” And this is the purpose of this, is what are we missing? So through this experience and with the other people, it's like, are there some really so obvious that we can't see the wood for the trees, things that we're missing. Maybe there are. You know, because I think some, in terms of agency, whether that's teacher or student, some people

get so bogged down with maybe proving that their ideas are right, because we live in a right or wrong society. That my whole purpose. Well, I agree

Participant 4:

I agree. And when pupils ask you, um, “How do I do X, Y, Z to make that sound?” Billy, Billy Flippin, what's her face? *Billy Eilish*. I can't say her surname. *Eilish*, yeah. Oh, they're all, obviously, the kids are all obsessed with seeing. I probably do quite a good job right now, but they're obsessed with that kind of whispering. “How do I do that?” I'm like, actually, I don't know how you do that safely. You know, there's certain things, because we don't know everything about all different styles of, or I certainly don't know everything about all different styles of singing. Do you know what I mean? And it's, yeah, there isn't one size fits all.

Researcher:

And what is, step back from the woods, what is the definition of ‘safely’ and who gets to decide that and why?

Participant 4:

Yes, sounds very good.

Researcher:

You know, somewhere on my computer I've got a scope of, oh, what was his name? From *Aerosmith*, the lead singer, *Steve Tyler*. If you looked at that strobe, you'd be like, this person is not a singer, they just abused their voice. He was great.

Participant 4:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

You know, so, yeah, I think the important You know, why do we feel this? Is it what you want? Yeah, maybe. Let's Let's continue. “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.”

Participant 4:

Because I'm wrong, because I must be wrong, yeah. Uncertainty and confusion. I don't like being confused or uncertain about anything, to be honest, in life. It's not a place I want to be. I don't like

feeling vulnerable, don't like feeling all that. So no, no, I will panic and go, “Oh god, they're going to think I'm terrible and stupid.”

Researcher:
And then how do you deal with that as a teacher?

Participant 4:
I'm like the nicest singing teacher on the planet. With kids I am. I'm very like, “So it's all good, you know, we're cool” and I'll do something wrong. And I'll, you know, and I regularly, I don't even have to try to do that. I have to regularly do things wrong and my voice will do something. And I'm like, “It's easy. It's just, and I've been doing this for four years”, blah, blah, you know? So just make them feel as at ease as I possibly can.

Researcher:
So if you've got a situation where your student is obviously feeling a bit uncertain, confusion and therefore anxious and whatever, how do you help them to have a more useful response than maybe what you would feel in that situation?

Participant 4:
I don't know, you know. I had a little girl who was under-confident, and we were recording for, we were doing grade one MT, LCM, and we were doing the recorded one. Back when you could record one song at once, you can't do that anymore, it's really annoying. So we recorded one, and then I made her watch it, and she burst into tears. And she was great. She was absolutely fine, but she burst into tears. She was so upset, like hyperventilating tears. I was kind of, oh my, like shocked for a start, because I had no idea she felt like that. And then I just, yeah, I think I just said to her, “Look, it doesn't matter, you know, it's just singing, it's not...” Play it down, I suppose, and kind of just try and take the pressure off it, try and make it, realise it's just, this is a fun thing we do, and it's, don't let it cause you angst. I don't know, and that's something I'm still working on.

Researcher:
Paths to finding some workings out for that?

Participant 4:
I don't know. I probably need to become a little bit less self absorbed and think about…

Researcher:
What makes you say that?

Participant 4:
Because I think I, you know, I think it's a very human response. But I often think people are reacting in the same way that I react, or for the same reasons that I react for them. And it's not, you know, it's not having that, that kind of being able to get in someone else's head and think that they might think in a different way And that's just, they also might not be, if we're thinking, they might not also be thinking, or if they are, they might, they might be thinking much less.

Researcher:
So they might not, they might not even be aware? You know, I mean, if you watch that, I watched a bit of the politics channel yesterday, because I felt like, you know, that's what I needed. But like, some of them, I'm like, “You don't even understand where your stance is on this, because you're not thinking about anything you're saying.” So that's, that's really interesting. And how did that, and then did that example you had, did they complete the recordings for the exam or?

Participant 4:
I spoke to her mum because she was only 11 years old. So it's, I spoke to her mum and mum was like, “She's got a lot of anxiety generally. We're working on it.” And she got a distinction. She got a really high distinction in the end.

Researcher:
And how did, and then how did that, how did she react?

Participant 4:
So now she's doing grade three now with me and going to do it in front of an examiner. Because we've got through that step, do you know what I mean? Where I'm like, “Look, look how you thought you were terrible.” I think she got 97 or something ridiculous, you know, really high. And I was like, “Now let's go and stick this in, you are so good.” And she's got much, much more confidence now. But yeah.

Researcher:
And that's got transferable skills for non-singing parts of life as well.

Participant 4:

Oh, yeah. I think singing does in general, I think, I think everyone should learn to sing who has any kind of interest in it, I really do, for exactly that reason.

Researcher:

And reflecting on that, what we've just discussed, how does that reflect on you and the ‘one’ you gave when you immediately saw the prompt?

Participant 4:

That's interesting. Because, yeah, I should do that myself and go, hang on every other person I teach also gets things wrong and it's fine and I don't think any less of them and I see them improve and do brilliantly and be strong and confident and brave but yeah that's what I should do. There we go.

Researcher:

And is number ‘one’ the answer that you want to stick with or do you want to change it?

Participant 4:

Do you know I'll give it a two but no more than that. I do not enjoy getting it wrong or not quite understanding something.

Researcher:

Shall we scroll down? Let's continue: “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.”

Participant 4:

So, I think they're two very different things. I'm very much able to ask questions, no problem at all. Depends who it is. Depends what I think of them.

Researcher:

So let's explore that. So let's explore. So I think there's two things there. There's ask questions and challenging ideas, same or similar or two sides of same coin. And then the other side that you just mentioned is the context of what it is. So let's explore your thoughts on that.

Participant 4:

So I'm always, I always feel able to ask questions and I have with any teacher actually, I've always felt not like you can't ask me how to do that, do you know what I mean? Everybody's made me think yeah you can ask. Challenge ideas to me though is challenge what they're saying. So they're saying do it like this and then for me to go but what if I did it like this instead? Feels like saying I know more than you.

Researcher:

So when you see that, when you see that phrase ‘challenge ideas’, so for you it sounds like that has an automatic negative ‘let's have an argument’ lens.

Participant 4:

Totally, totally.

Researcher:

Does it?

Participant 4:

No, it shouldn't, it absolutely shouldn't.

Researcher:

So if you take a step back from that: Why do you have your automatic lens and why shouldn't it?

Participant 4:

Because I think it's ingrained, and I don't think I'm the only one on this one, definitely not, teacher-student, that hierarchy, as opposed to teacher-student. It's almost like child, you know, adult-child.

Researcher:

And it's all that?

Participant 4:

So challenging ideas feels like, oh, being, you know, you don't do that to someone who knows more than you. They're wiser. There you are. They have all the answers, but whereas they ask questions is maybe a bit more of a level playing field.

Researcher:

Okay, so why do you think that is for you?

Participant 4:

For me personally, upbringing and everything, you know, kind of, I was brought up in quite a strict, your parents, you know, you just didn't. And I still to this day, my bloody mother, she still tells me what to do. Do you know what I mean? And it's kind of, it's still, it's just heavily ingrained in me. Respect your elders, all that business.

Researcher:

I guess your experience in your working life as well.

Participant 4:

Yeah, absolutely.

Researcher:

Definitely when you're like in a non-peripatetic, in a classroom situation. Yeah, yeah.

Participant 4:

Yeah, very much so.

Researcher:

It's kind of standardised, isn't it? And then if you think about you and your whole you right now. So if we, I'm trying to not lead, but you know, it's all data. So if we could make a supposition that we only learn by making mistakes and accepting those, and part of that process is challenging what's coming at us. What's your reaction to my supposition in terms of this, this and this and this?

Participant 4:

I think you're bang on the money. I absolutely agree. You only learn by making mistakes and challenging and changing and learning at 100%. I think, for me, it's something I would hope. For example, if I came for a lesson with you now, well, no, I already know, because I know you know a hell of a lot more about this than I do. I know of your pedagogy and everything is so much higher than mine. Like, you just have more knowledge than I do on a musical front, on a...

Researcher:

Why does that matter so much?

Participant 4:

If I think something different to you, my natural assumption is I must be wrong, because you know more than I do. You've had more data to form your opinion than I have.

Researcher:

And how did I get that data?

Participant 4:

Because you've done many qualifications and...

Researcher:

Do you think maybe it's also because I accept people challenging? I mean, yes. So maybe, you know, maybe... Since you've turned the table, you know, an interview works both ways. If you meet a challenge, maybe a different lens, because I'm all about opposite lenses to what we think, I'm like, why do I hate what you're saying? Why am I like, no? And then you can figure out your understanding and your stance, and then you've learned 500 more things along the way that you didn't even factor into it, maybe.

Participant 4:

Yeah, that's a really good point. I think some of it for me as well is what you were saying about before, that there isn't “This is how to sing.” It would be great if there was. It just doesn't exist. There's so many different ways to do things. And I think I don't like that. That's like, it's not black and white. It's a bit grey. So I'm always searching for the black and white, I think.

Researcher:

Yeah, I guess that relates to all your previous teachers and their stance, you know, and if you had all your, if all of your teachers were around having lunch out, I mean, some people would be getting arrested, wouldn't they? But I guess that it comes with the territory that you've got to take where you are as a teacher at that moment in time and go, “I believe this is, yeah, not necessarily right, but not right as in right or wrong, but the correct way to do things that I believe right now.” And you've got to take that objective stance in that kind of time and space. Otherwise, you'd never give a lesson because you'd say, I don't know enough to give a lesson.

Participant 4:

Well, you see that, don't you? On the Facebook groups, you see a new person coming in who's like, “I've got a master's, I went to this conservatoire. Oh, do you think I can teach a singing lesson.” And you see people like, yeah, and it's so true. And it's like, “Gosh, you bloody can. It's just, yeah...”

Researcher:

That's part of how you learn more as yourself, yes. And then, you know, you might see occasionally when I accidentally start arguments with people in that space.

Participant 4:

Yes, I enjoy that. They're my fits.

Researcher:

Yeah, that's always fun. Yes, interesting. So where are we sitting on this scale after reflecting on that?

Participant 4:

So I think we have to go on a three.

Researcher:

That's a perfectly valid response, because otherwise the three wouldn't exist.

Participant 4:

Well, this is true. Because I just think, yeah, it's the challenge ideas thing. I feel like I want to be able to, I feel like I will a bit more now. Watch out. Maybe, maybe. I'll come for a top up lesson and then you're like, wow.

Researcher:

We'll block out three days, stay in the spare room. Maybe it's just about giving the act of learning, so whether that's the teacher side, the student side, just the whole thing, giving permission to go, “This is where we are right now. Let's just all go on the same road to whatever that is, progress, you know.” And, you know, “Hopefully dodge the potholes as we go and if we hit one we just need to get a new tyre.”

Participant 4:

Yeah, yeah. I don't know.

Researcher:

Let's move on: “In lessons I mostly focus on doing what I'm told rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 4:

I would say yes. Let's go four. I'm not going to go five. I think I was a five probably till I met you. Whereas now I'm a bit more like I do because I definitely understand it now. So that must have come somehow. So, yeah. But I am just a good...

Researcher:

If you think about that and step away from our analogy of a wood and trees, a teacher can only be the enzyme to a reaction. So what did that facilitate for you then? So if you think prior to me, the enzyme, you were a five and now you're a four.

Participant 4:

I think I'm just a good girl, honestly. And I think that's a personal... And I do think though as well with singing and teaching and singing and being a teacher, you have to have, it is a relationship. And so you've been my best teacher because you have all the knowledge and everything, you've taught me loads. But also I think just because we work well together. But can't, you know, a great teacher is not for everyone. It's just, you've got to find the teacher for you that brings out the best in you. I'm not for everyone, you know? It's just, it's, yeah. So I think you, for me, and I talked to [Student name] about this, because I know you did this to [Student name] as well, because we had a conversation about it once. You are quite scientific about it, actually. You're quite anatomical. Do you know what I mean? You will, and whilst, don't get me wrong at first, M1, M2, da, da, I'm like, “What are you talking about?” Obviously, say it because, you know, it's me.

Researcher:

I mean, we've probably got the recording somewhere we could go back and analyse.

Participant 4:

But I need to know that. And I know some people don't, some people need to know how it feels. But I need to, I need to know how it feels. But I need to know more importantly, what the hell is

going on? Like, can I visualise in my head? What is happening? My vocal cords when they come together like this. Knowing that, I didn't know that, and the whole time that I trained at university, training to go to college, everything, all that, up to 25, I didn't know vocal cords vibrated like this and that the thick folds were down here and the thin ones were up there. I didn't know it. I was diploma level, I didn't know it. It's just, yeah.

Researcher:
And in, you know, the time since we've done that, things have changed. I've changed. The general pedagogic world has advanced. You know, [Pedagogue] is about to publish an article in the *Journal of Singing*, which is about to set the world on fire about how we understand some things.

Participant 4:
Oh, wow.

Researcher:
Yeah, I'm looking really forward to it.

Participant 4:
Yeah, that's really cool.

Researcher:
Yeah, and it seems to be a case that within pedagogy it's very ‘Chinese whispers’ and it's like people take tiny bits and then it gets morphed, you know. Then people can become unintentionally very narrow-minded and therefore not seeing, it's the topic of this whole chat, not seeing the bigger picture.

Participant 4:
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because it is just, I think there's a lot of snobbery as well involved in it. And you see that all over the Facebook pages. Oh my God, classical teachers, Jesus. They just don't think that pop or MT have any technique whatsoever, do they? They just think you just, I don't know what. I think there's more technique. Honestly, I've learned more physically how to manipulate where I put the sound through MT and pop than I ever, ever did to create a classical sound. Classical sound, I just yawn a bit, honestly. There we go. Yeah, there's a lot of snobbery involved. And what's right and what's wrong? Because that's the other thing. And this does frustrate me about teaching singing, singing everything. What are you getting? What is the end goal? Is it to

make you sound as good as possible? But what's as good as possible? What is good? What is pretty? To whom? Like, does it sound nice to me? Does it sound nice? What's your... Do you know what I mean? It's so, so subjective. So subjective, and I can't, yeah.

Researcher:
Yeah, I remember watching an amateur concert, like a variety, and I was sat next to someone who... Classical music and classical singing was definitely her thing, and the most contemporary she would get is G&S. And in the interview I said, are you enjoying it? She goes, I hate this, it's just da, da, da. And I just looked at her in the eyes and I said, why don't you just leave? If you hate, if you, I hate lots of things and I wouldn't spend my time doing it. So if you don't like the world of the genre you're in, just go.

Participant 4:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:
So I think that's, I think that's also valid. I think the problem comes when people try, when people feed maybe their own insecurities that they're better than other people because of X, Y, Z, whatever that is. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think there's also, there's a divide you spoke of, I think there's also a divide between voice scientists, evidence-based research, And there's also a real stress and a dichotomy between people that teach with a very anatomical language and people that teach only metaphors and all of that. So heuristic is the term for that. So I think there's a real, there's a wall between all of that without people stepping back and going “This is all the same thing we're describing. We're describing a cup of coffee.” Some people need to know the rate at which the coffee is going to evaporate from this mug. And some people need to hold the mug like this rather than by the handle. It doesn't change that it's a cup of coffee. Let's continue: “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 4:
Oh yeah, four.

Researcher:
Why not a five and why not a three?

Participant 4:

Not a three because I am definitely, I feel, yeah, increasingly able to make, I make informed decisions now, definitely, about my voice and training, what I need and what I don't need and when I'm going to, yeah, yeah. How much practice I'm going to do. Maybe, five then. I think I suppose I was staying away from five because I'm not in training at the minute.

Researcher:

Do you know what I mean? I mean, the actor, it depends how you define in training.

Participant 4:

Yeah, I don't have a teacher, I suppose is what I mean. Not whether I'm, I'm constantly doing stuff.

Participant 4:

Hmm.

Participant 4:

Maybe five then, actually. No, yeah, I am. And I like the word increasingly.

Researcher:

I spent a lot of time phrasing these things.

Participant 4:

That's very good. The word increasingly is good. I like that. If it was, I feel able to make informed decisions about my voice in training, it might be more of a four. But I'm increasingly able. Not perfect, but getting there.

Researcher:

Perfection is the enemy of progress.

Participant 4:

It is indeed.

Researcher:

And joy.

Participant 4:

I trust my teachers, strongly agree. I mean, not with the other ones, but yeah. But yes, strongly agree.

Researcher:

And then if you stand back from that, and then, I mean, we've, you've spoken a lot about that, but anything that comes out of that and thinking about...

Participant 4:

I, one of my, like, and you might be able to answer this better than me: Does talent play a part in brilliant singing?

Researcher:

I've got another interview in an hour… hahaha!

Participant 4:

You can't drop above the shelf like that. Because I truly believe I've had some exceptional singers teach me, like unbelievably good. Do they understand technique? Or is it just that they naturally are able to form really, really good technique and therefore they teach you, because that's what conservatoires do, they pull in the crème de la crème of performers who are now teaching, and you sit with them and you go, “Wow, you've had this incredible career, you must know so much.” And I'm not saying they don't, obviously they know a lot, of course they do, for their voice, not necessarily for other people's voice. So that's why I wouldn't trust some of my previous... [Teacher name] is a really, really good example, I think. [Teacher name] was a cracking singer. I mean, I know he didn't complete music college, because he's lazy and a very, very flawed person. But musician-wise and singing, natural God-given talent. Very good. But I don't think he understood.

Researcher:

So what was the question you were asking me?

Participant 4:

I don't know. So you understand. There in my mind. Every lesson I had with you, it was very clear that you understood the fundamental reason behind every single thing, every part of my voice, why it did this, why it was doing that, why I felt like I couldn't above a G do a mixed sound, I had to go

into my head voice. You understood why that felt like that and what I needed to do to correct that, to make it different. Previous teachers, no.

Researcher:
Do you think talent innately exists?

Participant 4:
I believe everyone can sing. I think some people can just naturally sing really, really freaking well. I think their vocal cords, their anatomy, their, the resonance, the shape of the cheekbones, the everything is lined up in a really, really nice way to make a really beautiful sound. What do you think?

Researcher:
I think this is an interesting discussion to continue at another point, but I will leave you with a thought that I would invite you to have some reading around and thinking about why you feel that. And if you had a particular example, of a person, of finding out, if you can, about their history of their life.

Participant 4:
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:
I have very strong opinions, which are based in performance psychology. So personally, I believe 100% that talent does not exist. There's no such thing. So I also believe that if you've got nature versus nurture, nature predominantly does not exist. It's all nurture. Because we all learn everything we are as humans from other humans. Whether or not we know that we are. I think nature comes into play maybe if you want to do basketball or be a jockey in terms of you need to be tall to play basketball and you need to be not tall to become a jockey like you know a six foot four person is probably not going to be riding a horse competitively. But I think that's probably the limit I think. I think it's also very like music performance psychology is very embryonic at the moment. We know a lot from sports, you know, and if we take someone like *David Beckham*, he practised football for about 4,000 hours before the age of five. So it's not innate talent. He just wasn't aware as a two-year-old bending shots against a wall that he was practising.

Participant 4:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

So I think, and if you, you know, if you look at, you know, singers like maybe, you know, you know, I mean, whoever, *Maria Callas, Pavarotti,* all from musical families, all used to sit around the piano and sing from the age of vocalising. Even people, you know, like *Adele.* Singing in at the age of 13 with her mum there. So I think, I like your reaction. I like my mic drop bombshell of my opinion. And I think what's really interesting is if we just step back from it and go, “What maybe makes someone good at something is maybe just the act of doing, regardless of what the detail is.”

Participant 4:

Yeah, not having the hang ups that stop you from progressing.

Researcher:

Yeah, yeah, whatever they are. And we have to come from, I think, non-emotional and reactive and self-identity stance and just go, we're just looking at what it is.

Participant 4:

You know, because that's definitely true. That's kind of because if you think about like in the corporate world, so men being paid more than women, my husband talks about this all the time. Like it's not. It says men go into an interview and if enough on their CV something's missing they go “Yeah I can fucking do it and they write it down and they do it.” This is very generic now, very stereotypical. But they write it down, go I can do it. Women are like “Oh but I've not, I haven't got that yet so they don't write it down.” So then you get this and he's like...

Researcher:

Where does that come from? You weren't born with that…?

Participant 4:

No, it's pure societal whatever upbringing yeah. Oh you should go into this. This is why you're doing your psychology masters now as well. I see. This is really interesting.

Researcher:

Very interesting. And it's not a case of, you know, me saying that, you know, you don't, none of us don't get really, you know, highly skilled people walking through our doors. Just if we, if we, a little bit of distance from whatever it is, is good. You know, even like in our everyday life, like waking up and like, “Oh, why do I, I don't want to, why do I feel like that? Is that because I haven't slept enough? If I'm stressed, what is it about? Is it because I had four rum and cokes too many last night?” You know, it's just having that moment where you go, “If I can understand, if I can begin to understand why, then that's a calming place because all we want to do in life is understand ourselves and each other.” Whether that's about feeling great, interpersonal relationships, or “Why the hell do I think there's a massive pothole between a G and an A above middle C.

Participant 4:
Yeah.

Researcher:
There's a reason and we only get to the real reason if we stand back from it all and go, “Why am I thinking that?” And sometimes someone needs, you know, an exercise or a thing or a distraction or they need to explore it anatomically or they need to explore it using metaphor. The method doesn't matter, it doesn't matter how you make your cake so long as it tastes nice. It only has to look nice if you're entering it in Bake Off, you know.

Participant 4:
It's so true.

Researcher:
Maybe, I don't know.

Participant 4:
Another wise Dodsworth moment.

Researcher:
“Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 4:
Strongly agree.

Researcher:
So what's making you think that?

Participant 4:
Because, yeah, I don't like to question what they say because they are the font of all knowledge.

Researcher:
What about when you're a teacher?

Participant 4:
You should trust your teacher. But do you know what? I'm going to change my answer. Is it all right to change my answer after having this conversation, you see?

Researcher:
Of course, because the important thing is not, you know, I mean, yes, I'm asking things on a scale so I can look at things and maybe I might say 40% people don't trust their teachers. But that's, that's not the point. The point is this discussion and your exploration.

Participant 4:
So now I would I would go down now to probably more like a three or two, I really would. Because trust, two-way street, you've got to be able to question, you've got to be able to feel comfortable enough to ask the question and know that that question is going to get answered and you're not going to be, you know, made to look stupid. So let's go two.

Researcher:
Oh, OK.

Participant 4:
That's a change, isn't it? Big change, isn't it? No, because trusting a teacher means not questioning what they say. No, you should be able to question what they say.

Researcher:
So there's an interesting thought that comes out of that, especially within the changing from a five to a two, is that then, so you've got student coming to teacher, there may be an inferred hierarchy within that, that we've all spoken about, then how much is it on the teacher to somehow, for this

trusting both ways relationship, to be like, “We're going to get the best out of this if we become equals and not hierarchy”?

Participant 4:
It's tricky though that, because I was thinking about that with my pupils. So the ones I have here, that's fine, the ones I like to teach at home. But the ones in school, it's just not a possibility.

Researcher:
Why do you think that is?

Participant 4:
They call me Mrs [Surname]. Do you know what I mean? Even down to the bare bones of what they had termed me as, it's, that's not an equal thing. I don't call them, you know, by their surname. It's, yeah, it's interesting.

Researcher:
Really interesting. That immediately is a, is an institutional barrier, isn't it? That means that you as the facilitator, the educator of the learning is having some of the work blocked by the institution that you're in.

Participant 4:
Honestly, it's because it's been a long time since I was kind of a proper classroom teacher. And I now I'm out of it. And when I'm in school now, I sit there and go, I don't think I could go back to it. And it's things it is, that institutional, “You can't do this, you can't do this, you can't do this.” But it's the same, and maybe it's working for yourself, I don't know what it is, but it's, yeah, it doesn't sit well with me. I hate when the kids tell me stories about things, I get really like, “No, no, this is not the way it should be.” We should all have mutual respect for one another. And respect isn't, it's not, shouldn't just be given just because I'm older than you.

Researcher:
“Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Participant 4:
Now, this does go back to my teaching days. I think it's important to understand your pupil and how to get the best out of them. And that all leads from understanding how their brain and what is

important to them? What are their motivating factors? What are their reasons? How do they learn? You know, like you said, some people need the anatomical stuff, some people need the feely-feely stuff, some people need the... And I think if it's going to be a good teacher-student and they're going to learn from you, you need to be able to sort of zone into how they need to hear that information. So yeah, they need to understand you.

Researcher:
Do you think that that also changes throughout the relationship as well, doesn't it?

Participant 4:
I mean, yeah, you know each other more and more.

Researcher:
Sometimes it changes and then how much do you feel that either your teacher or your student or your whichever way you are how important is it that so if you're the student how important is it that you feel that the teacher feels that you understand? So like another step, another layer.

Participant 4:
I think it's really important. I do. I think there's been many times where, and sometimes with you, like the start of when you first started teaching me, I would say this for me and you as well, where I would hope you thought that I understand, but I didn't necessarily. Because it was important to me that you thought that I got it. Does that make sense?

Researcher:
And do you think that I thought that you got it?

Participant 4:
No, in hindsight, knowing you now, no.

Researcher:
And then reflections the greatest tool, because then you can look back and go, “Oh, was that part of a bigger plan?”

Participant 4:

Yeah, no, no, totally. And you I think you knew that I needed you to think that, yeah. And that I needed at the start for you to think that because I used to be head of music, that I'm a musician that, do I mean? Therefore, I must be really, really, really good at music and quick and get everything like that. I remember my very first singing teacher when I was 16. I remember she used to go on to me all the time and go, “You're so quick. You just understand things. You pick things up so quick, so quick.” It's always been this thing. I'm really quick. If someone doesn't think that I'm really quick at picking things up, singing-wise and music-wise, I get really, like, panicky. Like, “Why am I not doing this really, really fast? This is my talent. This is my thing. This is what I do.” You know?

Researcher:

Why do you think that moment has imprinted so heavily on you?

Participant 4:

I think it's because everybody likes to be told they're good at something, don't they? Everybody likes to have that thing that they're better than most people at. And I think that was my thing. When I went for music college first time, I was only 17 because I'm quite young in my year, so I was only 17. I didn't even get through to the interviews there, the aural bits. Because they were just like, “You need to come back when you've graduated because you are so young. You've got voice, but nowhere near ready for us to be training it in that way.” That was my first, “Oh no, you're not as good as other people.” I think, I now retreat back and go, “Oh, I want to be that person again where I'm really fast and really good and really the top of the class and the best, the best, the best, the best.”

Researcher:

So reflecting on those things, does that inform you now?

Participant 4:

Yeah, I mean, that's, that's a part of who I became, you know what I mean? That kind of, everybody's the sum of experiences, aren't they? And that's, that was quite a formative experience, I think, being rejected, because I got rejected twice with music college. So it's, you know, it's kind of, yeah, that definitely has left me with a “I'm subpar, but must be better.” Must always be, seem to be better. [Teacher name], I remember, used to take the piss out of me with some things. Because

he'd be, he'd fire some musical language; “You're supposed to be head of music. You're supposed to be head of music.” And I'd be like, “Whoa”, I'm just a really good teacher.

Researcher:
So standing back from that experience through our reflexive lens that we're using, why, A, why do you think that happened from them? And B, you probably all do, answer this, why did you react that way? And C, what is the lens that right now on the [Date of interview] what is takeaway we can positively change our life with from that?

Participant 4:
What was the first one?

Researcher:
Why did he say it?

Participant 4:
Why did [Teacher name] say that to me? I think because I think, well, I think it fits in with C to be honest, like it's a trigger. Everybody has their triggers. For me it's a trigger. It's definitely a thing that I have. I have it with conducting as well. So I had a bit of hypnotherapy a few years ago from, do you know [Hypnotherapist name]? So I had a bit of hypnotherapy from her, she was trying to be a hypnotherapist, because I was so imposter syndrome about conducting, because again it felt like “I can't do this, this is too, this is too, like, you have to understand all the music”, and it figured out it is an absolute trigger for me, this being academically able, and because I didn't quite meet that, and it's not, because I did, I've got a degree in music from a really good university, it's not that, it's just, yeah, I was rejected, and I think it's seen that that is my trigger. Rejection on my voice, or on my musicality, or this thing that I love so much and I am really good at, but maybe not, you know, the most, not as good as you, for example, in terms of my quickness in understanding or my knowledge or my experience. And it's knowing that that's a trigger for me now. And that when it triggers, taking a step back and going, hang on.

Researcher:
And why do you think why do you think fundamentally that he said that?

Participant 4:

Was it because he's enormously insecure about his own? He's the same. He's absolutely the same. He didn't finish music at college. You know, not because, well, he I don't know, I can't remember what his reason was. He told me once, no, no, he got kicked out, basically. But it's just, yeah, it's, yeah, he's exactly the same. So he's trying to build up his bravado by taking the, you know, it's one-on-one, innit, when you take the piss out of someone. It's like a mirroring thing. It's, yeah.

Researcher:

And it's like it within teaching as well. You know, we mirror the stuff that's worked for us or has worked for our teaching before. Yeah, yeah. And we shy away from the stuff that maybe we didn't get or understand or didn't need or… So now in the period of reflection now, how important is all of that stuff that you explored in terms of you as the singer, performer, teacher?

Participant 4:

So important. Because if it's happened to me, it's happening to other people. And it's being able to change that for them so they don't go down the same path.

Researcher:

It's really interesting.

Participant 4:

It is. It's super interesting.

Researcher:

OK, here we go: “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

Participant 4:

Yes, they do. Four let's go four not five because um sometimes it's a bit too jargon-y for me so there's some of the groups on facebook when people are giving full words and I'm just I I switch off after about a sentence because I'm like “I can't bother to try and figure out what you're trying to say.” Just speaking accessibility is an issue in those kind of realms definitely yeah um for sure.

Researcher:

So on the uh other side of that: ”Imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 4:

Do you know, it depends sometimes.

Researcher:

Is it sometimes or sometimes not? Or is it...

Participant 4:

No, it's sometimes I do. It's really funny because me saying that, like, I need the scientific explanation. If I think about my teaching, because I'm teaching predominantly under 18, I have some adults but mainly under 18s, or even my over 18s aren't, they don't have a music background, do you know what I mean? They're not, I teach; “So feel the squidgy bit at the back, right, use it like you're yawning, do this like you're doing this, feel this bit, aim it there, it's that hard bit, aim it there, aim there”, do you know what I mean? So it's, I teach far more like that than, So, I'm going to go four on that as well, because I think you need both.

Researcher:

And then the final question, wrapping it together: “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 4:

Oh, this is really hard, because...

Researcher:

Yeah, it's supposed to be. It's the final question. Haha...

Participant 4:

But the thing is, if it's done right, no, I completely disagree with that. Because it should, that's exactly as it should be. It should be, here's what's happening. Here's how it feels. Surely, it's the two strands of understanding. You need both of them in order to really thoroughly understand something. It's like having it written down in a textbook, how to build a table. It's written down in a textbook. So you need to read how to do it and the why, and then you need to physically go and

build the table. And then you understand it. Do you know what I mean? So you need both. But it depends what you mean by switch. Oh, you've done that purposefully, haven't you? I feel more confused when explanations switch I'm going to go two. I don't like the word switch.

Researcher:
OK, why do you not like that?

Participant 4:
I want you to say, I feel more confused when explanations combine technical language and imagery, because then I'd strongly disagree. Because I think they should. The switch implies, because this, oh no, it's like this, oh no, it's like this, oh no, it's like this.

Researcher:
And assuming that both of these, both the technical language and the imagery are describing the same thing because quite often they don't, but assuming that they are, if those, things are measurable and therefore repeatable. Assuming they're talking about the same thing, how important is that thing in terms of the whole learner journey and the aims and objectives?

Participant 4:
Because it's one, well it depends though, although, no it depends. Because if you've got someone singing a song and they're doing a beautiful job but they have no ability to blend from the chest voice to the head voice, me. So me before you, I had, I could do really, really nice, good, strong chest voice, always had that because I've got a low speaking voice, really good. Always had my high stuff because of my classical training. But then there'd be three notes in the middle of my range where it was just flipping horrific because I had no ability to get from one to the other. So that's only, that's quite a small thing. Really, isn't it, kind of working on bridging between. So for that singer, that's huge. That will make such an enormous difference. But if it's just one tiny technical thing, then no.

Researcher:
So if we take that as a thing, three notes bridging between whatever we call it… However, you found the solution to the problem. Does, whether it involved metaphor or technical language, does that matter?

Participant 4:

No, so long as they get to the end goal.

Researcher:

Yeah, and so we know what the end goal is. I don't want those yucky three notes. Doesn't matter really the road. And what really, if we stand back from all of that, in our final stand back in from the forest, what was the bigger picture of what was helped or what was removed, blocking that?

Participant 4:

What was the bigger?

Researcher:

I guess I'm, yeah, I'm, yeah, kind of...

Participant 4:

It's hard to... is it giving someone a tool?

Researcher:

I think the tool is, it matters but maybe not as, not to the bigger picture. So if I'm drawing a painting of the bigger picture yes it doesn't matter what brush I use doesn't matter whether I use my finger what matters is the bigger picture and standing back and going maybe :I'm happy with that yes:, so it's an interesting point to mull over, really interesting, so maybe because we used that as an example, with those three notes, we did use some technical language. And that technical language and the process of experimenting and refining and analysing and evaluating and remaking new plans, yes, that got you to the place which was the goal of not having those sticky notes, But what was the bigger thing, maybe, at play than those intricate parts of the machine? What was the vehicle?

Participant 4:

Knowing that I could do it. I think one of the things that's missing in this is, yes, you gave me exercises and you explained it. You also demonstrated it. Which is massive for me. I needed to hear. And honestly, you, as having male voice and me having a female voice, the fact that you could do it. And I was just like, “There's fucking no reason why I can't do this at all.” So it's been believing, do you know what I mean?

Researcher:

So what did that give you?

Participant 4:

You gave me the confidence and the ability to see it, to see it happen. So then when I could do it, yeah.

Researcher:

And the confidence and the belief in what?

Participant 4:

And how to do it. And my voice. And that my voice works.

Researcher:

So therefore, what was the was the primary reason for having the sticky notes in the first place, and inability to change nicely between M1 and M2m or glide through your passaggio, ‘smelling flowers’? What was the main block?

Participant 4:

The main block was I'm a classical singer. And I don't sing like this.

Researcher:

So you're, so you, 10 minutes ago when we started this, you said, I had my talking voice nice and low. I had my classical singer voice. So if we step back from that, the woods are even further away. What was the main block?

Participant 4:

That I couldn't produce that sound.

Researcher:

What was the main block?

Participant 4:

I've never done it before.

Researcher:

Go further back. What was the main block?

Participant 4:

I was told not to do it. I don't know.

Researcher:

And you know, we are what we eat. We are what we think. So what was the main block?

Participant 4:

Classical singing's more work?

Researcher:

What about musical theatre? And where does that come from in terms of you as the singer? Where does that come from

Participant 4:

Initial singing training.

Researcher:

And then, but where does therefore that block come from; influences of other people, yes. But where does the block come from

Participant 4:

Getting it wrong.

Researcher:

And who gets it wrong? So where's the block come from?

Participant 4:

Me...

Researcher:

So it's interesting, yeah.

Participant 4:

Oh, no, without a doubt. Oh, this is fascinating, [Researcher name].

Researcher:

It's cool. Yeah, it's really cool. I think, thank you so much for doing that.

Participant 4:

It's quite a lot, isn't it?

Researcher:

It's a lot, yeah. But it's very, very interesting because I think that, you know, you were saying about social media and all of this, it's just too much information. Like, you know, the junk you get through your letterbox. It's just all junk mail. And we're just all overwhelmed. And I think something nice is emerging, there's a couple of accounts on Instagram, I mean, it's they're taking, they're using AI. They're doing an all right job where they're taking like psychological like learning concepts and stuff and they're using AI and they're doing some slides and stuff and you know… But there's, I think we're in an interesting place now where people are beginning to question that and going, “Hang on a minute, we know that's the thing, we just go, oh yeah, that's the thing in the world or that's the thing in society, but why do I have to subscribe to that newsletter of that if I don't like it?” And I think that's, I think that's really interesting. And I think, yeah, so, but it's, you know, there's much more stimulation people finding out who, younger people finding out who they are now than there was in the, you know, 70s, 80s, 90s.

Participant 4:

Definitely, oh God, without a doubt.

Researcher:

Because there's just so much going on, you know.

Participant 4:

Yeah,

Researcher:

And it's, I think it's double-edged, isn't it? I think, you know, with so much information about so many things out there, then it becomes harder to find truth. And then evaluate what truth actually

is, or what it actually means, or what it can do for you. But then I guess also, you know, if we were at school in the 50s, you know, other than being caned for talking when you shouldn't be, that's definitely hierarchy there, and that would just, lots of untruths were delivered as facts, weren't they? So I guess it's a glass of water is still a glass of water, just we know what the water is made up of, maybe.

Participant 4:
It's just, yeah. It's fascinating. It is fascinating.

Researcher:
Yeah, and I guess science, we're just explaining. If science is explained magic, and you know, religion is faith in all the stuff that we can't explain, or maybe don't choose to explain because it's scary, then the more we know about stuff is really interesting, but we need to not lose sight of the bigger picture as well. Which is, you know, your student that, you know, did grade one recorded and then now they're doing grade three. What's the biggest change? Is maybe that she hates herself a little bit less and is a little bit more happy. And all of that. So how you get there. Does it matter?

Participant 4:
And I think that's it. That's exactly what my whole thing, my whole [Name of brand] thing is. He's like, the positivity singing brings, because it does, it brings such good things, like on the base of it, forget the technique, forget the...

Researcher:
I mean, sometimes it also brings, you know, absolute nervous breakdowns and crying in lessons.

Participant 4:
I mean, 100%. But, you know, like my last night singing *Mr. Blue Sky.*

Researcher:
Yeah, but that's not a thing to... So her reaction to that, and I remember a lesson back in the basement of three houses ago, you know, you had a very emotional time. But that's also... A good thing. It's not a bad thing.

Participant 4:
It's a great thing. It's a great thing.

Researcher:
It's just the world, you know, saying, you know, girls are the emotional ones. There's a binary construct. Girls are the emotional ones. Boys don't cry and all of that. And it's just like, there is nothing to say in the rulebook of the universe “That thing is a bad thing.”

Participant 4:
Yeah, yeah, yeah. It is literally.

Researcher:
Just part of it.

Participant 4:
Society has decided.

Researcher:
That's weakness and therefore it's bad. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Participant 4:
Following rules. I mean, I love that. It's one of my favourite things about [Child’s name]. Honestly, he's just like this to rules. He literally is like, no, don't come at me with your societal rules and what, you expect me to behave? I'm going to stand in a shop and I'm going to go, what?

Researcher:
For ages. You know, and there's very few actual bad things like murdering someone. I would say that's probably bad. Like, you don't know, like, but there's far less than we're led to believe.

Participant 4:
God so much.

Researcher:
But, you know, getting really scared about doing something. And fundamentally, the person, like your student, did it and has continued to do it. And just hating themselves a little bit less. Well,

we're adults. We're still trying to hate ourselves a little bit less than yesterday. You know, and if and if and if we can facilitate that in someone else, then that's great, especially in this world. And if also they get more skilled at singing, that's a bonus.

Participant 4:
I agree completely. Right, I'm going to skedaddle.

Researcher:
Thanks so much for your time.

Participant 4:
It was so fun.

Participant 5 – Interview Transcript

Researcher:
Thank you for doing this. I'll share my screen with you. I won't because I've just clicked off our call, so I won't. Yeah, this is how you do it. So this is all my information. You can, this is for you to read. So basically I'm conducting like a hopefully as non-biased as possible study on how people learn what we think might be missing or confusing about the whole act of learning how to sing or teaching it or both or all that kind of stuff. So there's no right or wrong answers. I've got I've got 15 prompts for you where you can respond by rating on a scale of one to five, whether you agree or disagree, but it's all about what those prompts kind of make happen in your head. So verbalise as much as you want to and then it's my job afterwards to see if there's any sense to be made of everything. So this is our consent statement. Everything that we talk about will be anonymised and if it's private in any way, then obviously I will redact it. So if I may, I'll just tick through these for you.

Participant 5:
That's fine, yeah.

Researcher:
And then once it's all done then I will obviously delete all the data because it will be done. So there we go. Let's go, let's go to the first prompt. So obviously this is unique to you and who you are and your journey and what you do. So they're geared towards kind of like your experiences of when maybe you were a student, but also everything you do comes into play and how you think about singing and the teaching of it. So the first prompt is, “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.”

Participant 5:
I strongly disagree.

Researcher:
What makes you say that?

Participant 5:
I think that, well, from when I was being taught, it was never explained to me really why. We just warm up.

Researcher:
Just do a thing?

Participant 5:
That's all the purpose of a vocal exercise was purely, or presented, mostly as a warm up. And then if we were then later on when probably in my third year when I was working closer with [Teacher name], but we wouldn't have time for explanation of why I'm going to get you to do this particular phrase, breath, whatever it was that she was doing. It would just be, “Just do this.” And I used to watch it more than be, so more observational rather than actually being demo. Yeah, mostly female voices would be suggested. “Oh, just try this, just do this. Ooh, do something”, whatever it was over the, whatever she was doing over a break or I don't know. And then she would just should go, “Now try it.” And then they'd sing it. And then everyone would go, “Yeah, that's better.”

Researcher:
And how did that make you feel?

Participant 5:
Probably mesmerised, but I'm, you know, impressed at the age of 18.

Researcher:
And what impressed you?

Participant 5:
In terms of going, “Wow, she's so good. She can fix anything.” So it was almost an element of, it was a fixing mechanism to get what they needed rather than how can you take that and then, you know.

Researcher:
And how much did you really feel part of that process? Or was it kind of, you said, you mentioned being like, observing it? So did you feel part of it or were you kind of like I'm just watching the magic happen whatever that is...

Participant 5:
I'm just watching the magic happen.

Researcher:
OK, and how did that make you feel?

Participant 5:
Oh gosh I don't know how did it make me feel? I don't really know I'm thinking I probably trusted then that maybe with my own sound my own voice, perhaps, that actually if she can do that to someone else then what could she do with me? Not that I ever often felt like that.

Researcher:
And were there moments when some of this magic happening was like, that you remember as being like really clear or really helpful? Do you remember any bits that were really unclear or unhelpful? Where you were maybe like, “What on earth is going on, this is just not useful...” maybe?

Participant 5:
Anything specifically?

Researcher:
Maybe, yeah.

Participant 5:
I don't know, I'm trying to think of a particular scenario.

Researcher:
I mean also you've seen a lot of singing teachers at work in your in your profession, and a lot of, you know, vocal coaches and musical directors, you know, there any kind of things there where you're, you know, maybe you've gone, “Why are you doing this?”

Participant 5:
I've always trusted the person I was working with, I guess. I kind of, I guess I have a, like, something in here tells me whether somebody knows what they're doing. I think it is a thought. I don't think it's a gut, because obviously, that would be pointless. Well, always pointless? But in terms of being a professional in something, just because you have a gut feeling doesn't necessarily make it. Yeah, so it needs to be knowledgeable, a reason, a choice or an understanding. So I think, you know, if I was working with, um, with yourself and watching something happen, I wouldn't need

to question it, I don't, I just trust it. But that's because my knowledge from being a student and working with some, and also actually probably as, yeah, from a student time of working with some really pretty shit people and then trying to teach and then you get, and also, you know, I'm working, when I was teaching, you know, I never, I did teach at two um [Institution name] but that was never

private you know I was never a technical, I'm not a technical teacher, I would never you know I can do some harmony ensemble-esque feeling confident get you to feel good about what you're doing and a lot of my private teaching was of that caliber. Um, and I guess I know my limitations that if I had a student that's going on to you know I'm auditioning I probably get them; I can probably that's probably where my limits lie. You know, I mean, I can get you to that point of presenting yourself comfortably. What I think is safe. And that's probably where I was. Yeah, with it. So therefore, when I met others that they talk the talk, or they don't, there's just a gut of going… maybe it is a gut. There you go. I don't know. I thought it was a head process, that actually, "I know that what you're doing is, is dangerous, pointless", or just, yeah, that's usually lack of information rather than Whereas with yourself, I know that we have had many conversations, and I trust you. And also, I know your history. So I, I believe your process.

Researcher:
Shall we move on to the next one?

Participant 5:
I don't know if I want to.

Researcher:
"I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve." And this could also be what you've seen in your whole experience.

Participant 5:
Gosh, that's hard. Yeah, I'd probably just sit more midst for this more so three I guess is if it's a number, so neither agree or disagree agree, yeah because I think, um, often it's not clear as the narrative from the person I'm watching. Yeah, I mean well it depends, I think a lot of it is about breaking... it's about breaking habit, it's about breaking. And that's often just psychological habit, right? I think, yeah, yes, there is a physicality, an anatomy, you know, of process. But I think a lot of issues, this is my again, my in my opinion, live from actual people, not they just have a bit of a boundary. As to what they can and can't do, they get locked, everything feels free and therefore

you're not delivering what has been asked of you in music, you know. So in those moments I might not necessarily understand completely what the exercise is actually doing but the principle of it, of yeah they're just getting you to think differently and to trust them and try something different or energise in a different particular way or... But I guess that's, yeah, that's probably, but I, as a student, I never.

Researcher:
And if you remember those times, how clear do you think the teacher was in what they were? That's another question, isn't it?

Participant 5:
They were very, they were probably very unclear.

Researcher:
I guess, you know, some people, some people may think, you know, “I don't know what this is, but it works.”

Participant 5:
I think that, I think that, I mean, we may go on to different, but that the different ways of teaching or the different techniques that exist.

Researcher:
I know there, isn't it just a matter of, it feels like it's presented, a matter of opinion or choice or you know you can follow that or you can follow this or I think that's largely to do with some of the conflicts arise, isn't it you know every it seems that every like technical voice teacher has a bit of a God complex; they think their way is the only way and you know maybe, possibly, It would be nice, maybe if in the voice world, you know, we could just agree that a plié is a plié.

Participant 5:
Yes, I agree. I was just thinking I was watching the ice skating last night, and obviously they're all marked. And I was like, “How do they? But this is a creative art. This isn't.” How do they make this kind of uniform? Gosh, this must have taken a lot of time. And then obviously, whereas they're doing this similar steps or sequences or. But also my interpretation, I would go, “Well, I wouldn't do it that way because that musical choice brings this energy to me as an observer.” So actually the observers, whether they realise that or not, as the judges or the dancers are presenting this in that

step, which may not be the best way of presenting the step to get the best accurate results that's been told is the way to do it. I mean, I don't, you know, and perhaps with singing, Oh, you know, does it matter how you get there? Probably not, as long as you get what you, but then also what you get and present is a matter of, potentially a matter of preference, I guess, and choice, taste.

Researcher:
Yes, it's not maths, is it? It's not two plus two is two, four, even.

Participant 5:
No, and to me, [Spouse's name] and I have it all the time with, I'll listen to something and go, "I like her", and she'll go, "Oh really? That's oh my God..." and I'm like "Oh gosh but..." actually I think yeah, but that's my opinion, I feel comfortable and I feel like what they're, you know, I feel safe and I feel that they are safe but sometimes if the performer's not presenting safe I don't enjoy that but that's a personal you know I love a legit singer and everything being quite... I get a bit nervous otherwise tidy, tidy, yeah, everything's tidy.

Researcher:
Let's move on to the next one: "I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve." Yeah, just take a moment like you are, the language is purposefully like this.

Participant 5:
Yeah, is it meaning me as a teacher if I was in that environment?

Researcher:
Whichever, whichever you want. You as a teacher, you as an observer, you know. Also, right, as well, so, you know. Or you back as a...

Participant 5:
I think as a student, there's probably a strong narrative that I probably didn't understand. Just really what was going on. And what I was supposed to be achieving. I think I learned more after I'd left and actually began teaching and also then I started to challenge the way that I was thinking and all the way I was teaching actually.

Researcher:

So I would probably, if you want to explore those thoughts, as you're looking at the prompt and maybe thinking, what some of them, the time I would teach...

Participant 5:

So if I take take that now with the choir, yeah, very different type. Or maybe it shouldn't be, but I do see it's very different. It's an ensemble is being also there. There are a bunch of adult amateurs that don't, you know, they basically walk in the room at 7.30pm, and the last time they thought about actually singing or how they might even share a bit of a song other than the car was probably the week before when it finished. So my I feel really my main responsibility and my aim in

that point is to bring everybody onto the same page and that may often actually, most of the time, it's just an “Everyone to shut the front door.” Yeah at first so that they're actually listening so you to like using a warm-up so therefore the point of the warm-up and what we're trying to achieve from a technical perspective is actually irrelevant in that scenario, but what I do want them to achieve is by the end of us doing that simple five note scale on whatever actually, to me, I don't care whether it's a ‘ma ma’ or an ‘ooh’ or whatever. I just want them to be listening by the time we've finished. And therefore in the mindset, “We're gonna get shit done.” And they are, a, there's, but there are obviously other elements of, you know, singing there then together. We do things, you know, yes, it's an octave stretch. They don't necessarily know that they're doing that. And maybe I need to be clear. I mean, I'm questioning now how I'm, but you know, or why we're doing numbers to notes but actually it's just about intervals and almost getting again it's probably getting them to do it without realising, and over the time they become better at it clearer a more articulate you know they haven't they speak like this, and there's let's actually move our mouth and it's going to bring life. So yes, it's a kind of have a kind of understanding, I have a reason why, or it's just a simple harmony exercise. But actually, it's just to bring them together and get them focused in that scenario. Whereas when I was teaching privately, I guess it was more tailored towards to what they needed to achieve, whether that was kind of mentally just breaking down the barrier of or a blockage in something so by basically diverting their thought or doing something you know just singing across their break or thinking about larynx placement or just kind of grounded you know was it really clear what they were trying to, I hope so, but maybe all that I was trying for them to achieve was just to actually put their, be able to put their hand on their larynx and think, “Oh be a doll and sing something”, and then do it without touching it, where they can get the same sensation, which I guess is an achievement. So I'm probably One and five. Observing other people.

Researcher:

How about in your choir now, because definitely when you've got a large ensemble, there's obviously similarities and definitely differences, which is what you're speaking about. So if you, if it's possible, I don't know whether I'd be able to answer this. If you could put your thoughts into a member of the choir, how much do you think fully understand what those exercises are.

Participant 5:

Very few. So I think there are a couple of people that would be a little bit more with me. But whether that achievement in, you know, so it could be an achievement in, I know we, what you're trying to get us to do is to relax our jaw because I'm going, ‘yeah, yeah’, whatever. And they kind of, they can see that's what I was, others have no clue. Even though I say let, let the jaw be wide, like drop your jaw, like they can, I can see, they understand what I'm asking of them, whether they know why, but And if we're doing, you know, take well, I think I think why is maybe deeper than the prompt.

Researcher:

You know, it's like, certainly, you know. I guess they understand if you're visualising and giving them that visual cue and they copy you, then they're understanding the achievement. They just don't know maybe the secondary layers of why you want to do that.

Participant 5:

But I think there are probably a layer of people that do have that understanding from a visual or an audible, you know, they can, they can hear when the sopranos, for example, are a bit pitchy doing it. And they can sort of look at me thinking, “Oh, that's not quite doesn't sound right to me.” And actually, you know, so yes, some of them would, whereas others I think majority have no, in that scenario, have, probably don't really want to have a clue either, if I'm honest.

Researcher:

And you know, you've already, in the first prompts, you were discussing and thinking about, as long as the goal is achieved, does matter how we get there?

Participant 5:

Possibly not, no. But I mean, this is a wider, deeper thought process. And I've always had this, if a student doesn't trust their teacher, it's never going to work. And it was probably harder early doors of trying to be, you know, to earn a living really, basically taking people's money to give them an

experience and that's why I think mine most of the time sits with a non-professional, wannabe, enjoyable. We do a bit of a warm-up because we do, we have a half-hour slot and sing their favourite song. But if I can get them to be thinking slightly different, if I can get them as a 70-year-old to remember the words to the verse for the next week, that's an achievement that they don't realise that they need, I'm adding some contribution. And there were some, you know, students, younger students, I guess, when, you know, in a sort of [Vocational school] type schools that are, you know, if I can get them to improve their pitch without them realising, or to think about something, yeah. But when you're one-to-one if they don't believe you, what you're asking of them. Because often, yeah, maybe that's because it's not clear why you're asking them to achieve whatever the goal is. If you're not giving them clarity in why, maybe they won't do it. So therefore you don't get the result. So you need the buy-in. And that's why I think if you've got a good relationship with your teacher then that teacher's probably winning anyway, more so because they're able to get them to, yeah.

Researcher:
So where are we going on the one to five?

Participant 5:
I often do exercises and lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve. I think from my perspective, I'd have to say it's probably higher. Probably agree four, I would, I said, yeah, I generally.

Researcher:
That's good.

Participant 5:
I may even say it's higher, but I, you know,

Researcher:
You can think about it and change it later if you want. The important thing for me in this study is the conversation we have around clicking the numbers. It's not necessarily the numbers.

Participant 5:
Of course.

Researcher:
Let's move on. One of my favourite prompts: “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 5:
Yes, I do strongly agree. I think... I mean, yes, I have. So we've had this conversation before. I can use you. Think we have. Regarding how we're taught. And what level of, you know, I was always taught, we start with the legit, we do this, then we progress to that. And then we introduced, you know, and the last thing you do is your rock and or your belt, whatever, there's a program, that was the three year program. That's how we do it. Everyone has to sing the fucking *Gershwin* number, you know, something, whatever *Cole Porter* for what feels like forever. That's how I've always when I, but that's always and that's probably still is if I were to teach but I don't teach private, I don't get involved anymore other than the choir stuff which I don't always see that as technical but I suppose it's singing but there are pop choirs obviously pop songs. Um, if I was singing teaching going back I would have probably tried to introduce you know simple folk standards trying to pull it apart get to

think about, uh, vocal line and clarity and what and you know those kind of basic shapes, and I probably would have pulled it apart to start because if you can do that then you're going to apply it that you'll be able to apply it to this. But we've had this conversation where you completely reversed and actually why we think the hard stuff first we should get the stuff that they're more, I don't know, it's more able to in your opinion, but like more, uh, familiar to them as well in terms of the material and you believe it's you said, that's easier to achieve than the hard stuff. So that's an example of where it's a contradiction of thought.

Researcher:
So how much do we agree on that? I mean, not me and you, I mean you and the scale.

Participant 5:
So I would strongly agree that, yeah, I think so and also deep different teachers have their yeah their method.

Researcher:
Any thoughts on why why there are so many contradictions?

Participant 5:

Because there's no real, well I'm sure that there, is it's probably lack of... okay what do you mean by that from the person teaching it or, okay you know it's “Mimic this, it works...” and I think, yeah, I feel like we could, you know, if you took it to off off from a creative or singing to something like accounting we got you know there are lots of bookkeepers out there but I people that are what you may call creative accountants or investors or you know there are other ways to do things and why and what the results but the bookkeeper may pretend that they are an accountant or I guess they also then you're talking about you know differences in how they might design their spreadsheets or whatever as well let alone how, what to do with the data, yeah. So I think in singing, you know, that's why I've always understood where I sit in this, you know, I'm not, I am not that technical teacher that should be teaching in a degree course. But if you ask me to come in to your, I mean, I don't want to, you know, to teach in a [Vocational school] Saturday morning school, because I know that I know my shit and I know that your your students would be in safe hands yeah and we're not going to do vocal... Yeah I would not be blind to causing vocal damage it would be a choice and I think that's where there's a sense sometimes a contradiction because people think they can just do it because I easy, you know, how can we do that?

Researcher:

Also, maybe, you know, even drama schools, but definitely like music college side of things, lots of excellent performers then become teachers because, you know, it looks, you know, maybe especially in the opera world, it looks good if you've got this international soprano teaching on the faculty, but maybe they don't know how to teach so well.

Participant 5:

No, I think that's a wider problem in education, if I'm honest. And, and that's, yeah, I see, I used to see it quite a lot with, I can see very, I like what I'm trying to say, watching poor teachers or teachers teach poorly, that will be very damaging to students. Now, not necessarily I talked about like the physical, you know, health, but in terms of mental health would be very, very damaging, very, very fast. And I could, you know, I had an example where a student, a young woman, a young girl at the time, who was scared of singing. And we're doing ensemble. And anyway, the tea, you know, this particular teacher kind of bullied to them, in my view, and how poor they were, and how rubbish and it's not good enough. And actually, this eight weeks that I just spent building this trust and getting her in a sort of one-to-one to be able to sing a line or two on and having, you know, and share something. And now you're just literally like, you've literally into everything. I think that's because it's poor. I'm a bookkeeper but I can be an investor. Not really, you know, there is a... I

think it's knowledge. That's what I'm saying, I don't have... I'm not that person. I can walk into a room with 80 adults that don't sing and make them feel good and we'll get a nice sound out and that's about, you know, that's cool and we can put a show on, I can watch something and go "That's not good enough, that's not sustainable, so she's going to lose her voice, so cut that." Um yeah I can understand but I wouldn't class myself, but then maybe, no, but I'm now maybe mid to late 30s I'm not 21 trying to earn a living to pay my rent; whatever I say goes and whoever's going to listen to it will lot of people they're very stupid not all not all, but, I'm saying there's a, um, yeah and I've had people that I do some singing lessons and I think "Do you? Wow. I don't..." That's okay, that's my thought process and that you know and that's okay and I may be that to some others, and that's fine too.

Researcher:

Views are personal and always our own, aren't they?

Participant 5:

Yeah, so I'd say I strongly agree that there's a contradiction.

Researcher:

"When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is I am doing something wrong."

Participant 5:

I think... Yeah, I probably would agree. I think as a student...

Researcher:

Why do you think that was?

Participant 5:

Because the teacher is right. And there's a, you know, the teacher is always right.

Researcher:

Why did you think that? I'm assuming that from your facial expressions that aren't recorded that maybe that thinking's changed.

Participant 5:

Yes, I have changed my view. I think, yeah, we're always told that the teacher is right. We had a very interesting conversation, me and my mum was involved, [Spouse's name] the scenario is relevant, I guess, at school with [Child's name], and that the teacher is, you know, that the teacher is right. And I kind of was like, "I don't agree with that." And it's almost, I'm contradicting the words of, I don't know if it's the voice of reason and wisdom, you know, the sort of, when you should be raising a child to be accepting of the way that school etiquette and the way that you should behave in a classroom and what's, whereas I'm very much like, you know, "Let's shake it a little bit", because the teacher is not always right. And that's from somebody who's worked in schools, and seen the vast array of quality, or experience, or understanding, empathy, or whatever the words are. And it's quite extreme. But we're told that a head teacher is always the best. I guess that's the head teacher because they're the head. That's means you're the best. And that. Yeah, so I think. As a student, I was you were told to believe. Your teacher was right. Always there were sometimes with, you know, where maybe the singing when I was. As school that I may not like that particular teacher. But I think it's because, I Probably... Now I'm gonna contribute to it, maybe not. But I think it's because I could probably see through this out-of-work actor that was just covering a shift at our full-time theatre school, which was a good gig them on a Monday for three hours. You know what I mean? With some kids that are quite good and want to be there. I probably very quickly went, you know, I don't like them. Often it was quite often it was male, though, but that's probably predominantly they were male singing teachers that came in less than female. I guess it maybe that's changed.

Participant 5:

I think maybe it has.

Researcher:

Yeah, it's probably it's probably quite even nowadays.

Participant 5:

So I probably would feel if there was something I wasn't achieving, what then? Then I probably "Thought, well, it's not me, it's them." Or "I don't really care what I'm doing wrong." Perhaps at a younger age. Whereas now as an, you know, as a sort of, on the other end of it, of the giving, the teaching inside or whatever, you know, I would probably go, "Shit, what am I doing? What am I missing? Why can't I crack this? What am I doing?" Maybe my theory is incorrect with this individual or, you know, it's not one fits all.

Researcher:
Or one fits many when you're teaching in a massive ensemble choir environment either.

Participant 5:
Or that, yeah. So that one, I'm confused. But I probably would say, yes, it would probably be me. In my, yes, that I'm doing something wrong. But that's because taking ownership of what the student is learning or the person that I'm working with.

Researcher:
And, you know, there's no right or wrong answers. And there's also no value judgment on whether we decide to go, “Yeah, that's wrong.” That's not necessarily a bad or a good thing either.

Participant 5:
So I'll go four. I think. Yeah, I think so. And also from my time as a student, going back to the top prompts of not understanding what's actually being asked.

Researcher:
Yeah, but it's a whole experience.

Participant 5:
Yeah, yeah.

Researcher:
“I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking,”

Participant 5:
Yeah, I strongly agree I feel, uh, particularly now, what observing, yeah, also because I know that we'll fix it and we'll resolve it whether that's basically simplifying from a now show-side of it; “This is not sustainable, that's a problem, we will have to simplify because, we do this”, it's going up, this show, whether we like it or not. So I guess there's an element of control because I am in control. Whereas perhaps...

Researcher:
And the experience gives you more tools and more confidence to deal with those kind of situations, right?

Participant 5:

Yes, also depends who I'm working with in the room. Yeah, so the more familiar I am with a particular teacher or MD than I can, I know that it'll be fine. They'll fix that. They'll come up with a yeah. And also I know that even if you if we've, you know, we've had it was you may come up with a result. And I'll go, I'll still share my opinion. I may still go, “How do you feel? Are you comfortable with that?” About sustaining sustainability of said person you put “Oh no they're fine” and I would just take that at face value okay because I trust; whereas, you know if someone else said “Oh that'd be fine” I might be like “Yeah but do you know your shit? Do you know what you're doing?” Because I don't believe that it will be so and then I'll probably get what I want in a different way if we've decided to do this anyway way; yeah okay how I get that I don't know but yeah that's the fun maybe, maybe, I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons rehearsals whatever's or maybe to turn it on its head do the choir feel able to ask you questions or challenge ideas?

Researcher:

I mean, time allowing.

Participant 5:

Oh, they love it. Yeah, they would challenge me.

Researcher:

Because it’s a two-way street with this trust and respect that you've been talking about so far, isn't it?

Participant 5:

Yes, I hope so. Yeah, I think they would. They would feel confident. Not all, but I would like to think a majority. Would feel, yes, I think so.

Researcher:

And what about when you were younger at drama school?

Participant 5:

No, I just was, I just suck it up. You just take it. What's presented to you is the right thing and you just have to, yeah.

Researcher:
Maybe that's the environment in general.

Participant 5:
Oh, yes, completely.

Researcher:
Like “We just do this thing for three years, we get an agent.” That's it. “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.”

Participant 5:
Yeah, it's a cliché, of, well, we're not really giving the tool, not cliché, I don't necessarily think we are always giving the tools to the individual, the learner that they need. And I remember before, it wasn't a degree level, sort of sixth form. And my first suggestion was that we need to teach them how to learn. And it was thrown out the window, like I was some stupid 24 year old who didn't know anything. And I kind of went, “Ok, cool.” Because I actually felt that I didn't I was probably the closest to their age of learning going, I didn't get told. Not told, taught.

Researcher:
I didn't learn how to learn?

Participant 5:
Yeah, I didn't learn how to learn. And, you know, it's taken me, but, that's I think, that's across a lot of things with education and even writing I was you know I was terrible reading. I still don't read very much, but writing, language, grammar, whereas now I would put myself in a pretty high category, like a reasonably... I can write a decent letter, I can edit something to a standard that's acceptable, maybe the standards have dropped, but you know much much higher, you know, I haven't got worse and I've left from 18 going “Oh I can't really write very much anymore or put a punctuation you know capital letters and full stops and commas”. I'm actually very I'm more aware because I wanted to learn and I use my own resources and I think we don't allow yeah we don't teach them how to learn because if you can... I think that's very interesting what you just said about wanting to learn as well possibly. Yes, I mean, yes. And I probably was that child that didn't, you know, not trusting that male teacher in my when I was 14, that came in to cover a lesson didn't probably want to learn from them. Interesting, maybe that's why it was male, there was something that I didn't trust or bit deeper, but maybe, you know.

Researcher:
So now in your in what you do with the choir now, you're maybe the opposite of what you experienced when you were a younger learner yourself?

Participant 5:
As in, as the teacher?

Researcher:
Because you enable them to be able to ask questions and...

Participant 5:
Yeah, I think, yes, I would like to hope so. I'm a great Yeah, yeah, no, yes, I would say that I'm a good teacher. And I don't necessarily always know all the information. It depends how you define a teacher.

Researcher:
I think a mark of a good teacher is knowing when you don't know it all. Well, perhaps that's how we learn, isn't it? And if maybe, if lots of learning is in the initial stages mimicry, whether that's walking, verbalising when we're a child or singing or whatever it is, then what better way to enable learning in another by actually showing them that you don't know everything and therefore you're still learning?

Participant 5:
Yeah, that's a yeah, maybe, maybe I wouldn't say that's wrong. I would say that's hard sometimes because leadership, and there needs to be a sense of standard, I guess, standardisation and what is the way and yes. And I think with the choir, yeah, I would probably put that I represent myself like that. So if we take that to a degree until I need to hold fort. And that's... But that's more to do with sort of, I wouldn't that's teaching, although leadership, but you know it's more element of control because of mass learning.

Researcher:
You've got that and you've also got a gig in two weeks time and all of that and yeah all of that. So if we take, if we try to make this less like singular and take it as a construct, so you as a person enabling questions and challenging ideas as a tool for growth, maybe?

Participant 5:

Yes, I would say that I strongly agree to ask. There we go. And challenge.

Researcher:

So just reframing that prompt slightly, you're now the complete evolved equivalent of when you were back as a 14 year old? So that's, that's exciting. Interesting to… “In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.” And I like this duality of you then and you now so we can keep exploring those things.

Participant 5:

Yeah I think it's probably a similar contrast from there. Now, um, yes so I had yes, I this is a complicated one I see this all the time so [Child’s name] learning to dance, he started ballet last term you know and people may forget, or he doesn't know, you know, that I studied ballet for three years and as a child more than that because, obviously, I was at stage school but at that point when I was learning I was just doing it then understanding what is happening and why and I can see in his behaviour he's just doing a plié because it's a plié, yeah, but maybe I, but whereas I know why and what I was taught when I then went on to college to understand why and progress, I guess, from what you're doing each day into other subjects and the importance of it.

Researcher:

Also, as a non-dancer, my side of things, I'm just learning now, on my personal journey, it's like, well, actually, everyone needs to be able to do a massive plié. Or a you know a grand squat or whatever you want to call it because legs are the most important thing for your whole physiology you know and being able to you know squat and not fall over and all those kind of things that's really good just for general health and definitely for aging and things like that.

Participant 5:

And I probably If, you know, looking at the way I would approach me as a teacher in that environment, probably with more confidence and clarity than perhaps in a singing environment, I'd feel way more comfortable to be able to. So, you know, but that's also understanding that my knowledge as the singing teacher is nowhere near as strong as my dance. But people don't see me as that. I'm not presented as that. But actually, when we watch the auditions, I have a much clearer understanding of technically what's going on and what's okay, not safe, controlled, rhythmic, all those, than possibly in capacity other than I don't know, I don't feel safe, you're not presenting safe to me, so therefore, I'm not comfortable with this, um ,that's probably through my

knowledge that's created me to, yeah, so when [Child's name] presents his plié and I'm like "But I can add to that" but that's me, that's my kind of inner teacher wants to develop his understanding of why and how useful this tool is going to be. And it's interesting because particularly in ballet, I'm probably using that as an example because it is clearer than in singing of the stepping stones, knowing that you weigh like five exercises and you start to move, you're going to need that fucking plié more than you ever really. And then in the 10 exercises, that's going to lift you off the floor. It's going to be. Whereas in singing, why we start with that where it's not necessarily as clear on a grand scale, how it's taught.

Researcher:

And that's probably maybe because there are so many contradictory schools of thought, pedagogies, you know, a million and one singing books. This is the way to think about this as a concept, you know, rather than, you know, this degree of turnout is first position. And then you lower keeping yourself in a vertical line. That's all ballet people kind of agree on that. So, um, yeah. So, yeah.

Participant 5:

So as me now, and being in a lesson, I mean, if this is, or watching, I mean, we are talking about singing, right? But I will say it's a good discussion for learning in general because... I would like to say that I would want an understanding in what's happening now as an adult. Sometimes that could be through clarity in verbalising a question and therefore getting an answer, I believe. This is what we're doing, blah, blah, blah. Or that could just be through, so I'm observing someone teach, I see the progress, I understand what's happening, I know what, okay, I'm kind of in that, I understand. In the say, so in an example, I mean, I don't want to bring people into it. But I think it may be helpful when we have an audition, and we have [Assistant Director's name] and [Musical Director's name] in the room with very different opinions generally in life. We can obviously remove them as a thought. But yeah, if often one will request to to hear something else. And that request to hear something else is almost, "Eye roll, do we need to?" Like, "They can sing, it's fine." And I do understand that. But, so in that example, the eye roll of they don't, but they don't understand what that person needs at that point from the individual that is auditioning in the room, which may just be, it may just be, I just want to hear a different tempo. I just need to hear something in me. I just need to hear, you know, or I don't like that song. I can't emotionally disconnect from it, whatever. But there just could be something in that. But the person that's rolling their eyes, doesn't understand what's happening. I do. Because I know that it's what they need in that moment to

achieve something. I've been in a room with yourself. And I might say, “Do you want to hear something else?” And you might say, “No.”. And I go, “Ok.”

Researcher:
Okay, cool.

Participant 5:
“Thank you very much.” Or I might say, “Do you mind if we hear... Can we just take that…?”, and whether it's dramatically intended or whatever it is, or a different song completely or something, “Can we just change the tempo? Can we just speed it up? Can we do…?” Because I want to put them under pressure. And you'll know, I assume, you wouldn't go, “No, why? Why do we need, what's...” You probably know that somewhere I'm asking, I need something else from this, and you would understand, yeah, what's the process because it's a, we're talking about, I guess, what you're doing the process and understanding why and I think that, um, both scenarios are right, neither is wrong, but it's how it's then used as a tool of empowerment, perhaps, I may be going a bit deep but, you know, it's what's the point. Why we know that we know that this is their vocal type. Yeah, and it could be that meant “Why did we get them to sing it?” You know, I don't know, not an octave above, but you know, I mean like something really wild and yeah they're clearly not shocked, but yeah, but that's, when that would that's fun there's something in there that they don't even know they've got that we can work like, I don't know. And I think that's important. I think that's about life though. Just generally understanding what your needs might be, might not be what someone else's are in that moment, whether that's as the teacher or as the student. But I think students don't necessarily know either and they just do it. They just do the process rather than understanding. Hence the first question of their God and whatever they say is right. And we just have to go, wow, as long as you get there, it's great.

Researcher:
Sometimes in spite of the help.

Participant 5:
So in answer. So the question in I would say, no, I would focus on what is happening. Not doing what, I'm so, crazy example, nothing to do with performing. We're ladder, whatever course, bloody, I've got my pals where I can drive a scissor lift and moving one on a building site for the next five years. Process I had to do, it's a process, it's nothing. So the guy was an absolute twat. And I tried to kind of, not conflict, but just, he probably thought I was trying to be conflicting. I just asked a

question, “But what in this scenario?” And then I then very quickly understood what I need to do is just do the job, just do what we need to do, I don't need to worry about understanding why, maybe because I know why, because he's a jobsworth but he's got a job to do as well and he needs to tick a few boxes, sure let's just get this done. So that's my kind of other personal that I'd struggle with, I do know when I need to do what is focus on what we're doing rather than why, um, but as a teacher, or being in that kind of leadership directing whatever, I think understanding what is happening is really important to me and to be presented and challenged and whatever way of giving or taking but understanding why. Rather than because, also it doesn't... you don't get results if you just focus on what you're doing, it doesn't... nothing... yeah why are we doing it? I don't need to be at work if I don't need to be at work. I'm a great believer we if we can finish rehearsal at 3pm then we will finish then. Why do we need to stay here till 6pm? What is anyone gaining from this process of, you know, whereas others don't see it like that. Some people, they, you know, I see that, I'm a bit like that and everything. Challenge it. If you don't need it, don't do it. It's pointless. So I think, trying to bring this back to singing, as a child, I would, as a student, I would have all just done what I needed to just focus on doing what I'm told. But luckily now later in life I hope that I reflect the opposite which is actually trying to understand what is happening. That's quite hard sometimes because when you're the leader and you've got lots to think about it's very difficult. Sometimes it's easy when you're on the outside observing in those moments. But yeah, I would want to know what I'm learning and why, or what I'm teaching, why, and there's a sense of understanding from those choir members in the room. From the person auditioning who we might ask something like, “What do you need? What, you know?” I have comfort in them asking the question. Well, actually it's because I'm a little bit concerned about what you're presenting, that there might be something going on internally, vocal health wise, that we should maybe need to think about. Or I just, I've just heard that song like 15 times today. I'm it. Or it doesn't fit with what we're asking the character. So I just want something giving them an answer so that they understand.

Researcher:

So if you can put that into a number, that would be great. I think we're on the left hand side.

Participant 5:

Yes, I agree. I probably would say 2. I guess.

Researcher:

It's only in this moment.

Participant 5:
In this moment? Yeah, I'd say.

Researcher:
The importance of your reasoning and your thought process.

Participant 5:
Was it? Yes, Doctor.

Researcher:
“I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 5:
I think this is something that's changing in education environments, training environments, where it's becoming a little more student-led.

Researcher:
What makes you say that?

Participant 5:
Well, I think it's become more student-led because of the words ‘mental health’ so naturally things have become more we've been listening. I guess people are having to listen a little more, you know, generally to what the student or the person individually is presenting because, I mean, it's, you know, the extreme is pupil A has taken their own life and everyone goes, “We really probably should have listened to those 15 signs or this and this and this”, you know, we're becoming more liable, I guess, so we are actively seeking to listen to.

Researcher:
That's an interesting choice of words then ‘liable’. So if we're listening more, is that just because we legally have to or because we care more than we want to?

Participant 5:
Both, depending on the individual. And the institution, actually. But I think because we have a lot of people. I mean, I was asked once about mental health, in the workplace. And I kind of, I can't

remember what my answer was, it's probably not very helpful, but I was a little bit dismissive of, you know, I was almost like, “Babe, this is a five week contract.” Like, I'm pretty nice guy. I'll listen to anyone. I'm all, I'm very open arms. And, but the, the response I got back was like, “You have a duty and you know, you should be going on a level five mental health in the workplace course for five weeks to learn about how you can support your employees. And I thought, “Oh, but I've always thought that I was, I sit on the side of like, challenge and ask and be supportive. And, and now someone's challenging”, which is good, because I did and I now went to learn about mental in the workplace and how to... A lot of it I already knew, or I was in tune with, should I say. But it made me think, maybe I should, because I am liable, but actually I'd quite like to know more. So I think there's a bit of both. And I think in institutions, the student, the child has a voice. We're very much about giving them a voice, giving them an opinion. I mean, not literally a voice, but, and I think with singing from when I was, you know, I'd be at college and I don't know, you'd have to ask permission if you weren't participating in something. I mean, I'm really, I've got a really bad ankle. It's literally killing me. I've just walked up the hill at [Name of location] with my bag, my fucking Nordic sticks because you're sending me on a Nordic walk this afternoon but my ankle hurts. Mmm, “Well have you strapped it up? Have you done…? Well okay. And then you'd be kind of controlled, you know, really someone should have said “Do you feel okay to join in still?” I probably would have either gone “No” or “Yeah whatever.” I don't know, but I would have had the choice of, you know, rather than some receptionist telling me this is the process and go to injury clinic on Wednesday with [Name of practitioner] and she'll tell you... she'll write you a note that will last you a week... because apparently you have to be off for a whole week because that's the policy; it just feels very like that was, we're talking 20 odd years ago now, so I think whereas now from my understanding and little connection with you know it's becoming a bit more student-led um so making a decision about I can't sing or I'm struggling with this today, so... “No, I'm in pain. I'm not going to sing.” Tricky one.

Researcher:

And what about just general day-to-day? So, you know, you may be at an open mic musical theatre evening singing a song that you weren't expected to sing, you know, and you're like, it's going there, and then you just have those thoughts, you know, like, “Oh, How am I going to approach that note right now?” or whatever, you know? So you're feeling, you feel informed, increasingly informed. So we're on the other side of the scale.

Participant 5:

Yes, and that's the way it should be. Yeah, I'd say five.

Researcher:

I feel like you're going for a five.

Participant 5:

I went very tender, I went quite wide there, didn't I?

Researcher:

I like it, I like it. It's all interesting data. The next one, “I trust my teacher's expertise.” Which I think you spoke about in response to the first one.

Participant 5:

Yes, I would say I sit neutrally, needn't disagree. Probably because of my experience with multiple. So it would depend on who we were talking about.

Researcher:

So context, yeah.

Participant 5:

Yeah, you know, do I trust [Teacher name]? Yeah, way more than I trust, you know, someone else. Whereas, so I think, that that's depending on on who you're working with and actually that prompt really for me revolves around my own knowledge to be able to know when and the reason for trust, because I know that it's I feel safe and it's whereas actually as a younger person I was presented with “You must trust her” but I do then realise after I believed elements and I follow, you know, I wanted to learn more and wanted to so I trust. Whereas now I feel like my trust, that gut maybe, that I didn't want to talk about but I thought it was head but you know is that “Oh no don't trust them, no we don't need you know...” And I think there's a lot of, I mean particularly in the MD world, like the MD side of things, with very little vocal knowledge. And that's very, very worrying. But because they are the musical director, then the word music in their title and musical theatre, you know, they are seen as God. And so the choreographer and the people around that maybe aren't as informed or, you know, they put all their trust in that person. I go, “That's not the right person to be making these decisions”, but okay. But I understand that, going back a few prompts. I understand what I need to do or not do in that moment. I had, you know, the scenario with somebody this Christmas that pulled out and didn't sing. They took themselves off the show, going back a prompt. Have them informed to make their own decisions about their performance or training or, you know, and I respect that. But also, I would love to have challenged it, but from

somebody that I trust, you, that I don't know what your choice, but I have a quite a strong feeling of what it would have been to be interesting me to get what I wanted, which was to keep them on on the stage, whether that's right, wrong. Maybe I'm using that to my advantage. That's another question. But, you know, I think I know that you. I trust that you understand. And what would be in the interest of that singer?

Researcher:
Because even though they you know, they might have made an informed choice that they believed was right at the time, it may not have been for their own identity, self-worth, mental health journey as well. They might have made the wrong decision for them as well because, you know, I guess those moments of like high-octane events, they stay with you forever, don't they? You know, when you as a performer of maybe made the judgment call, “I'm not going to do my job today” for whatever reason. Those are the memories that, you know, someone doing their masters five years later will ask you a question. Those are the things that you think, “Oh, why is that still in my head?” Our next prompt; “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 5
No that's not true, that’s a one.

Researcher:
Why are you feeling that?

Participant 5:
Because that just, I mean, it means that you just whatever they say goes, you don't, yeah, that does... that's not trust, no trust is two-way. Doesn't mean that if you say, but I just want you and the teacher might shut you down, because of other reasons and necessity in the process of going, you don't need to like, “Just trust me, just do it, just do it. And then we'll talk.” I'll do it, you know.

Researcher:
That’s quite a passionate response of yours. Can you can you remember maybe a scenario in your where you've maybe had teachers that are like, “Just do this...” Or is it maybe just so diametrically opposed to your own values?

Participant 5:

I don't really remember a particular scenario, or scenario where I was told “Just do it.” I don't think. No, also, I think we just need to understand. Yeah, no, I love a question, I love explanation to children, particularly. You know, I yeah, because it's clarity and, yeah, no, I. It is a passion, I don't know why, where it comes from. But I do feel because it, but I guess it's yeah, maybe there's somewhere, there's a route of someone telling me that they're right, it's right and I'm wrong, Probably somewhere, you know, maybe. Interesting, though, because my my principal when I was at theatre school was incredibly I mean, she was a strong woman of, you know, we had elocution lessons on a Monday afternoon with the principal of the school, who would always be late, but who would used to just pick up some books from her library and just walk in, who had no idea. And we always have to stand up every time she walked in any lesson. But, you know, that's just the way we did it. But I have huge respect for her. What she stood for and get, you know, I went to teach for her and had first jobs with her and as a performer and learned a lot of craft. She used to produce pantomimes on a small scale, you know, have it as a massive connection of how I've got to where I am. But we weren't allowed to ask questions, I guess. That's probably where it comes from, actually. Did I trust her? I think so, yeah.

Researcher:

Maybe it's a different flavour of trust. Again, there's no value judgements here, it's just an exploring.

Participant 5:

I think it's respect that I had. So she had a very much, not children should be seen and not heard, but that kind of, you know, adult is right. “Listen, child.” And, you know, just very, ugh. She was painting a picture that she was horrible, but just, it was just the way things, it was traditional. That's how things were. And I think the world's changing for a right reason, to ask questions, to challenge. So just, that's why I probably feel, just to say, “Oh, trusting someone is not questioning that.” Absolutely not. You should be able to still question. That is trust. Questioning someone is trust because you, you know, I don't understand. I don't know. Whereas if you don't ask them the question, often it's because you're vulnerable yourself with, for me personally, I wouldn't want to give any further anything else away. So why would I? I don't trust them. I'm not asking anything.

Researcher:

Really interesting.

Participant 5:

Is it?

Researcher:

We're on the last four prompts. “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.” It could also be I feel that my choir understanding me is important for their learning.

Participant 5:

See, I don't necessarily agree strongly on this. I think that there is an element. Probably it's multi-layered. It’s important for my learning probably the word *learning* is wrong, well-being, yes, ok that's important but also because respectfully there's... I mean I'm talking maybe younger and obviously as you get a bit of margin now no that's a lot “No.” Most people I would have this applied to. So they don't always know what it is they need to learn or what their learning journey they're on at the moment. Is that right? Probably not, but that's a wider issue with society and the way we teach things. We do things to learn. We learn to pass an exam. Rather than what I said earlier of teaching them how to learn. So yes, for mental health, well-being, is it important that your teacher, you know, you understood? I'd say yes. But yeah, I wouldn't say. I have taught as a teacher, so whilst that's might go “They don't understand me”, so yeah, but you I would feel comfortable as the, what should be the, um, the knowledge or the experience I guess to go. Well I, they, “I don't need to understand”, it's not important for them you know for me to understand X, Y, and Z, yeah. In effect for their learning. Whereas if it was for mental health, which is also part of the learning, yeah, I guess. That doesn't give me a strong like, yes, absolutely, or no, not at all. I say, I think it's a very complicated. So somewhere in the middle. I'd say so. Yeah, I couldn't. But that's also to do with trusting what you're being taught and who's teaching you and why. And actually, absolutely.

Researcher:

And also, it's your response. And the data is the data and a three is a valid number. Otherwise, there'd be no three, there'd just be one, two, four, five.

Participant 5:

There you go, three it is then.

Researcher:

Here we go. “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

Participant 5:

I'm going to move room a second. No, you're fine. I'm just going to go upstairs. Hi, [Name of person]. I'll just go up here for a minute. I'm just at my dad's. Because [Child's name] is meeting me after school, so I'll just go upstairs. Out of the way.

Researcher:

Thinking about, do technical or scientific explanations help understand voice better?

Participant 5:

No, not massively. Yeah, I mean, if I was picking a number, I'd probably say four.

Researcher:

So they do?

Participant 5:

But not strong, like, yes, but not... As in, so if I as. And yeah, they do, they do. They do. So so we'll go with I think, yeah, understanding what's going on, the actually what's can give a visualisation and therefore clarity in what we're trying to achieve. No, no, no. Clarity, yeah.

Researcher:

I'm glad you used the word visualisation because that's our next one.

Participant 5:

Oh, good.

Researcher:

"Imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better."

Participant 5:

Yeah, I strongly agree.

Researcher:

Like a five?

Participant 5:
I think so, yeah.

Researcher:
So preference for that versus the previous? What's the most, if you were going to, bonus question, if you were going to rank the important, the most important out of imagery versus metaphor versus sensation based?

Participant 5:
So literally as an imagery of visualising someone else doing it or in some form?

Researcher:
Yeah, or it could be a, “I'm visualising my vocal fold” or “I'm visualising being in a field” or whatever it is. Metaphor, metaphor. Sensation-based is more what you feel in your body is happening.

Participant 5:
I'd say imagery then would be probably the strongest of those, if I'm honest. Yeah, I'd say that's probably. For me personally, but that's as a singer. Teaching-wise, sensation-based I would drive towards.

Researcher:
To get them to have a reference point maybe?

Participant 5:
Yeah, yeah,

Researcher:
So we're on our final our final prompt now okay: “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 5:
No, I don't. But I mean, yeah, the question that for me as me. No, I don't.

Researcher:
How much of a “No I don't?”

Participant 5:

As a technical language, I'm probably not as technical language experienced then.

Researcher:

That's OK, it's all about you.

Participant 5:

So maybe I would feel if somebody else was teaching me to become a little bit more confused, the flipping. But I feel that actually imagery again, because my biggest thing of of imagining this feeling, whether it's a whatever word you may use, it's, you know, I could use the word acquire and they go, well, vocal, well, you know, to imagine they got like little elastic bands and, you know, so imagining so, so, so yes, I can understand it as a teacher, it being so depending on your student to make it simple. But for me now, I probably sit one, attuned of like, no, I'd feel comfortable and I don't feel providing that the imagery was used to support the technical language. Is there one for that?

Researcher:

I think that's an interesting point to raise. Because maybe sometimes, you know, if people interchange things, something that maybe sounds scientific and whatever, and then use a wild metaphor, we'd hope that they were describing the same thing, wouldn't we? But maybe that's not always the case. And we'd hope that then both, you know, if they were describing different things, we'd hope that they were taking us to the correct goal. But I guess, you know, we're all on a learning journey and then you can't learn if you don't make takes, including the teachers.

Participant 5:

Including the teachers. Which is why when it doesn't work, I go, “What am I doing wrong? The question about what? What am I doing? What's not clear? What's what can I do differently?” As opposed to the student just can't get it. Sometimes we live in a world, I mean, going a bit off topic, a wilder, wider, we live in a world where, you know, we think that [Student’s name] is perfect and, you know, it's your problem, [Teacher’s name], you've got to sort him out at school and you kind of go, your [Child’s name] is a little, they need to learn how to do this, you know, but I do my route and that's why when I was taught and I was working in a school for five, six years, the values of the school, the ethos of the child learning and us actually guiding that and it's heavily instilled in me as a teacher. I sit comfortably with the values. Some of it's a bit wild, you know.

Researcher:
Yeah, they're not so good at keeping the books balanced, I hear.

Participant 5:
No, they've gone under.

Researcher:
But in terms of, you know, the child-centred learning, which is loosely adopted in national curriculum, or statewide but yeah unfortunately it's not great for business though. Which is ironic because education and learning and doing that and growing is literally a vital construct.

Participant 5:
We have, we had a very, that conversation with my mum and [Spouse's name] the other day about [Child's name] and it got wilder and like how we're generally educated and, you know, and standing up and the teacher being right and we should and my mum's kind of gives a very much, you know, I was right. We were on a bike ride at Centre Parcs and the sign said not to go up. But they did and I did and I got off my bike and I'm that, you know, it's ridiculous. There'll be a reason why we, and I can understand the logic in that there must be someone has, but you know, whereas I'm, I don't like red signs. I like green signs. I like to know what we are able to do. Whereas we live in a world of don't do that. Don't, you know, everything is negative.

Researcher:
Well, most rules and, you know, rules at school for primary school children, it's like, "You can't do this, you can't do this."

Participant 5:
So whenever I set rules over children, we never do don'ts. But that's a personal way of method of teaching. I always try and get rid of them. Whereas others, you know, and I'm not talking in a school where day environment, although I don't work in that anymore. But, you know, in a club, and I'd go, "What are our rules?" We don't do and I say, well, how can we put that into a positive? "We have to listen to the teacher when they're talking", great, not "Don't talk", you know, using the tool, whatever it is, I think, because we, but that doesn't necessarily conform with the world. I have a sort of; was an interesting comeback, what it was the statement that my sister-in-law said, but basically along the lines of rules are there for those that need them, we're there to create them, kind of in a very, you know, we create the rules, everyone else follows them. And my mum is a

strong advocate of, “I just follow because I'll be told.” And so I'm like, we've lost the will to make any judgment for ourself of, you know.

Researcher:
I guess it's all to do with with power, isn't it, as well? Power and autonomy over ourselves. In terms of geopolitical power, we are just the mice in the machine that run around and give them money. So are we going with a one or a two on this one?

Participant 5:
I'm gonna go with two just for security in case I feel confused.

Researcher:
Thank you so much.

Participant 5:
You are very welcome.

Researcher:
Thank you so much for allowing me to be a voyeur on the journey of your own mind and thoughts.

Participant 5:
I don't know what use it would be. I would love to know at some point what it means in your findings as to whether it's unanimous or...

Researcher:
I think there's a lot of similarities so far that coexist between people and what's interesting for me, to be continued, is when there isn't parity, when there's polar opposite views, is maybe to explore why those are there. I think that's personally what is really interesting for me.

Participant 5:
I think that's some of the things that I've said feel more valid. For me personally as a contribution of my educational experience teaching.

Researcher:

Everything's valid even if there's like a bit of data that doesn't sit within a pattern. The whole point is not to find the pattern within all of you but for me to step far enough away from the canvas to go “What It is the actual missing thing that we're all missing?” If there is one.

Participant 5:

Well, we're all being educated.

Researcher:

Rather than being taught how to learn, maybe.

Participant 5:

And that's probably because we've been through the education system of restrict, I think it's because it restricts us.

Researcher:

Oh, 100%. You know, it would be interesting to do it. I mean, I'm not going to, but it would be interesting to do another study and, you know, chat to people that have been through drama school and go, well, “Okay, what did you learn? Did you learn anything?”

Participant 5:

No, I agree. And there'll be no result. Probably won’t able to change anything anyway.

Researcher:

Because it's a machine and it's a thing and no one really cares. And I think that's what's lost after hundreds of years of all these systems is that there's no care.

Participant 5:

And then people... In the voice, you mean?

Researcher:

I think in the world. I think there's a lack of care.

Participant 5:

That's politics, though, isn't it?

Researcher:

That's the same?

Participant 5:

That would be.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for your time.

Participant 5:

Anytime and good luck with the continuing stuff.

Participant 6 – Interview Transcript

Participant 6:
Hello.

Researcher:
Bonjour.

Participant 6:
There we go. Sorry. I was like, why am I just in the dark?

Researcher:
No problem.

Participant 6:
I always have this thing. Where's the camera? Oh, it's there. Right. OK. Hello.

Researcher:
How are you?

Participant 6:
I'm okay, how are you?

Researcher:
I'm okay. Excellent. Well, thank you so much for taking part in my crazy study.

Participant 6:
I'm honoured.

Researcher:
So, this is my information, yeah. So, we're just going to have an exploration of your thoughts and feelings and experience all around voice pedagogy. Obviously. So lots of these things, so there's going to be 15 prompts, they're not really questions, and then I'll ask you to either agree or disagree with them on a scale. So lots of them are kind of flavoured towards when you're a student

how did you feel about this and your teacher, but obviously because you're a teacher and you lead choirs, so whatever it makes you think about is absolutely valid. There's no right or wrong, there's

no themes, it's just all about exploring what people think about in terms of singing and learning to sing and whether there are any, you know, like the title says, any tensions, gaps or unmet needs within all of that. So any view is useful data which I then get to spend the rest of February coding and thinking about. Okay, so this is just the consent statement. So everything we say obviously will become either if we mention personal things and will obviously all be anonymized and once I finish this three and a half year masters then it will all be deleted, all this information. Okay, so here is our first prompt. “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.”

Participant 6:
Yeah, I'm going with strongly agree.

Researcher:
So five.

Participant 6:
Yes, for me personally. Well, you're my most recent singing teacher. Yeah.

Researcher:
Yeah. And have there been instances before in your experience where maybe you wouldn't strongly agree?

Participant 6:
So I've been thinking about this and going back to my first singing lessons with [Teacher name] and think back then it was just, yeah, there was, it was a lot more just singing. And you didn't necessarily know why you were doing it, but it was just helping, you know, because the more, I don't know, I think in terms of just, if you're singing, your voice is going to improve, usually, unless you're doing something very, very wrong. And then, who else did I have? And then, oh yeah, like people at college and stuff. No, I would say I usually, yeah, I think that I usually understand why I'm being asked to do something.

Researcher:

And then if we maybe turn it slightly on its head because of, you know, what you you teach now and you choral direct and you musically direct. So how, again, there's no right or wrong answers. It's just exploring things. How much do you feel when you're in charge of the learning that they understand why they're doing what they're doing?

Participant 6:

So, yeah, I think with the kids, I'm not sure they would understand. I kind of, I mean, also because I'm saying it in French, so, you know, I'm never too sure what I'm saying. But I think I would do something, and then later on, in my head, I know that this, oh, this is maybe, this is for this, and this is for that. And then when we come to do the actual thing, I'll be like, “Ah, that's why we did that earlier.” Sometimes that happens for a reason, because I've thought about it. It's a happy coincidence. And I feel like they do understand why. I mean, none of them ever really have a problem with what I'm doing. So there's never a feeling of like, “Oh, why are we doing this? This is pointless.” The teenagers, slightly different because... teenagers. But then again, I'm able, I'm usually able to reference what we're doing or maybe then it's not even in the warm-up vocal exercises, we'll be doing a song and then I will get them to do an exercise then and there to help them sing that particular thing better. So then I think they would understand that because it's, you know, it's like right in their face. The adults, yeah, my lovely lady's English choir, I definitely explain to them more what we're doing because I know that it is a much more pedagogical approach and they would see it like that as well. They're not just there to learn a song, they want to get better, they want it. My other choir, yeah, I do, I will try and, I don't think they really know why we do the vocal exercises. They think it's just a warmup. I don't think, I think some of them can, but a lot of them can't see the benefit and they think, “Oh, why are we doing this again?” And to be honest, there's not really the time to necessarily explain. Also holding 60 people's attention is quite difficult. So I don't, yeah, I think, you know, I brush over stuff a lot more because they're there to have fun. So even the fact that I'm even getting them to do vocal exercises is already quite a big win.

Researcher:

The context is very important, isn't it? Because it changes, like, the primary goals and it also changes, even if the goals are similar, it changes why you're there and what the aim of for them is and everything yeah yeah let's move on to our number two there's only 15 okay: “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 6:

Um yeah I would say I agree with that strongly or mildly I think I can strongly agree is meant to help me improve, yes.

Researcher:

Thank you for noticing my linguistic choices in the my framing of the statements.

Participant 6:

Yeah, no definitely. I mean because obviously I'm not having regular lessons but I'm doing regular vocal exercises, things that I find on, there are some different people on YouTube that I quite, that I like and I feel like the exercises are helping me. So yes there's like one that's a warm-up, more in the warm-up area, there's one that's like for change in register, there's one for more flexible voice. So I cherry pick what I want to do and I feel like I can see what it's meant to help me with, yes. Yeah, I think in terms of my teaching, again, I think maybe when we're doing something and I can do this more, doing it with my teenagers yesterday and I would do, and I was doing it with my Tuesday choir, like literally we're trying to sing, they're trying to sing a line, the Sopranos, it's like they sung this line, finishing on, I mean, however many of them were, that was, that was the number of different notes I had. So I was like, well, you all gave me, you know, you gave me lots of choice there, that's lovely. So then, you know, then we was straight away, I was right, let's try this exercise to do it. So then they can definitely see the correlation. I think in general terms, they accept that we're doing exercises and that they're, you know, it's generally improving. It's meant to generally improve your voice. Specifically, it's not a singing lesson per se. So, you know, I do, there's a structure to it. But we do... We do different things. I mean, I'm just trying to get them... Yeah, I'm trying to improve the sound. So, you know, I do a lot of work on specifically that kind of thing. And the tuning. We do a lot of... We do stuff on intervals and tuning as well. Yeah.

Researcher:

Great. Our third one: “I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.” So this is holding a mirror intentionally up to the previous one that you've just answered. Yeah. And all of these is not necessarily about what numbers I'm putting down on your behalf, it's about how you're exploring and vocalising your thoughts.

Participant 6:

That's the main objective. I think like, yeah, I would say I'm going to say like, agree. No, hang on, disagree. No, hang on. I often do exercises without fully understanding. I'm going to say... What's... OK, what is the middle option?

Researcher:

Neither strongly or disagree or agree.

Participant 6:

Because I think... I wouldn't go with often. I sometimes... Because what happens, like, in a lesson with you is you can hear things I can't always hear.

Researcher:

Yeah...

Participant 6:

About my voice. So, sometimes I might do something like and I'm sort of busy analysing and I'm like not I can't quite get it mm-hmm I think and I guess yeah as a teacher some of the stuff that I might do with them is is sort of general so it's not specific so then maybe do we fully understand I don't know and as I say to them you can't see inside so we've got to imagine it and you know I'm going on what I can hear but it is that I don't know what you can feel. I'm not sure if this is fully answering this question.

Researcher:

It is answering it more fully than you can imagine.

Participant 6:

Okay, right, okay good.

Researcher:

So are we going for the three; the one in the middle?

Participant 6:

I think we're going for the three because I feel like I need to sit on the fence a bit and it's a valid number because it's there.

Researcher:
If it wasn't valid, then I'd have missed the threes out.

Participant 6:
Oh, there we go.

Researcher:
There we go. Our next one: “I've experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 6:
Yes. I think yes, I think we all have.

Researcher:
Yes. And then maybe now we can explore how you mentioned now you're like, cherry-picking what works for you, that's great, so then how do you, so that's like one method of getting rid of the contradiction, how do you marry that up and find your...

Participant 6:
I was just thinking because I don't know if this is, I don't know if this is valid, but I mean I've had lessons off you, I've had lessons from like opera singers.

Unidentified Speaker
Yeah.

Participant 6:
So then that's a whole different kettle of fish obviously. And then trying to marry that up and them not understanding. And obviously I played for integration class with [Teacher name]. So I would say I wasn't singing, but I was very much listening to what she was doing. And then you compare that to then how an opera singer comes at it. And that's, yeah, that's completely different, obviously.

Researcher:
What are some of those major differences that you've had to sit down with yourself and think.

Participant 6:

I think, yeah, just kind of for me, it's the idea of where is my voice coming from, like how far forward it is or back? And the opera thing. And I know when I was having I kind of had a bit of a lesson with an opera singer that I, yeah, was a housemate. And she, it was like, she wanted my head voice to improve, obviously. And I don't often think about my head voice. I'm usually trying to blend my head voice into something else. So, but she really wanted me to sing in like a full-on head she said that was the problem, that I think there was too much air coming through. So that, yeah, no, I mean this was a long time ago and my memory is vague at the best of times.

Researcher:

But it's interesting what you can recall when you're thinking about this, that's still stuck.

Participant 6:

Yeah, and we were singing, I was singing *Defying Gravity* and it was, yeah, it was, But I guess I see where she was coming from: She was saying that my blend could not work properly because there was too much air coming through my head voice. But I'm not sure that I ever figured that out. I don't think I, yeah.

Researcher:

And were there any strategies to remedy that?

Participant 6:

No. No, because she was, yeah, I wouldn't say she was a teacher. Though I don't remember her having some like idea of what to do; no physical idea of what to do it was more the I the suggestion of okay um yeah I'm thinking of the like saying you know... I... I use different people's methods like you know you must know the [Teacher name] like yes yes well I mean i've listened to her warm-ups this is when we do an I've listened to her warm-ups. Oh my God. Literally, I do like a short warm-up by her and I feel like I've been singing for eight hours and like I can't go on. And I...

Researcher:

In a negative way?

Participant 6:

In a really negative way. And I... But I, of course, I, of course, think to myself, well, that's obviously my problem. I'm obviously doing it wrong. I'm too tense or something.

Researcher:

I bought her first... When she first monetised, and did one. I bought one of her courses, and I said to [Researcher's husband], you know, because he's a hobbying singer but never, and I said this is me researching what not to do if I ever bring out a course. And so we bought a course and I think it was $499. I sat him down and he was in front and I just he did the first 20-minute lesson out of the 10 lessons and he was like "I can't do it, I hurt and I'm thoroughly confused." There's a lot of noise in the whole voice world, isn't there?

Participant 6:

I've just got, yeah, I've got this, I don't know, I don't even know who it is. She's got like an Indian accent and I just really like her warm up and I do that in the car on the way to work, on the way to choir. Yeah. And I just find it just really it gets my voice in a nice place, and I like what it sounds like, and yeah, just works for me.

Researcher:

That is the only thing that matters, really.

Participant 6:

And I just keep thinking that, what you said last time I had a lesson with you, it's not the length of the warm-up or what it is, it's just getting your voice ready to go. Yeah. That's all it is. So yeah, I use those ones a lot. And for me and for my for my choirs, yeah. And I just, I don't know, I think, I mean, you just have to, you're always gonna get, you're always gonna get people contradicting each other, aren't you? You've just got to do what works for you. I was telling [Child's name] that the other day, just like, you know, you've got to take on board everything and then, you've got to actually do what you need to do because if you keep trying to do what someone else tells you to do it will always influence you anyway.

Researcher:

Absolutely and then yeah it just becomes a wolf in sheep's clothing doesn't it. It's knowing what to delete after you've got it.

Participant 6:

Yeah and having the confidence to do that as well and not to be like oh this person is you know I've got to, I've, yeah, I've got, I don't know, I'm gonna go with agree.

Researcher:
So a four?

Participant 6:
A four. I mean, I, you know, that, yeah, because I'm also, in my head, I can't disassociate myself from being a pianist, so I'm trying to stick with just the, for this.

Researcher:
That's all right, because, I mean, you know, this is, maybe, there's no right or wrong, so maybe, you know, maybe this investigation starts from voice pedagogy and ends up about learning in general, who knows?

Participant 6:
Yeah.

Researcher:
So it's all valid. Okay: “When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.”

Participant 6:
Oh yes. Obviously number five.

Researcher:
So why do you feel that way?

Participant 6:
Oh my god, I mean even if I'm the one teaching.

Researcher:
Oh really?

Participant 6:
Oh god yeah. No but I and I always tell my students that I'm like if you don't understand it's because I haven't explained it right. I mean that's just but that's part of trying to make them feel good as well. But oh yes it's always me that's got it wrong.

Researcher:
Any ideas where that comes from

Participant 6:
Yes.

Researcher:
There's no value judgments here.

Participant 6:
So Innate low self-esteem. Which I haven't quite worked out yet. Is it married? Is it connected to possibly being somewhere in the H of the ADHD? Or is it not? I don't know. I don't know. I've decided I'm not going to investigate that. I'm just going to assume what I assume.

Researcher:
It might be also to do with aspects of perfectionism and things like that, maybe?

Participant 6:
It's definitely that too, but I just, I wonder why it's so strong because, you know, where I think it stems from, I mean, we're not, this is going well away from singing.

Researcher:
It may be, or it may not be.

Participant 6:
I mean, because what I understand is, if I look at where I think the low self-esteem comes I think it's so extreme from where it comes from It just comes from my parents and I'm not really, you know, not being a warm person and my sister being a massive bitch and just being mean to me. And I'm like, okay, well, I couldn't deal with that. So maybe there is another reason why I couldn't deal with that. Or is it just that I am so such a snowflake that I couldn't deal with that?

Researcher:
You have hit the nail on the head as to why you've answered five in this question. Yes. So I, in fact, believe strongly against your supposition, which was this isn't related. I believe that it's completely related. Yes. And that's not me casting any kind of morality or whatever. It's just going, yes, that

experience equals this feeling, I would say that that is equal. And why is that important? It's important because we're all on a journey of understanding ourselves and we can't progress and evolve if you don't understand what we're currently dealing with. It's not about blame or anything like that because those are societal constructs. Everyone's a victim of their own life.

Participant 6:

No, yeah. And I think, I don't know, I personally think it's even more relevant for singing because it's such a personal thing that it's very difficult to disassociate yourself from your own voice, which is what, as you know, which is what I've always struggled with, which is why I'm not a singer. Because, you know, even...

Researcher:

Yeah, absolutely, because the voices are tied in with our identity, whereas however amazing you are at playing the piano and I'm at playing the bassoon, in terms of identity, it can still be that particular bassoon or that piano's fault. But with singing, for some reason, just because there's a lack of an external thing, we maybe internalise those things too much. Let's move on: “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.”

Participant 6:

Oh yeah, I think I can. Now I can, certainly, but I'm 47. Previously...

Researcher:

So, has it been a journey?

Participant 6:

It's been a journey. Uncertainty or confusion. I think I can... Yeah, I can manage with uncertainty and confusion. I can't... This is probably another question. I can't sit with sounding shit or not being able to do the thing I think I'm supposed to be able to do, but uncertainty or confusion, I don't think I panic. I think I get frustrated.

Researcher:

Okay, so that may be the H in the ADHD?

Participant 6:

Possibly. Yeah, without panicking. Yeah, I don't think I panic in that situation.

Researcher:

And that also translates to teaching, doesn't it? You know, sometimes I guess we have an idea. We're like, this is the thing. This is how we're going to do the thing. Oh, it's not working. We need to go with it rather than like, oh my gosh, it's not working.

Participant 6:

Oh, yeah. And I would say, yes, that I have worked on that for myself. As a teacher, and that's why I say “If you don't understand, I haven't explained it right”, or “I just haven't found the way that works for you. So we're gonna try a different...”, I'm gonna try a different approach. And I, you know, and I do, I say that a lot; “I just need to find the thing that makes sense for you.” Absolutely. So yes, I don't think I panic. I think I actually find that interesting and a challenge. And in a good way.

Researcher:

And it also enables your learning on your side of it as well.

Participant 6:

Exactly, which I like, because I like learning, yes.

Researcher:

So, are we going with a five or a four?

Participant 6:

I think we can say five.

Researcher:

Great. “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.”

Participant 6:

Yeah I think I can do that.

Researcher:

Strong yeah?

Participant 6:
Yeah I think so.

Researcher:
I think they may tie in don't they?

Participant 6:
Yeah because I know like if you're saying like do such and such and I'm like “Yeah but I don't know... this is not happening here” or “What am I doing wrong here” or but yeah I think do I need to challenge ideas? I don't think. Hmm.

Researcher:
I mean, it's a spectrum, so it doesn't have to be, you know, let's pick a fight and have a fiery discussion.

Participant 6:
Yeah, I wouldn't say I like people challenging my ideas.

Researcher:
Oh, that's interesting.

Participant 6:
I mean, I'm in charge. OK. Yeah. Because sometimes, I guess, yes, sometimes I'm doing something and I'm like, so I'm on the teaching side now. I'm trying something out. I'm not entirely sure of the exact pathway to get to what I want. So I start with something and I'm like, “Let's try this and see if it works.” And then, you know, you just kind of, it evolves a bit, doesn't it? So then I guess if I was right in the beginning of the pathway and I was kind of in my head a bit like, and someone's challenging me, I might be a bit like, no, “Well, let's just”, I think, “Let's just try this first.” That's probably what I would say. I don't know. Yeah. But personally, I can ask questions. Yeah.

Researcher:
That's interesting thinking about these things, isn't it?

Participant 6:
It is.

Researcher:

“In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I'm told rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 6:

Well, now, that depends how old I am when you're asking me this question.

Researcher:

So, let's explore it. Let's explore your journey.

Participant 6:

I mean, I'm pretty sure when I was little… I mean, I started in essence when I was about eight. So I would, I'm pretty sure at that moment in time I was doing what I was told. Yes. I think I am a bit like that though. I mean, as you would know, I to do what I'm told and be told well done when I'm being the student. I don't know that I do that to the expense of understanding what is happening. I think... can't those two things happen at the same time?

Researcher:

Of course they can.

Participant 6:

Yeah, so I think I like to do what I'm told. I am definitely focused on that but I'm not sure I necessarily just blindly do what I'm told if I'm not too sure why. What is happening? No, I think I would be a bit like if something doesn't feel right then I would be saying “Well this doesn't feel right, I'm not doing it right”, rather than just doing what I'm told. But that is something that is in me, is this need to do what I'm told.

Researcher:

And do they live in harmony with each other?

Participant 6:

I think they can. I would say they can. I think I'm, I like to understand what's happening and I definitely, I think, I mean I like to teach in a way that people understand what's happening. I don't just, I never just say do this. I'll be like let's try this because we're trying to get this result, I think. So where does that sit Okay, focused on doing what I'm taught. No, I think we'd have to go in the middle. Because I feel like that splits my personality into that question.

Researcher:

That's good. “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 6:

Yeah, I would say agree. Hmm. I think no, number four, because I would still, I still happily have lesson with someone for sure. Cause I think, well, like I still happily have a piano lesson. You always benefit from another pair of ears.

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 6:

But I think, um, I think I understand my voice more now. Um, but I think with my voice, It's always been, like there are some situations I can sing in and there are some situations my voice will not work because I'm in my head and I get in my own way and I like sabotage it. So, but I've always had a thing with my, like if I need to do something with my voice, then it will work. And it's, sometimes I don't, necessarily know the technical whatever behind it. But it's like, well, “I want that sound and I'm going to make it.” So I guess that is the thing, like some of the technical side of it is still I feel like I don't have all the knowledge I would like to have. Like I was watching, you know, after the *Cynthia* in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, all the videos of that. Yeah. And there would be like singing teachers, like you know that, is it [Teacher name]?

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 6:

I quite like, And also ‘Ya Ya Ya’, I think was on there. And it would be like the video of them watching her, *Cynthia* doing whatever, and going, oh it's going from here to there, belt this, and here to there, you know. And can I actually identify these things? Not sure.

Researcher:

So the me question in response to that would be, do you need to?

Participant 6:

Yeah, that's it. Do I need to?

Researcher:

My response to the person doing the ‘Ya ya ya’ and the other would be, are you doing that to educate or just get followers? Because it's trending.

Participant 6:

Well, it was a bit. That's what I felt like, It was like everyone jumped on this bandwagon.

Researcher:

And then my question, you know, to *Cynthia* would be, do you think that you're doing what ‘Ya ya ya’'s saying or are you just telling a story and singing?

Participant 6:

Well that's it because I think *Cynthia* comes at it more from the, because when I heard her describing like *Elphaba* and she'd be like, “You know, here she's young so the voice is like this” and “Here she's this and the voice is like that”, she wasn't saying it in a jargon-y way.

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 6:

So that's that's what I think my voice does. I go with what I feel needs to happen at this moment in time. And then if I'm not achieving it, I'll kind of try and do some sort of exercises that I've done with you to get the result I want.

Researcher:

Yeah. Great. OK, here we go... Juicy one... “I trust my teacher's expertise.”

Participant 6:

I see, I think that's a very interesting one, isn't it, with singing?

Researcher:

It really is.

Participant 6:

Because I think you can be a singing teacher, you can be a singing teacher without being a, like, performing professional singer, can't you?

Researcher:

Yeah, I agree.

Participant 6:

Yeah, so it's hard to...

Researcher:

And also, you know, I mean, I know we're not... I know it's within voice pedagogy, but, you know, you can also think about the whole of you, which is also a lot of piano and stuff as well.

Participant 6:

Well, yeah, so with piano, it's like, obviously, I trust [Teacher name]'s expertise because I've heard her play and it's phenomenal. And straight away, my very first lesson, like, was just, you know, it just changed my life. And in a very specifically technical way, which no one had ever done before.

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 6:

So yeah, no, I mean that is why I come to you for a lesson because I know that you know what you're doing and then you can just like, you know, "Go do this."

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 6:

Like the little magic wand and there you go. But I don't know, I'm not sure about every, every singing teacher. I think there's a lot of charlatans out there because of this business that you can't see what's going on inside. Yeah and I think people can give lots of different reasons as to why something's happening.

Researcher:

Yeah, I think that, I think it's, I think the range of methods, reasoning, validity is, the range in singing is so great compared to everything else, you know. I mean, yes, you know, if you think in terms of piano, you've got, you know, schools of thought like flat fingers, arch fingers, overall all that kind of stuff but the range of difference is much less than when you go into the singing world and you've got opera people going push your belly out and then musical theatre people going breathe in your shoulders; it's just like what how can we get the breathing things so so different um and uh yeah not that I don't think it needs regulation, but I think it would be nice if there was, you know, somewhat more of a consensus as to what's going on, you know. Hopefully no one, unless we're doing like a little showy off moment, you know, everyone sits facing the piano keys rather than off to the side. Yeah, so it's, yes, and I think, I think, what do I think? I think because, and I don't mean this in a disparaging way, you know, in a previous me when I was teaching at a drama school and in charge of a lot of singing teachers because associated skills are so wide ranging. So there were singing teachers that don't play the piano, singing teachers that don't read music. Like that, it makes it much easier for someone who is not thinking so much about how people learn how learners want to learn, it makes it much easier for people to go, “Oh, do you know what? Well, yeah, I'm not performing, so I'll just do a bit of singing teaching because I can sing.” And I think that's really tied in with piano skills and musicianship skills in singing teachers. You don't need to play the piano or even read music to become a good singing performer. But I think I could probably, if I did study look at singing teachers that can play the piano a bit and read music versus the ones that just want a lyric sheet.

Participant 6:

Yeah, see for me that's just not acceptable. And I think, yeah, I sit on that side, on the unacceptable side and I've, you know, tried to see it holistically and I always do come back to that side of like there's something missing and I think it's the not like just basic musicianship but also I think when you look at, you know, to look when you look at a teacher, the teacher, are you going to teach what you were taught and what you've figured out for yourself and what you were taught that you've taken and you've made it work for yourself yeah so these people who can't even play the read music, but exactly whatever they were taught. That would be my worry. Yeah. And you also have, obviously, as we well know, top musicians, orchestral musicians, who are absolutely rubbish teachers, because that comes down to they've never had a problem that they've had to work through themselves. They've just been an amazing player from the word go.

Researcher:

Yeah. Or they're on so many beta blockers, they can't break it down into anything.

Participant 6:

I think I think in order to be a teacher, I don't know, I just think you need to have had some sort of struggle. You need to have figured out how you do something. Yeah. Pass that on to someone. Otherwise, what are you passing on? Copy this. I mean, and that is even worse for singing because you can't copy it because you can't see what's going on. We're going to say strongly agree.

Researcher:

Excellent.

Participant 6:

How many more questions are there?

Researcher:

Five.

Participant 6:

Oh Lordy. Okay, right, let's go because I'm sorry, yeah, we chat too much and I have to go pick up [Child's name].

Researcher:

"Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say."

Participant 6:

No.

Researcher:

How much of a no?

Participant 6:

No, no, no, that's a one. Trusting a teacher means you can question what they say.

Researcher:

Yes. Nice. “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Participant 6:

Oh, yes, because yes, I'm very sensitive. I need to feel like my teacher likes me and like that they think I'm good. I mean that I know that about myself. I have a very fragile ego. I realised it just the other day. I was like, “Why are you so upset about this situation? Ah, it's because you feel like someone's dissing you. Be it a 14-year-old girl, you still can't live with that.”

Researcher:

Life is a journey of evolution.

Participant 6:

Oh so true.

Researcher:

“Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

Participant 6:

Yes.

Researcher:

A big yes or a small yes?

Participant 6:

A big yes. Yes, I like scientific, I like technical, I like physically do it like this and then you'll hear it and it'll sound like this. I find it much harder with the voice obviously than I do with the piano but I'm very much like you can't repeat something unless you know how you did it.

Researcher:

Maybe that's also experience as well. You've done more piano so that's more bedded in.

Participant 6:

Yeah, my piano is very much in two sections; until I was 23, where people just went, “Do it like that, don't worry about it.” You know, [Teacher name]. And after 23, [Teacher name] “How on earth can

you repeat it or ever do it again unless you know exactly what you did?" I mean, it's like polar opposites. So I'm in that camp. But learning music, for me, you program it into muscle memory. I'm talking more about piano now, I know, than voice, but still.

Researcher:
It's all the same.

Participant 6:
I know with the singing, like I'll do, I'll be like, "That note isn't coming out how I want it to." So I'll do something and I'll be like, "Right, it's there now." And I know when I come back to it, it'll still be there.

Researcher:
And the piano and your abilities on the piano help with that as you're programming it into singing.

Participant 6:
So yeah, I'm very much, and I tell my students that, like learning music is not airy-fairy, it's nothing to do with music. It's scientific and it's programming.

Researcher:
It's exactly the same as playing football. I want to hit it with this foot and I want it to hit that thing.

Participant 6:
So then you do your dribbling exercises or whatever.

Researcher:
That's as far as my sports analogies go.

Participant 6:
No, but exactly. Once that's done, you know, which is the absolute basic minimum of what needs to be done, then you can start thinking about what want to sound like,

Researcher:
Yeah, absolutely. Because then when you get into the real world and the 'L' plates come off, then all manner of things throw curveballs into the mix. And if you haven't got that basis, then you can't

deal with them. And it's a car crash. Yeah. So on the other side; “Imagery, metaphor, or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 6:

Yes, big yes. Definite yes. I use lots of imagery. I like that. I use it for myself. I use it in my teaching. It's all about, oh yeah, you know, yeah. Because for me, it makes life more interesting and colourful anyway. It's harder in French, but like, still, definitely. And this is what I keep saying with the singing, you can't see what's going on so we've got to imagine something. At the very basic with the tiny children it's like we're going up and down and then I've got one who can't sing in tune for love nor money so I'm like “Well it's a high note” so I'm like “Well here we're on the seventh floor. “Do you know what I mean? Like any just even basic um anything just to and also it just makes life more fun doesn't it if you're just imagining.

Researcher:

Everyone needs that.

Participant 6:

Oh definitely. That's interesting how that matches with the technical bit because it's like the technical and the imagery I think they have to go hand in hand otherwise it's too dry or it's too airy-fairy.

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 6:

You have to have a mixture of the two.

Researcher:

Lovely. This is our final prompt. “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 6:

Oh, how interesting. For me, no. For me, I like that. But I can't, yeah, I mean, hmm. I think it's possible that some of my students might agree more with that statement, but...

Researcher:

They're earlier on a journey, aren't they?

Participant 6:

Yeah. I think. But again, with students, you never know. This is what I always try to explain to [Child's name] when she's teaching [Child's name] something. If they're not doing what you want them to do, is it because they're not doing it and they're defying you? Obviously, that's what [Child's name] thinks. Or actually, is it just because they can't do it yet and they're trying their absolute best, but they just can't get the result that you want. Oh my God, speaking of which, This is, I'm going off on a tangent here, but I have a student, [Student's name], who cannot blend her head voice and her chest voice. She's got one hell of a belt, she's 10, and she's got a voice like an angel. We call it her angel voice. And never the two will meet. And I'm working on that, we are working on, so this is challenging my teaching skills. Plus, she can't do lip trills.

Researcher:

Rolled R's?

Participant 6:

Can she roll her R's? No, don't think she can. It's [Child's name] that can. No, so what we do when me and [Child's name] are doing the lip trills, so we've been trying.

Researcher:

So whatever you can to lower the frustration first that's the primary problem it's not balancing the primary problem is the frustration.

Participant 6:

Yeah and just and also you know she needs a lot of encouragement as well because she spends so much time going "Ooh isn't that good, aren't I good at that", which obviously means, yeah she can't say it for herself.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for taking part.

Participant 6:

I think there was something on with *Julie Andrews* the other day, a little video, and I didn't quite listen to all of it, but something about her not being happy with her first singing teacher or something, and I think it was like, because singing is so personal, and for me, it's like, as a teacher, if someone's got no confidence in their voice, how do you you get over that? Or is it impossible? Is it actually just, you know, are you just born going, yeah, I'm a singer? Or?

Researcher:

No, I don't think you're born with it.

Participant 6:

But I think, how do you get? How do you have that thing in your head? Like I have a thing that I'm a pianist, even though I still like get so nervous and whatever. I'm a pianist. I was never a cellist. I played the cello. I was never a cellist. And I can't in my head be a singer. “Are you a singer? No.” Teach singing, love singing. Sometimes I even think I sing quite well. But am I a singer or can I? No. Like, you know, so how do you, is that something a teacher can bring or is that?

Researcher:

I think so. I think so. But in terms of your first question, I think the student has got to be in a place where their want is bigger than their fear.

Participant 6:

Yes, okay.

Researcher:

So if they *want* to do it and that's, even if it's just a tiny bit bigger than the *fear* of doing it, then that's workable. If the fear is too great then maybe they need to take, not be having singing lessons and take a step out and go, do you know what, I've got to work on just being less fear, whatever is.

Participant 6:

But that's definitely true for anything in life, the want has to be bigger than the fear.

Researcher:

Absolutely, and you know that's why.

Participant 6:

When it's a situation I might be getting anxious I'm like, this is something you want to do.

Researcher:

No one is forcing me at knife point to go and do this, yeah.

Participant 6:

Okay, interesting.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for your time.

Participant 6:

OK, bye.

Participant 7 – Interview Transcript

Researcher:
Good morning.

Participant 7:
I'm trying to see if I can get it on my laptop. How are you?

Researcher:
Yeah, good. Tired, but good. How are you?

Participant 7:
Yeah, exact same.

Researcher:
Do you always get Fridays off? Or is it just this Friday?

Participant 7:
No, Friday is my day off. Tuesdays as well usually, but that's usually more kind of my rehearsal day. So Fridays and Sundays are the day I get properly free of anything. No responsibilities at all.

Researcher:
Just to wake up and live.

Participant 7:
Yeah, sometimes I didn't wake up. Think I could have probably easily slept through to about 1pm today, I think.

Researcher:
Halftime next week. Reading week?

Participant 7:
No, I don't get it. No, I didn't get end of March. My university doesn't really do reading weeks.

Researcher:

It's usually the way with courses that have independent practical stuff to do, do you know what I mean? If you're doing English literature, you'd only be in for three hours a week.

Participant 7:

Yeah, exactly. I think Wednesdays and Thursdays, I'm in for I I'm in for nine hours on a Wednesday, I think.

Researcher:

And then when you add the travel and everything, it's long.

Participant 7:

Yeah, really long. And then what's going on? I should really Yeah, this is my fault for not having used this laptop for forever.

Researcher:

Everyone's having like, you know, like zoom, Zoom-COVID regressions when I do this.

Participant 7:

Yeah, that's exactly what I'm facing. I was always more of a, more of a team's person anyway.

Researcher:

That's all right. So thanks so much for doing this. So this is my final project in my masters. And it's all about understanding, confusion, and trust within learning singing. So that can be within like a one-to-one setting or in like a group setting or even in, you know, like when you do shows and MDs and all that kind of stuff. So there are no right or wrong answers and it's all about what you think and feel. And if we go off on a tangent into like instrumental music or even like, you know, “Oh, I remember when I was 10 at primary school and I had this really great teacher who did this thing.” That's all, everything you say is great. So I'm not answering a question other than are we missing anything basically in how we approach teaching. So I'll share my screen. So this is like the information sheet and what you agree to. So everything we talk about will be anonymised. If there's anything personal, if we mention names, you can absolutely mention names, but I'll take them out. So it's all safe and hunky-dory. So when... This is what you're consenting to. If you want to withdraw at any time, you are absolutely allowed to. And I won't be like, “Why?” All the stuff will be anonymised, as I say, and then kept until I finally graduate, and then it will all be deleted, and that

will be that. So if I may just tick through these for you. And then there's 15 prompt statements or questions, and then we'll go through them one by one. And there's a scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree or disagree, agree or strongly agree, just like a survey. It's interesting what numbers you put on them, but that's not necessarily the aim. The aim is to investigate how you got to deciding those numbers, if that makes sense. So anything you're thinking, if you verbalise it, even if it might not be totally thought out, that's the point. And then after all of this, then I look through the transcript of it all and kind of, you know, look for common themes amongst everyone, basically.

Participant 7:
Yeah, absolutely.

Researcher:
Here we go. So the first prompt is, “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.”

Participant 7:
Okay, I would go with agree.

Researcher:
So just a normal agree like a four?

Participant 7:
The explanation that I'm given for all my exercises is usually very good. They usually are very clear. My perspective is everything relating to voice teaching is very new because I've never had voice lessons until September just gone. Yeah, so kind of starting from scratch with the concept of SOVT exercises. If there's an exercise I do about It's kind of going up a scale but returning back to the tonic and I'm doing that the same thing going back down the scale And my teacher explained to me about how useful that particular exercise is to linking the head voice to the chest voice. So I think my teachers do a really good job in explaining the concepts and the actual usefulness of what they're teaching me and telling me to do, which also makes it easier to do because then I'm happier to do it if I know exactly why I'm doing it instead of just doing it for no reason.

Researcher:
Is there maybe a particular example that's kind of like really embedded in your memory where you're like, I am 100% on board with this, I totally get it, this I'm going to remember in 20 years time?

Participant 7:
The scale exercise I said about with kind of returning to, well, the 1 over 8 essentially. I think that's one that's going to really suit me. It especially relates to something that I needed to work on and do still need to work on. So that's the one that's really going to stick with me, I think, because I think it's really specific to what my needs are and it was explained in a way that makes me go, this is actually going to help me out very well.

Researcher:
And have there been any times on the opposite side of that where you're in a situation where you're doing an exercise and you're like, “I might as well be going shopping in Tesco. I have no idea what this is doing.” Not casting dispersions on anyone, obviously.

Participant 7:
It's not necessarily a vocal exercise, but it is something that I do in one of my vocal classes. I kind of understand the reason why we need to do it. It's all about recognising chords as a singer. But being able to sing, one of the things we had to do was be able to sing a 7sus4 chord arpeggio. And I was sitting there going, “I really don't think, I don't think I understand why this is useful to any of us in this room.” We have to do it because we've been given it, but I don't think this is actually going to be useful to anyone because we're not actually instrumentalists. So there would be no point where we have to sing a 7sus4 chord.

Researcher:
So in that situation, what would have helped that? Do you think maybe more of an explanation from the teacher?

Participant 7:
I mean, yeah, I think it's kind of related to not note recognition, it was related to chord recognition and understanding a scale and how to kind of essentially skip out notes in a scale but still be able to sing it. But I think if the teacher had explained how it would relate to like the concept of sight-singing, that would have really helped because singing a 7sus4 chord doesn't actually help but if

you realise then that it teaches you how to sing the jump between the one and the fourth interval, the fourth and seventh pretty easily. And if you're given something in sight-singing where that happens, you already have it within you. I think that would really helped. Not just me, also the other people in the class. And then I think kind of breaking it to us as an overall kind of musical skill rather than just as a singing skill. I think that would have worked out as well.

Researcher:
I'm assuming your colleagues in your class were maybe feeling the same as you.

Participant 7:
Yeah, I'd say so. They're all kind of focusing on being solo artists, whereas I'm coming up for more like a, I want to be a session singer. So I'm going “Anything overall musical makes sense to me vaguely (or more than them).” But for them, they're going, “I'm never going to use this.”

Researcher:
Yeah, this is for my backing singers…?

Participant 7:
So really, me, myself as a person who wants to be a backing singer, I was like, okay, I don't understand it that much, but I can see how it would be useful if you give me some explanation. I think even if they got the explanation, they'd be going, “Yeah, not something I need to do.”

Researcher:
Yeah, I guess that's, you've got a range of people in a group setting always haven't you? Thank you for that. Let's move on to the second one. “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 7:
I would say strongly agree on this one. The reason being is if I am kind of given a brief explanation of what I'm doing. And then either I am told about what it's approved, what's it meant to improve, but I usually do kind of understand what it links back to as soon as I'm told what it is meant to improve. So I mean, an example, one doesn't come into mind, but I've always had in every single lesson I've had, if a teacher gives me an exercise to do during the lesson, then if they help me understand what the exercise is, I usually find it quite easy to grasp what it's actually going to improve and help me work on. The scale exercise or the scale jumping exercise for my transition

between head voice and chest voice, the singing the random collection, the arpeggios and random chords to help with kind of sight-singing was a big part of last semester. We did just do a vocal exercise which was... What was it? But anyway, once I have a brief explanation of kind of what the exercise entails, I usually find it quite easy from there to get what is improving from doing it. I don't think at any point I've gone, “I don't know what this is doing for me.” Once the teacher helps me understand what to do and understand why they asked me to do it, I then immediately go, “Oh, I know exactly what is being helped here.”

Researcher:
Thank you. Let's move on to the next one. So some of these questions, the exploration is like cyclic in nature; So we may get to a question like, oh, “I've already spoken about that in there”. But it's just exploring. And some of them are slightly the other way round. This one is one of those. “I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 7:
I'll go with disagree on this one.

Researcher:
What's your thoughts when you hear hear this statement and then you disagree?

Participant 7:
Well my thoughts are that it's kind of saying that I'm going through my lessons essentially without realising what I'm doing. That's kind of the way I've read it.

Researcher:
I mean maybe it was the 7sus4, you know, maybe that's in there a little bit isn't it?

Participant 7:
That's why it's not a strongly disagree because there have been moments here or there. But on the kind of the majority, I do understand what they have me do. I mean, especially when when I was introduced to SOVT exercises, for example. You know, it can seem (as someone completely new to sing lessons) especially in a group setting, it can seem really when we're all doing a literal siren for about two minutes. But I understood the reason behind it, especially as my teacher, we did essentially like a whole small anatomy lesson in that lesson. It was an hour and a half lesson. So we did some anatomy and then we did the SOVT exercises. And even though that kind of exercise

can seem very stupid to be doing. If you don't fully understand it, I think you'd never really want to. But I think understanding that kind of thing and how it helps your voice makes it key that you do understand the majority of what you're doing, because otherwise you're going to get nowhere with it, I think.

Researcher:
And do you think understanding the exercise you're doing makes you better at it and therefore makes your voice better? Or do you think you can do an exercise and be like, “I don't know what's going on here” but still get better? Do you think the understanding helps?

Participant 7:
I think you do still get improvement from not understanding it, but I think understanding it kind of halved the battle. I think with everything in kind of a musical context, I think once you have the understanding and therefore intent behind something, I think that always makes it more authentic or better. So having an understanding of what the exercise is meant to do and then having the intent of doing it makes it far stronger because you're more sure of yourself as you're doing it if you understand what's actually happening.

Researcher:
Yeah, lovely. Let's move on to our next one. “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 7:
That's a tough question. I've had quite a few different teachers this last semester, so I have to bring my mind back. I'll go with neither disagree or agree for a second. I might change my answer. I think there's kind of a, there hasn't been anything glaringly different in what I've been taught. I think I wouldn't say disagree either because there have been small things where it's kind of each teacher I've had. So my usual setup is an hour and a half of singing of group lesson on a Monday morning and we focus more on kind of the technical side of musicianship and arpeggios and etc. Then we have a choir lesson which is really just a bit of fun to be fair, I mean we're learning for a choir but there's nothing more to it other than that. And then I have a half an hour one-on-one every week and then my choir teacher and my Monday teacher both stay the same but my one-on-one has had, it's usually the same teacher but I've had a couple of one-off lessons with other teachers and then there's usually a common thread once they know, once I say to them what I want to improve but they do all focus on different aspects of what I'm doing. So one teacher for example is, the

main focus of doing my current teaching teacher is about how to involve essentially more mouth movement and the right vowel shapes to support what I'm singing, instead of trying to push through with a small mouth and then trying to force the sound out of it. But then I had a one-off singing lesson with another teacher where we were focused on the same kind of thing of my upper range, but essentially she was saying that how tense the rest of my body was; it was really preventing me from getting anywhere. And so I would say slightly agree but not so much that I would say agree on the survey. The common thread there was I was aiming for the exact same point of improving my strength in my upper range. I think mouth movement and jaw tension was pretty similar to head movement and neck tension to the point where they kind of get into the same thing, but not quite. It's not that massively different or contradicting to each other at all.

Researcher:

And then when you have those moments, how do you kind of, because, you know, your voice and your journey is your most important thing, how do you then marry that up in your head and you'll go like, “OK, we're just maybe doing different routes.” Because sometimes that can, when you're practicing, it may get in the way. I guess.

Participant 7:

Yeah, it can be really in this kind of case where it's especially when it I mean, I can imagine when it contradicts each other, it can make it really confusing. But in this case, it's not contradiction. It's kind of going, “Oh, I have to do all of this at the same time.” And it can it can get very difficult in practice. I mean, I remember that one of the key things that both of them essentially said was practice and move your mouth a ton, move your head and your neck a ton and then you'll eventually get to the point where you can just do it without realising. But having to remember doing all of that whilst breathing properly because breathing is something entirely new to me as well. I very much usually don’t when I'm singing which I know isn't good for me. So having to remember all of it and the lyrics of whatever I'm singing, it can, I would say it's overwhelming it just it gets a bit of a lot, it gets a lot in the practice session so and then how do you how do you make that less overwhelming, um, I usually go for if I'm practicing a particular song especially, um, not so much my vocal exercises that I'm doing, um, but if I'm practicing a song I kind of break it down piece by piece. So the breathing is almost a constant now, so I don't have to worry as much about that. It's more about breath placement for that part now. So that's not too bad. That's on a, if I had a lyric sheet, just marking what kind of breath and where I take that. So that part's not too bad anymore. But when it comes to the vowel sounds, I really have to spend a couple of goes getting exactly which one worked for me. I remember when I was practicing the Danny songs for *Grease* when

[Cast member] was ill, when it came to *The One That I Want*, the word ‘chills’, I think it might be a G, that syllable was really hard for me to get that note on. I can see a G pretty easily on that particular syllable I couldn't quite do it, so I had to spend a couple of goes practicing which way to sing it to make that note really clear and easier to hit. When it comes to head movement, that's the one that I usually forget the most about to be fair, but I do think it's the least important. It's just that the teacher said my neck was very tense, so I just kind of tried to move my head around slightly sometimes in the mirror to try and keep the movement going. But I don't really focus on that one as much because I don't think it's as important to me as the other things I've been told to do.

Researcher:
Great, thank you. The next one is: “When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.”

Participant 7:
I want to go with disagree here. Reason being, I'm, I think, I pride myself on being someone who with a kind of a simple explanation, I can, I can get through something. When I, yeah, when I feel confused isn't because I'm doing something wrong. It's because I, I've never really I haven't been told how to do it properly. It's not that I'm doing it wrong, it's that I'm just muddling my way through it because I don't have a clear vision of what it's meant to be because I haven't been told. I wouldn't say that I'm doing it wrong. It's mainly a case of I either haven't been told or I'm muddling my way through it. It's not because I'm doing it completely in the way that they haven't told me to. It's just I've kind of come back to the lack of intent and conviction. It's kind of, feeling confused for me is about not having the intent behind what I'm doing, because I haven't been told how to do it properly. Whereas...

Researcher:
Also maybe experience comes in there as well, if something's new.

Participant 7:
I think when it, if it's something that's completely new, it can be feel easy to be confused at the start of it. But I don't think it's necessarily a case of doing it wrong, because I think if I was second-guessing myself, and then really going, “Am I doing it right?” That's kind of more in the case of, oh, it could be wrong. But that's more about doubt, I think. When it comes to just being confused, I'm just going, I don't really know what I am doing, but I think I'm vaguely doing it in the way that they

wanted But I think there's a way I could improve it if they just clear direction what's meant to be happening.

Researcher:
So when you're practicing, I'm just highlighting, I like how you've explored the language of the prompt. That makes me smile. So you were kind of talking, I'm not aiming, you're kind of maybe aiming for clarity and intent rather than maybe being right or wrong. So when you're practicing, if your aim isn't, “Oh, I'm doing this right”, “I'm doing this wrong”. How do you frame that for yourself? I'm trying to be very unleading.

Participant 7:
Well, the way I try to do it is that I'm not always going to assume that I'm doing something perfectly right. I think for me it's a case of if I... I usually go for exercises that I know I have correct. I think when I do my solo practice, I never throw in an exercise that I'm that confused about or I know that I'm going to get wrong. I want to work on the ones that may still be challenging for me, but that I

know exactly how they work. Because then I can focus on, like I said, on the intent of, if I have real conviction in how I'm practicing, that always helps me, because then I know I can, with meaning behind it and with a real clear line of what my end goal is, instead being right or wrong and doing the actual exercise itself, means that I have kind of more of a, as more of a staying power with me, I think it leads me more towards my goal if I know what I'm aiming for rather than worrying on the minute details whilst I'm practicing of how the exercise is going. I'd rather focus on what it's doing for my voice and if there are small tweaks I can make but I don't think if I'm worrying completely about the exercise then I'm not worrying about the writing at all. I think my voice is like; the improvement of my voice is first and foremost but the exercise is just a way way to get there. It's just we need to figure out which exercises, even if they are challenging, I know correctly and how that can help me to get there.

Researcher:
I love that. That's really informative. Thank you. The next one is; “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.”

Participant 7:
I strongly agree.

Researcher:

Strongly agreeing, number five. That was a very quick response as well.

Participant 7:

Yeah, I think for me it's kind of a case of, I don't often feel confused in my voice lessons, but it just comes back to a case of, if I am so uncertain or very confused, I know I can just simply ask for an explanation. I'm not going to throw myself into doing an exercise without knowing how it works or being massively uncertain of myself. Actually, coming back to the wording, now the uncertainty is into it. I would never do an exercise in a lesson or do something where I'm doubting myself. I think the key example I can give is sometimes I have, when my upper really top of where my chest range reaches. I can absolutely have some apprehension in reaching those notes and that does hold me back slightly when I'm doing it but the next go around I don't panic about it because we just do the exercise again and then the next time around I have absolute confidence hitting it. And the confusion doesn't happen all too often but even if it did I think I get to happily answer for another explanation. I don't think I'd sit there going, going within myself and going, oh I don't know what I'm doing or I don't know what's happening here. I think clarity is just the main, is the most important thing because I think I need to be able to, once I know exactly what I'm doing, even if I'm slightly confused about how it helps me, I know exactly how the exercise works and I can just throw myself into it fully.

Researcher:

It sounds like you're also you also have a really clear, almost like an out-of-body experience. You're always watching yourself and you're like, “This is the greater goal. This is only a step on the ladder to get to it.”

Participant 7:

Yeah, kind of I mean, it's weird. I mean, this sounds, I always try to approach everything from a, like a, just an overall musician's point of view, rather than just somebody who's a singer. So especially when it comes to kind of a band setting for example, I'm often, so I'm newly in this 13 piece like funk and soul band and it's when we're rehearsing it's all about, I'm thinking we're about kind of the goal as a band together rather than just what I'm doing as a singer. Not to throw shade at the other singer, but the other singer always just looks at the lyrics whilst we're rehearsing, whereas I'm looking at the entire score to know exactly how everything's working, know where my rests are. And it also helps when we're doing changes of arrangement, where if I know exactly

what's happening as well, because you don't want to come in as a singer when we're doing, let's say, a trombone solo.

Researcher:
Someone's just knocked on my front door. I wonder who they're from… [slight interruption] Right, we're back in the room. Sorry to interrupt the flow.

Participant 7:
So yeah, everything I do is more about the bigger picture. I think when it comes to being in a band setting, more about what the overall band is doing rather than just what I'm doing as a singer. And then when it comes to my singing lessons, obviously being there in the room and doing all the exercises properly. But I like to think of how these exercises will help me reach to what my current goal is. I think I don't have a current goal, my goal isn't, “Oh, I want to be the best singer in the world.” I think I kind of go, I break that up into chunks and go, “My current goal is working on strengthening my upper range. So I really want to, I can sing in A, but I'd like to really solidify that.” And over the next however much time, I really want to get to be able to sing a C before going into falsetto, but that's kind of, more about how I'm getting there rather than just individual particular like details of confusion or uncertainty.

Researcher:
So when you're in that band setting and you're looking at the bigger picture, how aware, I mean you mentioned that the other singer they're only looking at their lyrics maybe, so then how does that affect you and your journey? You're seeing the bigger picture but you're also seeing seeing 12 other people having their own mini pictures.

Participant 7:
Yeah, I mean, it's quite good because luckily, to be fair, pretty much all the musicians in the band are amazing, better than me, I'd say. I'm not ashamed to admit it. We have a five-piece brass section, four of them are like proper, proper jazzers who go to the conservatoires in London. On the whole, the majority of everyone is looking at everyone else's parts, but not understanding, I think, the other parts in the score or the arrangement just helps. It helps so much, I think, because you can stand there with... The best example I can give is that myself looking at the overall arrangement, knowing exactly when the rests are and so on, and knowing exactly the form and the structure of the song, it lets the other singer, the reason why the other singer only looks at the lyrics or their part is because they know that they can look at me and I'll probably know roughly where

we are, because I usually view them throughout the song, but I think it would be easier if they knew exactly where we were as well. But in comparison to everyone kind of looking at their own part and the comparison of being a singer and looking at the bigger picture there, I think it's just as necessary to do that as any other instrumentalist because let's take the drummer for example. The drummer might be the one looking at the bigger picture or he's the one who's arranged the piece so he knows exactly what everyone's parts are and when to cue the sections but even though you as a singer are not the one leading the new sections, you're not the one taking the solo or cuing what the next one is when it's an instrumental break. It's just as important to know exactly what's happening around you because that's when it does come to being confused with what and doing it incorrectly because you don't want to be kind of like just falling through the song not knowing where you are except for when you hear the one chorus cue or the one verse cue that you know you want to know kind of bars are in the instrumental break. One of the songs we did has a 24 bar break in the middle, which when we first did it, I couldn't remember exactly where I came in, but I looked at the score and saw it was 24 bars. I went, “Ooh, I can count to four, 24 times.” And just knowing that kind of simple thing. And even if you lose count, there's a change within the solo, within the instrumental break that should go, “Oh I know where we are again.” So it was, the song was *Hit Me Square* by *Huey Lewis and the News* and there's kind of the beginning instrumental break and then there's the saxophone solo halfway through. So even if you do lose count then, but knowing what happens in the score of having the saxophone solo halfway through, you know, oh I suddenly know where I am again. So looking at the bigger picture of a singer I think is just as important as any other instrument in the band.

Researcher:
Great, thank you. Our next one is; “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.”

Participant 7:
I would go with agree. I think I'm very happy to ask questions about what I'm doing. The challenging ideas, not necessarily so much because I think because of how new it is to me, of being taught in lessons.

Researcher:
And what does that phrase challenge ideas mean when you hear that?

Participant 7:

It can work in a similar way of asking how something works I believe but I think it's also a kind of case of going well wouldn't this work better or isn't this a particular other way that you can go through it and I think particularly in that phrasing or that idea of the phrase, sorry. I think I'm not quite at the level where I could do that because having only been in singing lessons for four or five months now, I think it's all very new to me. So I don't really know necessarily enough alternatives to go, actually, let's try this out. But, or this would work far better in my opinion. Asking questions I'm absolutely happy to do. I think it comes way back to me being able to have the intent to understand what I'm doing. If I don't ask questions about something I'm never going to fully grasp it and I want to know exactly what I'm doing most of the time so I can just really properly go for it. So that's why it's such an agree because I think asking questions I'm absolutely happy to do and all my teachers are very supportive so I think it'd be very to ask them a question without them looking down on you for asking it. Even if it's a simple question, they're very happy to answer it and then we'll go into it. But challenging ideas, I'm not quite there. Maybe in the six months I'd go for it, but I think I'm just there to shut up and listen at the moment, really.

Researcher:

Very interesting. The next one. “In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I'm told rather than understanding rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 7:

I don't know whether to strongly disagree or disagree on this one.

Researcher:

Explain what you're thinking.

Participant 7:

Well, I mean, I'm speaking the entire time about focusing on kind of what's happening to me and the bigger goal and how that's being achieved. And I think that's that would lead to one strongly disagreeing. But I can't do that without doing exactly what I'm told to do in the lessons. I can't think about how I'm achieving this goal of, let's say, increasing my upper range or a particular thing, whatever the next goal is in my mind. And then, essentially, only half do the exercise I'm told to do thinking more about what's happening to me. I think they kind of work in a balance of I do the exercise I'm told to do and then whilst doing that or having done that exercise I understand what is happening. So I think I'm gonna go with disagree because I still do exactly what I'm told when I do

the exercise but it's then once I've done it, or whilst I'm doing it, that's when the understanding of what is happening comes in. And I think I do lean, I don't know, I think I'm talking myself into the middle now.

Researcher:
It's interesting, isn't it? And this is the whole purpose of the study. The questions may feel easy, or they may not feel easy. The whole point is you exploring your thoughts about them.

Participant 7:
I think, yeah, put me down for three, I'd say actually. Reason being, even though I have spoken about kind of the intent in the bigger picture or bigger goal in what I'm doing, I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. I think you can do what you're told and also understand what's happening. And I think both of them work just as well. I mean, I wouldn't necessarily come up with the particular vocal exercise that the teacher tells me to do. And so, therefore, I would do it. But then as soon as I have done it, the understanding of what I've just done, or prior to doing it, understanding what is happening in the exercise is just important, I think. Especially because they have way more experience than I do, especially in vocal teaching. I'm not a voice teacher at all. That they come up with and then focusing on understanding what I'm doing beforehand is, oh, okay, no, put me down for disagreeing. I'm fairly committed. So the reason I've just changed my mind is because I do like to understand what happens in the exercise before I do it. And I just realised I kind of, I think I lead myself down a path I didn't necessarily have to based on the question.

Researcher:
That's how we grow thoughts.

Participant 7:
I do what is involved or what's happening or how the exercise helps me but understand what is happening within the exercise beforehand and then understand how that helps me or realise myself what that's doing for me after or during the exercise. It's kind of the way I work. I'm still going to do what I'm told and do the exercise though so I'm not going to go as strongly as But I think, yeah, I do like to understand what is happening before I do it.

Researcher:
Our next one is: “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 7:
I'll go with agree. I do still feel very new to it. But the amount of the... especially when it comes to decisions about my own voice, I absolutely agree. I think, um, I felt it really clearly, um, especially when it comes down to a major thing I'm practicing of vowel sounds and mouth shape went to support that. That, when I first was taught about it and when I first did it in practice with, um, *Master Blaster* by *Stevie Wonder*. We doing that song for one of my exams and it's kind of the last line of the first verse, it goes on the corner at the end of the block. I'm not going to sing it right now. I'm not warmed up in the slightest.

Researcher:
I don't keep the audio recording, it's all right.

Participant 7:
No, it's fine. I wouldn't be able to hit the notes at all. I'd be talking about it and then not actually demonstrate at all what I was talking about. But it was a very interesting vocal lesson because the teacher I had, it was just a one-off lesson. And to be honest, I did actually prefer that lesson with her than any of my other vocal lessons I had with my ongoing teacher. No hate to my ongoing teacher, but I think this particular one-off lesson, that teacher grasped what I was aiming for far better, and I think she really catered the lesson to me a lot more. But we were talking about the difference between the vowel shapes and so on, and I hadn't thought about it at all up until that point I was kind of very set on the way that thinking this is how the words written on the paper. I know how the word is meant to be said in spoken in spoken English so I'm going to try and sing that word in the same sound that you would say it in. And on the word end we're focusing on opening up the ‘ee’ so kind of work at and instead of just end really like a really short sound on the ‘ee’ and it made an absolute night and day difference on how easily it was hit once doing that. And since then I've been able to make more kind of informed decisions, especially about that kind of thing about mouth shapes and vowels and syllables. And even though I'm still working particularly on the mouth shape side of it, I think being able to make the informed decision about what syllable I should use here and there really helps because it kind of songs that were previously difficult to sing for me a lot easier. It supports my voice so much more. And about breathing as well. I had no idea about breathing before doing vocal lessons in September, but now being able to know kind of

roughly where I want to take a breath and how big of a breath I need to take. Take the end of *Beauty School Dropout* when I went for the A I knew running up those stairs that I had to take a really deep breath in the quick moment I had. Because I wouldn't have a chance to take a stacked breath just before the note, so I'd have to take a really deep breath to go for that note. Or, because it was kind of free time, I could just stop and take a breath just beforehand. So I think I am absolutely increasingly able to make informed decisions about myself. I wouldn't say strongly agree, because I think there's still a way to go. But in comparison with where I was before I had any vocal lessons, I definitely am. And my training, to some extent as well, we had to do for last semester for our exams, we had to give a presentation about ourselves as a singer. And one of the aspects of it was demonstrating how we warm up and some of the exercises we do. One of the exercises I did was an intonation exercise and that is absolutely an example of making a decision about my own voice and training. You sing one note and then you slide into a semi-note higher over the course of like six bars and it's about really getting the intonation of that semi-note change. And I saw it from a video of a choir doing it as an intonation workshop. And I think without kind of having at least a bit of training behind, like a bit of lesson in the training behind me, I wouldn't have felt comfortable making that decision to go, yeah, this is something I want to work on and really focus on. So I think I definitely am able to, like increasingly able to make important decisions.

Researcher:
That's really interesting. Thank you. Our next one, short and sharp: “I trust my teacher's expertise.”

Participant 7:
Yeah, I go strongly agree with this one actually. I think all of the teachers I've had, absolutely I trust their expertise, especially I'm really getting into jazz singing at the moment. I think I've realised that that's kind one of the main avenues that I want to go down and focus on for the rest of my life essentially. That's really something that interests me and I really enjoy doing it. Even though she's my group vocal lesson teacher, that jazz singer. We did a one-on-one about vocal improv and scatting. The expertise she had, it was so useful. That's how it may have been one of the best singing lessons I've had in the last six months. It was so informative and she broke it down so clearly that it was clear that her expertise in the field, she had so much experience in doing it. And I'm actually having another one-on-one about jazz singing next week with her, which I'm really looking forward But it's the same with all of my teachers, like my choir teacher, she went to [Name of conservatoire], and half the arrangements we do are arrangements that her old [Name of conservatoire] teacher did. So she's massively familiar with them, and she's also massively familiar with arranging the choirs herself. And then my one-on-one sing teacher, I absolutely and she

comes from a gospel background. And there has been no point where I've thought, yeah, my teachers don't know what they're talking about. I think they all have the experience that they need to be doing it, and I firmly believe in it.

Researcher:
That's good news for you and the institution. So, leading on from that: “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 7:
I strongly disagree.

Researcher:
Let's explore that.

Participant 7:
I can trust them, I can trust their expertise, but it doesn't mean I have to blindly believe everything that they tell me or tell me to do. As much as I don't necessarily challenge the ideas that they might give me in vocal lessons just yet, it doesn't mean I won't do it in the future. I think I might not believe myself to be in the position to do so just yet, because I think I should learn a little bit before I am able to actually challenge or properly question what they say.

Researcher:
I guess there's a difference between verbalising it and thinking it as well.

Participant 7:
Yeah, 100%. But I also think questioning what they say can also be taken more of a softer approach of actually just asking a question of how the exercise is useful for me, or for them to just explain and I absolutely already. So I think trusting someone is also trusting them to give an answer to your question or trusting them to have more thought behind just the singular exercise. Fine, if I challenge what they say or if I were to challenge their idea and went how about this one and this one, I think having trust in someone means that they'd also, you know, either they provide a reason why they're they go, actually, you're right, we should do that, or they provide an equally good reason why they go, no, this is the one that we should stick with, or trusting them is then also to give, trusting them to give a really good explanation or make me understand why I'm doing a particular thing, I think is just as important as just believing in their expertise. I think, yeah, I think

trust is kind of an encompassing thing of, even if I were to question them or challenge their ideas, they would equally good answer, good response to that as well.

Researcher:

“Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Participant 7:

I'm between agree and strongly agree. And I'm trying to figure out what, I'm not sure, I think I'm leaning towards strongly agree. I think feeling understood is a really important thing. And that's not necessarily, you know, being understood as a person, but kind of, you know, for the teacher to understand what I'm aiming for. Or, so with working on the, my upper range at the moment, my one-on-one teacher still completely understands it and was also going to suggest the same thing. And I think that really helps because we both have kind of a common thought before it's even begun. Or with my group lesson teacher who then did the jazz one-on-one, there was a clear feeling of being understood there because I really want to delve into the specific area of singing that she specialises in. And I think just feeling understood in a lesson makes it so much easier to be receptive to what's being Why do you think is? Because I think feeling understood encompasses a lot of things. If I didn't feel understood, as in if they didn't understand where I'm coming from as a singer, what my background is or what I'm aiming for as a singer, if I was to be given to a teacher as a complete blank slate with and I wasn't allowed to say my background or what I was aiming for, or they didn't know. And they gave me something that I think isn't necessarily as important for me to work on. Particularly my mid-range, kind of the G to F, that area, like G3 to F4, I think is I'm not going to say it doesn't need any work, but if there's anything in my voice that I can rely on, that's always going to be completely strong. And there, it's that range. And if a teacher then suddenly said, no, let's work on that, I would feel like they don't understand what I need as a singer. And I think it's so important to be understood. So for my current one-on-one to understand that I want to work my upper range, and also actually realising that that's really what she wants me to work on at the same time as I think there's a kind of an understanding between us there that really helps because it's not necessarily a common goal because it isn't her voice that she's improving but it's a goal in the fact of a common goal for me that we believe in there or with my group teacher with the jazz singing I feel understood there because it's a similar thing it's kind of a common goal for me between us where I think if they didn't understand me as a singer, so my, like I said, background or future, I think there would be no staying power in what they actually taught me, because what they might give me as an exercise isn't necessarily what I need. So I'm going to go with strongly agree, I think.

Researcher:

Great, thank you. We're on our last three now. “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand stand my voice better.”

Participant 7:

I'll go with neither agree nor disagree.

Researcher:

So what's the pluses and minuses of that then? The benefits or the...

Participant 7:

Actually, no, I'll go with agree.

Researcher:

A change of heart?

Participant 7:

Yeah, I've always... Oh, no, actually, back to my original answer. I neither agree or disagree. And the reason being, scientific explanations specifically, are something I absolutely love. I really dove into wanting to work as a scientist when I was at school and I did GCSE PE of all things for the theory, not at all for the sports. So when it comes to the scientific explanation of how the voice works, I love it. I really enjoy that kind of thing. And then take SOVT for example, like being taught the actual anatomical reason or the actual anatomical work behind them in comparison with just a standard singing, it really helped me to understand both my voice and what it does for me a lot better. And then the technical side of it is where I disagree in, I think, or slightly disagree or not disagree at all kind of thing, where the technical explanation does help. And I suppose it does help me to understand my voice better. But it's kind of the scientific explanations really stick with me. And then the technical explanations don't necessarily stick with me as much about understanding how it helps my voice better. I can believe it, believe in what the explanation is. But I don't know, I might be slightly indifferent towards it. It's good to know. Actually, I'm going to go with agree.

Researcher:

I love this journey.

Participant 7:

I do think technical explanations do help me understand. And scientific explanations really help me understand. It's just that I think what was confusing me is that technical ones don't help me understand as much as the scientific ones do. But there's still one out there. Understanding that they bring to me. At no point do I go, this isn't helping you understand my voice at all. So I think I'll stick with the grey there.

Researcher:

So on the other side of the coin: “Imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 7:

I'm going to go with neither disagree or agree on this one, actually. Reason being, the imagery can help. So coming back to like, vowel sounds and syllables, talking about the colour of that, like a darkness or brightness. Love it. That's really, that's really good for me. But the method for all kind of like, the imagery of or when, what's another one? When we're in choir lessons, and the teacher's talking about the, all of us saying, all of us staying in tune by the soprano is essentially holding us up. It makes sense. But I don't think beyond the colour of a syllable, imagery and metaphor doesn't really help me that much. But then there are specific examples that do really work for me. So it kind of goes both ways. There's no particular... I need a combination of essentially logic and imagery. One or the other doesn't really work for me.

Researcher:

Which brings us nicely onto the last one. “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 7:

Strongly disagree. Strongly disagree.

Researcher:

Strongly disagree.

Participant 7:

Yeah, I think that's, I don't have much more to say other than that's exactly what I want. That's for me. I mean, imagery and metaphors and so on don't necessarily stick with me as much but

switching, throwing the technical language does work really well for me. And then imagery, I think is just there to provide kind of just like a boost to it, really. And therefore, it just works really well. That's the kind of teaching I really enjoy.

Researcher:
That's our last question. Is there anything you feel that has come up in your mind that you haven't said or spoken about?

Participant 7:
No, I don't think so. Yeah, I think I've drained the reservoir. I've really gone for everything.

Researcher:
Thank you so much for your time this morning.

Participant 7:
Of course.

Participant 7:
It's been really enjoyable.

Researcher:
Well, thank you so much. Enjoy the rest of your day.

Participant 7:
You too.

Participant 8 – Interview Transcript

Participant 8:
Hello, hello. Hello. Long time no see.

Researcher:
Long time no see. Thank you so much for agreeing to do this. There are no right or wrong answers there's 15 prompts guiding us through clarity confusion agency learning relationships and all things like that. And they're all based on a Likert scale. So rating one to five, strongly disagree to strongly agree. Now, I'm not going to be, I will have a quantitative lens, but I'm not going to be quantitatively analysing the answers. They are merely as a prompt for you to explore your thoughts. And my primary data is anything and everything you think and therefore say. Are you ready?

Participant 8:
Yes.

Researcher:
Here we go: “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.”

Participant 8:
OK. I've now got a question for you already.

Researcher:
Good.

Participant 8:
I have had a number of teachers. I've had five… probably five… teachers over the years.

Researcher:
Yeah.

Participant 8:
Do I answer for my coach? Or for teachers in general.

Researcher:
You can explore all of that and then maybe through the exploration you might find a median answer.

Participant 8:
Number four.

Researcher:
Okay. And what was going on there to make you choose a number four for us?

Participant 8:
It’s been very different between different teachers. For some it was because that's what we always do, for some it was to improve the ability to do a particular type of something specific in a particular song and it was just to create a sense of building general stamina and in some cases it was to help me specifically with what challenges I might have. So, and in some cases, I just didn't know, I did it because they told me.

Researcher:
And as you're remembering those, can you think of any examples of any of those situations? So maybe where something felt particularly clear or not particularly?

Participant 8:
Okay. Yeah, in the past there was someone who gave me, oh, you know, it's a book of these are the exercises and these are the, going up and down these and that's the one that's particularly good for trying to get you to be able to do quick whatever. So that was given with a very specific purpose, whether it was effective or not, I don't know, but I knew why I was being asked to do that. For some, when it's just, “Oh, we just do some warmups”, you know, it's warmup, I don't know. In the case of yours, we had good discussions about why I was doing them. And actually, one of the reasons that we did that was because actually, there was quite a lot to do. And I just wanted to jump on to doing the singing. And so it was important for me to understand why it was good to do. And also I felt I had the confidence to ask you that and you explained it in a way that I then took on board. Not that I always did it but I knew why I should be doing it.

Researcher:
Great, should we move on to the second one?

Participant 8:

Yes, yes.

Researcher:

“I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 8:

A vocal exercise. We're at four for exactly the reasons I've just explained.

Researcher:

And what was the vocalised sigh for?

Participant 8:

That I've answered the wrong question than the previous one.

Researcher:

They're merely prompts.

Researcher:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:

So how does that make you feel that you had an answer before your time?

Participant 8:

No, I mean, it's... So, the previous question is, I understand why. And the second is, I feel clear about what it's meant to help me improve. So, the first one, it could be, why? Well, it's because we always do it. And if I understood that, well, this teacher, it's because we always do it, it isn't necessarily going to help me improve. Whereas I, the sort of learner that I am, I both want to understand why they're asking me to do it, but also what the benefit for me personally is. There, I think we've covered that one, have we?

Researcher:

Yes, absolutely. Here's number three: “I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 8:

No. Well, that would be a number two, because in the past, there might have been some occasions. I can give you an example.

Researcher:

Great.

Participant 8:

In the past, where I was given something to do. But this is sort of, this might not fit with this one. I was that then enabled me to produce that song better there and then. But I didn't understand it enough that I could then go home and work on that and independently have that development. And that was a frustration for me because it was almost like, but you're singing it better, isn't that enough? And it was like, well, no. I'd like to understand how I can take this knowledge outside of this lesson and that will then continue to help me improve and that I can see that change myself outside the lesson.

Researcher:

And why was that, this might be an obvious question, why does that feel important to you?

Participant 8:

Because I take personal responsibility for my development and I feel that the development should not only be happening in the actual lesson, I would hope that I can go out and practice and improve myself. And if I don't have the understanding of how to do that, then I'm less likely to be able to improve.

Researcher:

Great. Let's move on: “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 8:

Isn't there a number six? Let's just call it a number five.

Researcher:

Yes. And how does that sit within, you know, you mentioned at the beginning you've had five singing teachers.

Participant 8:
I'm trying to think actually now, let me just check.

Participant 8:
Yeah, five that I can particularly remember.

Researcher:
And also you've had, you know, a lot of experience in musical theatre and choirs and choral societies.

Participant 8:
Choral leaders, choir leaders and musical theatre MDs. If anything, that there was even more difference between them. Definitely approaches that seem to contradict each other. Just a very basic thing. If you're doing a warmup before you're doing something, some of them seem to be completely the opposite to what someone else was suggesting. You do. I mean, you only need to have the idea of if you've got a high note to sing later on, make sure before you've gone on stage, you can actually sing the note above because then you've got a more chance of singing the note on stage. If you've got a high note on stage, it's not about warming up to reach that note. It's about general warming up and then that note will flow, you know. How you stand, how you breathe, when you breathe, how much you breathe, how much breath you need, how much you open your mouth. Do you need to open your mouth? Where is the sound coming from? So, yes, huge amounts of difference of approach.

Researcher:
And then how do you...

Participant 8:
Oh, I've thought of a sixth teacher.

Researcher:
Oh, there we go.

Participant 8:
And there's a particular reason why that one came. She didn't know why she was teaching. She was just teaching me the way she had been taught. And she was very competent and she'd gone

to a conservatoire. But in terms of the way she was teaching me, it was simply passing on what she had had as opposed to being about me. There we go.

Researcher:
That's interesting. Great. And with this experience and the weight of the passion at which you answered five, how do you then create a calm direction of you and how you want to progress through those stormy contradictory opinions?

Participant 8:
OK. Well, one reason is one thing is you don't necessarily stick with the same singing teacher.

Researcher:
Absolutely.

Participant 8:
For me, it's recognising that it isn't simply a one-way thing of... I don't know, it's not like you're all watching the same TV show and then you interpret it. It's absolutely a two-way thing that you need to have some understanding of yourself, teacher needs to have a good understanding of you and what your challenges are, what your motivation is as well, how you work as a person, and what your priorities are and why you're doing it.

Researcher:
And that can change as often as a teacher change, can't it?

Participant 8:
That can change. That can change over time, and it can change depending on the context in which you're doing the singing as well. That's not to say that one person is... I mean, I've always been intrigued by hearing from different people, but there have been occasions when I've thought, actually, I'm just going to nip to the loo during this warm-up. Because this isn't, I warm up at home, this won’t be helpful for me.

Researcher:
Yeah.

Participant 8:

Oh, I'll give you another example of, if a warmup is, what's the purpose of a warmup before you go on stage? From a personal point of view, I want to be in the zone, but relaxed. And if I am asked to do a singing exercise involves trying to match numbers to notes and to all have a bit of a laugh about it, I will get very stressed that I find it very difficult to remember the right things. And similarly,

if it's anything that's a call and response, I find that very difficult because I'm a visual learner in that I like to visualise it on a stave to be able to sing it. And so there I'm concentrating mad to try and think, “Was it up there or down there?” And that does not relax me at all. So if you have an environment where other people are going, “Oh, this is really good fun. I've had a good laugh. I now feel relaxed. I'm ready to go on stage.” It could have completely the opposite effect for me. And in previous show I was in, I actually did excuse myself and went to the loo. I warmed up at home. I went to the loo during the warm-up to just not have to deal with someone else's approach to...

Researcher:
And things like that seem to me as an outsider to be easily remedied by just having a printout for people who would like to see it on a score and just go, that's what it is.

Participant 8:
Yeah.

Researcher:
And then all the participants are included in the fun rather than be excluded.

Participant 8:
Yeah. And well, there are, yeah, there might be other ones where the point of it is meant to be to try and get your brain working.

Researcher:
But if everyone's brains are in different positions, starting positions, aren't they?

Participant 8:
Exactly. Yeah. And it's so so that's an example of a different approach. The breathing one has been quite difficult, and they open your mouth or don't open your mouth is quite tricky. And, yeah, I'm now going to be personal, I have to say with you, this is what's been so...

Researcher:

That's okay, I'm definitely an insider researcher, it's okay.

Participant 8:

What's been so interesting at coming to you is that either this is your style, the thing of, you know, it's physically being produced, so it's actually quite handy if we physically know what's going on, but we understand which bits we can control and what we can't to also recognise that a lot of, a fair amount of what was going on for me was the tension and the stress. So if we're trying to deal with tension, you have to manage dealing with the tension so that it doesn't get in the way of the singing and recognise that that's part of the issue. But the very fact that I get excited about the having, oh dear, what's the word? When you've got the chart and it shows what the frequencies are. The frequency response chart thing, live. And that fascinates me. And then to ask you to sing and I sing in different ways. And then you relate what the frequency response is to what it sounds like in a recording, how you feel about it, and sort of look at those three together. So it's the physical, it's something physically happening in me. It's something in terms of what you hear, but it's also, for me, understanding the frequencies. In contrast, if it's just, imagine the this or that sort doesn't work so well for me, probably because of my, you know, fascination with acoustics in my background. But to have a singing teacher who acknowledges that is the basis of who I am. So therefore, working through things like that with me is really helpful. The other thing is, teachers approach or approaches contradict each other. The idea that as long as you can sing well when you leave the class, leave the lesson, they've done their job. Whereas your approach felt very much more equipping me. I mean, it's almost like trying to put yourself out of a job. “It's okay if you don't come back for a fortnight. You don't have to come back and see me next week. Come back in a fortnight, you know, go and build on it.” But it's never felt like that. It's felt like I am being equipped to enjoy singing and not just follow rules, but to understand what's going on better. Therefore, I can enjoy it better and I can help myself improve. There we go. That's that.

Researcher:

There we go. Let's move on.

Participant 8:

That's another lesson soon?

Researcher:

When your PhD is out the way? I need what you just said, not in this setting, but on a testimonial on the website. That's what I need. The next one is; “When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.”

Participant 8:

When I feel confused.

Researcher:

There's a lot to unpack. That's on purpose.

Participant 8:

Number three on that. I'm confused because I'm not understanding. I'm confused because I've maybe not managed to produce yet the effect I'm trying to get, but the point is it's not like here is the instruction, you do it and now you can It's here is the concept, here is something to try. Let's try it out a bit. I'm not very good at not getting it right first time because I'm a bit of a perfectionist. However, recognising that the lesson is a safe space to explore trying things out is very helpful. So, however, I do tend to think, “Oh, God, I can't do this.” But if I'm with a teacher who supports me through that, they're actually recognising that that is a personality challenge for me rather than it being a problem in the teaching method.

Researcher:

Or even a case of whether something is right or wrong.

Participant 8:

Oh, oh, I see what you mean. Oh, yes, that's the end of the sentence, is it? Doing something wrong. There are certainly some things that are wrong. However, there can be many things that are right. And exploring the choices of different ways of doing it right or not wrong is really helpful. Yeah, I think as I have got older, I have understood better that it can be about choices. And so it's not about right or wrong. Except, yeah, there are some things that can become so unhelpful, they are wrong.

Researcher:

Yeah, I like a number three. “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.”

Participant 8:

Panicking? Four. Four? Yes. You weren't expecting that?

Researcher:

I'm not expecting anything.

Participant 8:

I don't panic. I might feel a bit frustrated and that might... Create a bit of additional tension. Uncertainty and confusion are two different things, I think.

Researcher:

Uncertainty is...

Participant 8:

Let's start with confusion. Confusion is not really sure what I'm being asked to do and not understanding how I could do that and what I might need to... How to use my own body and mind to do that. Whereas the uncertainty is, how would this work? I understand what I'm trying to do here, but how would that work for me? And how do I actually make it happen? So the confusion is the ‘what’ more, and the uncertainty is the ‘how’. I'm not very good with the ‘what’, that I will ask questions so that I understand the ‘what’. The ‘how’. I can get a bit frustrated, but I won't panic. And if I'm starting to get too stressed about it, you know, if I stamp my foot and whatever, then I'm glad who helps me away from that.

Researcher:

And then how do you manage situations where there's a teacher or a conductor which is not helping you deal with, let's replace panic with stress?

Participant 8:

Okay, if I'm in an environment where there's an MD asking for something that I really can't see what they're getting at. I will get cross and I will get stressed about it. But I'm also, I'm inclined now to fall back on sort of a bit more confidence in my own knowledge about things. So if what they're asking is something that doesn't fit with how I feel, I understand my own voice, I will be slightly loathed to go down that direction. However, it will stress me. And at times I will just do what I'm told and think, “Well, okay, if that's what they want, I'll give it a go, you know.” But, and I don't

understand either why they want it or exactly what it is they're wanting and how I should do it. But, so yeah, it's likely to make me, it's likely to make me cross as to panic.

Researcher:
That's okay. Our next one: “I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.”

Participant 8:
I hope I don't challenge too many ideas.

Researcher:
I don't think challenge has to be positive or negative. Well, I mean, it could be all positive.

Participant 8:
OK. In voice lessons, absolutely. In group environments, less so, because I recognise that there is a goal for the group as a whole, and the chorus master MD or choirmaster has a role to play to try and get us all to work as a team, as an ensemble, even if you're a soloist, to fit the director's idea. So I think there's a difference between lessons and music leadership in a group.

Researcher:
So, if you had to summarise all that is you and had to choose a number, what number would you choose?

Participant 8:
Oh, I forgot to give you a number. Oh, I'm still going to say a five.

Researcher:
Great. The next one is, “In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.” It links to something you've already said, I think, doesn't it?

Participant 8:
I think I'm a one. I need to understand it. I like to understand it.

Researcher:
Great.

Participant 8:

Yeah I think that I've already said it really haven't I?

Researcher:

Anything can flow at any point. Okay: “I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 8:

Five. Five. I must come back and get some more lessons.

Researcher:

When the write-up's finished maybe for both of us.

Participant 8:

It's an interesting thing about increasingly able, I'm now realising I think I have had six teachers. Is that due to age? Is that due to development that I'm now, you know, the next thing would be the diploma? Is it due to confidence or stubbornness as an individual or actually as a singer? Increasingly able to make informed decisions. I think it depends on your teacher. I've been in environments where I've had teachers that I haven't really feel have helped me make informed decisions. They've made the decisions for me. But I would rather be in an environment where I can make informed decisions.

Researcher:

I think everyone would, maybe.

Participant 8:

I don't know. I think some people want to be told what to do. They'll do it and it'll happen. Okay. I think also, this is an interesting thing, I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training. It's a bit like a haircut, if you go in saying I'd like my hair to look like like this, and the hairdresser's going, “Actually, that's not really what your hair's designed to do.” There is a danger that we listen to people singing that, you know, if you're going to do a song in musical theatre, you listen to it on Spotify, you maybe you go to somewhere where you hear someone else sing that song, and you think, “I'd like to sound like them.” And because that's how you aspire. That's how you think you should develop is to become someone like them. Whereas I'd like to be someone like me and do the best I can do with what I've got. And it could be that doing the best I

can do with what I've got is not actually sounding like someone else. Yeah. However, I can change my mind. Because it was about six years ago that I said, “I'm really not interested in learning how to belt.” And now I'm curious about how belting and how it, you know, the possibilities of using it. But this is about going back to the hairstyle analogy. It's understanding what is possible as a hairstyle, rather than just coming up with one that you're saying, “I want it to look like this picture of a famous person. I just want to sound like you know”, whoever it might be. Increasingly able to make informed decisions. Yes, both, well, all three from getting older, being more mature as a singer and feeling more confident with my singing teacher.

Researcher:
Great. I love that exploration.

Participant 8:
You're sort of thinking qualitative, what can I pick out of this? What can I pick out of You've got a few quotes for me there.

Researcher:
That's me with NVivo all next week.

Participant 8:
If you want me to rephrase it in something as a short reply, just let me know.

Researcher:
Thank you. “I trust my teacher's expertise.”

Participant 8:
Number five. Okay. It would have been a bit embarrassing if I'd gone, “I think we're at number three on this one.”

Researcher:
I think it's... I think with people that have had multiple teachers, it's interesting.

Participant 8:
Okay, that's a thing. Did I trust you? It could be a thing if you wanted to.

Researcher:

It can be whatever you decide for it to be.

Participant 8:

Okay. Let me think through the teachers previously. When I first started, this is an interesting thing, I'm going to go through them now. When I first started, I was at school and just coming out of school, I stayed in the local area and I went back to my school and did some singing lessons. The power dynamic between us, because she had been my A-level music teacher, and it's the first time that I'd tried to sing, because previously I was a pianist and I was an oboist. She clearly had expertise as a teacher and was a good singer, but the dynamic was such that I didn't have the confidence to even let her try and find out what my voice was. I was just constantly embarrassed I couldn't sound like her. Then when I moved, oh, I'm thinking of the one when I was up in Cheshire and she was the one who had been to the Royal Northern and I just, on reflection, she was just reiterating the way she had been taught, but because she'd been to the Royal Northern, I think she was maybe, I thought, “Well, she must know what she's talking about.” So I tried to follow. Then there was an older woman that I went to when I first moved to the west of London. And things started to come into shape of there are different ways of doing things and different options. And she was a teacher as opposed to a singer, primarily, actually. And then we moved on to another one, once I'd moved to this area. Oh, I found some more. I've got up to four. Another one, I got to this area and I was suddenly moving into classical singing more. And she, I definitely trusted her expertise. However, I think I was still, trying to be someone else rather than trying to be the best I could be. Then there was one who is very much a classical singer, I'm getting the order wrong here, very much a classical singer who didn't want to work on any musical theatre with me because it just wasn't what she did and that struck me as very odd but I thought “Okay, I know she works with very capable...” I knew other people who had been taught by her and I again I thought “Well they are very high achievers so she must be a good person to be with.” Then we went to another one who was much more interested in the person and he dis-intrigued me because I'd never been to a male singing teacher so I thought “Well how can a male singing teacher teach me?” And that makes me realise that in all previous cases, it was about emulating their way of singing because that's how I interpreted it. And I learned a very great deal with him. However, there were times when I, this was the thing of, if you're sounding great at the end of the lesson, that's fine. And I was thinking, “No, but I want something to take away. I want to, you know, I don't want it to be magic. I don't want you to wave a magic wand. I want to understand.” And then we have my final teacher who I trust completely because I don't need to have any validation because the effects and the confidence show themselves and it is what I'm wanting that I can take something

away that I can work on and I understand it's like finally after how many... I've got to, this isn't about me, the expertise isn't about turning me into a singer, this other singer, it's about me developing to be, make the choices I want, to be able to do with my voice the best that I can do, and to enjoy it. Which is, that is an expertise in understanding the student, it's an expertise in understanding the student's psychology as well as physiology, and understanding the student's priorities, which is unlike some of the earlier ones, they don't want to just be like me and wish they were at the Royal Northern College, you know. There we go.

Researcher:
I love that very thorough answer. Thank you.

Participant 8:
How many was that? I think we've got...

Researcher:
I think it was eight, maybe.

Participant 8:
I'm visualising them all. And one of the things, actually, here's the thing, and this is not on the... It's related to the panic thing, is... How much did I enjoy going to all of those? What was my reason for going to have singing lessons with all of those eight people? How much did I enjoy it and how did I feel when I went in and how did I feel when I left? All of those eight. And obviously, you know, it depends on why you are learning, having singing lessons as to what your priority would be. One hopes you're going in into it with a sense of, “I'm looking forward to this.” I have to say, many times there was a sense of, “I wish I'd done more practice”, but you know, hey. But I would hope that I would come out not only thinking I sang well, but also thinking I'm going to enjoy, this has increased my enjoyment, so I am going to continue to enjoy singing. And you see, I'm not aiming… I'm not auditioning next week for the West End. So if you were, you'd have a bit of a different priority.

Researcher:
Maybe enjoyment is still a contributing factor more people need to consider. Let's move on to the next prompt: “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 8:

Disagree. I'm not into blind trust. I need to... I can question. They might then say, “OK, you might not understand this at the moment, but let's just give it a go.” But I'm still going to question. Yeah, there you go. That's my answer.

Researcher:

And maybe in a choral setting, you are questioning what they say, maybe just not verbalising that.

Participant 8:

Yeah, OK.

Researcher:

For political reasons. Yes, exactly.

Participant 8:

And for the political reasons, but also for the benefit of the group as a whole. Yeah.

Researcher:

Great. “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Researcher:

Number five.

Participant 8:

Number five.

Participant 8:

I hope I'm not too much of a burden to my teachers. It's easier to teach people that you don't have to understand. And you can just do...

Researcher:

We're on our last three now.

Participant 8:

Oh, really?

Researcher:

“Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

Participant 8:

Yeah. Oh, yes. Number five. But then...

Researcher:

Oh, there's a hesitation?

Participant 8:

No, no, I'm thinking... Yes, no, they do help me understand my voice better, but it's almost what kinds of technical or scientific explanations, but let's not get into that.

Researcher:

We can get into it if you want. Or maybe we'll look at the next one first. Shall we look at the next one first then?

Participant 8:

Yeah.

Researcher:

“Imagery, metaphor, a sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 8:

Better. Well, this is a three because sometimes one needs to have imagery or metaphor in the scientific explanations because I'm not having the thing down my throat to show me and you don't have the nerves to be able to sense all the things. So, middling, but I would like that. And also imagery and all that kind of stuff can help with the physical stresses for the whole body as well as it just being the vocal cords. So, but not on its own, just it's not enough.

Researcher:

The final prompt is the third in the trilogy of the final questions: “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 8:

I think you need both. So, strongly disagree.

Researcher:

Great. That's the end of our 15 prompts.

Participant 8:

How long did that take?

Researcher:

Well, we didn't start dead on the start, so probably about 45 minutes.

Participant 8:

Okay. You did say let's finish the three. So where was it I was? Oh, it's going back to the science the previous one. Not that one. Not that one. But this one. Yeah. Yeah, well, it's been interesting for me. As I said, it was this three-way thing between physiology. Yeah. And looking up about how, not just sound, but how different vowel sounds and consonants are made and, and where they are in the mouth. And therefore, you know, that bit needs to be free, if you're going to try to make that sound, if you're trying to, if you're, you know, if you're adapting sounds, but the most useful thing has in, you know, the M1 and M2 and thinking of understanding the way the vocal cords work, but then to be able to explore using that in different ways so that it feels like it's not just an explanation, what it's done is given you access to make choices and understand those choices in a physical way. And that's vocal cords. I ought to be a brilliant singer at the end of all this. But anyway, not yet, because I haven't done all the practice. But understanding the vocal cords, understanding the air resonances, understanding about whether it's nasal or not, but also understanding the role of breath and the role of the physicality at the same time. It's, yeah, I'm saying the word understand a lot.

Researcher:

Absolutely, yeah. So looking back on...

Participant 8:

I got so excited about the...

Researcher:
The spectrogram.

Participant 8:
That's the word, the spectrograph. And I accept that that is probably a bit individual to me that I got so excited about it. But...

Researcher:
I mean, I guess it's the closest thing we get in a music room to putting a camera down there and actually visualising something physical in the physical domain of what's going on inside us.

Participant 8:
But it also...

Researcher:
Also, you know how to read one, so that helps.

Participant 8:
There were lots of things I found fascinating about that. I discovered that I tend to swoop. I don't hit notes very cleanly. That should be a choice. If you want to swoop, you can swoop. But if you want to hit the notes cleanly, you should be able to hit the notes cleanly, that I have tendency to land on a note and then grow on it once I've got confidence I'm on the right note, you know, that spectrograph gave me so much more. But also times when I thought I was loud because it felt loud in my body wasn't necessarily audibly loud to other people because that's what that was demonstrating and that was fascinating because then that brings it back to what are you actually hearing when you're listening to yourself? And yes, we can sing for ourselves, but ultimately, if you're going to do it in public, what other people hear matters. So I found that... So that's the sort of technical side, as well as the scientific of what's going on in the body.

Researcher:
Are there any aspects of voice teaching, voice learning, that you feel are often missing, overlooked, or not talked about enough?

Participant 8:
Oh.

Researcher:

You've got definitely eight pedagogical influences in your history.

Participant 8:

Yeah. The sense of exploration. The suggestion might be that you, you're taught something and then you carry it out and that has made you better and you've done it and that's made you better. Whereas it can be an exploration of, I mean, it's an exploration of, “Okay, I'm going to do something physically slightly different here. How much am I doing it? How does it work? How do I feel about it?” So it's that, “Let's just try.” I've had with previous singing teachers a sense, not all of them, some of them, the sense that it was that former description which is I tell you something, you carry it out, you now sing it better. And the confidence to try something and it to be all over the place but it's still useful to try is you know, fail and fail well. There's a phrase, isn't there, which is, you know... It'll come to me.

Researcher:

Yeah. I was thinking all data is valid, isn't it?

Participant 8:

Well, it's that kind of thing, yeah. But also, if you try something and it doesn't work, that doesn't mean it won't work next time. Because there are so many aspects related to it. It's about exploring. And for several of my singing teachers, that has not been the sense of it. It's been almost like, this is the result we should be aiming for. This is a technique to achieve that result. Do the technique and you'll get there, sort of thing. And so therefore, if you try and it doesn't work, that's a failure in you. Going back to one of the questions, you might have understood what they're asking you to do but you might not know how to do it or you might have even tried to do it but it doesn't work the same with your voice. And the understanding that as well as trying things out that I mean all teachers will talk about you know we have good days and bad days but it's also how what the whole range of influences can be that actually do affect your voice. I'm trying to remember what the question was again, because I think I came up with something else that's, it's...

Researcher:

Which, what was the flavour of the question?

Participant 8:

it was something that might be missing in some.

Researcher:
Oh, yeah. So my final question. Yeah. So looking back on your experiences in terms of voice teaching or learning the voice, do you are there any aspects that you feel are missing, overlooked or not talked about enough?

Participant 8:
Yeah. For some of the early ones, maybe not having a strong sense of why I actually wanted to have singing lessons. Because, and this sense that you should only have singing, you're only gonna go for singing lessons if you've got a specific goal in mind. Whereas for me, it was pride. Primarily enjoyment, to make better use of what I got. So that's something. It was missing, overlooked or what was the other one?

Researcher:
Or not talked about enough.

Participant 8:
Not talked about. Yeah. With some of the previous teachers, it would, I would have felt embarrassed if I had felt weepy at getting emotionally, an emotional release, either in terms of singing and producing the sound or in terms of the content of the song. And so therefore that would have helped me back because I didn't have the relationship with the teacher where it felt appropriate to get that emotionally involved. Yeah. I can't think of anything else at the moment.

Researcher:
That's all right.

Participant 8:
Can I tell you, no, but the thing is, can you imagine what it's like, I can visualise the room that I went to for each one of those singing teachers.

Researcher:
Wow.

Participant 8:
And all eight of them, my goodness.

Researcher:

I can't remember anything like that from my history. It's just, it's filed away deep in the depths.

Participant 8:

But the interesting thing And so, I mean, one interesting question is “Why?” If I've had eight singing teachers, the first one being when I was 19, was it 19 or would it have been 21? No, it must've been 19. So I think it was just as I was leaving school. Why, in each case, why did I leave that singing teacher? And that's quite an interesting thing because a couple, it was because I was moving to a different school place. But for all the others, it wasn't. So out of six, well, I've not left you. So that makes seven, eight, it started with down to seven, two, it was because I was moving. So that leaves five.

Researcher:

It's Friday afternoon maths.

Researcher:

It's just kind of not being a priority?

Participant 8:

priority and engage in singing lessons with that person, which is interesting. So something we can take out of that is if I had five occasions where it just sort of drifted apart, it's pretty good that I'm still wanting to have singing lessons. So you could say they didn't, but on the other hand, if it had been more successful, I'd have stayed with them.

Researcher:

So maybe it was something that you realised on some level is that...

Participant 8:

Oh, I thought of someone else I went to for a chat. But I did not choose to continue with him.

Researcher:

You realised the engagement wasn't both sides of the fence, maybe?

Participant 8:

I don't know that it was as simple as that. I think it was also...

Researcher:
Right teacher, wrong time, maybe?

Participant 8:
Yeah, I'm thinking about, yeah, I've got in front of me a gardening book here and it's right plant, right place, you know, and so a different plant in that spot could do really well. Yeah. I don't think any of them were dreadful teachers. I think one in particular was quite immature as a teacher and a couple of others were doing things by the book but so it's yeah it's right plant right place or you know mismatch between what their focus was and what I was, I was wanting from it.

Researcher:
And that's got to be the primary focus in any, if you're the student, it's, “I want this and I need a person to help facilitate it”. And if I'm the teacher, it's, “Am I the, is my, (is me now, not me five years ago or me 10 years ago) is me now the right facilitator for this want?

Participant 8:
Um sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't yeah yes and I think that's absolutely true and I don't think you can just judge it on who that person is previously taught or who they are you can't judge it on any of that and you can't judge it on um their teaching style it's going to be um uh Yeah, it's, it's, there needs to be a match between what the way they work and what the student is wanting. But then they come back to me hairstyling. I do need to go and get a haircut. Back to this.***Researcher:*** Me too.

Participant 8:
You arrive, you arrive with the hairstyle and say, “This is what I want.” And the, the hairstylist has to gently say, “But that's not what your hair does. How about this?” So, but then I'm not being as specific as, you know, a particular type of hairstyle. I'm, “Is your goal to go to college, get into a conservatoire? Is your goal to get solos in your local choir? Is it to be, you know, on the stage?” But is your stage operator or is it, you know, full on, we will rock you or whatever the meatloaf thing is, you know, we're full on belting. Is it, to sing better with your church gospel group, you know, or is it primarily, I enjoy singing and I'd like to feel I'm doing it better because then it just makes me feel good, you know.

Researcher:
Which is also equally as valid.

Participant 8:

So to find, yeah, to find someone. But then you've got the other side of it is, and this was what was interesting by going to, and I realised, two male singing teachers and a trial with someone else who was male. Although all the others were female singing teachers, they didn't necessarily, they didn't have the voice that I have, you know, they might not have had the vocal range or they might not have, you know, their bits weren't arranged in the same way, you know, their vocal resonance cavities are probably different, you know, their physique might have been different, their breathing capacity different, all kinds of things. So the idea that just because they're female and even just because they sing the same vocal range that you do is really not the point because that, yeah, it might be a different, a different fact. It might be a different whatever, as well as a different ambition. Yeah, there we go.

Researcher:

So interesting, thank you so much.

Participant 8:

I suspect, because I feel very in tune with the way that you've been teaching me, is a lot of the answers fit with the priorities that you've got, but that's because I've ended up with you.

Researcher:

And as much as this project is supposed to be constructivist and grounded theory and non-biased, other than my samples all know me somehow, and I am an insider researcher, obviously the enzyme for me researching this, which is acknowledged, is somewhat, I feel maybe I'm doing something that other people aren't.

Participant 8:

Well, yeah. One thing that's really so interesting is you were the first person to identify that I actually had quite a big vocal range. Now, that's not to say I have to use all that vocal range, but it's there as a choice. Now, how did I manage to get into my 50s? I mean, unless when I was 25, I didn't have that vocal range. But it kind of seems unlikely that my vocal range increased with age.

Researcher:

Yeah, that would appear unlikely.

Participant 8:

Unlikely. So it's just it's kind of like other people. And this is this classic thing. You go along to a singing group and they say soprano or alto. And I sort of say, well, what's the music and what do you want?

Researcher:

Yeah. “Also, I'm pretty happy doing tenor, thanks.”

Participant 8:

I'll do tenor as well if you're short. And they're sort of going, okay. And if it's choral music, I'll probably be happy with top soprano, but if it's opera, no, I'll go down to second soprano.

Researcher:

And also, it might be at the end of a very long week and actually, you know, some mezzo or alto is perfectly fine.

Participant 8:

Yeah, yeah. And it's, yeah, and just because I can do both, I could sing tenor, or I could sing soprano doesn't mean that that's always what I want to do, or it's what, you know, anyway. It's just intriguing.

Researcher:

You know me, I love ending on greater philosophical questions.

Participant 8:

It's just, how did I get to whatever the age was mid 50s?

Researcher:

And maybe I like to think of it as walls and mirrors. And that's what I do is I, you know, maybe I go, “Hey, here's a mirror. Should we look in it or should we avoid it?” You know, sometimes people don't notice the mirrors in their hallways or they think there's a hallway there, but actually it's not a wall. It's just perspective, I guess, you know, in the same way. Same way you know if you've never listened to like um acid house music then you know that kind of stuff is there but versus someone who's you know maybe a musicology PhD into the evolution of acid house you know you don't

know you don't know what's there until you open the door I guess. But also, what would be the value of knowing that?

Participant 8:

Because particularly if you're... Oh, actually, here's something we didn't talk about at all. That when I came to you, I said I was interested in doing exams. And that might seem a strange priority for somebody who has no benefit from doing exams. You know, it's not... I don't need them. I don't need the qualifications. But the incentive for me was, it's a type of performing, but it's, and it's also a way of performing, but without the responsibility of being with other people, you're focusing on yourself. And it's a way of performing which encourages you to work towards a specific goal. And the nature of the, and you can explore a repertoire, and obviously, you know, my interest in musical theatre written for older voices and all that kind of stuff. So to have the opportunity to do that, but also it could just be for fun. It could just be, you know, It's being with somebody who understands why I might choose to actually take exams, even though you are absolutely right to say, shall we just leave it until we've got the PhD out of the way? Or a little bit further on with the writing up.

Researcher:

Yeah, I mean, yeah, absolutely. You know, if we're in an observatory role, look at every decision we make as simultaneously the right and the wrong one, if we choose to have a binary right or wrong lens in front of us, then nothing probably matters as much as we think it does.

Participant 8:

Yeah, it's... Yeah, anyway, I have on my... Having dear [Child's name], who's sitting next door, back home means that I don't sing around the house so much. It's inevitable, you know, and I don't put aside time to sing around the house once he gets a job.

Researcher:

Yeah, but maybe also you could.

Participant 8:

Sorry?

Researcher:

Maybe you could sing.

Participant 8:

I could, but somehow I've not made that a priority at the moment.

Researcher:

So maybe when you're in the bath, you can have an exclamation of thought of why that's the case and what you feel about that. Not for any reason, not for any judgment, just to have a thought process.

Participant 8:

So I can't remember what's your title for the whole thing? Show me that again.

Researcher:

Oh, well, the actual title title is...

Participant 8:

Or what's the title for the data gathering?

Researcher:

Exploring Perceived Gaps, Tensions and Unmet Needs in Contemporary Voice Pedagogy.

Participant 8:

Yeah. Yeah. I'm feeling emotional because there's something that's come to mind completely about if you had it under the, why do you sing? Yeah. And you're talking about singing in the bath. And when I was in and out of hospital in 2018, often in a shared hospital room, but sometimes on my own. I think it was, when I was in the shared room, there was the one of the shower areas had a really nice acoustic. And I would sit in there and I also was in pain quite a lot. And I would sit there and I would sing through my little repertoire of songs that I liked until somebody banged on the door. And I thought, and it's a really interesting thing of why do we sing? And where does that fit it with singing teaching? Well, these are songs that I had been actually it was it was musical theatre songs that I'd sung previously. And so that the reason I knew them so well is because I had sung them in a I'd had to learn them and so, yeah, understanding why we sing and how, although there can be tension in a singing environment of the need to improve, and yes, I want to improve, of course I want to improve, but I really want to enjoy and I want it to be an expression of me and that's what I was doing then and to be able to sing and for it to relieve tension and help manage pain and in a very impersonal environment to have a little bit of a personal space and to be able to

sing was something that is a very, very vivid recollection. There we go. It's interesting I connect it to physical spaces and acoustic isn't it? Thinking about all these places I used to go for singing lessons.

Researcher:
I think that is...

Participant 8:
And now I'm thinking about a shower room in the hospital.

Researcher:
And I think that's understandable, isn't it?

Participant 8:
So it doesn't really fit with what you're doing, but it does fit to a certain extent because of the full understanding of why someone might be choosing to have...

Researcher:
So I think if I was going to choose a simple short title, it would be What Are We Missing?

Participant 8:
Yeah.

Researcher:
Because I feel definitely within singing we are, compared to other things like piano, you you know, I mean, you might be a archy fingers pianist or a flat pianist, but you know, we generally agree that the fingers need to be somewhat near the keys. Versus in singing, you've got people saying we need to breathe low and out or high and in or, you know, so. You know, whereas if you, you know, I always like looking, you know, having metaphors with ballet, you know, ballet teachers, you know, may like a difference of a hand, but they all agree on what a plié is and what makes it happen and why you should do it.

Participant 8:
So here, but here the thing is, one of the things that we were saying is there's horses for courses, you know, right plant, right place. But yes, for the student, it can be very confusing, particularly if

the teacher is quite adamant about the way they've learnt it, and therefore that's what they're trying to transmit.

Researcher:

There's definitely, all singing teachers believe they're the voice of God, in terms of their pedagogical stance is the only way for sure. And I think the more involved I get into it, the more I realise is that's absolutely there. But those lineages, if you like, come from very small snapshots with a very unclear, bigger picture. Yeah, you know, and, you know, 150 years ago, people, the pedagogical of that time, knew more. I mean, yeah, they got some mechanics wrong because, you know, understandably, but their musings on, you know, how you marry mechanics and acoustics were quite on the money. But what's happened is we've had this pedagogical 'Chinese whispers' and those thin lineages, they're just wisps of really tiny, tiny, like, abstracts within much bigger concepts that have just got lost, you know, and now that we can do all the thing and put pads on and measure the pressure and, you know, say actually, your vocal folds themselves, they just buzz like a kazoo, like a kazoo. The whole voice is acoustics, you know, you know, and, you know, so Yeah, there is a mechanism one, there is a mechanism two, but can you consciously control that thing? No, what you're doing is you've got an acoustic target and you're probably using your proprioception, your perception of yourself and some kind of audio memory to get to that target. So yeah, you are on thick folds and thin folds, but you're not controlling explicitly in the same way I don't sit here and go pH level of my blood can you please lower now? And what's the value of that? Maybe it is that there is a clearer way that we don't get hung up on things that happen as a byproduct. What we need to do is maybe clarity comes from having everything and then us realising most of this out of our direct control. It's interesting analysis, but everyone just do the Dodsworth Five is what I'm getting at.

Participant 8:

But then also, it's how that is communicated to the student.

Researcher:

For sure.

Participant 8:

And it's not just how it's communicated, but how it's received by the students. So that is, that is, it's not, I'm thinking about the different with me teaching maths, you know, ultimately, solving quadratic equations, yeah, there are a couple of different ways you can do them. But basically, it's quadratic

equation, you start with the problem, you end with the answer. I can teach those in various different ways. And if I've got a good understanding about how my students will, you know, if I just throw it out to them, they're going to go, “Oh, God”, then I'm not going to see them for the rest of the lesson, unless they're the kinds of students who say, “Now I've got a challenge for you. How about this?” And then off they go, beavering away. So it's understanding the student, how not only in general, but at that particular time in that particular context, and how they're going to respond and all that. So that's, that's, you're dealing with two things, you're not you're dealing with what is the nature of a qualitative equation and how is it going to be solved, and you're dealing with how do you communicate that to the students so they can then do the solving, you don't have the, you know, the quadratic equation is not a solid positivist thing like that.

Researcher:
Yeah, exactly.

Participant 8:
Anyway, And obviously, did I sign the thing that says, and when it's finished, I'd like to see a copy of it? Because I have one of them.

Researcher:
Yes, absolutely. We can do that. There we go. That's it. Right. Lovely talking.

Participant 8:
And I will be in touch in due course.

Researcher:
Absolutely.

Participant 8:
And I will. Yes, I will follow your recommendation that I should sing in the bath.

Researcher:
Absolutely.

Participant 9 – Interview Transcript

Researcher:
How are you?

Participant 9:
I'm well, to a certain degree.

Researcher:
Where are you?

Participant 9:
I'm currently, actually that's a very good question for specifics, but for general, I'm in the Caribbean at the moment.

Researcher:
How long have you been there?

Participant 9:
Since October time.

Researcher:
Have you been back at all in any of that time or not?

Participant 9:
You might think it's good because you're in the Caribbean but also, well, There's only so many beaches you can go to before you've been to them all.

Researcher:
And how, when do you finish? How long have you got left?

Participant 9:
Come back in March on the 26th. So, what is it, 40 days?

Researcher:

40 days and 40 nights.

Participant 9:

Yeah, I am counting down.

Researcher:

How many different shows do you do?

Participant 9:

Doing seven shows, but I'm only in six of them.

Researcher:

Thank you so much for doing this (wherever you are in the world). I'll share my screen if I may because it's, even though it's an Interview and a discussion, it's kind of like got a questionnaire as prompts for us to discuss. So basically I'm exploring if there are any gaps, tensions or needs in the whole act of learning to sing, basically. Whatever that may entail. So even though I'm going to ask you 15 prompts and ask you to rate that on a scale of one to five, whether it's agree or disagree or neither, those don't really matter so much. What matters is how you verbalise how you get to those numbers. And so basically, everything you're thinking, if you can just verbalise it, that's my primary data. So that's what it's about. So everything that we, this is all the consent things, everything we talk about obviously remains confidential and I'll only store it as long as I need to. If we talk about specific people that is totally fine, but I will either anonymise them or redact anything that's particularly personal out of it if we mention people by name and stuff like that. And you can have a copy of the research afterwards if you so wish. And everything that's stored here will be kept securely and destroyed once I've got my certificate. So, just to reiterate, there's no right or wrong answers. The whole purpose is for these to instigate a thought process and then you verbalise that. Shall we start with number one? Let's go: “I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular exercises.” This also could be you've had you may have had various teachers throughout your experience also it could be because you work in professional performance it could be also musical directors and coaches and things like that yes over to you to verbalise your thoughts on that...

Participant 9:

Well as you said I have had multiple teachers before and of course musical directors as well. Generally musical directors don't really get you to, at least in my experience, they haven't really got me to do any kind of exercises although on this contract I'm doing it currently they have. Most of the time yes I do understand exactly why they're getting me to do an exercise and they either tell me or it's it's clear to see what the exercise is doing whether it's uh working on your breath or how releasing something it's very clear most of the time. I'd say the times I haven't really understood why we're doing an exercise is when I've had someone who they don't really know I wouldn't say they're very confident or they just know what they're doing as a teacher for instance I hate to use it but I can't remember who they were there was someone in who I trained with who they're a singing teacher now, I don't know if what they did with me at one point, they even knew why we were doing the exercise. And that's when I got confused about why are we doing this.

Researcher:

And how did that make you feel? That you felt like, hey, you might not even know why we're doing this.

Participant 9:

Well, I felt frustrated and I also lost a little bit of respect, because if they don't even know why they're doing it, then why are they teaching it? They're just being a parrot, they're just copying what they've done before, just because they've done it before. They're not thinking why I'm doing this because it does this, they're just copying what they've done before. And I'd say frustrated is the most feeling I feel from that.

Researcher:

What number would you like to go with?

Participant 9:

I would say five, because it's a rare outlier that I do get people who don't know what they're doing.

Researcher:

Let's move on and we can always come back and discuss previous prompts or any thoughts that come into your head at any point.

Participant 9:
Okie dokie.

Researcher:
The next one, number two, is “I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.”

Participant 9:
Yes, I'd say straight away five because, again, unless it's someone who doesn't know what they're doing or it's just a really convoluted exercise that thought through, it's very clear what you're doing. I mean, if you're doing long phrases, for instance, and breathing out slowly, that's to work on your breath and it's helped to improve your control of your breath or scales. That's easy. To either warm your voice up or help improve your range by going up. I'd say it's very easy to understand and it's very clear to understand what an exercise is actually meant to do. Even if it's not just an exercise which is vocal, it incorporates physical elements into it. You know what those physical elements are, like for instance, you've got me to, when you've taught me before, you've got me to hold a chair out in front of me and squat and that's to help engage my body and that's something that I've had to work on a lot as a singer actually. So even if it's not other elements and it may look weird I know exactly what it's trying to do.

Researcher:
Are there any moments, and thanks for the example including me in real life, are there any moments where maybe, rare as they are, where you can remember thinking, I'm going along with this but I haven't got a Scooby-Doo, what's going on here?

Participant 9:
I think there was a time when I had, I can't remember who it was, I think I had someone who got myself and a couple of others to make animal noises, which, yes, you're making sound, but surely that's an acting exercise, not a vocal exercise. I wasn't very clear about what they were trying to do with that. Because...

Researcher:
How was it framed?

Participant 9:

It was framed, if I remember correctly, we were still in the process of warming up and he, I think this was before we did our physical warm-up, but it was an acting exercise he got us to do. He framed it as an exercise, but he told us he wanted it as a vocal exercise.

Researcher:

How did that make you and your cohort feel?

Participant 9:

Well, he was in charge, he was my boss, so I had to listen and follow what he did and he told us to do, but I kind of switched off in that.

Researcher:

So maybe slightly disengaged?

Participant 9:

Yeah, disengaged would be a good word.

Researcher:

Our next prompt is, “I often do exercises in lessons (and this could be rehearsals or group lessons or whatever) without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.”

Participant 9:

I'd say no, I consciously acknowledge when I'm doing them what exactly I'm trying to warm up, take for instance on my contract now with the exercises I do to warm up I'm consciously thinking about what areas I'm warming up and what I need to warm up with the exercises that I'm using and even with other parts of it I'll go back to that exercise and replay it again so I can warm up a slightly different area using that same exercise because it works better for, I don't know, the placement or wherever I am. Or I could use, I could come back, for instance, there's the ‘ray rewrite row’ and then doubling it up, tripling it up and then quadrupling it. Doing that, I always start with it on a ‘ray rewrite row’ and then I'll go to ‘gei gei’ or that kind of thing just to go through the mouth and warm it up so I'm consciously thinking about where that is in the exercise and exactly what it's doing or even if it's just a humming scale I know that that's to start gently warming the voice up and it also is helping with all my sinuses and all the cavities in my face helping to bring them up to speed basically which I've needed it for this contract is all I will say um it's a busy time being on a ship

yeah especially when I'm ill as well yeah all the recycled air inside not only that the haze and air conditioning and So it feels like you're going towards a number one maybe on this question. Yes, number one.

Researcher:
Our next one: “I've experienced moments where different teachers or approaches (and this could be MDs as well) seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 9:
So I have experienced that. The way I feel a lot of people I've come across trying to teach singing, everyone I've come across has had their own interpretation of the basic blueprint. I think that's a good way of describing it. You've got the blueprint of singing. Everyone does it. Everyone does it in similar ways but you've just got different techniques, you've got the same mechanics to sing, but everyone interprets it a bit differently and thus teaches it differently. A big example is I know people who have what exactly head voice is, what exactly mix voice is, what exactly falsetto is. Everyone's interpretation of exactly what it is and people have said something where I've gone no that's not falsetto that's head voice or that's not head voice that's mixed voice or they'll teach about anatomy which I've never heard of before or they'll use analogies which like instead of going up like I've heard with other people they say to go down or think down. So it's different interpretations that model it which can get very confusing especially when someone's adamant that they're right but then someone can pretend the opposite thing is also saying that they're adamant they're right.

Researcher:
How, in those instances ,how do you as you, and you are the most important person in your journey because you are the person, how do you clear yourself from that confusion and find your own path to how to sing?

Participant 9:
Well, certainly at the start I didn't do that. I didn't know how to do that. But as I've developed in my career, I'd say I've just figured out I don't listen to what other people say much anymore. I still listen, of course, but whatever they're saying now, I take with a grain of salt, unless it's got scientific backing and it's like, for instance, the actual anatomy of the voice and exactly what's causing the sound to be. But other things, I don't really listen to what they're saying. It's an interpretation. I can clearly feel in my voice where there is different things happening. And I try and just match up with what they're trying to say mechanically or intonation-wise, texture-wise, whatever they've asked of

me. I try and find my own interpretation and the feeling of that. For instance, I know that when, as you get higher, you go through different, it actually feels different when you sing higher and higher. And I know that head voice and chest voice and all these different voices, they have a different feeling in my own voice, which I know personally. It's not, others probably have the same thing. They can describe it and they use head voice and all these things but I don't really do that anymore. I just know what they want or try and figure out what they want. Sometimes it doesn't work.

Researcher:
And as you've already discussed, sometimes maybe people, language and description aside, may not even know what they want.

Participant 9:
Oh yeah. Yeah and especially uh people who aren't trained in singing they know they're trying to describe what they want but they have no idea what they're talking about when they're trying to say it. It's the same with someone who isn't trained in acting trying to tell you what, uh, acting-wise they want someone who hasn't trained in singing trying to tell you what singing-wise what they want and same with dance They, they try and describe it in their best way, but it's not as descriptive. So you have to kind of figure out through what their intentions are, through what they're saying. These, these more, or they try and use more every day. Words, I guess, instead of more specific words to do with singing.

Researcher:
Lovely, thanks for that exploration. What number does that lead us on?

Participant 9:
I'd say four.

Researcher:
Lovely, thank you.

Participant 9:
Yeah, four because most of the time everyone is still saying the same thing, it's just in different.

Researcher:

The next one is “When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.”

Participant 9:

Yes, or rather, yes, to a certain degree, but it's more... I know when I doing something, for instance not using the right part, or like if I'm not using enough of, I'm not breathing enough in for instance, which I know has happened sometimes. So I know when I have done something wrong, but most of the time I feel like I'm not confused about much, and if I'm confused it's only temporary, as I understand what they're trying to ask me to do. But I'd say just vocally wise, I'm not normally confused. Most confusion just comes through learning material, not actual vocal techniques or vocal, through the actual vocal lessons I have.

Researcher:

So those moments regardless of, almost regardless of the process, so when those moments of innate confusion in the process of growth occur, not withstanding that, do you associate that with being wrong at all?

Participant 9:

I feel like when I was younger probably yes uh when I was younger and I was still learning to sing. I was still even an actual individual as a person I feel like I'm more likely to have thought I was wrong then because I'm just I was still young I was still learning. I still had people telling me these things, I was still being told what to do and expecting to being told what to do and what I'm doing wrong, instead of just thinking for myself and knowing my myself and my voice well enough to be able to say “Uh oh no no like I'm fine this is what I'm doing wrong” instead or like “Oh that's what they want.” It was more of when I was younger I was following I guess whereas now... No, I'm pretty confident with where I am, what I'm doing, and I'm not really normally confused by anything anymore. And if I ever am, it's not because of growing and growth. It's just how someone has tried to tell me the information they want to.

Researcher:

So I know it's tricky. So if you could average all of those throughout your experience and lifetime...

Participant 9:

When I was younger I would have said a four but now I would go with one but two just purely because of my younger years.

Researcher:

Lovely, thank you. The next one is, “I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons (or working life, rehearsals, shows, et cetera) without panicking.”

Participant 9:

Yes, I'd say. Because, yeah, I'd say five. It's never... I guess the only time I'd actually panic a voice lesson as if I'd specifically gone to a voice lesson to help me because I had a very troublesome song to deal with and I still wasn't getting it. I think that's the only time I panic, but that's not because of the lesson, that's because of whatever I brought into the space trying to learn. So I'd say completely I am not... I'm completely fine in lessons. I'm quite relaxed.

Researcher:

“I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.” So, this might be an interesting one. Voice lessons and maybe a one-to-one situation versus group and working.

Participant 9:

Yes, it's, again with that, there's a difference between, exactly as you've said, one-on-one vocal classes, group singing sessions, and even in the working world it's an entirely different thing. Let's start with one-to-one sessions, yes, completely free, you can start the philosophy of singing if you want to, you can go into the mechanics, you can go well why am I singing this like this and then you can have a debate. I feel like one-to-one singing lessons and again this is also dependent on the teacher you have. I've had a teacher which she, I felt like I couldn't really debate with her. So...

Researcher:

What made you feel that?

Participant 9:

Well, for starters, I only had, I think, how long was my lesson? I think it was an hour. Yeah, I had an hour every week with her, but she was a very strong woman. And she just kept pushing me to basically only do twang. She didn't really teach me much else apart from twang and when I asked to do other stuff she didn't really teach me it and when I asked about, for instance, singing more

operatically and how to go about doing that she didn't really explain explained it very well even though she is operatically trained and she was singing on stage as an opera singer as well.

Researcher:
And how did that make you feel that your aims weren't fully understood?

Participant 9:
I didn't really know at the time. I thought she's a singing teacher, she's experienced, she's been in the industry so so whatever she's saying she must know what she's on about.

Researcher:
And then maybe, sorry, I was going to say maybe how does it make you feel now reflecting on it? Maybe you have more thoughts on because you're more experienced now.

Participant 9:
It just irritates me a bit that I wasted some of my time in that doing those classes when not only could I have been learning more varied styles, which is something that I do need in my career. But also, I think the biggest thing I could have learned from her, which I didn't, was how to actually use my voice without twang, because you need to use it without twang sometimes. And I'd say just irritation is what I feel looking back now that it was time, I wouldn't say fully wasted, but it was time not spent as well as it could have been. And then continuing on to, we've done one-to-one sessions; group sessions, I feel like if you're among a group of friends, it's easier to ask questions and stuff. In fact, I'd say in a training environment, you've got the best chance of it because you know everyone there, or you're most likely to know everyone there, and you're most likely to have a rapport with whoever's leading it. Out in the world, probably not so much if you're going to a masterclass, or a workshop, probably not. I feel like most people are strangers there, so A, you're less likely to want to speak up anyway. But B, you probably also paid to be there. So yes, you can ask questions and stuff, but also you are wasting others' time sometimes if they go, “Oh, why is he saying that?” And then in the real world, just quite simply, a lot of the time, you're not paid to ask questions sometimes. Whatever you're creating, whether that's a stage show or an immersive experience or video, anything like that, you're hired to do a job and fulfil what they need you to do, how they want the product to be. If you're creating the product and you're working with a good team, I feel like, yes, you can ask questions and challenge ideas when you're learning material. For instance, with my current contract, when we were learning and vocal material for the shows, we had a good deal of freedom to interpret the songs how we wanted and that's going to set how

the others, the rest of the cast, do it. But also they, the others, they can change it as well probably. For instance, I've added a few things in some of the songs where I'm going up some notes or down or like doing certain kind of textures with in certain areas. But I've also worked other jobs where, no, they want it exactly how they've outlined it and you can't deviate from that. And that's really stifling. But in the end, you're being paid to do a job there to fulfil their needs. So as much as I'd like to ask questions and challenge ideas, and as much as I get frustrated I just have to accept it and try and try and do things in a subtle way instead of overtly asking questions.

Researcher:
Maybe sometimes the challenges stay in our heads?

Participant 9:
Yes, yes. There's, uh, especially, especially, I've learned, well, I already know how to do it, but I've learned just how far my limit can go on this, uh, contract with that, with a, with a certain vocalist who's next door to me right now.

Researcher:
So if we could, if it was theoretically possible to average all of those answers into a number? Where would we about be lying?

Participant 9:
Number four. On the whole, yes, because most of the time you're getting your vocal classes, it's outside of work because you're building up your voice outside of work for work. In work you'd actually probably have your vocal lessons is if they needed to build you up to something.

Researcher:
The next one: “In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I'm told rather than understanding what is happening.”

Participant 9:
Again, it's changed since as I've got older as I've become more of an individual because everyone, I feel, unless you're very special, everyone as you get older you change the way you learn from “Oh I've told this so I'll repeat it”, to “I've told this so I can see this in that and now I understand that's why this is like that.” I feel like when I was younger, definitely no. I was focused on what I was being told to do, trying to follow that instead of maybe sometimes understanding what was

happening. But now I feel like I'm following what I'm told and then also at the same time now understanding what is happening.

Researcher:
So where do we sit? On a scale with that?

Participant 9:
I'd say one now.

Researcher:
“I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own voice and training.”

Participant 9:
Well, again, just that one word, increasingly, straight away a five. Even across every single year I've continued working and actually now that I think about it, since I've started working in the world, out in this industry, I feel like that is the germination point of when I've started being able to truly know my voice and what I need and what I've got, where my limits are at the moment, and based decisions on that. And one of the hardest things I've probably had to learn is how ill do you have to be you don't sing and how old you have to be before you can continue singing. I think that's one of the biggest things that I've learned. But again, year after year, I feel like I'm more comfortable with my voice where it is and being able to decide things about it. “Oh, I need to do this now. I need this vocal warm up to be longer today because of whatever reason.” Or “I don't need as much of a warm up today because my voice feels great.” That's becoming more and more of an occurrence that's happening in my life, which it's freeing, I would say. You have more control.

Researcher:
That sounds really positive as well.

Participant 9:
Yeah, it is.

Researcher:
Our next one: “I trust my teacher's expertise.”

Participant 9:

This links back to that other question I said about it depends on the teacher. So...

Researcher:

Just feel to explore the thoughts verbally.

Participant 9:

I've had some great teachers. I feel like the way you taught me was very, very good. I understood and it agreed greatly with my voice, with what you taught me. I've also had this other woman, [Teacher name]. I feel like I trusted her expertise but I shouldn't have as much as I did. I've also had musical directors who, they've been absolutely wonderful and I've also had others which I wouldn't throw, I wouldn't throw them a bucket of water if they were on fire. I think it's completely varied and sometimes credits don't really translate to teaching. You can have all the credits in the world, you could have been in like every musical ever on the West End or Broadway or on every ship ever, but that doesn't translate to teaching, that's just performing.

Researcher:

Sometimes it may not even translate to whether or not you're any good.

Participant 9:

Yes, yes as well. And that's exactly the reason because a lot of singers I know, they, part-time when they're not performing, they'll be singing teachers. And yes, I know, they're singing teachers but I doubt they're any good. They're just, again, they're they're regurgitating what they've been taught. But again, it's their own personal interpretation. So would I trust them? No, I don't think I would trust them. I wouldn't trust my fellow co-workers to teach me how to sing. I feel like there's an over-saturation sometimes of people who wouldn't trust with the expertise, but I do know people who I would trust their expertise.

Researcher:

Yeah, so let's just bring it back to your experience as a learner.

Participant 9:

Yeah, so I'd say on the whole number four. Yeah, number four because I've mostly had people that I've trusted their expertise in actually teaching me singing and it has worked, it has paid off.

Researcher:

Great, thank you: “Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.”

Participant 9:

Strongly disagree number one. How are you meant to know what or why that is the case? Why they're teaching you this if you don't question it? How do you know anything if you don't question it? That's the whole point of science in the first place. You have to question everything other how do you know that it's right that is actually correct or true and, you can, it's a peer review system so you can learn understanding from asking or questioning that person reasoning I yeah I feel strongly disagree.

Researcher:

It is yeah a very quick and passionate response thank you.

Participant 9:

Yes I don't like I like it when people just go with the flow, unless, I mean, even I get annoyed when I have to go with the flow because of job reasons.

Researcher:

I can imagine: “Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.”

Participant 9:

I'd say yes, five. If you feel understood by your teacher, you have a strong, you feel like you have a strong connection with them and that they can get to your needs better and understand what you're feeling. And they also would know your voice better as well by that regard. So I feel like if they understand you more, they understand your voice and your needs better for training purposes.

Researcher:

We're in our last section now. Our final three prompts: “Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

Participant 9:

I think this is a personal question because I know people that don't like... I know people that very strongly like the scientific side and explanations but I love it. So I'm a five. They do really help me

understand it, like exactly what's happening with your larynx and everything going on in your throat but also how it's connected down to the rest of your body and what that's doing. I love that stuff and it does help me create a mental image and also understand what I'm actually feeling happening with my voice. For me, I strongly agree. It helps me a lot personally.

Researcher:
Talking of which, what you just said: “Imagery, metaphor or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.”

Participant 9:
I'd say it does less.

Researcher:
We're not comparing even though it feels like it.

Participant 9:
No, but the way you go and learn through your voice is you have to feel it in your own body. You're the only one that you're literally the only one that can do that. And to do that, you have to be imagining it in your mind. So I'd say five as well.

Researcher:
And our final prompt. Here we go: “I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 9:
Personally, one strongly disagree. I welcome both.

Researcher:
So it doesn't make you confused it makes you clearer maybe; that there's value to both sides of the coin; so any final thoughts on that?

Participant 9:
Yes because that's explaining the technical side I feel like can't explain what it feels like or it can help you create a mental image of everything in your head like anatomy-wise and motion-wise but I feel like when you have metaphors and symbolic things being told to you you can understand them

easier possibly but also you can attach a feeling to them into your mental imagery better than anything technical-wise and I think marrying them up is the best way of going about it just in general because then you get the technical side and understanding and the mental blueprint of your actual body but also having the metaphors and imagery and sensations also as a human you are that as well. Having both I feel like is the best way of teaching but again this is a personal preference thing. Someone could absolutely be confused by both but I personally love having both with me. I love the scientific aspect of the technical side and the more, I'd say it's kind of literary in the way of describing through metaphors and using language to describe what you should do. A good example would be when... I can't remember but someone said about when you're singing, singing like down as you sing higher or something like that. But what they're trying to describe is to open up the back of your throat. Some people struggle with that um so I think I think both are important for me personally that's why I'm saying strongly disagree with being confused I think it helps me personally be clearer yes and I guess you're kind of exploring there the need for both and the difference between understanding something objectively and then doing it physically?

Researcher:

And there's there's a difference. So as we're at the end of the 15 prompts, looking back on all of your experiences, are there any teaching or learning moments that have stayed with you? Or which ones have stayed with you the most? I mean I know we've talked about some of them, some positive ones and some not so positive ones. But are there any moments that your brain chooses to replay where you're like, “Oh, nice.” Obviously, the one doing a plié holding a chair is still somewhere there in the mind.

Participant 9:

I'd say again with you, when I sung, what was it? *Not Getting Married Today,* but I sung it in the original key. I think that kind of opened my eyes to the fact that yes, I can actually sing that high, it's just I need to, I'm doing something which I'm not quite figuring out yet. I think that kind of, in my mind made me realise I know I can sing that high now.

Researcher:

Maybe the limitations are not as limiting as we first feel.

Participant 9:

There was also... Oh, did you want to say something?

Researcher:
No, no, no. After you.

Participant 9:
I also remember I disliked my vocal classes that I had whilst I was training at university, because there were 46 of us in a room and one person singing at a time over two hours. And I just feel like I didn't gain enough or much from those classes.

Researcher:
And even... Why did you feel that? Because I guess the assumption is that we can watch people's learning and still learning directly. So why did you maybe feel that wasn't the case?

Participant 9:
Because in the end singing is a practical thing. You need to sing to learn to sing I feel. You can't just spend your life listening to or watching other people sing because how would you know how to sing if you never do it? And we spent two hours in these classes where sometimes we wouldn't even sing. It was just literally going through the list. We only get through about 20 people in that class.

Researcher:
And so was it the frustration of the class design or was it the frustration in the context with the rest of the timetable maybe?

Participant 9:
I think maybe both, but I remember specifically thinking of one point that I prefer a one-on-one, and that some of the things that were being told to me, or that they were being like explored by the others in the masterclass, they were things that A, I had already learned and I was quite comfortable with, So I felt like it was a waste of time. Or B, I felt like they weren't really even teaching. We were just going through singing songs sometimes. And I remember that.

Researcher:
Maybe if there were there were different teachers involved, it might have had a different impression.

Participant 9:

There were, there were. But some of these teachers, there was this one woman who came into just pop classes, I feel like we were just literally singing songs in that class, we weren't being taught anything. Whereas there was this, we had a vocal anatomy master class, which I really enjoyed because he did go through the science of exactly how sound is produced and everything, and I found that wonderful. I learned a lot in that. But on the whole, most of the classes just repertoire classes, not actual teaching.

Researcher:

Which I guess is totally fine if it's marketed like that, which is you're just going to stand up and practice singing in front of people just for the practice of performance.

Participant 9:

Yeah, they never really did say that.

Researcher:

So wrapping up our whole exploration, are there any aspects of voice teaching or learning that you feel maybe often missing, overlooked, or not talked about enough? End with a massive question, obviously.

Participant 9:

I feel like from talking with other people, because they've trained at different places that I have, and comparing my experience. With my experience of my training at university and college, I was never taught how to sing pop songs properly, and the sound and technique that you need for that, and to do it safely as well. We had no classes on it. The only time we did anything pop-wise was these pop master classes that we just sung songs in, we didn't really do anything else. And most of what I've been singing is pop and rock as well. The only training I had at university was in musical theatre, the legit sound. And I feel like that was everything else I had to learn on the job. And speaking to others from other places they've trained, they had similar things as in they were taught how to sing kind of musical theatre and pop but they never really were taught how to sing more in a legit style or operatically or with any kind of darker vowels or sounds or anything like that. They were never taught any of it. So I feel like in some places they do miss out on singing techniques that are needed out there and how to do them safely as well because it can be, you can easily wreck your voice I've found. So I think some places, some training places don't have a comprehensive singing training, uh I guess that's interesting I'm assuming only but it's only from

my experience that when you're in training you have to do certain voice assessments along the way where you have to do different styles maybe not on my university no I think in every single time we sang in the classes we had to sing we just sang two musical theatre songs and then we graded on that.

Researcher:
I guess it's understandable on one side because you're doing a musical theatre degree, but also musical theatre is more than a certain contemporary musical theatre sound. Because what if you're in *42nd Street* or *We Will Rock You?* They're both musicals.

Participant 9:
My uh, my uh, my course they knew that most of their graduates were going into cruising so they knew they would need pop and rock and uh, even still, musical theatre is that, is still there's always a musical theatre show but they never... I still think they don't teach any kind of pop or rock sounds um, and again in my experience, others have said in their training, they've lacked certain styles. But I don't know if it's like what the percentage would be of places training. But I know some places they do do all of this. They do teach you how to suit other styles. I guess it's like dance as well. Like for instance, my course mainly focus ballet, jazz and tap and then we didn't really do any other of the dance styles whereas other places will focus more on other dance styles.

Researcher:
It seems like revisions of program designs might be necessary to meet industry expectations.

Participant 9:
Yes, I think some of the places are behind behind the curve in where the industry is heading. Especially with the way that technology is being used more and more and stuff as well now. Like I've never used in-ears before for instance and then I had to use them on a job and that you do need to get used to those as well.

Researcher:
It's a whole different way of hearing.

Participant 9:
Yes and one I much prefer now that I know how to use them because, oh my god, this amount of sound issues I have on every single job I have; it drives me insane but there's, so I'd say, there's

definitely things missing but it for singing training style wise I and I feel like if you have a good teacher they can they can teach you that privately one-on-one I think it's mostly just in a, in a like, the training institute like universities, drama schools, that's where it's lacking. I feel like one-to-one singing teachers, maybe even, I haven't been to one in ages, but masterclasses or workshops, they might even be good still. It's just when you go into the institutions, I feel like they're the ones behind the curve.

Researcher:
Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything you feel within, feel within side you that you'd like to add that you haven't already spoken about?

Participant 9:
I don't know. I guess I've met people that don't enjoy singing anymore and that's a shame. They've had this singing sucked out of them. And I've also I've also met people that they sing too much.

Researcher:
What do you mean by that? Well, thank you so much for all your time and taking the time out of your busy yoga teaching, Pilates and rock pop shows, whatever you're doing today.

Participant 9:
There was something actually, They also, I don't think training wise, I've ever been taught how to sing and prepare myself to sing when I'm ill. I've never had any kind of classes on that and what to do and I've had to teach myself how to do that.

Researcher:
And knowing, like you said earlier, you said figuring out for yourself, “When am I too ill?” When do I actually need to go “I can't do this?”

Participant 9:
For instance, from the 2nd of January until last week, I was ill with a lung infection. It was a really bad lung infection as well, and I was really, really ill. Even when I was getting better, my voice was being destroyed because I had phlegm settling on my vocal cords, and I couldn't cough because I was on stage. That was... Beginning to destroy my voice as I was certain I was gonna get vocal damage from it So I just said “No, I'm not gonna do... I'm not gonna sing. I'm just gonna use my sick tracks now.”

Researcher:

And that's good that you've got sick tracks...

Participant 9:

Well, I had all of them apart from two Okay, they didn't they didn't record them. I Guess I know management of time and things like that It's a mess on this contract.

Researcher:

At least you've got majority of them though. Because putting a face on and just running around a bit is definitely easier than actually singing when you're that sick.

Participant 9:

Yes, and it did help a lot. But one of the things I've had to learn, because this is the second contract where I've had a long-term lung infection, and one of the things I've learned is how to adjust my vocal technique so I'm actually able to sing higher when I don't have, when all of my nasal passages are fully blocked up with snot and so I can't get that brightness into my voice. What to do then? How to sing higher then? I mean, I couldn't get up to some of the notes I had to sing, I mean, but I could get high enough to do an alternate version of those higher notes.

Researcher:

I guess it's like driving a car. You don't really learn until you pass the test and take the helix off.

Participant 9:

But I had to completely alter the way I sing and I'm having to now revert it back gradually, which has been troublesome and learn how to into my nasal cavities now again. So that is something that I've realised, I guess, this year actually. I've never, I have never and also not met anyone else who has been taught how to continue singing whilst ill.

Researcher:

But I'm not sure how you'd go about teaching that because that is just as specific as can be to an individual. It sounds to me, you know me, it could be an interesting thing to muse upon and develop. Yeah, when to phone in sick or when to ask for sick tracks or when goes on or when they have to go to plan B and you're just too ill, you're on sick deck.

Participant 9:

Yeah and like if you're in the middle of a show and you realise midway through I'm not going to be able to hit those notes what am I going to do when to try and go for those high notes and when to just go for an alternate version and that's all part of probably the bigger exploration of knowing yourself yes. And that's only done through experience I'd say absolutely it's a difficult thing to go kind of explore and teach. They might not teach it because either they haven't thought about it or… Well actually now that I think about it, there are some ways of teaching it because when I was looking at the way I was singing and how I altered my technique, when I couldn't use any space up here because it was all blocked, I was doing pretty much a legit sound. I was going to the darker vowels and more of the 'tilt' or whatever you'd call that, what the people call it nowadays. But I was going into more of an operatic sound and I was able to get through it better because there was less need to focus all on here. And it was a brighter sound, but it was able to do that. So maybe that's a way of going about it, discovering if you're ill like this.

Researcher:

Maybe if a singer is truly adaptable and in control of their sound choices then maybe that's enough. Or it's how you frame it because yeah you have maybe it's you have your A plan and then you have your B plan and your C plan for when XYZ hits. Because there's no point having a toolbox if you don't know what tools are inside and you don't know whether you need a hammer or a screwdriver.

Participant 9:

Yeah, exactly, yes.

Researcher:

So maybe it's that duality of what we were talking about between understanding and doing. You need to understand the concept or the construct and then realise what that means in the doing of...

Participant 9:

Without understanding, your doing is not capable of being done.

Researcher:

Well, I mean, Statistically, you'll accidentally do the right thing half of the time.

Participant 9:

Explain America then.

Researcher:

I don't think we have long enough. In our lives. We're not doing too dissimilar here in the UK at the moment. Well, thank you so much for your time. I look forward to seeing you next month when you're back.

Participant 9:

See you soon and have a lovely evening or morning or whatever time it is there yeah.

Participant 10 – Interview Transcript

Participant 10:
Good morning.

Researcher:
Hello. How are you? I'm really good.

Participant 10:
How are you? I'm feeling [bad], but never mind. I've managed to get an appointment with a doctor after this meeting.

Researcher:
Oh, OK. Do you feel any better at all?

Participant 10:
I'm slightly better, yeah, but I mean I've been through every kind of medicine you could name, you know, from night nurse to whisky man, you know, the tickly coughs and the chesty coughs and the throat sweets and everything and just Benylin, ibuprofen.

Researcher:
That could be like £15 day of that, can't it?

Participant 10:
Exactly, yeah, or £10.99 for a bottle of night nurse, it doesn't do anything, you know. So, but I'll see what she says, yeah. I had this way before Christmas, November time I think, similar, it wasn't as bad as this. And I went to see them and they just said, just keep taking your medicine, it will go eventually. I said, how long is eventually? And that was about three weeks as well. But hey ho. It's night time the worst, because you're snoring away there, all of a sudden it attacks you. Your lower stomach muscles. My God, it's such painful that. But no, no. So you're all fine though, are you? You escaped all this.

Researcher:
I'm fine.

Participant 10:

Good man. Right, so what is this you're wanting to do?

Researcher:

Okay, so this is the final stretch of my Masters. So my final project is all about meeting with people from different backgrounds, whether they've been mainly teachers or mainly singers or whatever they do. And basically having a chat and working out what we're missing in teaching singing specifically, but actually what I found over the past few months is that it's all obviously translatable into how we teach people to teach, to learn anyway. So it's got a questionnaire as a basis. So it's got like 15 prompts or statements. And I'll ask you to give an answer on a scale of one to five, strongly agree, strongly disagree, like an Amazon survey. But really, I'm not using the data of that as like, like statistics data. What's the real data is anything that you think about it is valid. So everything you say, that's my data really. So this is just to like prompt us to have a chat.

Participant 10:

Okay. Quick question before we start. How long is this going to take roughly?

Researcher:

Depends how long you chat for.

Participant 10:

Now I've my appointment to be at the doctor at quarter past 11 yeah so sure let's let's rattle through then okay come on then yeah.

Researcher:

Some people take 45 minutes some people have taken two hours oh gee my god you got nothing better to do than that yeah right that's all right um concise responses. I'll just tick these consent statements for you. So these prompts, they're geared towards asking you about your experiences of learning, and it's specific in, like, voice lessons. Obviously, do that as well when you're a teacher, but you can also draw on your experience as a teacher, as a musical director, absolutely all your years in the classroom. So whatever comes to mind is good data for me. So our first one. “I usually understand why my teacher asked me to do particular vocal exercises.” But it can also be the other way around while you give them.

Participant 10:
So that's a five, yeah?

Researcher:
Yeah.

Participant 10:
Yeah. Well, it's just part of the warm-up process, yeah. You wouldn't go onto a football field and play a 90-minute football match without warming up, you know. So it's the same with everything. You wouldn't go for a five-kilometre run unless you do stretches to warm up, you know, stretch all your muscles and things. So it's the same with those vocal exercises, you know. Loosen up all the vocal cords and stuff, yeah.

Researcher:
Did you ever have, like, an experience where you; and this might not be particularly vocal it might be in bassoon and piano days where you were you were asked to do something and you were like "I've got no idea why we're going down this road"

Participant 10:
Um no not really no I'd never never experienced that yeah there was always always a reason given when I was learning there was always a reason given why I was asked to do certain things yeah of course very clear yeah the second one is I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help improve yeah them go with that. Five. Five. Don't need to add anything more than that.

Researcher:
"I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they're meant to achieve."

Participant 10:
Not really, no. I often do... No, that's got to be one. Yeah. No, you explain it all, yeah. And now you see, nowadays with the new LCM (London College of Music, Music Theatre) syllabus, You know, they've got to do exercises as part of their exam now, you see. Oh, do they? Yeah, they have to do three exercises, three vocal warm-up exercises before they do exam and say what they're for, yeah.

Researcher:

And are they free choice?

Participant 10:

There are free choice, there are examples in the LCM, you know, book list, tick list and things like that, yeah.

Researcher:

And that's for Music Theatre, is it?

Participant 10:

Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm just...

Researcher:

Because for a while, they changed it, didn't they, to be more acting-based?

Participant 10:

Oh, yeah, it was silly. They went silly for a long while.

Researcher:

So now they've gone back to it being more about singing.

Participant 10:

Look, can you see that?

Researcher:

Oh, OK.

Participant 10:

Yeah. So that's it. Mind you, they have examples. They're not... I'm not really all for it. An example here, you know, sort of C-E-G, C-E-G, and the words go, “I am old and I am ill.” And then it goes, “I am old and I am ill.” I'm thinking that's really exciting, isn't it?

Researcher:

What a positive, inspirational warm-up.

Participant 10:

That's the words to use for a typical warm-up, yes. Yeah, so that's what they've produced anyway, that thing.

Participant 10:

Oh, okay.

Researcher:

Is that for grades, is it?

Participant 10:

Yeah, for anything, yeah. Anything, because they do the same for the... I've got a diploma student, she's about to do her second diploma with me, yeah. And there's the same diploma warm-ups as well, too. Really? Yeah. Right, sorry.

Researcher:

I'll have to look at that, because I've got a student that's...

Participant 10:

Right, I'll have a look, yeah. Just go on the LCM website, it's all there for you, yeah.

Researcher:

Right, next one. “I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seem to contradict each other.”

Participant 10:

No, not really, no. I'd put a one in that.

Researcher:

“When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.”

Participant 10:

Disagree with that. One.

Researcher:

"I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking."

Participant 10:

Yeah, strongly agree.

Researcher:

"I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons."

Participant 10:

Yeah, agree. Agree with that. Five.

Researcher:

Five yeah?

Participant 10:

Yeah, that's alright.

Researcher:

"I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons."

Participant 10:

Yeah. Five as well with that. I always say to myself, Ask. Always ask. Don't leave your lesson and say, oh, we should ask that, yeah?

Researcher:

"In Lessons, I mostly focus on what I am told rather than understanding what is happening."

Participant 10:

Four, I'll put on that. Okay. Yeah. Yeah, because it's, um, they need, they need explanation as well, too. There's no point in just saying, just sing this, boom, you know, and then sing it. It's like rote, learning by rote, isn't it? You know, and you got to explain why they're doing that. Yeah. No, no. Four of that.

Researcher:

Okay. 'I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my voice and training."

Participant 10:

Yes. Five on that. Are you still teaching teenagers, 17, 18, 19-year-olds?

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 10:

Are you finding this thing, there's a sort of unwritten rule that everything's got to be belted these days?

Researcher:

No. No? No.

Participant 10:

See, I've got one. I've got a student who's at the music, or the place in Dunstable, what's it called, PAD?

Researcher:

The PAD, yeah.

Participant 10:

Yeah. And she's come to her lesson with me on a Monday, you know, after our class, you know. I said, I've got to belt this, I've got to belt this, I've got to belt this. I said, “Why?” You know, *The Life I Never Led, Sister Act.* She said, I've got to belt that out. I said, “Why?” I said, “The singer doesn't belt it on the actual recording, does she?” “Oh, but that's what they want me to do.” I said, “No.” I said, “Sing it in your normal voice.” I mean, I don't know what your thoughts on that is, you know, but it's just, it's not a belty song. Because it doesn't even go up to the top F at the end. Now, I know you put it up to the top F when we did it. Yeah. “Life, I never led...” She went up to the top F, yeah? What's her name again?

Researcher:

[Performer name]

Participant 10:

[Performer name], that's right, yeah? Because she could do it, you know? But the actual score, it goes down to the... “Life, I never led...” Down to the lower F, you know? Hannah said, there's

nothing there for you to build. I said, you sing it in your normal voice. So, it's... Yeah. She said, but no, this is what we've got to do now. I was thinking, okay.

Researcher:

I guess maybe, maybe like a person like that is just doing what they're told in their course without going, why? Or maybe they've missed the point. Maybe like, there's some learning there, which is like, we're doing like the big ends of the 11 o'clock numbers. So we're just getting you ready for that.

Participant 10:

Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. But no, I mean, it's just, no, it's just coming. And it's worrying her. And I said, you've got nothing to be worried about. You just crack on. You sing your normal voice.

Researcher:

And act and tell the story. That would be great.

Participant 10:

Well, that's it, [Teacher name]. I mean, that was a great... You know, [Teacher name] don't you? That was a great sentence. “Tell me a story. Tell me the story. Put both feet on the floor and tell me the story.” And I'm a great believer in that. Tell us what it's all about.

Researcher:

Well, that's why we do it, isn't it? And that's why it's different from instrumental music, You're actually using words.

Participant 10:

Exactly, you see. And you can tell a story a lot easier by singing than you can playing a bassoon or a piano. Absolutely. Nice one, yeah.

Researcher:

“I trust my teacher’s expertise.”

Participant 10:

Right, five. Next one, yeah.

Researcher:

"Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say."

Participant 10:

Three.

Researcher:

Nice. I like a three in the middle answer.

Participant 10:

Yes.

Researcher:

"Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning."

Participant 10:

Five. Common sense.

Researcher:

"Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better."

Participant 10:

Now you see, that depends on age. Right? The younger the students are. For example, I've got a Year 7 student who's doing Grade 6. I've got a year six student who's on grade five and I'm just wanting them to sing and listen to their voice and just get experience of singing yeah. I would leave the technical and scientific bits till at least I would say especially with girls voices because they take far longer far far longer to mature and develop yeah. See I would put that as a three as well, yeah? And I would leave the explanations till they're a lot older, at least year nine, year ten maybe, yeah? When their voice is starting to settle, you know, I don't know.

Researcher:

"Imagery metaphor or sensation based teaching helps me understand my voice better."

Participant 10:

Yeah, okay, four.

Researcher:

“I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.”

Participant 10:

I love that.

Researcher:

This also might be like what you've experienced in the world, seeing other people as well.

Participant 10:

Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah, That's a three as well, too. That's down the middle as well, yeah.

Researcher:

So those were all the questions. So any thoughts that you have on any of that about what you've thought about?

Participant 10:

Not really, no. I mean, just... They're good questions, I mean, they're straightforward enough questions, you know, and it's just, I would like to think that 90% of the people who, 95% of the people who look at those questions would come up with the same answers, you know? And similar reasons as well, too. You know, I mean, it's just, I had to get assistance from, from [Teacher name] you know, [Teacher name]? Yeah, well, I own her company now. She went back to the classroom, so I now own a music teaching company.

Researcher:

Okay. Yes, yeah, yeah.

Participant 10:

Husky voice girls, singers, yeah? You come across them?

Researcher:

Yeah.

Participant 10:

How do you get them? Because the one that I've got just now is obsessed with singing lower stuff, you know? *Speechless* from *Aladdin*. She wants to do some of the *Les Mis* numbers. I gave her *Someone Else's Story* from *Chess*. And the huskiness is coming out when she's singing in her lower register. Because [Teacher name] used to teach her. And she said to me, do a lot more exercise. Spend most of your lessons just doing vocal exercise with her and put her up the top. Get her up to the top. Using songs like *I Feel Pretty.* I mean, that's not high either, is it, you see? And that's helped her a little bit, yeah? And I've got another one exactly the same. I thought, this is weird, yeah? I had one about three, four years ago at my other school I taught at, yeah? But that was because she was going to the Saturday school, what's it called? Name of the Saturday morning music drama schools.

Researcher:

Stagecoach?

Participant 10:

Not that one. Another one?

Researcher:

Theatre Train?

Participant 10:

Another one?

Researcher:

Little Voices?

Participant 10:

It might have been [Theatre school name] and they were just belting and shouting all the songs the whole time. Because they want to be heard and they want to be seen and they want to be, you know, "This is me, look at me." I can just see mummy and daddy taking them down there on a Saturday morning and saying, "Go on, go on, sing your hardest." And it ruined her voice. So when she came back to her, that I do with [Teacher name] through the musicale. She came to that two yeah? And her voice is still the same. Husky, that's it again; "You're still belting, aren't you?"

Researcher:

Is it husky when she speaks as well?

Participant:

A little bit, yes, yeah.

Researcher:

So it's an ongoing pathology then?

Participant 10:

Yes.

Researcher:

And did it not used to be husky?

Participant 10:

It was always husky when I took her over. It was always husky. That was from year six.

Researcher:

Yeah. So there's either some brain reason, which means the vocal folds are not meeting properly, or it could be just because she's female and teenage. Yes. It's quite common to have a chink where they don't close properly. The only real problem is that it means that her voice will tire more quickly. Yes, yeah. Because the folds dry out sooner.

Participant 10:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I was conscious of that.

Researcher:

Yeah, in terms of what to do, I mean, I know that, you know, singing through straws are all the fashion right now, but I mean, there's nothing wrong with a good old lip trill.

Participant 10:

Exactly, yeah.

Researcher:

And “oo” vowel, because “oo” vowel naturally occludes the vocal tract. It creates back pressure going the other way. So it thins them out. And when they're thinned out, it automatically brings them together. So if you start on an “oo” vowel in head voice, probably around like a C4, C above middle C, around there. Play around there, either exercises that go up or down, whatever flavour you want. And then it's important that they, have an objective that they're tracking. So if you get like a nice clean “oo” around that C, then what we're trying to model is feel what that “oo” feels like in your body, in your mouth, in your whole self. Hear what it sounds like, and then when you sing any other note, doesn't matter whether it's chest voice, whatever, belting on an “oo”, you want your body to feel the same. Because all we can really semantically and cognitively track is just sensation. If you then want to label it and go this is XYZ and your larynx is doing that, that's interesting but we can't manipulate that.

Participant 10:

Well that's yeah, because that's got all the serious technical details of it.

Researcher:

Exactly, so if she's got a nice “oo” up there, it's like, “What does that feel like”. So if you maintain what that feels like and you want that to be constant, then nine times out of 10, it will stay in that position.

Participant 10:

Oh, thanks for that. I'll try that when we go back.

Researcher:

And it's just, you know, we're creatures of habit. You know, we are what we think and we are what we do. So she's just got into a habit. Yes. So whenever she's talking or singing, her brain goes, oh, we're doing this now. Yes, that's it. Yeah. And it just, you know, there's lots of jazz singers that, you know, have a husky voice and whatever. But like my mantra always is, let's try and start from ground zero and make that a choice rather than your default.

Participant 10:

Exactly, exactly. You see, so see, I introduced her to the opening segment before O*n My Own*. And there's just not a lot of, not a lot of people know of that, you know, because I've got the score a little bit, you see. And even my diploma student, who is just amazing, you know, she'd never heard the

opening section as well, too, you know. The husky voice one, you know. It's funny when she's singing that bit, you know, because I'm saying to her, sing it as if you would speak it, tell me a story, you know. And there's less of a huskiness as well, because it's sitting right in the middle there of her range, you know. And it sounds really good.

Researcher:
I sometimes feel as well that because you know in Musical Theatre we watch people telling the stories and emotive that also people have this unwritten assumption that it's harder to do it than it is.

Participant 10:
Exactly, exactly.

Researcher:
You've got those habits and oh no it's hard because it's emotionally driven.

Participant 10:
It's so easy to do really here. No, I like that. Thank you very much for that. I'll try that when I go back.

Researcher:
Anything that just, I feel anything that just calms the mind into acceptance of like, I'm just doing this and the aim is the easiest way possible and the least stressiest way possible, that sorts out a hundred other things that you could spend tens worrying about.

Participant 10:
Yeah, exactly. Exactly, yeah.

Researcher:
I mean, you see it, don't you, when students come in and you're like, okay, this energy is a lot today.

Participant 10:
Oh, yes, yes, yeah, yeah.

Researcher:
And that's not particularly useful for singing your best.

Participant 10:
No, no, of course not. So, I mean, fortunately, I get them all at the end of the day, you know, so they're tired.

Researcher:
It's yeah, I find it, now I just basically teach at home and I've got a sofa in front of the piano and I'm like, you need to just just sit down and calm down. And they're like, well, I'm going to sing this. And I'm like, yeah, yeah. I just sit here like cross-legged behind the piano and I'm totally fine. So you just sit on the sofa. We're not stressing. Yeah.

Participant 10:
No, no, no, no. It's such a good way to be.

Researcher:
And then some people who've, you know, like older students, like maybe adults who've had lots of singing teachers, then, you know, they start kind of like on the sofa and they do their exercises. And then I'm like, should we sing the song? And then instantly it's like, Yeah.

Participant 10:
Yeah, I can imagine, so the heart rate just ups severely. It's amazing that, you know. I haven't got any adult students who I'm in, so I think my oldest one is, yeah, Diploma was my oldest one. But she did the, what's the first diploma? The DipLCM? Yeah, she did that one last summer. It was just stunning. Absolutely stunning. And she talked to the examiner for something like 20 minutes afterwards.

Researcher:
I think those discussions are good for them as well.

Participant 10:
Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because, her knowledge is something else. Amazing knowledge. So, yeah. She's one of my pluses.

Researcher:

And they still do the sight reading and sight singing?

Participant 10:

No, no, no. That's all gone. That's all gone now.

Researcher:

But it's replaced with some weird fifth warm-up about being ill.

Participant 10:

Yeah, being old and ill. So three warm-ups and then, depending on the grade, three or four songs. Diploma 20-minute program.

Researcher:

It seems that they corrected some of the stuff and then decided just to add exercises for no reason.

Participant 10:

I know. I don't understand. Maybe they're seeing if the candidate has really warmed up or not. I don't know.

Researcher:

I'll have a Read of the syllabus and let you know my thoughts. Well, thanks so much for your time. It's all right. And reliving lockdown by downloading Zoom again.

Participant 10:

Is there anything else you need or not?

Researcher:

If there's anything else you want to say, now's the time to say it.

Participant 10:

Right, take care. Take care, see you soon.

Appendix E2 – Early Analytic Draft Findings (Proposal Stage Submission – P1)

This appendix contains an early provisional findings draft developed following analysis of Participant 1 prior to full data collection. It functioned as an exploratory analytic scaffold during the iterative development of the coding framework. As further interviews were analysed, categories were refined, expanded, and reorganised through constant comparison and memo-writing. The final findings chapter reflects cross-case integration and supersedes this early draft.

This chapter presents the findings of the study, organised thematically and informed by an interpretive qualitative analytic approach. The findings are presented as emergent and provisional, reflecting the iterative nature of data generation and analysis described in Chapter 3. Rather than treating findings as fixed outcomes, this chapter illustrates how participant accounts are being interpreted and organised in relation to the research questions and the analytic sensitisers developed through the literature review.

The findings are structured around five thematic domains that reflect recurring areas of experience, tension, and meaning-making in participants' accounts of voice teaching and learning. These domains are not treated as discrete or exhaustive categories, but as overlapping analytic lenses through which participants' experiences can be explored. Across all sections, analysis attends to how participants describe confusion and clarity, agency and trust, pedagogical coherence and fragmentation, and perceived gaps or unmet needs within contemporary voice pedagogy.

Each section begins by outlining its analytic focus and relationship to the research questions, providing a framework within which participant data will later be interpreted. This approach is intended to make the analytic process transparent and to demonstrate how individual accounts are situated within broader pedagogical and theoretical concerns.

Experiences of Confusion and Contradiction

Primary Research Questions addressed: RQ2, RQ3
Secondary link: RQ1
This section examines how participants describe experiences of confusion within voice pedagogy, particularly where pedagogical explanations, techniques, or expectations appear contradictory, inconsistent, or insufficiently explained. Analysis attends to how confusion is framed by

participants: whether it is understood as a normal and productive part of learning, a temporary state to be resolved, or as a personal failing or deficit.

The analytic focus is on moments where participants encounter competing pedagogical narratives, conflicting terminology, or shifts in expectation across teachers, styles, or training contexts. Particular attention is paid to how participants locate responsibility for confusion; whether internally (e.g. self-doubt, perceived incompetence) or externally (e.g. pedagogical inconsistency, lack of clarity). Emotional responses to confusion, including anxiety, frustration, or disengagement, are also considered, as these responses shape ongoing learning experiences and perceptions of agency.

> “I'd say I'd be a three there, because sometimes I'm like, oh yes, I understand why you've asked me to do that, because it's helped me do that. And then sometimes I'll do things where I think, why am I sitting here humming for four hours?”
> (Participant 1)

This extract illustrates how experiences of pedagogical clarity and confusion coexist within the same learning context. The participant describes moments where the purpose of an exercise is understood retrospectively, alongside moments where the rationale for prolonged technical work remains unclear. Rather than framing confusion as a persistent or absolute state, the account suggests fluctuation depending on explanation, context, and perceived outcome. The rhetorical question “why am I sitting here humming for four hours?” highlights how uncertainty can emerge when pedagogical intent is not made explicit, positioning confusion as a response to instructional opacity rather than learner incapacity.

Moments of Clarity, Sense-Making, and Insight

Primary Research Questions addressed: RQ2
Secondary link: RQ1
This section explores moments in which participants describe increased clarity or understanding in relation to their voice or training. Analysis focuses on how sense-making occurs and what conditions appear to support it, including explanation style, timing, relational safety, and opportunities for questioning or reflection.

Rather than treating clarity as the absence of confusion, this section considers clarity as an active process of meaning-making. Attention is paid to how participants describe transitions from uncertainty to understanding, and how these moments are often relationally and contextually situated rather than solely technique-driven. This analytic lens provides an important counterbalance to deficit-oriented accounts of learning and highlights pedagogical practices that participants experience as enabling understanding.

> “I don't know what that is with me, but if something, if I don't understand something, because usually you're in a group of people. So often you feel like everyone around you is doing it because they're doing the same thing. Or if something goes wrong, I always go, it's me. And I don't know whether that's a confidence thing or... I mean, there have been instances where they go, no, no, that's right. And I'll go, oh.”
> (Participant 1)

This extract highlights how moments of clarity often emerge relationally rather than through technical explanation alone. The participant describes a default tendency to internalise uncertainty as personal failure, particularly within group learning contexts where comparison with peers intensifies self-doubt. Clarity is experienced not through additional instruction, but through brief interpersonal confirmation (“no, no, that’s right”), which reframes the participant’s interpretation of their own experience. The understated response (“oh”) marks a moment of sudden sense-making, suggesting that clarity can arise from reassurance and relational feedback as much as from explicit pedagogical explanation.

Agency, Trust, and the Learning Relationship

Primary Research Questions addressed: RQ2, RQ4
Secondary link: RQ1
This section examines how participants describe agency within the voice studio, with particular attention to the role of trust, authority, and the student-teacher relationship. Analysis considers how pedagogical practices and relational dynamics shape participants’ perceived ability to ask questions, express uncertainty, or make informed decisions about their own voice.

The analytic lens distinguishes between different constructions of trust, including trust as relational safety and trust as compliance or deference to authority. Shifts in participant positioning (from passive recipient to active agent) are examined, alongside tensions that arise when pedagogical

authority is experienced as either supportive or constraining. This section also attends to how agency develops (or is inhibited) over time and across career stages.

> “So I think really, I would focus on doing what I'm. Yeah, I would do focus. I'd say I'm going to say four on that. I do focus on what I'm doing. But because you it's because you would feel that you understand why you're doing it. And if you didn't, then you would say I don't understand while I'm doing this okay.”
> (Participant 1)

This extract illustrates a form of conditional agency grounded in understanding rather than compliance. The participant associates their ability to focus and engage with tasks with a sense of clarity about pedagogical purpose, suggesting that agency is exercised through informed participation rather than passive obedience. The movement between “doing” and “questioning” indicates that trust in the learning process is contingent on explanation and meaning, rather than assumed authority. This account positions agency as relational and dialogic, emerging when learners feel able to voice uncertainty without jeopardising their standing within the lesson.

Navigating Evidence-Based and Heuristic Approaches

Primary Research Questions addressed: RQ3
Secondary link: RQ2
This section explores how participants experience different explanatory frameworks within voice pedagogy, including technical or scientific explanations and heuristic, metaphorical, or sensation-based approaches. Analysis focuses on how participants navigate these frameworks in practice, particularly when they are presented in parallel or without explicit integration.

Attention is paid to experiences of coherence and fragmentation, including moments where mixed pedagogical languages support understanding and moments where they generate confusion. Rather than positioning evidence-based and heuristic approaches as oppositional, the analytic focus is on how participants experience their interaction, translation, or collision within real teaching contexts. This section directly addresses tensions identified in the literature regarding pedagogical pluralism and coherence.

> “I don't think so. But actually, you know, it's like it's actually just made me realise what I do. I've never thought in my head, oh, imagery and metaphors. And now I think, that is what I do. I've just never thought of it in that way before. But actually, that is exactly what I do.” (Participant 1)

This extract illustrates a moment of reflective re-framing in which the participant becomes aware of their own preferred mode of meaning-making. Rather than explicitly identifying with “imagery” or “metaphor” as pedagogical categories, the participant describes recognising these approaches retrospectively through reflection prompted by the interview process itself. This suggests that heuristic or experiential strategies may be operating implicitly within learners’ practice, even when they are not labelled or foregrounded within teaching contexts. The account highlights how reflective dialogue can surface tacit pedagogical processes, bridging the gap between experiential knowledge and conceptual understanding.

Perceived Gaps, Unmet Needs, and Pedagogical Tensions

Primary Research Questions addressed: RQ1, RQ4
This section synthesises participants’ reflections on what they perceive to be missing, underdeveloped, or inadequately addressed within current voice pedagogy. Analysis considers how perceived gaps relate to participants’ training histories, career stage, and evolving professional identities.

The analytic lens attends to unmet needs not only at the level of technique, but also in relation to explanation, reflection, emotional safety, and learner agency. Structural and cultural tensions within training environments are also considered, including pressures related to performance demands, stylistic expectations, and pedagogical norms. This section provides a bridge between experiential findings and broader implications for pedagogical development.

> “Yeah, exactly. Like coming up with a plan rather than... I remember I went to someone before and I didn't really last very long going there. I mean, he was very, very nice and everything. But like, and I knew what he was trying to do and he wants to go all the way back to the beginning and wants to go all the way back, but the thing to classical and all that sort of stuff. And it's like, yeah, I get it, but I'm not here to do, like, I'm not at the beginning of, you know, this is what I want to achieve. And he just wasn't. On the same page, maybe. Yeah, it was like, no, no, you've got to do this and do that. And the thing is,

> it's like, actually, you know, those lessons did not interest me. So then I wasn't doing the work in between. So therefore, you know, it was a waste of time, waste of money, like, because it's important to have the interest and to want to go and to want to…"
> (Participant 1)

This extract foregrounds a perceived mismatch between pedagogical approach and learner need, highlighting the importance of alignment, relevance, and shared goal-setting within voice teaching. While the participant acknowledges the teacher's expertise and intentions, the insistence on returning to foundational or stylistically misaligned material is experienced as disengaging rather than supportive. The resulting loss of interest directly impacts practice adherence, reframing pedagogical misalignment as both an educational and practical cost. This account positions learner motivation and agency as contingent on feeling "on the same page," suggesting that unmet pedagogical needs may arise not from technical inadequacy but from a lack of responsiveness to learner context and aspiration.

Findings Summary

This chapter has outlined a provisional analytic framework for interpreting participants' experiences of voice pedagogy. By organising findings around themes of confusion and clarity, agency and trust, pedagogical frameworks, and perceived gaps, the chapter establishes a coherent structure through which participant data will be examined. The following chapter will return to these findings in dialogue with the literature, exploring their implications for reflective and adaptive approaches to contemporary voice pedagogy.

Appendix E3 – Final Codebook (01-09 Framework)

This appendix presents the complete coding architecture developed during analysis. Initial open coding generated provisional and participant-led codes (00), which were iteratively consolidated through axial memoing into the stabilised 01–09 framework.

Participants 9 and 10 were analysed following consolidation of the 01–09 structure. Their transcripts were examined in light of the developing framework to assess its robustness and explanatory adequacy. No additional core categories were required, although theoretical properties within existing categories were further elaborated.

Name	Sources	References
00 Initial Codes	1	1
00 Participant Language	8	131
01 Instructional Clarity & Purpose	7	168
Believing exercises relate to upcoming performance	1	1
Believing leader cannot explain purpose	1	1
Dismissing exercise as unnecessary	1	1
Expecting exercises to have performance context	1	1
Judging exercise as not useful for performance	1	1
Lack of explanation for exercises	1	1
Linking disengagement to lack of usefulness	1	1
Not knowing purpose of specific exercises within routine	1	1
Not knowing why exercise is being done	1	1
Perceiving exercise as wasting time	1	1
Questioning purpose of exercise	1	1
Questioning value of breathing exercise	1	1
Resenting exercises perceived as purposeless	1	1
Sometimes understands purpose of exercise	1	1
Understanding increases when linked to specific song	1	1
02 Evaluative Pressure, Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance	7	134

Name	Sources	References
Accepting others may be better	1	1
Assuming others understand when confused	1	1
Comparing self unfavourably to others	1	1
Experiencing ongoing competition after employment	1	1
Feeling behind in shared performance	1	1
Feeling less trained than peers	1	1
Feeling observed by decision-makers	1	1
Feeling performance decline under pressure	1	1
Feeling pressure despite collaborative setting	1	1
Feeling pressure despite humour	1	1
Feeling pressure to justify casting decision	1	1
Perceiving coaches as softening criticism	1	1
Pressure worsening performance	1	1
Public correction increasing emotional intensity	1	1
Receiving direct correction about accuracy	1	1
Strong emotional impact of correction	1	1
Using humour to deliver correction	1	1
Worrying about future employability	1	1
Worrying about others' approval	1	1
Worrying about others' evaluation	1	1
03 Authority, Hierarchy & Strategic Compliance	7	115
Adjusting response based on perceived openness of coach	1	1
Agreeing outwardly despite internal disagreement	1	1
Assessing whether leader will provide support	1	1
Avoiding confrontation over disagreement	1	1
Being open to changing approach	1	1
Complying with authority despite disagreement	1	1
Conditional compliance	1	1
Following instruction when purpose is understood	1	1
Questioning as collaborative meaning-making	1	1
Questioning participation under pressure	1	1
Recognising validity in criticism	1	1

Name	Sources	References
Rejecting idea that trust requires silence	1	1
Using experimentation to resolve disagreement	1	1
04 Agency & Control	7	219
Asserting ownership of character choice	1	1
Choosing to do own warm-up instead of group activity	1	1
Disagreeing based on character interpretation	1	1
Doing personal warm-ups instead of group activity	1	1
Expecting consistency in warm-up routines	1	1
Feeling able to question instruction	1	1
Feeling incomplete if routine not followed	1	1
Feeling lack of control in lessons	1	1
Feeling ready after completing routine	1	1
Feeling unsettled by unexpected changes	1	1
Not fearing asking for clarification	1	1
Preferring collaborative planning	1	1
Preferring individual preparation over group warm-up	1	1
Requesting clarification when uncertain	1	1
Routine creates sense of readiness	1	1
Trusting own established routine	1	1
Using personal preferred warm-up	1	1
05 Alignment & Relational Trust	7	135
Expecting teacher to understand learner goals	1	1
Experiencing lesson content as misaligned with goals	1	1
Experiencing misalignment with teacher	1	1
Experiencing relational trust in teaching	1	1
Framing teacher-student relationship as collaborative	1	1
Generally trusting teacher expertise	1	1
Linking understanding to questioning	1	1
Linking understanding to questioning (2)	1	1
Misalignment hindering learning	1	1
Perceiving leader as lacking role competence	1	1

Name	Sources	References
Perceiving misaligned teaching as wasted investment	1	1
Prioritising personal fit over reputation	1	1
Receiving support for personal interpretation	1	1
Reduced engagement when misaligned	1	1
Selecting teacher based on perceived fit	1	1
Valuing feeling understood in learning	1	1
06 Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation	7	179
Articulating previously unexamined learning preference	1	1
Confusion when technical and imagery explanations are mismatched	1	1
Experiencing moderate confusion with modality switching	1	1
Experiencing performance as storytelling	1	1
Finding technical focus distracting in performance	1	2
Finding technical instruction less accessible	1	1
Imagery resonating more effectively	1	1
Not identifying with technical orientation	1	1
Not understanding technical explanations	1	1
Partial understanding of technical language	1	1
Preferring imagery-based teaching	1	1
Prioritising storytelling over technical focus	1	1
Self-identifying as non-technical learner	1	1
Visualising imagery during performance	1	1
07 Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload	7	126
Becoming vocally restricted after criticism	1	1
Experiencing racing evaluative thoughts	1	1
Feeling more comfortable in solo performance	1	1
Feeling surprised by positive feedback	1	1
Gaining awareness through external feedback	1	1
Gaining self-awareness through reflection	1	1
Inhibiting spontaneous performance	1	1
Lasting effect of criticism on confidence	1	1
Level of panic depends on stage of preparation	1	1

Name	Sources	References
Moderate ability to tolerate uncertainty	1	1
Momentary loss of confidence mid-performance	1	1
Overthinking contributing to confusion	1	1
Panic reduces with repetition	1	1
Panicking when uncertain	1	1
Perceived decline in confidence over time	1	1
Recovery after panic spike	1	1
Second-guessing performance choices	1	1
08 Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency	7	133
Balancing recorded model with live instruction	1	1
Believing full understanding is not necessary	1	1
Experiencing compulsory group warm-ups	1	1
Experiencing conflicting advice from different teachers	1	1
Experiencing inconsistency in teaching approaches	1	1
Experiencing lack of structure in warm-up	1	1
Observing others disengage	1	1
Perceiving warm-ups as improvised	1	1
Receiving different performance instructions from different teachers	1	1
Recognising different teaching styles	1	1
Recognising multiple valid approaches	1	1
09 Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices	7	90
Attributing performance issues to skipped routine	1	1
Attributing problems to self	1	2
Believing help requires willingness to change	1	1
Drawing on prior experience for decision-making	1	1
Moderate confidence in making informed decisions	1	1
Seeking external guidance intentionally	1	1
Strategic repertoire decision-making	1	1

Appendix E4 – Cross-Case Coding Matrix

The 01–09 framework was developed through open coding of early transcripts (P1–P2) and consolidated during analysis of P3. The matrix below reflects coding distribution across participants to whom the stabilised framework was applied (P3–P8). Later cases (P9–P10) were analysed theoretically to assess framework robustness (see Appendix H and Appendix J).

	01 Instructional Clarity & Purpose	02 Evaluative Pressure, Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance	03 Authority, Hierarchy & Strategic Compliance	04 Agency & Control	05 Alignment & Relational Trust	06 Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation	07 Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload	08 Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency	09 Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices
P3	17	25	15	44	22	38	30	36	4
P4	13	8	12	24	20	21	18	12	11
P5	16	15	4	16	18	18	11	17	9
P6	28	26	40	44	29	33	24	19	20
P7	24	24	15	29	13	25	22	19	14
P8	27	18	11	34	18	30	9	17	16

Appendix E5 – Participant Level Analytic Memos

Reflexive Log – Coding INT01 (Page 1)

In this opening segment, I noticed that I did not feel defensive when the participant described oscillating between understanding and confusion. Instead, I felt slightly validated — perhaps because the ambivalence aligns with my belief that vocal learning is rarely linear or uniformly clear. I recognise that this reaction may indicate a subtle bias: I may be inclined to interpret partial clarity as pedagogical realism rather than interrogating moments of genuine confusion.

I am also aware that when the participant links understanding to goal-oriented tasks (e.g., preparing specific repertoire), I feel drawn toward interpreting this as evidence of increased agency or contextualised learning. However, at this stage, that would be premature theorising. I need to remain cautious about projecting my framework onto their experience.

There is a risk that I may read their difficulty “passing things on” as confirmation of my own emphasis on epistemic clarity in teaching. I must therefore ensure that codes remain descriptive rather than explanatory.

At this early stage, I will prioritise staying close to the participant’s language and allow patterns to emerge across interviews before drawing any analytic conclusions.

Analytic Note – INT01 p.2

P1’s response appears strongly framed through a performance lens. Their evaluation of clarity (“four”) is grounded in whether exercises relate directly to upcoming repertoire. This may suggest that perceived clarity is contingent on performance context rather than a broader understanding of vocal development or technique.

Important to explore whether other participants frame clarity similarly, or whether this performance-orientation is specific to P1.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.3

This page shifts from mild ambivalence (earlier pages) to stronger negative evaluation. P1 describes experiences of warm-ups lacking structure, improvisation, and perceived incompetence of the musical director. Confusion here appears tied not only to unclear purpose, but to perceived lack of expertise and consistency.

There is a clear link between perceived usefulness and group engagement. When exercises are seen as unrelated to performance or lacking explanation, participants disengage and revert to personal routines.

Emerging observation: clarity appears connected to structure, explainability, and perceived authority of the leader. However, this is an observation, not yet a theme.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.4

This page intensifies earlier themes. P1 describes shifting from participating in unclear group warm-ups to actively prioritising personal routines. There is a clear link between lack of explanation and emotional response (“resenting”, “wasting my time”). Perceived lack of purpose appears to prompt self-directed preparation and withdrawal from group structure.

Emerging observation: clarity may influence not only engagement but emotional investment and trust in leadership.

Observation only – not yet a theme.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.5

P1 describes continuing a long-established warm-up routine despite not fully understanding each component. There is a distinction between cognitive understanding and felt readiness. The routine appears to function as psychological preparation and reassurance. Understanding is described as optional if the routine “works” and produces a feeling of readiness.

Observation: perceived value may not depend on explicit explanation.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.6

Unlike earlier pages describing confusion and resentment in poorly structured contexts, P1 describes contradictory advice as normal and manageable. There is evidence of intentional help-seeking and openness to change. Contradiction is not framed as destabilising, but as part of learning. External feedback is described as increasing awareness rather than undermining confidence.

Observation: contradiction alone does not produce confusion; context and perceived competence may mediate response.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.7

P1 describes outward agreement despite internal disagreement when strongly opposed to a suggestion. Response appears influenced by social dynamics and perceived openness of the coach. Contradiction is not inherently destabilising; however, exercises perceived as unnecessary or unexplained elicit internal dismissal, even if external compliance remains.

Observation: behavioural compliance may mask internal disagreement.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.8

P1 describes a tendency to attribute confusion or mistakes to themselves, particularly in group settings. There is evidence of automatic self-blame and surprise at positive feedback. Confusion may be internally attributed rather than immediately linked to instruction. Self-comparison with peers appears to influence confidence.

Observation: experiences of confusion may interact with self-perception, not solely instructional clarity.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.9

P1 describes a competitive professional environment that sustains pressure even after securing employment. Pressure appears to intensify self-comparison and negatively affect performance. Evaluation by directors and concerns about future employability are salient. Shared performance contexts (e.g., duets) increase perceived pressure compared to solo moments.

Observation: performance context and career insecurity may amplify internal self-attribution and perceived mistakes.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.10

P1 describes correction often delivered through humour, which lightens interaction but does not remove pressure. Panic is explicitly acknowledged when uncertain, though moderated by stage of preparation. Criticism is recognised as valid, suggesting pressure is not perceived as unfair but still emotionally impactful.

Observation: humour does not eliminate evaluative tension.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.11

P1 describes panic as cyclical rather than constant. Although panic reduces with repetition, there remains a recurring moment of doubt (“hang on, I don’t know what I’m doing”) followed by recovery. This suggests panic is processual, not fixed.

New layer: past emotionally charged correction (public, high-stakes) appears to have had a lasting impact on confidence. Confidence is described as having decreased with age and experience, particularly in singing. Criticism is not framed as unfair, but as emotionally powerful and restrictive (“closing everything up”).

Emerging observation: evaluative moments do not only affect immediate performance but can shape longer-term vocal confidence and openness.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.12

P1 describes sustained internal evaluation and second-guessing, particularly linked to perceived audience/authority approval. Overthinking appears to generate or intensify confusion, suggesting that confusion may not solely arise from instructional clarity but from cognitive overload and evaluative rumination. Tolerance of uncertainty is moderate rather than absent, indicating fluctuation rather than fixed panic.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.13

P1 reports feeling able to question and challenge vocal instruction, particularly when interpretive or character choices are involved. This suggests the presence of agency and negotiation within learning contexts. Decision-making is framed as ultimately belonging to the performer, with experimentation used to resolve tension. This complicates the earlier narrative of confusion and panic, indicating oscillation between uncertainty and ownership.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.14

P1 describes conditional compliance: they focus on doing what they are told when they perceive purpose and understanding. Questioning is positioned as a route to understanding rather than opposition. This suggests a negotiated relationship between authority and agency. Compliance appears contingent upon perceived clarity and alignment.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.15

P1 reports moderate but growing confidence in making informed vocal and training decisions, drawing on accumulated experience. Teacher selection is framed in terms of personal fit rather than reputation. Trust is described as relational and mutual, suggesting that clarity and agency may be supported by perceived alignment and bond. Trust appears conditional rather than automatic.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.16

P1 rejects the idea that trust requires unquestioning compliance. Questioning is framed as collaborative rather than oppositional. Learning appears contingent on mutual understanding and alignment; misalignment is described as being “on different tracks.” Trust is relational and dialogic rather than hierarchical.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.17

P1 strongly links learning effectiveness to alignment between personal goals and teacher direction. Misalignment (“not on the same page”) leads to reduced engagement, lack of effort between sessions, and perception of wasted investment. Feeling “not in charge” appears to diminish motivation. Collaborative planning is positioned as essential to maintaining agency and interest. Clarity and engagement appear contingent upon shared understanding of purpose.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.18

P1 reports difficulty understanding technical or scientific explanations and expresses stronger resonance with imagery and sensation-based teaching. Preference appears linked to identity rather than rejection of expertise. Technical language may contribute to confusion when not translated into experiential terms.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.19–20

P1 describes potential confusion when technical and imagery-based explanations are poorly integrated, particularly if the relationship between them is unclear. During performance, storytelling is prioritised over technical monitoring. Excessive technical focus in performance is perceived as reducing expressive impact. Technical language is not rejected outright, but is experienced as distracting or inaccessible when insufficiently contextualised.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.19–20

P1 expresses potential confusion when technical and imagery-based explanations are presented without clear integration. The issue appears less about plurality itself and more about coherence between modalities. Technical language is described as difficult to understand and potentially distracting during performance, particularly when it shifts attention away from storytelling. Expressive, story-based framing is experienced as more effective in performance contexts. Confusion may arise when explanatory frameworks are layered without explicit connection.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.20

P1 reports moderate confusion when explanatory modalities switch without clear integration. Strong self-identification as a non-technical learner is reiterated. Notably, the interview prompts appear to generate new metacognitive awareness, as P1 articulates a previously unexamined preference for imagery-based learning. Reflection itself seems to clarify aspects of their learning process.

Analytic Memo – INT01 p.20

P1 positions themselves as “not a technical person,” reinforcing earlier preference for imagery-based instruction. Confusion when switching between technical and metaphorical explanations appears moderate rather than absolute, suggesting variability rather than rejection. Notably, the interview prompts facilitate increased metacognitive awareness, as P1 recognises and articulates their reliance on imagery in a way they had not previously consciously identified. The reflective process itself appears to generate clarity.

Analytic Memo – INT01 Overall

P1’s account reveals oscillation between uncertainty and agency. Confusion and panic appear linked to evaluative pressure, misalignment with teacher goals, and cognitive overthinking rather than simple lack of knowledge. Trust is described as relational and collaborative, with questioning framed as a route to understanding rather than opposition. Agency is conditional and negotiated: compliance occurs when purpose is understood, but misalignment leads to disengagement. Strong preference for imagery-based and story-driven approaches is evident, with technical language experienced as inaccessible when not clearly integrated. Reflection during the interview generated increased metacognitive awareness of learning preferences. Overall, confusion appears relational and contextual rather than inherent.

Focused Analytic Memo – Post P1 Coding

Following line-by-line initial coding of Participant 1, approximately 100+ micro-level codes were generated. Through constant comparison and early focused coding, these were grouped into nine emerging conceptual categories. These include: Instructional Clarity & Purpose; Evaluative Pressure & Performance Ecology; Strategic Compliance & Negotiation; Agency & Control; Alignment & Relational Trust; Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation; Panic, Confidence & Cognitive Overload; Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency; and Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices.

Several conceptual tensions are already visible:

- Confusion appears relational and contextual rather than purely cognitive.
  It is linked to evaluative pressure, misalignment with teacher goals, modality switching, and overthinking, rather than simply lack of knowledge.
- Agency is conditional and negotiated.
  Compliance occurs when purpose is understood and alignment is present; resistance or disengagement emerges when misalignment or lack of clarity is perceived.
- Learning preference is epistemic rather than merely stylistic.
  Imagery-based and story-driven framing are described as more accessible and performatively generative than technical language when insufficiently contextualised.
- Trust is collaborative, not silent.
  Questioning is framed as relational meaning-making rather than opposition.

Importantly, categories were not pre-imposed but emerged through iterative comparison and grouping. Some initial codes were collapsed into broader families when conceptual similarity became apparent. This marks a shift from open coding toward focused coding.

At this stage, categories remain provisional. Subsequent participants will test, refine, collapse, or expand these emerging conceptual groupings.

Focused Analytic Memo – P2 (Early Coding)

Early focused coding of Participant 2 reinforces several emerging categories identified in P1, particularly Evaluative Pressure & Performance Ecology and Agency & Control.

A strong ecological pattern is evident: improvement is linked to reduced evaluative presence. The participant describes significant vocal development occurring in a self-created, private rehearsal

space (“mobile singing studio”), where “no judgment” was perceived. In contrast, practice at home was inhibited by shyness and awareness of being overheard. This mirrors patterns in P1 where performance restriction was associated with public correction or perceived scrutiny.

Confidence development appears relational and contextual rather than purely technical. The participant’s progress is attributed not to abstract theoretical knowledge but to embodied repetition in a psychologically safe environment. Practice becomes effective when autonomy and freedom are present.

Additionally, modality preference continues to emerge. The most impactful teacher is described as “brutal, but great,” using unusual, embodied cues that “worked.” Again, effectiveness is framed pragmatically (if it works, it works) rather than being evaluated through technical legitimacy.

So far, no new major categories have emerged. Instead, P2 appears to be strengthening and deepening properties within existing conceptual families. This suggests early pattern stability rather than fragmentation.

Categories remain provisional and will continue to be tested against subsequent transcripts.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 1 (Instructional Clarity)

Participant 2 expresses moderate uncertainty regarding the purpose of vocal exercises, rating understanding as “two or three.” Unlike P1, who linked lack of clarity to frustration and disengagement, P2 appears more accepting of technique without explicit rationale. Exercises are framed analogically (“scales are like pliés”), suggesting normalisation of repetition without explicit conceptual grounding.

This may indicate variability in how learners respond to instructional opacity: some resist or disengage, while others comply pragmatically. Clarity is therefore not simply cognitive but relational and dispositional.

Category stability remains intact. No new category required.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 1 (Trust, Pragmatism & Embodied Learning)

Participant 2 expands on moderate instructional clarity by introducing a pragmatic stance: understanding is not always required if effectiveness is demonstrated (“the proof is in the

pudding"). Trust functions as a mediating mechanism between opacity and compliance. Unlike P1, who linked lack of clarity to frustration and misalignment, P2 appears dispositionally comfortable with "just doing" when relational trust is established.

Importantly, learning is framed as embodied and experiential rather than conceptual. Knowledge is validated through felt experience ("how it feels or sounds"), not abstract explanation. This strengthens the emerging category of Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation and suggests that clarity may not require explicit theoretical framing if embodied results are perceived.

The oscillation between questioning and compliance reinforces the category of Strategic Compliance & Negotiation; agency is situational rather than binary.

No new categories are required. Existing structure continues to hold.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 2 (Differentiating Clarity Types)

Participant 2 distinguishes between understanding why a teacher selects an exercise and understanding what an exercise is generally designed to improve. While she rated Prompt 1 as moderate (three), she rated Prompt 2 as strong agreement (five). This suggests that global functional understanding (e.g., scales improve technique) can coexist with uncertainty about specific pedagogical choices.

This distinction refines the "Instructional Clarity & Purpose" category: clarity may operate at different levels; functional, contextual, or relational. P2 appears secure in general technique knowledge but less concerned with immediate pedagogical rationale.

No new categories required. Category refinement is occurring through dimensional differentiation rather than expansion.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 2 (Temporal Clarity & Self-Regulation)

Participant 2 introduces an important temporal dimension to instructional clarity. Unlike immediate confusion triggering anxiety (as seen in P1), P2 expresses confidence that clarity will emerge over time ("I might not be clear yet but I will be soon"). This reflects tolerance of ambiguity and trust in the learning process.

Notably, she recognises her own role in seeking clarity (“I could just ask”). Choosing not to question is framed not as passivity but as strategic pacing; prioritising embodied experience over verbal explanation. This strengthens the categories of Agency & Control and Strategic Compliance & Negotiation.

Embodied epistemology continues to dominate: learning is preferred through “feeling” rather than discourse. Category stability remains strong, with increasing dimensional refinement rather than expansion.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 3 (Opacity as Intentional Pedagogy)

Participant 2 strongly agrees with performing exercises without full understanding but reframes opacity as pedagogically productive. Drawing on metaphors (“paint the fence,” “wax on, wax off”), she conceptualises delayed understanding as part of trust-building and embodied learning.

Unlike P1, who linked lack of clarity to confusion and evaluative pressure, P2 frames it as a strategic means of moving students “out of their head.” This introduces an important distinction: instructional opacity may function either as destabilising (when misaligned) or developmental (when trust is established).

Additionally, as a teacher herself, P2 demonstrates reflexive adaptation to different learning styles. Pedagogical plurality here appears intentional and responsive rather than inconsistent.

Categories remain stable. However, dimensional variation within “Instructional Clarity & Purpose” and “Pedagogical Plurality” is deepening.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 4 (Pedagogical Plurality & Emotional Response)

Participant 2 strongly affirms experiencing contradictory approaches across teachers and musical directors. Examples include opposing views on diaphragm engagement and vocal fry usage. This confirms the prevalence of pedagogical plurality within professional singing contexts.

However, unlike P1, who linked inconsistency to destabilisation, P2 responds with humour (“it makes me laugh”). This suggests that plurality alone does not generate confusion; its impact may depend on experience, confidence, and epistemic stance.

Additionally, P2 critiques outdated practices while acknowledging historical context (“you can only know what you know”), demonstrating reflexive awareness of evolving vocal science. Plurality is therefore framed not merely as contradiction but as temporal evolution.

The existing category structure remains robust, but dimensional variation within “Pedagogical Plurality” and “Panic/Confidence” is deepening.

Analytic Memo – P2 Prompt 4 (Plurality Across Development)

Participant 2 provides a vivid example of contradictory pedagogy (breath-heavy opera method vs reduced airflow approach). While earlier she framed contradiction humorously, here she acknowledges that as a younger learner it was destabilising (“I don’t know what to think anymore”).

Plurality therefore appears developmentally mediated: novices experience contradiction as confusion; experienced singers reinterpret it as methodological variation. Agency emerges through experimentation (“I can try both”) and independent evaluation.

This deepens the category of Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency by introducing a temporal dimension (novice vs experienced response).

Analytic Memo – P2: Time Pressure, Questioning & Pedagogical Style

In this segment, Participant 2 introduces time and assessment pressure as key ecological factors shaping learner behaviour. Questioning is not avoided due to fear or lack of trust, but due to perceived cost: “If I stop and ask… I’m not going to get to sing my song.”

This suggests that agency is not binary (present/absent) but strategically regulated. Learners actively manage when and how to question based on lesson pacing, teacher style, and performance deadlines.

Pedagogical plurality appears here not only as contradictory technique (earlier example), but as contrasting discursive styles (expansive vs concise teachers). Students adapt behaviour accordingly (“don’t ask questions with this teacher”).

As a teacher, Participant 2 attempts to synthesise these approaches into a “middle ground,” explicitly referencing differentiated learning styles. This reflects a developmental shift from reactive learner to reflective practitioner.

Emerging pattern:
Plurality (technique + style)
Ecology (time pressure, assessment)
Strategic agency (withholding vs asking questions)
Adaptive pedagogy (responsive teaching)

This strengthens the model that learner clarity and agency are contextually mediated, not purely internally determined.

Analytic Memo – P2: Attribution of Confusion
Participant 2 reports a strong tendency to internalise confusion ("I am doing something wrong" – rated 5). This indicates a self-blame attribution pattern when clarity is lacking.

However, she also introduces occasional external attribution ("this guy's a crackpot"), suggesting that perceived teacher credibility moderates this response.

This contrasts with earlier strategic withholding (time pressure) and suggests multiple mechanisms underlying confusion:
Internal attribution (self-blame)
Structural constraint (time)
Teacher credibility assessment

Confusion is therefore not a singular experience but mediated by context, trust, and perceived authority.

Analytic Memo – P2: Internalised Inadequacy & Confusion
Participant 2 reveals a longstanding self-concept of intellectual inadequacy ("I've always had this insecurity that I am dumb"), which strongly shapes her attribution of confusion. When clarity is lacking, she defaults to internal blame rather than questioning pedagogy.

This suggests that confusion is not only structurally or pedagogically mediated but psychologically pre-framed. Learner identity plays a significant role in how pedagogical ambiguity is interpreted.

Interestingly, despite internal self-blame, she demonstrates adaptive agency by selectively

retaining “nuggets” from teachers whose methods do not fully resonate.

This deepens the model: clarity and agency are mediated by learner self-concept as well as pedagogical ecology.

Analytic Memo (Identity Reappraisal & Agency Reclamation):

Here P2 demonstrates explicit metacognitive agency. She recognises the automatic self-blame thought as historically conditioned rather than objectively true. The phrase “the new me that knows she's intelligent” signals identity restructuring over time. Agency appears as narrative reframing: she does not deny the insecurity exists, but she locates it developmentally and contextualises it. This supports the emerging model that agency is not absence of insecurity but reflective regulation of it.

Analytic Memo (Insecurity as Background Noise):

Earlier she rated internal self-blame strongly (5). Here she simultaneously affirms the insecurity yet reports strong ability to “sit with uncertainty… without panicking” (5). This suggests decoupling between insecurity and panic. Cognitive vulnerability exists, but panic response is regulated. Confusion does not automatically escalate into destabilisation. This marks a contrast with P1’s more immediate anxiety response.

Analytic Memo (Ambiguity Tolerance as Epistemic Style):

Uncertainty is framed as “normal.” This strengthens the emerging pattern that P2 has high ambiguity tolerance. For her, confusion is not inherently threatening; it is integrated into the learning process. This aligns with earlier embodied epistemology and delayed-clarity framing (“paint the fence” metaphor previously).

Analytic Memo (Comparative Ecology of Intelligence):

Sibling comparison appears to have shaped early academic self-concept. While not directly pedagogical yet, this indicates that voice lesson cognition may be influenced by earlier evaluative ecologies (family, schooling). This supports the broader model that learner responses in pedagogy are historically layered rather than context-isolated.

Analytic Memo (Perfectionism & Panic Response):

Here uncertainty is framed as intolerable for the sister figure. Confusion triggers withdrawal. This strengthens the emerging distinction between ambiguity intolerance leading to exit versus P2's tolerance. Panic appears linked to perfectionism and identity fragility.

Analytic Memo (Normalisation of Uncertainty):

P2 explicitly frames uncertainty as "pretty normal." This reinforces her high ambiguity tolerance and process-based epistemology. Learning is developmental and iterative rather than outcome-immediate.

Analytic Memo (Developmental Expansion of Agency):

P2 marks a clear temporal shift: "I do now." Earlier restraint ("I'm just not gonna stop") appears strategic or deferential; current stance is entitlement-based ("I'm allowed to ask"). Agency is developmentally acquired rather than static. Age functions as legitimising factor.

Analytic Memo (Matured Assertive Agency):

Agency is now self-authorised ("I'm too old for this shit"). Earlier hesitation remains ("I'm going to wait"), indicating agency is situational, not absolute. Development over time remains a strong property of this category.

Focused Analytic Memo – P2 (p.16–17 Block)

This section strongly reinforces 02 Evaluative Pressure & Performance Ecology. The parental statement "I paid an hour for a chat" introduces external evaluation of lesson productivity, which then reshapes how P2 measures value ("how much literal singing I was doing"). This ecological pressure interacts directly with 06 Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation ("If I'm not doing, then I'm not learning"), tightening the link between embodied output and perceived legitimacy.

Agency (04) is now developmentally asserted ("I'm too old for this shit"), but behaviour remains strategically regulated (03). Emotional response (07) is triggered not by confusion, but by perceived inefficiency or misalignment with evaluative expectations.

No new nodes required. Structure remains stable.

Focused Analytic Memo – P2 (p.18–19 Block)

This block presents a productive tension between 03 Strategic Compliance & Negotiation and 04 Agency & Control / 09 Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices.

P2 strongly agrees (“Number five, please. Thank you. Absolutely.”) that she mostly focuses on “doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening,” yet immediately also strongly agrees that she is “increasingly able to make informed decisions” and states, “I mean, I have to. Who else is going to do it?”

This suggests that compliance and autonomy are not opposites in her experience. Instead, they appear layered:
In-moment lesson behaviour may prioritise execution.
Broader career trajectory requires independent decision-making.

The reference to drama school (“30 contact hours with teachers arguing about which way to do”) introduces developmental context: institutional environments distribute authority; professional adulthood consolidates it.

No new nodes required. The existing structure continues to hold, with a deepening distinction between micro-level lesson compliance and macro-level career agency.

Focused Analytic Memo – P2 (p.19–21 Block)
This block significantly deepens 05 Alignment & Relational Trust and shows trust as conditional rather than absolute. P2 explicitly differentiates between trusting expertise and suspending questioning. Trust is not blind; it is moderated by perceived teacher credibility (“not all teachers know what they're doing”), motivation (teachers who “just want to be doing”), and context (masterclass vs technique teacher).

Strategic compliance (03) remains strong: she is willing to “just go with it” and “judge it later,” but patience has temporal limits (“if it's the entire time where I can't ever ask why”). Agency (04) appears as a defence of learner rights: “I think they should be allowed to.”

Crucially, she distinguishes between technique (framed as potentially evidence-based, injury-linked, “a studied thing that we know to be true”) and performance feedback (taste-based, subjective). This sharpens 08 Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency and introduces epistemic differentiation within pedagogy.

No new nodes required. Structure remains stable, but trust now appears multidimensional: competence-based, motive-based, and context-based.

Focused Analytic Memo – P2 (Understanding Prompt)

This block strongly consolidates 05 Alignment & Relational Trust as central to learning effectiveness. P2 equates being understood with trust (“a level of understanding is a form of trust”) and frames misunderstanding as a “roadblock.” Importantly, understanding is not merely emotional validation; it includes recognition of learning modality (“the way I learn”), psychological barriers (“blocks about certain things”), and preference tendencies (“gravitate towards other things”).

Trust here is mutual and epistemic rather than purely affective. Learning quality is perceived as contingent on relational attunement. No instability in node structure; this reinforces 05 and 06 as tightly interlinked in P2’s experience.

Focused Analytic Memo – P2 Final Block

This final segment significantly strengthens 08 Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency. P2 explicitly contrasts dance training (perceived consensus) with singing training (perceived fragmentation), describing voice pedagogy as “way more mysterious and varied.” The repeated inability of teachers to agree (“Why can't you all agree?”) reinforces plurality as a structural feature rather than an isolated experience.

At the same time, P2 demonstrates strong epistemic differentiation (06): technical explanations can “unlock something,” but excessive information leads to cognitive interference (“I'll think about it too much and then I back away”). Imagery is strongly endorsed (five), yet switching between imagery and technical language does not create confusion for her—provided they “match up.” This suggests integration capacity rather than modality rigidity.

Importantly, plurality does not destabilise her. Instead, she reduces complexity to a functional safety principle: “As long as you're not hurting yourself.” This indicates a pragmatic decision heuristic operating within plurality. Safety becomes the organising anchor when consensus is absent.

No new nodes required.
The 01–09 structure comfortably holds the full transcript of P2.

Focused Analytic Memo – Participant 2 (Post-Coding Summary)

Participant 2 strengthens and refines several categories identified in P1 but demonstrates notably higher ambiguity tolerance and pragmatic regulation.

Unlike P1, confusion does not automatically escalate into panic. Although P2 reports internalised insecurity (“I was dumb”), she demonstrates the capacity to sit with uncertainty without destabilisation. Panic and cognitive overload (07) are triggered more by perceived inefficiency or evaluative pressure (“I paid an hour for a chat”) than by instructional opacity itself.

Strategic Compliance & Negotiation (03) emerges as a dominant behavioural pattern. P2 is comfortable “just doing it” and judging later. Compliance is not passivity; it is temporally regulated and context-sensitive. Agency (04) is developmental and self-authorised (“I'm too old for this shit”), but remains strategically deployed.

Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency (08) is vividly articulated. P2 perceives voice pedagogy as fragmented compared to dance training. However, plurality does not produce destabilisation. Instead, she adopts a pragmatic safety heuristic (“As long as you're not hurting yourself”), suggesting that learners may stabilise themselves when pedagogical consensus is absent.

Alignment & Relational Trust (05) is central. Being understood is directly linked to learning quality, and trust is competence-based, motive-based, and context-sensitive.

Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation (06) shows strong embodied preference. Technical explanation can “unlock” cognition, but excessive detail increases cognitive interference. Imagery is strongly endorsed, and switching between modalities does not produce confusion if coherence is perceived.

Overall, P2 represents a learner profile characterised by:

High ambiguity tolerance
Strategic compliance
Developmental agency
Conditional trust
Pragmatic safety anchoring within plurality

No new categories required. Existing 01–09 framework remains robust.

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Overall, P2 represents a learner profile characterised by:

- High ambiguity tolerance
- Strategic compliance
- Developmental agency

- Conditional trust
- Pragmatic safety anchoring within plurality

No new categories required. Existing 01–09 framework remains robust.

Focused Analytic Memo – P3 (Clarity & Understanding Block)

This block contributes strongly to RQ2 (confusion, clarity, agency) and begins to illuminate tensions relevant to RQ3 (evidence-based vs heuristic framings).

Unlike P2, P3 distinguishes sharply between directional clarity and complete understanding. The compass metaphor (“we've got a compass… I know the direction”) suggests tolerance of partial knowledge. Clarity is conceptualised as trajectory rather than precision.

Importantly, P3 demonstrates epistemic sensitivity to framing effects: technical terminology (“mix”) can induce tension and cognitive interference (“I tense up”), whereas broader or reframed language feels less destabilising. This indicates that clarity is not merely about information provision but about linguistic alignment with learner identity and internal models.

P3 also articulates a nuanced epistemological stance: voice is “art” and “science,” objective and subjective, anatomical yet individual. This creates a layered understanding of why “fully” understanding may be impossible. The middle rating (three) reflects not confusion but recognition of complexity.

Early training context (drama school) shows reduced comfort in questioning, suggesting agency develops over time and relational safety.

No new nodes required. The 01–09 framework remains stable and is now demonstrating conceptual depth across participants.

Focused Analytic Memo – P3 (Plurality, Attribution & Panic Block)

This block contributes strongly to RQ2 (confusion, agency, panic) and significantly advances RQ3 (tensions between approaches).

Unlike P2, P3 describes plurality not only as inconsistency but as situationally destabilising, particularly under assessment conditions. Contradictory advice (big sound vs falsetto; cast

recording replication vs artistic ownership) creates pressure when short-term goals (“assessment”) constrain developmental exploration. The decision to “change the song” demonstrates strategic agency under constraint (09).

Importantly, P3 rejects internalised blame: “I can't do it yet” and “sometimes when I feel confused… that means I'm doing the right thing.” This contrasts sharply with P2’s earlier self-blame tendencies and suggests a growth-oriented attribution style.

However, panic intensifies when identity and performance blur (“when the practice and me have blurred”). Evaluative ecologies (assessment, group classes) amplify this. One-to-one lessons are experienced as safer, suggesting that relational containment moderates panic.

Plurality here is filtered through time pressure and performance stakes. Under long-term development, contradictions are navigable. Under short-term assessment, they become destabilising.

No new nodes required. The 01–09 structure continues to hold while demonstrating clear inter-participant variation.

Focused Analytic Memo – P3 Block (RQ-linked)

This block strongly addresses:

RQ2 – experiences of agency and clarity
RQ4 – features influencing autonomy and trust

Emerging pattern:

Agency is conditional and relational.
Participant does not challenge unless familiarity threshold is met (05 ↔ 04).
Economic/time pressure leads to strategic compliance (03).
Compliance is not passive; it is calculated.
Understanding is frequently deferred to private practice, suggesting a two-stage learning model (lesson = doing; home = meaning-making).
Longitudinal development is explicit.
Participant reports growth in agency and strategic synthesis (04 ↔ 09).

No new codes required.

All data cleanly fits 03–05–09 structure.

Focused Analytic Memo – P3 Penultimate Block

Strong engagement with:

RQ2 – clarity, confusion, agency

RQ3 – tensions between evidence-based and heuristic approaches

RQ4 – autonomy, trust, relational conditions

Emerging patterns:

Trust is actively chosen and continually evaluated (05 ↔ 09).

Trust is not blind; it is conditional and agentic.

Non-questioning is reframed as controlled strategic compliance (03 ↔ 04).

Silence is positioned as a decision, not submission.

Feeling understood is a prerequisite for vulnerability and exploration (05 ↔ 07).

Clear epistemic divide between:

- Understanding anatomy (06)
- Understanding “my voice” (embodied, subjective)

This directly engages RQ3:

Technical/scientific explanations are not automatically internalised as usable knowledge.

No new codes required.

Structure remains coherent.

Focused Analytic Memo – P3 Final Block

This block directly engages:

RQ2 – clarity, confusion, agency

RQ3 – tensions between evidence-based and heuristic approaches

RQ4 – pedagogical features influencing autonomy

Key patterns:

Clear epistemic orientation (06):

- Embodied, imagistic, action-based learning preferred.

Technical knowledge acknowledged but experienced as distant or abstract.

Distinction between understanding “the voice” and understanding “my voice.”

Plurality tolerated (08):

Switching between modalities does not produce confusion.

Preference does not equal exclusivity.

Suggests cognitive flexibility.

Performance ecology (02):

Technical cognition framed as interfering with acting.

Performance context alters epistemic usefulness.

Agency development (04):

Interview process itself stimulates reflection.

Participant identifies gap between perceived and enacted agency.

Expressed intention to ask more questions.

Developmental Observation:

Across P3, we see:

Early compliance

Conditional trust

Embodied epistemic preference

Reflective awakening toward greater agency

No new codes required.

All data contained within 02–09 architecture.

Post-Coding Analytic Memo – Participant 3

Positioning within Research Questions

Participant 3 engages most strongly with:

- RQ2 – Experiences of clarity, confusion, and agency
- RQ3 – Perceived tensions between evidence-based and heuristic approaches
- RQ4 – Pedagogical features influencing autonomy, understanding, and trust

RQ1 (perceived gaps and tensions) emerges through patterns of conditional agency and epistemic distance.

1. Conditional and Relational Agency (04, 05, 03)

Participant 3 demonstrates agency that is present but moderated.

He:

- Strongly trusts his teacher's expertise (05)
- Actively researches and selects teachers (09)
- Frames non-questioning as an active decision (04)
- Withholds questions due to time and cost pressures (03)

A notable pattern emerges:

Agency is exercised in teacher selection,
but constrained in lesson interaction.

This suggests a two-stage agency model:

1. Pre-lesson autonomy (choosing and evaluating teachers)
2. In-lesson strategic compliance (protecting time and efficiency)

This speaks directly to RQ4, indicating that autonomy is shaped not only by confidence but also by structural factors such as cost and perceived time scarcity.

2. Trust as Chosen and Evaluative (05 + 04)

Participant 3 strongly agrees that he trusts his teacher's expertise. However, trust is not framed as passive or blind.

He:

- Researches teachers beforehand
- Assesses relational “vibe”
- Withdraws if alignment is not present
- Rejects the notion that trust requires silence

He reframes non-questioning as:

An active decision within his control.

Trust is therefore:

- Conditional
- Reflective
- Revocable
- Intertwined with self-trust

This nuance strengthens analysis under RQ4, particularly in relation to autonomy within learning relationships.

3. Embodied vs Abstract Knowing (06)

A clear epistemic distinction runs throughout Participant 3’s data:

He differentiates between:

- Understanding “the voice” (anatomy, science)
- Understanding “my voice” (embodied, experiential)

Technical/scientific explanations:

- Increase his anatomical knowledge
- Feel abstract and distant
- Do not translate directly into improved practice

Imagery/metaphor/sensation:

- Feel tangible and actionable
- Support performance integration

- Align more closely with his embodied experience

Importantly, he does not reject scientific knowledge. He tolerates plurality (08) but expresses a clear epistemic preference (06).

This directly informs RQ3, suggesting that tension is not between science and imagery per se, but between abstract knowledge and embodied integration.

4. Confusion vs Vulnerability (07)

Participant 3 distinguishes between confusion and affective vulnerability.

He reports that:

- Switching between technical language and imagery does not confuse him.
- Technical language may increase feelings of vulnerability or nervousness.
- Vulnerability is not the same as confusion.

This distinction is analytically significant and may help differentiate cognitive tension from emotional response in later cross-participant comparisons.

5. Developmental Trajectory (04 + 09)

Temporal awareness is explicit.

He repeatedly positions his current agency in contrast to earlier stages:

- “A year ago would be different.”
- “Over the last three years…”
- “I’ve gained more agency.”

Agency is described as developmental, not fixed.

Notably, the interview process itself appears to catalyse reflection:

He expresses a desire to ask more questions in future lessons.

This suggests increasing metacognitive awareness and potential behavioural shift.

6. Emerging Pattern

Across Participant 3’s dataset, a consistent profile emerges:

A reflective but restrained learner.

Characteristics include:

- High relational sensitivity
- Strong preference for embodied epistemology
- Active teacher selection but cautious in-lesson challenge
- Economic/time awareness influencing behaviour
- Increasing but not fully enacted agency

This contrasts with Participant 2's more assertive self-positioning and may contribute to emerging theoretical differentiation within the dataset.

7. Contribution to RQ1

Perceived gaps and tensions include:

- Financial/time pressure limiting in-lesson questioning
- Technical knowledge not fully translating into embodied understanding
- Trust functioning in complex, negotiated ways
- Agency cognitively present but behaviourally moderated

Summary Statement

Participant 3 presents as a highly reflective, relationally attuned, and epistemically embodied learner. He actively constructs trust and strategically selects teachers, yet his in-lesson agency is moderated by structural constraints and relational comfort. He tolerates pedagogical plurality, prefers embodied modes of knowing, and demonstrates a clear developmental trajectory toward greater ownership. The data suggest that agency in contemporary voice pedagogy may be conditional, relational, and temporally evolving rather than uniformly expressed.

Focused Analytic Memo – P4 Block 1

This participant introduces a distinct pattern compared to P2 and P3.
Strong engagement with:
RQ2 – clarity and confusion
RQ3 – plurality of approaches

RQ4 – autonomy and pedagogical influence

Key emerging features:

1. Strong Explanatory Orientation (01 + 04)

Unlike P3 (who tolerates ambiguity), P4 explicitly states:

“I need to understand why.”

Clarity is not optional for him — it is epistemically necessary.

2. Plurality as Comparative Evaluation (08)

He evaluates different pedagogical traditions:

Conservatoire = low explanation

Felt-based teacher = low explanation

Technique-based teacher = high clarity

Plurality is experienced as inconsistency, not flexibility.

3. Retrospective Clarity (01 + 09)

He frequently reports:

Not understanding at the time

Understanding later

Suggests a delayed-processing model of clarity.

4. Teacher Identity Formation (03 + 09)

He explicitly frames himself as:

“The sum of all those experiences.”

Past confusion becomes present pedagogy.

This is significant for RQ1:

Pedagogical gaps in training directly shape future teaching behaviour.

5. Epistemic Tension

He contrasts:

“Just go with how it feels”

Needing to understand theory

Unlike P3, she leans toward explanatory necessity.

This will likely create a useful contrast across participants regarding epistemic orientation (06).

<u>Focused Analytic Memo – P4 Block 2</u>

This block powerfully engages:

RQ1 – Learner experiences of confusion and agency

RQ2 – Emotional responses to pedagogical contradiction

RQ3 – Plurality as destabilising rather than enriching

RQ4 – Teacher identity shaped by past vulnerability

1. Plurality → Internalised Deficit (08 → 02 → 04)

Unlike P3 (who tolerates plurality), P4 experiences contradiction as destabilising.

Pedagogical inconsistency does not produce curiosity.

It produces:

“I must not be understanding it correctly.”

Plurality becomes self-blame.

This is a significant grounded contrast.

2. Confusion = Moral Failure (02 + 07)

Confusion is not neutral.

It threatens identity:

“I must be wrong.”

“I don’t want to look stupid.”

Confusion becomes existential, not cognitive.

3. Development of Agency Through Maturity (04 + 09)

She recognises:

Younger self lacked vocabulary.

Agency requires conceptual literacy.

Agency is developmental, not automatic.

This is highly relevant to your agency construct.

4. Inability to Sit With Uncertainty

She explicitly rejects ambiguity:

“It’s not a place I want to be.”

This contrasts sharply with P3, who can sit in tension and contradiction.

You now have emerging participant typologies:

P3 = exploratory, dialectical

P4 = clarity-seeking, anxiety-averse

5. Repair Through Teaching

Important inversion:

As a teacher, she creates safety precisely because she cannot tolerate confusion herself.

Her pedagogy is compensatory:

She becomes what she needed.

This pattern mirrors P1 and P2 in different ways.

Focused Analytic Memo – P4 Block 3

This block directly advances RQs:

RQ2 (agency/clarity/confusion): She separates “ask questions” (safe) from “challenge ideas” (socially risky), showing that agency is not one behaviour but a negotiated social act.
RQ4 (features enhancing/limiting trust, autonomy): Hierarchy (“adult-child”, “respect your elders”) constrains challenging even when she conceptually endorses it. Relational fit (“we work well together”) functions as a key condition for both learning and questioning.
RQ3 (evidence vs heuristic tensions): She explicitly prefers anatomical/scientific explanation (“I need to know that”) while recognising individual differences (“Some people need to know how it feels”). She also frames the pedagogy landscape as culturally and socially polluted (“Chinese whispers”, “snobbery”), not just technically diverse.

Theoretically significant pattern strengthening across P4:

Deference identity (“I’m just a good girl”) + self-blame assumption (“I must be wrong”) combine to suppress challenge.

Agency increases with epistemic vocabulary and confidence, but remains moderated by perceived teacher credibility (“Depends what I think of them”).

Plurality is experienced as status conflict, not neutral variation, and is linked to moralised “right/wrong” discourse.

Focused Analytic Memo – P4 Block 4

This block powerfully advances:

RQ1 – Experiences of agency, clarity, and confusion
RQ2 – Emotional responses to pedagogical dynamics
RQ4 – Conditions enhancing or limiting learner autonomy

1. Trust Is Conditional on Explanatory Competence (01 + 05)

For P4, trust is not charisma or reputation.
It is:
“You understood the fundamental reason behind every single thing.”
Trust = perceived mechanistic understanding.
This strengthens the developing theme:

Instructional clarity underpins relational trust.

2. Trust Initially = Deference → Then Reframed as Mutuality (05 → 04)

She moves from:

“Font of all knowledge.”

to

“You’ve got to be able to question.”

This is a live example of epistemic shift during interview — important grounded theory development.

3. Identity Threat Drives Masking of Confusion (02 + 07)

Critical pattern:

She did not want the teacher to know she didn’t understand.

“It was important to me that you thought that I got it.”

Understanding becomes performative.

Confusion becomes hidden.

This is analytically significant for your “fog” metaphor.

4. Rejection Trauma → Competence Identity (07)

Music college rejection becomes:

Competence trigger

Fear of not being “quick”

Drive to be “the best”

This explains:

Sensitivity to hierarchy

Panic around not understanding

Resistance to ambiguity

5. Reflexive Growth Emerging (04 + 09)

Unlike earlier blocks, she now demonstrates meta-awareness:

“Knowing that that’s a trigger for me now.”

She is beginning to separate identity from performance.

That is a key developmental marker.

Focused Analytic Memo – P4 Final Block

This closing section sharpens several emerging theoretical threads.

1. Integrated Epistemology (06 + 01)

Unlike P3 (imagery preference) and earlier P4 (scientific preference), here she articulates a mature dual-strand model:

“Here’s what’s happening. Here’s how it feels.”

She resists “switch” but endorses integration.

This is significant:

Confusion is not caused by plurality per se — but by incoherent framing.

2. Outcome > Method (09)

“So long as they get to the end goal.”

Method becomes secondary to functional outcome.

This aligns with emerging cross-participant theme:

Learners care about removal of blockage, not allegiance to epistemic camp.

3. The Real Block Was Identity (07 + 02)

When pushed beyond technical framing, she arrives at:

“The main block was… me.”

“Getting it wrong.”

The passaggio issue was not biomechanical.

It was fear-based identity restriction.

This is a strong grounded moment.

4. Confidence as Primary Vehicle (04 + 05)

“Knowing that I could do it.”

“You gave me the confidence.”

The technical intervention functioned as:

Permission

Demonstration

Belief transfer

Technique was the vehicle.

Confidence was the transformation.

5. Bigger Picture: Self-Worth Reduction of Shame

Her final stance reframes singing as:

“Hating themselves a little bit less.”

This is profoundly aligned with your broader philosophical stance.

Voice pedagogy here is not merely skill acquisition.

It is identity recalibration.

P4 Overall Pattern Emerging

Compared to:

P3 → dialectical, comfortable with ambiguity

P2 → pragmatic, autonomy through necessity

P4 → clarity-seeking, identity-sensitive, hierarchy-aware, confidence-driven

You now have clear variation across participants.

This is strong grounded development.

P4 Post-Coding Summary (Whole Transcript)

- Dominant code profile
- 07 – Identity & Self-Perception (strongest): self-worth, “good girl”, fear of looking stupid, rejection imprints, being “quick”, imposter trigger, shame/competence narratives.
- 02 – Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance: confusion → “I must be wrong”; dislikes uncertainty; “switch” language triggers; confusion intertwined with vulnerability.
- 08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency: vivid contradiction experiences (breath, support, genre snobbery, social media noise, multiple teachers).
- 05 – Alignment & Relational Trust: trust is central but revised; “feeling understood” as learning condition; modelling/demonstration as relational proof.
- 04 – Agency & Control: agency grows through confidence and choice; but historically constrained by hierarchy and “don’t challenge”.
- 06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation: prefers scientific/technical explanations but teaches kids via sensation/imagery; ends endorsing both.
- 01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose: wants “why”; frustration when teachers don’t explain; accessibility threshold for jargon.
- 03 – Teacher Authority, Hierarchy & Institutional Constraint: “Mrs ___”, school context blocks equality; upbringing/elder respect shapes stance.09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices: one-teacher-at-a-time preference; end
- goal > method; changing answer after reflection indicates active negotiation.

Focused Analytic Memo – P4

P4 is an identity-sensitive learner-teacher whose relationship to voice learning is governed less by technique itself and more by status, safety, and self-concept.

- 1) Confusion is moralised and internalised (02 + 07)

Her default interpretation of confusion is self-blame (“I must be wrong”), linked to formative rejection experiences and a “quick” identity. Confusion triggers vulnerability, which triggers panic, which reinforces hierarchy.

- 2) Pedagogical plurality is experienced as destabilising (08)

Contradictory teachings (breath/support/genre values) generate a sense of being “stupid” and “subpar,” rather than curiosity. She prefers one teacher at a time unless the learner has high agency (09 + 04).

- 3) Trust is necessary but dangerous (05 + 03 + 04)

She begins with strong trust in teacher expertise, then revises the meaning of trust after reflection: trust should include permission to question. This is a key developmental shift from hierarchical compliance to reciprocal safety.

- 4) The mechanism of change is confidence, not anatomy (04 + 07 + 05)

The pivotal transformation in her “three sticky notes” example isn’t the technical solution; it’s belief transfer through demonstration: seeing the teacher do it collapses the “I can’t” identity narrative. Technique is the vehicle; confidence is the causal lever.

- 5) Dual-mode epistemology becomes integrated (06 + 01)

She values technical explanation personally, but teaches via sensation/imagery for accessibility. She ultimately argues learning is strongest when technical + felt experience are aligned, and rejects “switching” as implying incoherence (02).

Theoretical contribution (emerging)

P4 suggests a pathway where agency is mediated by identity safety: learners may not challenge ideas or tolerate uncertainty until the teacher relationship reduces shame and destabilises the “I must be wrong” schema. In this frame, “clarity” is not only cognitive—it is also relational and identity-stabilising.

Analytic Memo (P5 – pp. 1–9)

Participant 5 describes early training as observational and opaque, characterised by implicit authority and limited explanation. Instruction appears experienced as demonstration-driven and outcome-focused rather than process-explicit. There is a recurring distinction between achievement and understanding — exercises “work,” but their purpose remains unclear.

Trust emerges as a central mediating factor. Clarity appears secondary to relational belief. Where trust exists, lack of explanation is tolerated. Where trust is absent, clarity becomes necessary.

The participant demonstrates reflexive repositioning over time: moving from passive observer (“watching the magic happen”) to self-aware practitioner who questions purpose and articulates

limits. Their current teaching practice strategically prioritises ensemble cohesion and psychological readiness over explicit technical explanation, particularly in amateur contexts.

A tension is emerging between:

clarity vs outcome,
explanation vs buy-in,
technique vs taste,
authority vs relational trust.

This may connect to RQ2 (clarity/confusion/agency) and RQ4 (trust and pedagogical features), though coding remains inductive at this stage.

Analytic Memo (P5 – pp. 10–15)

Contradiction between pedagogical approaches is strongly acknowledged and normalised by P5. Institutional sequencing models (e.g., “start legit, progress later”) are contrasted with alternative philosophies. Contradiction appears linked to absence of shared standards and uneven teacher preparation.

Authority structures (teacher always right; head teacher as ultimate authority) are described as culturally embedded, particularly in earlier training environments. Younger self demonstrates compliance (“suck it up”), whereas current self demonstrates reflexive ownership and adaptive flexibility.

Trust remains central. Uncertainty is tolerated when relational trust exists. In unfamiliar or low-trust contexts, evaluative scrutiny increases (“Do you know your shit?”). Confusion earlier in training was internalised as personal fault; current stance reframes confusion as pedagogical or theoretical misalignment (“maybe my theory is incorrect”).

Emerging pattern:

Early training = hierarchical, compliance-based, contradiction tolerated without questioning.
Current practice = adaptive, relational, strategic, control-conscious.
Trust functions as regulator of uncertainty tolerance.
Institutional authority previously suppressed agency; professional maturity reclaims it.

Potential relevance to:

RQ2 (confusion and agency shift over time),
RQ3 (contradiction between approaches),
RQ4 (trust and control as stabilising mechanisms).

Coding remains inductive.

Analytic Memo (P5 – pp. 16–23)

A strong throughline emerges around learning how to learn as a perceived unmet need. P5 positions earlier training as tool-poor and compliance-based, with agency developing later through self-directed learning and professional maturity. Asking questions is framed as both a pedagogical tool and a marker of evolved learner/teacher identity, but is constrained by leadership demands, “mass learning,” and institutional policy.

Institutional constraint is illustrated through rigid participation processes and policy-led decisions (“permission,” “controlled,” “policy”), contrasted with P5’s preference for pragmatic, purpose-led decision-making (“If you don't need it, don't do it”). P5 also links the shift toward student-led practices to institutional duty, risk, and “liability,” indicating that care and compliance are intertwined.

Emerging pattern:

Agency and informed decision-making increase with experience and trust.

“Tools” (metacognitive learning tools, questioning, clarity) are described as missing earlier and deliberately cultivated now.

Institutional environments shape behaviour toward compliance, while later professional contexts enable challenge and autonomy.

Potential resonance with RQ2/RQ4 (agency, autonomy, trust) and RQ1 (gaps/unmet needs: learning-to-learn; policy-driven constraints), while remaining grounded in participant language.

Analytic Memo (P5 – pp. 24–26)

Trust is presented as conditional, relational, and competence-mediated (“my own knowledge… the reason for trust”), rather than an unconditional stance. P5 contrasts imposed trust in earlier training (“You must trust her”) with present-day evaluative trust shaped by experience and perceived safety. Institutionalised authority is foregrounded via “God” language attached to MD status and embodied hierarchies (standing when the principal enters; questions not allowed).

A key tension emerges between trust-as-compliance versus trust-as-dialogue. P5 rejects “not questioning” as trust, framing questioning as a marker of trust and psychological safety, and non-questioning as vulnerability management and low trust. “Feeling understood” is treated as important for wellbeing/mental health, but not positioned as unequivocally necessary for “learning,” suggesting a separation between relational attunement and skill acquisition, with a complicated middle position.

Pattern signals:

Trust is not binary; it is calibrated by perceived expertise, safety, and the learner’s own epistemic confidence.

Authority structures can suppress questioning even when respect is high.

The role of being “understood” is reframed toward wellbeing rather than purely instructional outcomes.

Analytic Memo (Strictly pp. 27–33)

In this closing segment, P5 articulates a clear epistemic preference: imagery is primary, technical explanation is supportive when it enhances visualisation and clarity. Switching between modes is not inherently confusing if coherent.

Institutional education is described as restrictive (“machine,” “restrict”), contrasting with the participant’s value for agency and self-judgment.

Trust is explicitly reframed as dialogic: questioning equals trust; silence equals lack of trust. Feeling understood is linked more to well-being than strictly to learning.

This final block reinforces:

Imagery as dominant learning scaffold
Trust as relational and question-enabled
Education systems perceived as restrictive
Autonomy positioned as developmental endpoint

Analytic Memo – Participant 5 (Whole Transcript)

Participant 5’s narrative presents a clear developmental arc from compliant learner within hierarchical structures to reflective practitioner who values agency, dialogue, and relational trust.

- Early Training: Compliance + Implicit Authority

P5 describes earlier training environments as structured, sequenced, and largely unquestioned. Trust was expected rather than negotiated. Authority was culturally embedded (“teacher is right,” standing when principal entered). Questioning was limited or absent. Confusion was often internalised rather than explored.

There is little evidence of explicit “learning how to learn” within those formative environments.

- Trust as Conditional and Competence-Based

Across the transcript, trust is not described as automatic. It is:

    - Dependefnt on perceived knowledge
    - Linked to safety
    - Strengthened by familiarity
    - Maintained through dialogue

Crucially, P5 reframes questioning as a sign of trust rather than disrespect. Silence is positioned as vulnerability or lack of trust.

This represents a shift from imposed trust to negotiated trust.

- Clarity vs Outcome

P5 repeatedly distinguishes between:

    - Understanding why something is done
    - Achieving the desired outcome regardless

There is tolerance for outcome-first teaching in ensemble contexts, particularly where cohesion or psychological readiness is prioritised. However, at an adult/practitioner level, understanding and reasoning become more important.

- Epistemic Preference: Imagery Dominant

Technical explanation is valued when it produces visualisation and clarity. However, imagery and sensation are preferred primary tools. P5 demonstrates comfort moving between modes, provided they align coherently.

There is no rejection of technical knowledge — rather, a pragmatic integration preference.

- Institutional Restriction vs Autonomy

Education systems are described as restrictive (“machine,” “restrict”). Compliance culture is contrasted with learner autonomy. P5 expresses frustration with rule-bound environments and values positive framing, choice, and judgment.

There is a repeated emphasis on:

- Informed decision-making
- Learner voice
- Ownership of learning
- Challenging unnecessary process

Developmental Shift in Agency

Earlier self:

- Observational
- Impressed by “magic”
- Internalised confusion

Current self:

- Reflective
- Evaluative
- Comfortable with uncertainty
- Willing to question
- Increasingly confident in self-directed decisions

Agency appears to have developed through experience, not formal pedagogical structure.

Emerging Pattern (Grounded)

For Participant 5, the perceived gaps in vocal pedagogy are not primarily technical. They appear to centre around:

- Lack of explicit metacognitive tools (“learning how to learn”)
- Over-reliance on authority structures
- Insufficient dialogic trust

- Institutional rigidity
- Limited clarity around pedagogical sequencing in singing compared to other disciplines (e.g. ballet)

The strongest stabilising feature in their account is relational trust combined with autonomy.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 1 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant codes:

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

04 – Agency & Control

Moderate presence:

02 – Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance

06 – Epistemic Orientation

Minimal but present:

07 – Cognitive Overload

03 – Strategic Compliance

05 – Relational Trust

09 – Strategic Decision-Making

No major absences.

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

Clarity appears context-dependent:

Strong clarity in one-to-one learning and self-directed YouTube use.

Reduced clarity in large-group choir contexts, especially when:

Time is limited.

Attention management is difficult.

The primary goal is “fun” rather than skill refinement.

Confusion emerges under specific conditions:

When auditory feedback exceeds internal sensory awareness:

“You can hear things I can't always hear.”

When internal analysis competes with execution:

“I'm sort of busy analysing…”

Agency appears strongest when:

The participant selects exercises independently.

Correlation between exercise and repertoire is immediate (“right in their face”).

Authority seems accepted without overt resistance in group contexts, suggesting compliance may coexist with partial understanding.

Plurality is already structurally embedded: multiple teachers, choirs, modalities, languages, purposes.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

Notably:

No strong resentment toward lack of clarity.

Past non-understanding (“you didn't necessarily know why”) is described neutrally.

Fence-sitting is embraced rather than anxiety-inducing.

There is no strong affective destabilisation here; ambiguity is tolerated.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 2 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant codes:

07 – Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload

02 – Evaluative Pressure & Self-Blame

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

Strong secondary presence:

04 – Agency & Control

01 – Instructional Clarity

Minimal but present:

03 – Authority

05 – Relational Trust

06 – Epistemic Orientation

09 – Strategic Decision-Making

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

Plurality appears as a trigger condition for:

Confusion (“completely different” approaches).
Physical and affective overload (“singing for eight hours… can’t go on”).

Contradiction alone does not destabilise her.

What destabilises her is:

Lack of procedural remedy (“no physical idea of what to do”).
High authority + no strategy.
Internalised responsibility (“obviously my problem”).

Self-blame is automatic and immediate.

Identity vulnerability is strongly activated when:

Voice quality is perceived as poor.
Singing ability feels misaligned with self-expectation.
Feedback lacks embodied guidance.

However:

Agency co-exists with vulnerability.

She:

Cherry-picks.
Deletes.
Reframes contradiction as inevitable.
Has developed capacity to “sit with uncertainty.”

Confusion does not produce panic.
Poor sound quality does.

Important conditional distinction emerging:
Uncertainty ≠ Panic
Perceived incompetence = Threat

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

Notably:

She strongly agrees she assumes she is wrong.

Yet she also strongly agrees she can sit with uncertainty.

This complicates a simplistic “confusion → panic” model.

Also:

Contradictions are normalised rather than catastrophised.

This participant tolerates plurality cognitively,
but not identity-threat affectively.

P6 – Full Analytic Memo (Axial-Aware)

a) Category Distribution (Across Entire Transcript)

Dominant Categories

07 – Identity, Panic & Cogni**tive Overload**

04 – Agency & Control

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

These four categories drive most of the transcript.

Strong Secondary Categories

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

02 – Evaluative Pressure, Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

Less Dominant but Structurally Important

03 – Authority, Hierarchy & Strategic Compliance

09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices

Notable Absences

No strong external blaming.

No sustained anger toward teachers.

No rigid allegiance to a single pedagogical camp.

No panic in relation to technical confusion.

b) Relational / Axial Probing

Below are grounded conditional relationships visible within P6 only.

1. Plurality as Structural Condition

Plurality (08) is not episodic — it is structural:

- Opera vs MT.
- Technical vs imagery.
- Piano vs voice.
- YouTube vs in-person.
- Teachers with musicianship vs without.
- Performer-teachers vs non-performer teachers.

Plurality produces two divergent outcomes:

→ Outcome A: Confusion / Physical Overload

When:

- Explanations lack procedural strategy (“no physical idea of what to do”)
- Warm-ups feel exhausting (“singing for eight hours”)
- Technical reasoning is opaque
- Teachers replicate what they were taught without adaptation

→ Outcome B: Strategic Agency

When:

- She can “cherry pick”
- She can delete ideas
- She reframes contradiction as inevitable
- She integrates technical + imagery

Plurality alone does not destabilise her.
Plurality without coherence does.

2. Clarity as Stabiliser

Instructional clarity (01) stabilises identity and trust.

Clarity is experienced when:

- There is technical specificity (“know exactly what you did”).
- There is repeatability (“you can’t repeat something unless you know how you did it”).
- There is purpose framing (“we’re trying to get this result”).
- There is immediate repertoire link (“right in their face”).
- There is integration of imagery and technical explanation.

Clarity increases:

- Trust (05)
- Agency (04)
- Tolerance of uncertainty (07 decreases)

3. Self-Blame as Automatic Response

Under confusion (02), default attribution is internal:

“Obviously my problem.”
“It's always me that's got it wrong.”

This is rapid and unexamined.

However, this self-blame does not lead to collapse.

It coexists with:

- Capacity to question.
- Capacity to reflect.
- Capacity to sit with uncertainty.

Thus:

Confusion → Self-blame
But not necessarily → Panic

4. Identity Vulnerability as Primary Instability Trigger

The most destabilising condition is not contradiction.

It is identity threat.

Markers include:

- “I have a very fragile ego.”
- “Am I a singer? No.”
- “I get in my own way and sabotage it.”
- “I can't sit with sounding shit.”

Distinction emerging:

- Technical confusion → frustration.
- Sounding “bad” → identity threat.
- Not being able to label self as “singer” → persistent identity split.

Identity vulnerability is tightly linked to:

- Early relational history (parental coldness, sibling hostility).
- Perfectionism.
- Sensitivity to being “dissed.”
- Need to be liked by teacher.

5. Trust as Relational-Epistemic Construct

Trust (05) is conditional.

She trusts when:

- Teacher demonstrates musicianship.
- Teacher has struggled and worked something out.
- Teacher explains technically.
- Teacher integrates imagery appropriately.
- Teacher allows questioning.
- Teacher understands her personally.

She distrusts when:

- Teachers lack musicianship.
- Teachers replicate without reflection.

- Teachers rely on trends.
- Teachers appear performative.
- Explanations contradict widely without coherence.

Trust does NOT mean compliance.

“Trusting a teacher means you can question what they say.”

This is significant.

Trust → Permission to question
Distrust → Withholding legitimacy

6. Authority Operating Bidirectionally

As student:

- “Need to do what I'm told.”
- Wants approval.
- Likes being told well done.

As teacher:

- “I'm in charge.”
- Does not like being challenged early in a pathway.
- Frames explanation responsibility as hers.

Authority tension is acknowledged but managed.

7. Epistemic Integration Rather Than Polarisation

She rejects binaries.

Technical vs imagery:

“You have to have a mixture of the two.”

Scientific vs imaginative:

“It’s scientific and programming.”
“You can’t see what’s going on so we’ve got to imagine something.”

Plurality does not require choosing a camp.
It requires coherence.

8. Uncertainty Tolerance is Developmental

She explicitly locates change over time:

“I'm 47.”
“It's been a journey.”

Current state:

- Can sit with uncertainty.
- Finds it interesting.
- Frames it as challenge.
- Does not panic.

Past state implied:

- Greater insecurity.
- More compliance.
- Less questioning.

Thus:

Age/experience → Increased epistemic flexibility.

9. Want vs Fear as Process Variable

Emerging conditional variable:

“The want has to be bigger than the fear.”

This applies to:

- Performing.
- Singing identity.
- Anxiety situations.
- Students.
- Herself.

Process pattern:

Fear > Want → Withdrawal
Want ≥ Fear → Growth possible

This appears to mediate identity stabilisation.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

Several contradictions complicate linear interpretation:

1.She strongly assumes she is wrong
Yet also strongly tolerates uncertainty.

2.She values questioning
Yet does not enjoy being challenged when teaching.

3.She embraces technical explanation
Yet relies heavily on felt/aesthetic judgement.

4.She expresses high agency
Yet cannot self-identify as “singer.”

5.She distrusts poorly trained teachers
Yet acknowledges the field is inherently plural.

These tensions are not resolved within the transcript.

They coexist.

Process Summary (Descriptive, Not Theoretical Closure)

Within P6’s account, learning stability appears to depend on:

- Clarity of purpose.
- Demonstrable expertise.
- Musicianship legitimacy.
- Integration of technical and imagery approaches.
- Relational warmth and feeling understood.
- Space to question.
- Personal agency in selecting and adapting methods.
- Desire outweighing fear.

Instability appears under conditions of:

- Identity threat.
- Lack of procedural explanation.
- Perceived incompetence.
- Authority without transparency.
- Field-level inconsistency without coherence.

Plurality itself is not destabilising.

Unintegrated plurality is.

P7 MEMOS AXIAL

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 1 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

Strong secondary:

04 – Agency & Control

08 – Pedagogical Plurality

Minimal:

02 – Confusion

03 – Compliance

07 – Identity

05 – Trust (implicit but stable)

09 – Strategic framing of career

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

Clarity is central and functional.

Understanding produces:

Understanding → Intent → Authenticity → Stronger execution.

He explicitly links cognition to outcome quality.

Confusion appears when:

- Exercise lacks visible application.
- Transfer link is not articulated.
- Group goals differ from individual goals.

Plurality (solo vs session ambitions) influences perceived usefulness.

Authority is tolerated when clarity is absent (“we have to do it”), but this produces disengagement rather than panic.

Notably:

He does not default to self-blame.
He defaults to questioning pedagogical framing.

This contrasts structurally with P6 (without comparing across participants formally yet).

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

He acknowledges improvement can still occur without understanding:

“I think you do still get improvement from not understanding it.”

So understanding is not framed as strictly necessary — but as performance-enhancing.

He does not express anxiety when confused.
He expresses scepticism.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 2 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:
04 – Agency & Control
06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

Strong secondary:
01 – Instructional Clarity
09 – Strategic Decision-Making

Moderate:
02 – Overwhelm (cognitive load)
08 – Plural teaching contexts

Minimal:
07 – Panic (present but controlled)

03 – Authority

05 – Trust (stable, not interrogated)

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

Plurality does not produce contradiction for P7.

Instead:

Plurality → Cognitive load

Not → Epistemic doubt

Overwhelm arises when:

- Multiple technical demands must be remembered simultaneously.
- Breath + vowel + jaw + lyrics + posture are layered.
- Novel breathing techniques are introduced.

He manages overwhelm via:

Breakdown → Chunking → Prioritisation → Practice selection.

Notably:

He does not interpret confusion as personal failure.

He interprets it as:

- Insufficient instruction.
- Insufficient clarity.
- Insufficient procedural detail.

Clarity functions as primary stabiliser again.

Agency appears highly developed:

He:

- Selects exercises strategically.
- Prioritises goals.
- Discards lower-value corrections.
- Frames exercises as means, not identity markers.

Identity vulnerability is minimal compared to cognitive load.

Uncertainty is tolerated because:

Uncertainty + ability to ask → Control maintained.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

He reports:

“I strongly agree” (re: sitting with uncertainty)

Yet also:

“It's overwhelming.”

This suggests:

Overwhelm ≠ Panic.

He experiences cognitive saturation, but not affective destabilisation.

Also:

He downplays tension/neck work as less important.
This may reflect selective integration rather than contradiction.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 3 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:
04 – Agency & Control
06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

Strong secondary:
01 – Instructional Clarity
05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

Moderate:
03 – Authority awareness
09 – Strategic decision-making

Minimal:
02 – Self-doubt
07 – Identity fragility (mild, developmental not destabilising)
08 – Plurality (contextual, not conflictual)

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

Authority and agency coexist without tension.
He acknowledges hierarchy:

“They have way more experience than I do.”
“I'm just there to shut up and listen at the moment.”

Yet this does not suppress questioning.

Pattern emerging:

Experience gap → Deference
Clarity provided → Confidence grows
Confidence grows → Informed decisions increase

He locates himself developmentally:

Newness → Listening phase
Training → Increased autonomy

Clarity directly leads to perceptible physical change:

Vowel adjustment → “night and day difference”
Breath planning → Reliable execution
Intonation exercise → Self-selected training focus

Understanding precedes performance commitment.

He repeatedly frames:

Understanding before action.

This is epistemically consistent across blocks.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

He prefers a one-off teacher’s lesson more than his ongoing teacher’s.

Yet he does not frame this as contradiction or distrust — only difference in alignment.

He says he is “just there to shut up and listen,” yet also:

- Actively questions.
- Reframes prompts.
- Changes survey answers mid-reflection.
- Selects external exercises independently.

So deference is contextual, not submissive.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 4 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

04 – Agency & Control

Strong secondary:

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices

06 – Epistemic orientation (trust = explanation + reasoning)

Minimal:

03 – Deference (developmental)

02 – Misalignment risk

07 – Identity (range-reliability positioning)

08 – Plurality (contextual)

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

Trust (05) is grounded in:

- Demonstrated expertise (“broke it down so clearly”)
- Responsiveness to questions
- Alignment with his goals (“understand what I'm aiming for”)

Trust does not produce compliance.

Instead:

Trust → Safety to question → Better understanding → Greater receptivity.

Misalignment is framed as a potential threat to engagement:

Teacher misreads goals/needs → “no staying power.”

He defines being “understood” primarily as:

Goal-attunement + background awareness + appropriate prioritisation.

This links:

05 (trust/alignment) ↔ 09 (strategic direction) ↔ 01 (clarity).

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

He strongly trusts all his teachers (“no point… don’t know what they’re talking about”), yet he also prefers certain lessons and frames “being understood” as variable across teachers.

So trust is stable at the level of legitimacy, but alignment is differentiated and affects perceived lesson value.

Also, he defers (“not in the position yet”) while simultaneously asserting non-blindness. Developmental humility coexists with strong agency.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 5 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:
06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

Strong secondary:
04 – Agency & Preference Articulation
01 – Instructional Clarity

Minimal:
02 – Mild ambivalence
05 – Trust (stable)
08 – Plurality (integrated, not conflictual)
09 – Strategic preference

No 03 (authority tension) or 07 (identity strain) present.

b) Relational / Axial Hints (Within This Block Only)

His epistemic stance is layered:

Scientific explanation → Strongest retention
Technical explanation → Helpful but less sticky
Imagery → Enhancing, not foundational

He does not experience switching as destabilising.

Instead:

Plurality of explanation modes → Enhancement
Not → Confusion

Switching between modalities increases coherence rather than reducing it.

This contrasts with some participants (pending cross-case analysis).

He repeatedly self-adjusts mid-response (neither → agree → neither → agree), suggesting reflective differentiation rather than confusion.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

He expresses preference hierarchy (scientific > technical > imagery), yet still ultimately agrees that all help.

He does not reject imagery — he reframes it as supplementary.

No evidence here that mixed language produces overload.

Instead, mixed language produces optimal learning conditions for him.

P7 – Full Axial-Aware Memo (Across All 5 Blocks)

a) Category Distribution Overview

Most Dominant Across Transcript:

04 – Agency & Control
05 – Alignment & Relational Trust
06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation
01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

Moderate:

03 – Authority awareness (developmental humility)
09 – Strategic training decisions

Minimal:

02 – Confusion/dissonance (rare, non-threatening)
07 – Panic/identity destabilisation (absent)
08 – Pedagogical plurality conflict (absent; plurality integrated)

b) Relational / Axial Observations (Grounded in This Participant Only)

1. Clarity → Intent → Confidence → Improvement

He repeatedly links:

Explanation → Understanding → Intent → Better execution.

Confusion is framed not as incompetence, but as:

Lack of clear direction.

Clarity stabilises his learning system.

2. Trust + Agency Coexist

He:

Strongly trusts expertise
Strongly rejects blind compliance

Trust for him includes:

- Responsiveness to questioning
- Goal alignment
- Clear reasoning

Authority does not suppress agency.
Authority + explanation → Expanded autonomy.

3. Being Understood = Learning Stability

If teacher aligns with:

- His vocal goals
- His stylistic direction
- His background

Then:

Receptivity increases
"Staying power" increases

Misalignment would reduce engagement.

4. Plurality Does Not Create Confusion

Different teachers focusing on different elements → not contradiction.

Switching between technical and imagery → not confusing.

Plurality becomes problematic only if:

It is unexplained.

But when explanation is present, plurality enhances learning.

5. Developmental Deference Without Submission

He says:

“I'm just there to shut up and listen at the moment.”

But also:

- Questions frequently
- Changes survey answers reflectively
- Selects his own exercises
- Articulates modality preferences
- Chooses additional one-on-ones

So:

Developmental humility ≠ passivity.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

No panic under uncertainty.

No self-blame when confused.

No authority-induced silencing.

No confusion from modality shifts.

He may represent a learner profile with:

High metacognitive capacity
High epistemic curiosity
Low evaluative fragility
High tolerance for structured complexity

He does not exhibit the instability patterns seen in other transcripts (pending cross-case validation).

P8 AXIAL MEMOS

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 1 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

04 – Agency & Control

Strong secondary:

09 – Strategic Decision-Making

08 – Pedagogical Plurality

Moderate:

02 – Frustration when transfer is blocked

05 – Trust conditional on explanation

Minimal:

03 – Authority compliance (situational only)

b) Relational / Axial Observations (Within This Block Only)

A strong transfer orientation emerges:

Clarity → Transferability → Independent practice → Development.

When exercises produce immediate improvement but lack explanation:

Immediate success ≠ Satisfaction.

She explicitly rejects lesson-contained progress.

Authority without explanation → frustration.

Explanation + discussion → buy-in (even if compliance imperfect).

Plurality across teachers produces variation in clarity, not necessarily confusion — but it exposes differences in purpose articulation.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

She rates both prompts 1 and 2 as “4” despite describing significant variation and occasional non-understanding.

So her global rating masks local dissatisfaction.

Also notable:

She complied even when she did not understand — but dissatisfaction emerged retrospectively around independence, not authority.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 2 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

Strong secondary:

04 – Agency & Boundary-setting

07 – Identity / perfectionism tension

02 – Stress under misalignment

Moderate:

03 – Conditional compliance

b) Relational / Axial Observations (Within This Block Only)

Plurality is experienced as:

High variability → High cognitive and emotional impact.

Contradiction alone does not destabilise her.

Misalignment does.

Pattern:

Approach mismatched to learner profile → Stress + withdrawal (loo example).

She actively regulates environment:

Warm up at home

Excuse herself

Change teachers

Loathe certain directions

Strong epistemic identity:

Visual learner

Acoustics fascination

Frequency chart integration

Physical + auditory + measurable data alignment

For her:

Alignment = Teacher acknowledges learner identity.

Trust is not about expertise alone.

Trust = Being known + Being equipped + Being transferable.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

She rates ability to sit with uncertainty as 4, yet:

- Reports stress
- Reports frustration
- Reports perfectionism
- Reports getting cross

So no panic — but strong affective response.

Also notable:

She will comply “at times” even when misaligned, but it creates stress and resistance.

Plurality does not inherently cause confusion — but modality mismatch does.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 3 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:

04 – Agency & Control

09 – Strategic Decision-Making

Strong secondary:

01 – Need for Understanding

06 – Epistemic Orientation

Moderate:

03 – Contextual authority awareness

08 – Teacher variability

Minimal:

05 – Trust (present but not central)

07 – Identity reflection (developmental, not destabilising)

b) Relational / Axial Observations (Within This Block Only)

Clear pattern:

Understanding ↔ Agency.

She rejects:

“Doing what I am told rather than understanding.”

Her autonomy includes:

- Stylistic self-definition
- Rejection of imitation as default
- Openness to revising previous stances (“I can change my mind.”)

Developmental factors identified:

Age
Maturity
Confidence
Experience across teachers

Teacher impact is decisive:

Teachers who “made decisions for me” → Reduced autonomy.

Preferred environment:

Teacher supports decision-making capacity.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

She rates ability to ask questions in lessons as 5, yet explicitly reduces challenge behaviour in group contexts.

So agency is context-dependent.

She is confident in one-to-one but defers to ensemble hierarchy.

Also, while strongly autonomy-driven, she acknowledges influence of teacher and context on her perceived agency.

Interim Micro-Memo (Block 4 Only)

a) Category Distribution

Dominant:
05 – Alignment & Relational Trust
03 – Authority & Power Dynamics
01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

Strong secondary:

04 – Agency & Identity reclamation

08 – Pedagogical plurality across lifespan

Moderate:

02 – Embarrassment and self-comparison

07 – Identity insecurity (early stages)

b) Relational / Axial Observations (Within This Block Only)

Clear developmental arc:

Early phase:

Authority prestige → Compliance → Emulation → Embarrassment.

Later phase:

Understanding → Alignment → Confidence → Authentic development.

Prestige markers (Royal Northern, high achievers) initially equated to expertise.

Over time:

Expertise redefined as:

Understanding student psychology

Understanding student priorities

Equipping independence

Trust is no longer based on institutional prestige.

Trust now based on:

Transferability + personal alignment + growth in confidence.

Pattern emerging:

Opaque authority → Shame + imitation.

Dialogic expertise → Confidence + autonomy.

c) Negative Case Sensitivity

She reports trusting teachers historically, yet describes:

- Embarrassment
- Emulation
- Compliance without confidence

So trust at the time did not equate to psychological safety.

Her present trust appears qualitatively different from earlier trust.

Also:
She strongly rejects blind trust, yet acknowledges compliance in group contexts for political/ensemble reasons.

Participant 8 – Block 5 Coding (Prompts 13–15 + Closing Reflections)

Pages 17–30
Framework 01–09 only
One strong quotation per relevant node
No cross-block referencing

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

*"*What it's done is given you access to make choices and understand those choices in a physical way."

Here clarity is not defined as information transfer, but as choice-enabling understanding. Technical explanation becomes valuable when it enables agency, not when it merely explains mechanics.

02 – Evaluative Pressure, Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance

*"*This is the result we should be aiming for. This is a technique to achieve that result. Do the technique and you'll get there… so therefore, if you try and it doesn't work, that's a failure in you."

Participant identifies a pedagogy that collapses outcome and method into inevitability, producing implicit self-blame if the technique fails. Evaluative framing shifts responsibility onto the learner.

03 – Authority, Hierarchy & Strategic Compliance

*"*There needs to be a match between the way they work and what the student is wanting."

Authority is reframed as conditional and relational. Legitimacy emerges through alignment, not status or lineage.

04 – Agency & Control

*"*Understanding the vocal cords… understanding the air resonances… what it's done is given you access to make choices."

Technical knowledge increases perceived agency by expanding choice awareness. Control is conceptualised as informed experimentation rather than mechanical micromanagement.

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

*“*I would have felt embarrassed if I had felt weepy… and so therefore that would have held me back because I didn't have the relationship with the teacher where it felt appropriate.”

Emotional safety directly mediates expressive freedom. Lack of relational alignment constrains emotional access and thus learning.

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

*“*The sense of exploration… ‘Okay, I'm going to do something physically slightly different here. How much am I doing it? How does it work? How do I feel about it?’”

Strong epistemic preference for exploratory, iterative learning over prescriptive replication. Knowledge is constructed through embodied trial rather than delivered as fixed technique.

07 – Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload

*“*In a very impersonal environment to have a little bit of a personal space and to be able to sing… helped manage pain.”

Singing is linked to identity, regulation, and coping under stress. Voice operates as a stabilising identity anchor in contexts of vulnerability (hospitalisation).

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

*“*Particularly if the teacher is quite adamant about the way they've learnt it, and therefore that's what they're trying to transmit.”

Rigid lineage-based pedagogy increases potential confusion. Transmission models are contrasted with adaptive, student-responsive models.

09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices

*“*Why, in each case, why did I leave that singing teacher?”

Participant reflects meta-cognitively on teacher turnover as strategic filtering rather than failure. Teacher choice is framed as situational fit (“right plant, right place”).

Focused Analytic Memo (Block 5 Only)

In this final section, Participant 8 consolidates a coherent learner identity characterised by:

- High epistemic curiosity
- Strong need for understanding-to-choice translation
- Rejection of blind authority

- Emphasis on exploratory process over result replication
- Sensitivity to relational safety
- Strategic teacher selection based on fit rather than prestige

Technical explanation is not valued for its scientific status, but for its agency-enhancing function. Imagery is not rejected but positioned as complementary rather than sufficient. Confusion emerges primarily when pedagogy presents technique as deterministic rather than exploratory.

A significant emergent dimension in this block is voice as identity regulation tool — singing during hospitalisation to manage pain and reclaim agency in impersonal environments. This extends beyond skill acquisition into existential function.

Pedagogical alignment, for this participant, is less about style or genre and more about:

- Shared understanding of purpose
- Permission to explore
- Emotional containment
- Choice architecture rather than command transmission

Block 5 reinforces Participant 8 as a highly reflective, autonomy-oriented learner whose confusion arises primarily from rigidity, not complexity.

P8 – Block 5 Coding (pp.17–30)

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

“Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.”

“What it's done is given you access to make choices and understand those choices in a physical way.”

“Understanding the vocal cords, understanding the air resonances, understanding about whether it's nasal or not… understanding the role of breath and the role of the physicality at the same time.”

Clarity is explicitly tied to explanatory coherence and application.

02 – Evaluative Pressure, Confusion & Cognitive Dissonance

“This is the result we should be aiming for. This is a technique to achieve that result. Do the technique and you'll get there… so therefore, if you try and it doesn't work, that's a failure in you.”

“You might have understood what they're asking you to do but you might not know how to do it or you might have even tried to do it but it doesn't work the same with your voice.”

Clear articulation of pedagogical pressure when method is treated as universally effective.

03 – Authority, Hierarchy & Strategic Compliance

“Particularly if the teacher is quite adamant about the way they've learnt it, and therefore that's what they're trying to transmit.”

“I don't think any of them were dreadful teachers… a couple of others were doing things by the book.”

Authority described as tradition-based transmission rather than adaptive facilitation.

04 – Agency & Control

“What it's done is given you access to make choices.”

“If you want to swoop, you can swoop. But if you want to hit the notes cleanly, you should be able to hit the notes cleanly.”

“It's an exploration of, ‘Okay, I'm going to do something physically slightly different here. How much am I doing it? How does it work? How do I feel about it?’”

“I don't need the qualifications… it's a way of performing which encourages you to work towards a specific goal.”

Agency is framed as choice, experimentation, and self-directed goal setting.

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

“I would have felt embarrassed if I had felt weepy… because I didn't have the relationship with the teacher where it felt appropriate.”

“There needs to be a match between the way they work and what the student is wanting.”

“It's right plant, right place.”

Relational alignment repeatedly framed as prerequisite for safety and continuation.

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

“Imagery and all that kind of stuff can help… but not on its own, just it's not enough.”

“I think you need both.”

“The sense of exploration.”

Participant articulates preference for integrated epistemic modes (technical + metaphor) and exploratory learning.

07 – Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload

“In a very impersonal environment to have a little bit of a personal space and to be able to sing… helped manage pain.”

“I would sit there and I would sing through my little repertoire of songs that I liked until somebody banged on the door.”

Voice framed as identity stabilisation and emotional regulation during hospitalisation.

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

“You're taught something and then you carry it out and that has made you better… Whereas it can be an exploration…”

“It can be very confusing, particularly if the teacher is quite adamant about the way they've learnt it.”

Clear contrast between transmission model and exploratory model; plurality becomes confusing when rigid.

09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices

“Why, in each case, why did I leave that singing teacher?”

“If I had five occasions where it just sort of drifted apart… if it had been more successful, I'd have stayed with them.”

“It’s right plant, right place.”

Participant actively reflects on teacher choice and disengagement as strategic evaluation.

Focused Analytic Memo – P8 Block 5

Block 5 consolidates P8 as:

- Strongly autonomy-oriented

- Epistemically curious
- Resistant to deterministic technique framing
- Motivated by enjoyment and identity expression
- Sensitive to relational mismatch
- Strategically selective in teacher retention

Technical explanation is valued when it expands choice, not when it enforces compliance.
Exploration is preferred over prescription.
Emotional safety enables expressive freedom.
Teacher–student fit determines longevity.

Participant 8 – Axial Memo (Within-Case Analysis)

Core Organising Pattern

For P8, the central organising phenomenon appears to be:

Agency through understanding.

Across the dataset, confusion does not primarily arise from technical complexity. It arises when pedagogy reduces choice, obscures rationale, or frames technique as deterministic.

Clarity, for this participant, is not simplicity.
Clarity = access to informed choice.

1. Clarity (01) and Agency (04) Are Structurally Linked

Technical explanation is consistently valued when it:

- Expands perceived control
- Enables experimentation
- Translates physiology into decision-making

Scientific knowledge becomes empowering when it moves from description to application:

“What it's done is given you access to make choices.”

Thus:

Instructional Clarity (01) → increases Agency (04)
Not because of correctness, but because of option-awareness.

2. Confusion (02) Emerges from Deterministic Framing, Not Ignorance

Evaluative pressure arises when technique is framed as universally effective:

“Do the technique and you'll get there… if it doesn't work, that's a failure in you.”

Here, confusion is not about misunderstanding instructions.
It is about mismatch between pedagogical certainty and lived vocal variability.

This links:

Evaluative Pressure (02)
+
Authority Transmission (03)
→ Reduced Agency (04)

3. Authority (03) Is Legitimate Only When Adaptive

P8 does not reject expertise.
They reject rigid lineage-based authority:

“Quite adamant about the way they've learnt it.”

Authority is accepted when:

- It responds to the student
- It equips rather than performs
- It enables autonomy

Thus:

Authority (03) must align with Agency (04) to sustain trust.

4. Relational Alignment (05) Regulates Expressive Depth

Emotional expression is contingent on safety:

“I would have felt embarrassed if I had felt weepy…”

Without relational alignment:

- Emotional access is restricted
- Expressive learning is constrained

This shows:

Alignment & Trust (05) → Conditions Identity Expression (07)

5. Learning Modality (06) Is Integrative, Not Polarised

P8 explicitly rejects epistemic binaries:

- Technical only = insufficient
- Imagery only = insufficient
- Switching between them = not confusing

“I think you need both.”

This participant thrives on integration rather than consistency.

Pedagogical Plurality (08) becomes problematic only when dogmatic, not when blended.

6. Identity (07) Extends Beyond Pedagogy

The hospital singing narrative is critical.

Voice is not merely skill development.
It is:

- Emotional regulation
- Pain management
- Personal space reclamation
- Identity continuity

This deepens the stakes of Agency (04).
Loss of agency in lessons is not trivial; it touches identity.

7. Strategic Decision-Making (09) as Adaptive Filtering

Teacher turnover is not framed as failure.
It is framed as fit evaluation:

“Right plant, right place.”

P8 demonstrates:

- Reflective teacher selection
- Withdrawal from misalignment

- Persistence in seeking fit

This suggests high meta-cognitive engagement in training choices.

Structural Summary of Relationships

For P8:

Instructional Clarity (01)
→ enables Agency (04)
→ supports Identity Expression (07)

Rigid Authority (03)

Deterministic Framing (02)
→ reduces Agency (04)
→ creates frustration, not panic

Relational Alignment (05)
→ permits emotional expression
→ sustains engagement

Pedagogical Plurality (08)
→ acceptable when adaptive
→ confusing when dogmatic

Strategic Decision-Making (09)
→ used to restore alignment when agency is constrained

Provisional Interpretive Statement (Within-Case)

Participant 8 demonstrates a strongly autonomy-oriented learning identity in which:

- Understanding must translate into choice.
- Technique must be exploratory, not prescriptive.
- Authority must be relational, not hierarchical.
- Emotional safety mediates expressive depth.
- Teacher–student fit determines sustainability.
- Singing functions as identity regulation beyond performance contexts.

Confusion arises not from complexity, but from reduction.

P9 – Focused Theoretical Coding

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

Extension + Professional Expectation

“Most of the time yes I do understand exactly why they're getting me to do an exercise… it’s clear to see what the exercise is doing.”

“If they don't even know why they're doing it… they're just copying what they've done before.”

Analytic Note

Clarity here is not framed as pedagogical kindness. It is framed as professional legitimacy.
Lack of explanation → loss of respect.
Clarity becomes a proxy for teacher competence.

This strengthens 01 as:

Not just cognitive clarity
But epistemic credibility

02 – Evaluative Pressure & Cognitive Dissonance

Weakening / Developmental Shift

“When I was younger I would have said a four but now I would go with one.”

Analytic Note

Confusion previously internalised as self-fault.
Now reframed as communication issue or teacher limitation.

This shows:

- Early-career internalisation of error
- Later-career external differentiation

Category 02 appears developmental, not static.

03 – Authority & Hierarchy

Clear Boundary Condition

“He was my boss… I had to listen and follow… but I kind of switched off.”

“You're hired to do a job… you can’t deviate from that.”

Analytic Note

Authority constrains outward questioning but not internal judgement.
Compliance ≠ agreement.

This introduces a strong relational tension:

Professional employment hierarchy moderates vocal agency expression.

03 now clearly interacts with 04.

04 – Agency & Control

Strong Intensification

“I take what they say with a grain of salt unless it’s got scientific backing.”

“I'm not gonna sing. I'm just gonna use my sick tracks.”

Analytic Note

Agency here is strategic and protective.
It includes:

- Filtering input
- Adjusting technique during illness
- Refusing unsafe vocal output

Agency is not rebellious.
It is calibrated risk management.

This strengthens 04 as:

Informed adaptability under constraint.

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

Conditional Trust

“If you feel understood… they understand your needs better.”

“Sometimes credits don’t translate to teaching.”

Analytic Note

Trust is not based on credentials.
It is based on perceived attunement and practical outcome.

Alignment is functional, not sentimental.

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

Novel Clarification

“I love the scientific aspect… it helps me create a mental image.”

“Marrying them up is the best way.”

Analytic Note

P9 rejects the science vs imagery binary.

Technical explanation = structural blueprint
Imagery = embodied execution

06 here becomes integrative, not preferential.

This supports theoretical stability in 06.

07 – Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload

Boundary Case

“The only time I'd panic… is if I brought in a troublesome song.”

Analytic Note

Panic is not teacher-induced.
It is performance-demand induced.

Growth-related uncertainty is tolerated.
High-stakes repertoire failure triggers anxiety.

This sharpens 07:

Panic is contextual, not structural.

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

Core Reinforcement

“Everyone has their own interpretation of the basic blueprint.”

“Someone adamant they're right… opposite person also adamant.”

Analytic Note

Plurality is normalised but recognised as destabilising early-career.

Resolution mechanism:

- Personal embodied feedback
- Scientific filtering
- Professional pragmatism

08 remains a central structural tension.

09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices

Major Extension (Institutional Critique)

“I was never taught how to sing pop properly.”

“Training institutions are behind the curve.”

“I've never been taught how to sing when ill.”

Analytic Note

09 now expands beyond personal choice into structural deficit.

Institutional curriculum gaps create:

- Industry-readiness misalignment
- Safety gaps (illness management)
- Style incompleteness

This strengthens 09 as:

Strategic adaptation compensating for systemic omission.

AXIAL MEMO – P9

P9 represents a late-stage professional stabilisation case.

Confusion has largely resolved into:

- Filtering
- Differentiation
- Contextual compliance
- Internal autonomy

Core pattern emerging:

Early training = authority compliance
Professional maturity = selective integration

A new relational axis becomes clearer:

Pedagogical plurality + institutional incompleteness
→ requires development of professional self-governance

Illness singing is particularly important:
It reveals:

- Adaptive technique switching
- Tactical compromise
- Self-protection in absence of formal training

This is a boundary condition your earlier participants did not strongly articulate.

P9 strengthens:

- Agency as adaptive competence
- Clarity as professional legitimacy
- Plurality as navigable rather than paralysing (at later stages)

No new categories required.

The 01–09 structure holds.

Saturation signal:
Multiple categories are now recurring with similar internal logic but varied context.

P10 – Focused Theoretical Coding (01–09)

01 – Instructional Clarity & Purpose

Strong Saturation / Normalisation

“There was always a reason given when I was learning… always a reason given why I was asked to do certain things.”

“You wouldn't go onto a football field and play a 90-minute match without warming up.”

Analytic Note

Clarity is treated as common sense and non-negotiable.
It is analogised to sport physiology — unquestioned preparation logic.

Unlike P9 (clarity = epistemic credibility), here clarity = procedural normality.

01 is fully saturated across cases.
No instability introduced.

02 – Evaluative Pressure & Cognitive Dissonance

Minimal Activation / Boundary Weakness

“Disagree with that. One.” (re: assuming confusion means doing something wrong)

Analytic Note

There is no strong evidence of internalised evaluative anxiety.

P10 appears developmentally stable and pedagogically confident.

This weak presence strengthens a pattern:
02 is strongest in early-career or high-institutional contexts.
It reduces significantly in established professionals/teachers.

Category remains intact but is not central here.

03 – Authority & Hierarchy

Moderated Compliance

“Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.” — “Three.”

Analytic Note

This is interestingly more moderate than P9.

P10 does not strongly reject non-questioning.
He allows a situational middle ground.

Authority is not framed as oppressive.
It is pragmatic.

This suggests:
03 varies by generational/identity position.

Hierarchy is not necessarily threatening when one is the authority.

04 – Agency & Control

Protective Redirection

“You sing it in your normal voice.”

“Ask. Always ask. Don't leave your lesson and say, oh, we should ask that.”

Analytic Note

Agency here is outward-facing (teacher-to-student), not self-protective.

Contrast with P9:

- P9 agency = internal filtering under industry constraint.
- P10 agency = guiding others away from misapplied institutional demands.

Agency shifts from self-governance to pedagogical stewardship.

04 deepens conceptually.

05 – Alignment & Relational Trust

Uncomplicated Affirmation

“Feeling understood… Five. Common sense.”

Analytic Note

Alignment is assumed as foundational and obvious.

No ambivalence.
No tension.

05 is saturated across participants as core relational necessity.

06 – Learning Modality & Epistemic Orientation

Age-Conditional Framing

“That depends on age… I would leave the technical and scientific bits till at least year nine.”

“Imagery… four.”

“Switching between technical and imagery… three.”

Analytic Note

This is a new nuance.

Unlike P9 (integrative epistemology),
P10 frames modality choice as developmentally staged.

Technical knowledge is withheld for cognitive maturity reasons.

06 now includes:

- Developmental calibration
- Age-based epistemic scaffolding

This is a meaningful refinement of the framework.

07 – Identity, Panic & Cognitive Overload

Calming as Pedagogy

“You just sit on the sofa. We're not stressing.”

“Anything that just calms the mind… sorts out a hundred other things.”

Analytic Note

Overload is addressed through environmental regulation.

P10 foregrounds nervous system calming rather than cognitive reframing.

This reinforces 07 as:
Not only internal panic tolerance,
But pedagogical atmosphere management.

New relational addition:
07 ↔ 05 (alignment and safety co-regulate panic).

08 – Pedagogical Plurality & Inconsistency

Externalised Plurality (Institutional)

“They went silly for a long while.”

“Everything’s got to be belted these days.”

Analytic Note

Plurality here is not teacher-to-teacher contradiction.
It is institutional trend distortion.

This is important.

P10 does not report confusion from plurality.
He critiques systemic fashion shifts.

08 now includes:

- Market-driven pedagogical distortion
- Belt culture normalisation
- Saturday school vocal damage patterns

Plurality becomes socio-cultural, not just interpretive.

09 – Strategic Decision-Making & Training Choices

Strong Institutional Commentary

“I now own a music teaching company.”

“I would leave the explanations till they're older.”

“They want to belt everything.”

Analytic Note

P10 operates from structural positioning.

09 extends from:
Personal decision-making (P9)
→ Institutional and curricular decision-making (P10)

Strategic choices include:

- Exam preparation alignment
- Style correction
- Preventative vocal rehabilitation
- Managing institutional syllabi

09 strengthens significantly here.

AXIAL MEMO – P10

P10 presents a high-stability pedagogical case.

Core differences from P9:

- Less autobiographical developmental tension
- More outward-facing instructional control
- Less epistemic uncertainty
- More common-sense framing

Emerging relational refinements:

- Clarity (01) is culturally assumed among experienced teachers.
- Authority (03) is less threatening when one occupies it.
- Modality choice (06) is age-sensitive, not preference-based.
- Plurality (08) may stem from institutional fashion cycles rather than epistemic contradiction.
- Anxiety regulation (07) is environmental and relational, not just internal.

No category collapse required.

Framework holds.

What shifts is perspective:

- Early career (P2–P6): confusion and contradiction salient.
- Mid-career performer (P9): adaptive filtering and autonomy.
- Senior teacher (P10): stabilised clarity and preventative correction.

This suggests a developmental arc across your dataset.

Appendix E6 – Axial/Intermediary Integration Memo

Intermediary Axial Memo

(Post P1–P5, Pre-Final Integration)

1. From Categories to Conditions

The 01–09 framework remains robust across all five participants. No structural collapse required.

However, axial relationships are now clearer.

Across P1–P5, confusion is not primarily a knowledge deficit. It appears to function as a relational and contextual phenomenon.

Confusion emerges under conditions of:

- Pedagogical plurality without framing
- Authority structures limiting dialogue
- Modality switching without coherence
- Evaluative pressure
- Identity threat
- Misalignment of goals

This strengthens the earlier memo insight:

Confusion is relational and ecological, not merely cognitive.

2. Agency as Interactional, Not Linear

Early assumption: Agency develops over time.

Refined finding: Agency develops conditionally.

Across participants, agency is shaped by:

- Temperament (questioning vs compliant)
- Pedagogical climate (dialogic vs authoritarian)
- Identity safety
- Structural constraints (time, cost, hierarchy)
- Professional exposure

Crucially:

Agency is not inevitable.
It can be suppressed.
It can be delayed.
It can be reactivated.

This modifies the earlier “developmental arc” assumption.

Instead of linear progression, the data supports an interaction model.

3. Dialogic Pedagogy: Rare but Catalytic

Across participants:

Dialogic environments are described as:

- Clarifying
- Empowering
- Identity-stabilising
- Meta-cognitively enabling

However:

They are not described as the norm.

This suggests:

Agency is most robust where dialogue, explanation, and permission to question are explicit.

But such spaces appear episodic rather than structurally embedded.

This is analytically significant.

4. Trust Reframed

Trust across participants is:

- Conditional
- Evaluative
- Relational
- Reversible

Blind trust is rejected.
Silence is often linked to vulnerability, not respect.

Questioning is reframed as relational meaning-making.

This challenges hierarchical models embedded in traditional training environments.

5. Epistemic Orientation: Integration Over Opposition

No participant rejects technical knowledge outright.

However:

- Technical knowledge without contextualisation produces overload or abstraction.
- Imagery and sensation are described as more actionable.
- Switching modalities is not confusing if coherence is preserved.

The tension is not “science vs imagery”.

It is:

Abstract explanation vs embodied integration.

This nuance strengthens RQ3 considerably.

6. Identity as a Central Mediator

P4 makes this most explicit, but it appears across participants:

Confusion interacts with identity.

When identity feels threatened:

- Confusion becomes self-blame.
- Agency collapses.
- Trust destabilises.

When identity feels safe:

- Confusion can become exploratory.
- Questioning increases.
- Agency stabilises.

This suggests that clarity is not purely instructional.
It is relational and identity-stabilising.

7. Structural Pattern Emerging

Across participants:

Early training:

- Authority heavy
- Questioning limited
- Metacognition implicit
- Plurality unframed

Later experience:

- Increased self-trust
- Selective trust in teachers
- More strategic negotiation
- Agency either reactivated or strengthened

This supports a provisional axial proposition:

Agency in voice pedagogy is negotiated within relational climates. It is moderated by learner disposition and amplified in dialogic environments. Where suppressed, it often internalises rather than exits.

What This Means for Continued Coding

- Testing interaction patterns.
- Looking for disconfirming cases.
- Refining properties of 04 (Agency), 05 (Trust), 02 (Confusion), and 06 (Epistemic Orientation).
- Mapping identity mediation more explicitly within 07.

Specifically, in remaining transcripts:

- Cases where dialogic pedagogy does NOT increase agency.
- Cases where high temperament does NOT lead to questioning.
- Instances of exit (if any).
- Structural features that consistently suppress questioning.

This will either strengthen or challenge interaction model.

Analytic Development: From Initial Coding to Axial Integration

The analytic process began with detailed initial coding of Participant 1 using line-by-line gerund-based codes in line with Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach. This produced over 100 micro-level codes capturing actions, interpretations, affective responses, and contextual conditions. At this stage, the emphasis was analytic openness rather than categorisation.

Through constant comparison within P1, recurring patterns became visible. Codes relating to confusion frequently co-occurred with evaluative pressure. Questioning behaviour appeared linked to relational trust. Modality switching (technical versus imagery) was often discussed in relation to cognitive overload. These repeated pairings suggested clustering tendencies but were not yet formalised.

Following this early comparison work, the most significant and frequent codes were elevated into provisional focused categories (Charmaz, 2014). This resulted in the development of the 01–09 framework (see codebook

These categories were not pre-imposed but inductively consolidated when conceptual similarity became evident across multiple instances.

Subsequent participants (P2–P5) were coded initially without forcing them into the framework. Only after open coding were segments compared against the existing categories. No additional primary categories were required. Instead, variation occurred within categories, particularly in the properties of Agency (04), Confusion (02), Trust (05), and Epistemic Orientation (06). The framework therefore demonstrated analytic stability while allowing dimensional variation.

However, as transcripts accumulated, descriptive categorisation alone became insufficient. The 01–09 framework identified what was present but did not yet explain relational dynamics. Certain tensions repeatedly disrupted static interpretation.

First, confusion did not behave uniformly. It intensified in hierarchical or evaluative contexts but stabilised in dialogic environments. It was frequently intertwined with identity threat. This suggested that confusion was conditional rather than inherent.

Second, agency did not follow a simple developmental trajectory. While participants described greater autonomy in later professional stages, this increase was not purely age-based. Some participants described questioning dispositions that were suppressed within authoritarian climates. Others described agency strengthening specifically within dialogic pedagogical environments. This disrupted any assumption of linear maturation.

At this stage, axial thinking emerged organically. The analytic question shifted from:
“What categories are present?”

to:

“Under what conditions do these categories intensify, suppress, or transform one another?” (cf. Charmaz, 2014).
Through continued constant comparison, three relational patterns began to crystallise:

1. Learner disposition interacts with pedagogical climate.
2. Confusion is mediated by identity safety.
3. Dialogic pedagogical spaces amplify agency but appear episodic rather than systemic.

Reflexive consideration was necessary given the researcher’s dual role as teacher for some participants. Comparative coding confirmed that descriptions of dialogic amplification of agency were not exclusive to participants taught by the researcher, reducing the risk of self-confirming interpretation.

At this stage, the emerging proposition is provisional and conditional rather than deterministic. Agency within contemporary voice pedagogy appears relationally negotiated and contextually amplified. It is shaped by learner disposition and strengthened in environments where explanation and challenge are legitimised. Where such environments are absent, agency may be suppressed or delayed but not necessarily extinguished.

Further analysis will test this interactional model by seeking disconfirming cases and refining properties and dimensions within the most theoretically sensitive categories.

Appendix E7 – Cross-Case Theoretical Integration Memo

(Post P1–P10 Final Integration)

1. Purpose of This Memo

This memo documents the final stage of constructivist grounded analysis following completion of coding for Participants 1–10. Earlier appendices detailed:

- Development of the 01–09 framework
- Cross-case distribution across P3–P8
- Axial relational refinement after P1–P5

Participants 9 and 10 were analysed using focused theoretical coding to assess the framework's robustness, saturation, and explanatory limits.

No new core categories were required. However, several theoretical properties were significantly refined.

This memo therefore articulates:

- The stabilised core phenomenon
- Cross-case relational patterns
- Category refinements
- Developmental positioning across participants
- Provisional theoretical contribution

2. Framework Robustness and Saturation

Across P1–P10:

- All nine categories remained analytically active.
- No transcript required structural amendment.
- Variation occurred in intensity and interaction, not architecture.

Category 04 (Agency & Control) remained the most conceptually central across cases.

Categories 01 (Clarity), 05 (Alignment/Trust), and 06 (Epistemic Orientation) repeatedly interacted with it.

Category 02 (Evaluative Pressure/Confusion) varied most dramatically by context and developmental position.

The framework demonstrates conceptual stability with relational variability.

3. Core Integrative Finding

Across cases, the central organising phenomenon can now be articulated as:

Agency in voice pedagogy is relationally negotiated and conditionally amplified within specific pedagogical climates.

Agency is not a personality trait alone.
It is not a linear developmental achievement.
It is not guaranteed by expertise.
It emerges — or contracts — under particular conditions.

4. Cross-Case Relational Patterns

4.1 Clarity → Agency (Conditional Amplification)

Instructional clarity alone does not guarantee agency.
However:
When clarity includes explanation, rationale, and transferability:

- Learners report increased confidence.
- Questioning increases.
- Metacognitive awareness strengthens.

When clarity is absent or purely procedural:

- Compliance increases.
- Engagement becomes passive.
- Improvement may still occur, but without ownership.

Thus:
Clarity amplifies agency when it is dialogic, not when it is merely directive.

4.2 Confusion as Ecological, Not Cognitive

Early transcripts suggested confusion as misunderstanding.
Cross-case integration shows:
Confusion intensifies under:

- Evaluative pressure

- Hierarchical silenceIdentity threat
- Unframed plurality
- Deterministic technique claims

Confusion stabilises under:

- Identity safety
- Permission to question
- Explanatory coherence
- Non-catastrophic framing of error

Therefore:

Confusion is relationally mediated, not purely informational.

This reframes RQ2 significantly.

4.3 Authority: Suppressive or Stabilising

Authority behaved differently across cases.

In early-career or evaluatively intense contexts:

- Authority constrained questioning.
- Silence was linked to vulnerability.
- Compliance masked uncertainty.

In experienced or teacher-positioned participants:

- Authority was pragmatic.
- Questioning coexisted with respect.
- Hierarchy was not experienced as threat.

Thus:

Authority is not inherently suppressive.

It becomes suppressive when dialogue is structurally limited.

4.4 Epistemic Orientation: Integration Over Opposition

No participant rejected technical knowledge outright.

However:

- Technical explanation without embodiment → overload.
- Imagery alone → insufficient for some learners.
- Switching modalities → not destabilising when coherent.

The data does not support a “science vs imagery” binary.

Instead, it supports:

Embodied integration as epistemic stabiliser.

This directly addresses RQ3 and complicates simplistic evidence-based vs heuristic debates.

4.5 Identity as Mediating Variable

Identity emerged as a cross-cutting condition (Category 07).

When identity felt:

- Threatened → confusion intensified → agency contracted.
- Safe → confusion became exploratory → agency expanded.

Identity safety mediated whether challenge became growth or collapse.

Thus:

Clarity is not merely instructional.

It is identity-regulating.

4.6 Pedagogical Plurality: Framed vs Unframed

Plurality did not inherently produce confusion.

Plurality destabilised learners when:

- Teachers presented approaches as exclusive truths.
- Institutional trends shifted without explanation.
- Contradictions were not contextualised.

Plurality enhanced development when:

- Differences were framed as stylistic variation.
- Teachers explained epistemic reasoning.
- Learners were invited to compare rather than comply.

Plurality becomes destabilising only when authoritarian.

4.7 Strategic Decision-Making as Meta-Agency

Later-career participants (P8–P10) demonstrated:

- Strategic teacher selection
- Filtering of techniques
- Institutional critique
- Preventative pedagogical adjustments

This suggests a higher-order form of agency:

Meta-agency = the ability to evaluate pedagogical systems themselves.
Meta-agency appears strengthened by dialogic exposure earlier in training.

5. Developmental Positioning (Without Linear Assumption)
Early assumption: agency increases over time.
Cross-case refinement:
Agency develops conditionally.
It is shaped by:

- Temperament
- Pedagogical climate
- Identity safety
- Structural constraint
- Professional exposure

Some participants demonstrated early questioning that was suppressed.
Others described agency reactivating later when safer environments were encountered.
Thus:
The data supports an interactional model, not a linear maturity model.

6. Final Theoretical Proposition
Based on P1–P10 integration:
Agency within contemporary voice pedagogy is relationally negotiated and contextually amplified.
It emerges most robustly in dialogic climates where explanation, challenge, and identity safety coexist.
Confusion is ecological rather than purely cognitive, intensifying under evaluative hierarchy and stabilising under relational trust.
Pedagogical plurality becomes destabilising only when unframed or authoritarian.
Technical and heuristic approaches function optimally when integrated rather than polarised.

7. Theoretical Contribution
This study does not propose a new technique.
It proposes a reframing:

- From technique transmission → relational negotiation
- From confusion as deficit → confusion as climate-dependent
- From authority as expertise → authority as dialogic positioning
- From evidence vs heuristic polarity → embodied integration

- From linear learner development → interactional amplification

The 01–09 framework remains structurally intact and theoretically generative.

No new categories were required at final integration.

What changed was relational understanding.

8. Positioning Relative to RQs

RQ1: Gaps and tensions

→ Tension lies not in content disagreement alone, but in relational framing and identity safety.

RQ2: Confusion, clarity, agency

→ Confusion is mediated; clarity amplifies agency only when dialogic.

RQ3: Evidence-based vs heuristic tension

→ False polarity; integration stabilises learning.

RQ4: Pedagogical features enhancing autonomy

→ Explanation, permission to question, contextualised plurality, identity safety.

9. Saturation Statement

Across ten participants:

- No new core categories emerged.
- The relational model accounted for variation.
- Deviant intensities were explained by contextual positioning.
- The framework demonstrated explanatory adequacy.

Theoretical saturation was reached at the level of relational interaction, not merely category repetition.

Appendix F – Cross-Case Theoretical Integration Memo

Instrument item	Analytic construct / focus	Research question(s)	Intended analytic use
L1: I usually understand why my teacher asks me to do particular vocal exercises.	Pedagogical clarity	RQ2	Identifies perceived clarity of pedagogical intention
L2: I feel clear about what a vocal exercise is meant to help me improve.	Pedagogical transparency	RQ2	Explores alignment between task and learning outcome
L3: I often do exercises in lessons without fully understanding what they are meant to achieve.	Confusion attribution	RQ2, RQ3	Highlights perceived opacity or lack of explanation
L4: I have experienced moments where different teachers or approaches seemed to contradict each other.	Pedagogical contradiction	RQ2, RQ3	Identifies experiences of inconsistency across pedagogies
L5: When I feel confused in lessons, I usually assume it is because I am doing something wrong.	Internalised responsibility	RQ2	Examines self-blame and learner positioning
L6: I feel able to sit with uncertainty or confusion in voice lessons without panicking.	Tolerance of uncertainty	RQ2	Explores emotional regulation in learning contexts
L7: I feel able to ask questions or challenge ideas in voice lessons.	Learner agency	RQ2, RQ4	Indicates permission to question and dialogic learning
L8: In lessons, I mostly focus on doing what I am told rather than understanding what is happening.	Compliance vs agency	RQ2, RQ4	Identifies passive vs active learning orientations
L9: I feel increasingly able to make informed decisions about my own	Developing autonomy	RQ2, RQ4	Tracks growth of agency over time

Instrument item	Analytic construct / focus	Research question(s)	Intended analytic use
voice and training.			
L10: I trust my teacher's expertise.	Relational trust	RQ4	Explores foundations of the learning relationship
L11: Trusting a teacher sometimes means not questioning what they say.	Trust–authority tension	RQ4	Examines compliance framed as trust
L12: Feeling understood by my teacher is important for my learning.	Relational safety	RQ4	Highlights emotional and relational conditions for learning
L13: Technical or scientific explanations help me understand my voice better.	Evidence-based explanation	RQ3	Explores impact of technical frameworks
L14: Imagery, metaphor, or sensation-based teaching helps me understand my voice better.	Heuristic explanation	RQ3	Explores impact of experiential frameworks
L15: I feel more confused when explanations switch between technical language and imagery.	Framework coherence	RQ3	Identifies fragmentation or integration issues
IP-A: Opening open-ended invitation	Meaning-making	RQ1, RQ2	Establishes participant framing and priorities
IP-B: Follow-up prompts linked to Likert responses	Experiential elaboration	RQ2–RQ4	Deepens understanding of Likert positions
IP-C: Mid-interview open reflection	Reflexive sense-making	RQ1	Allows emergence of unanticipated themes
IP-D: Closing reflective prompt	Perceived gaps and needs	RQ1, RQ4	Synthesises participant insights and unmet needs