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A study of the considerations to be given in
the building and implementation of an ethical
framework that shapes our approach to the
teaching of trans/gender non-conforming
(TGNC) voices

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The Portfolio

1. Introduction and Rationale

During this study, I intend to further my knowledge and research on the trans/gender non-conforming (TGNC¹) singer and the considerations one must give into the devising of an ethical framework that can be utilised in the singing studio. Although an emerging area of vocal pedagogy, literature relating to the TGNC singer is limited (Lessley, 2017; Aguirre, 2018) with the majority of texts referring to spoken voice over the singing voice. Furthermore, they tend to encourage a focus on practical knowledge and solutions for TGNC voices users. Although there are practical considerations and knowledge to be given in developing a well-rounded ethical framework for TGNC singers, these can often be viewed as the *only* considerations to take when teaching TGNC singers. Therefore, the emphasis of this study will not be the practical aspects of the mechanism, but considerations as they pertain to TGNC identity and experience and the impact they may have on the teaching of TGNC individuals in the singing studio. In much the same way that vocal pedagogues describe the processes of voice production being inter-connected (Dorscher, 1994; Miller, 1986; Mills & Stoneham, 2017; Stark, 1999; Sundberg, 1987), so too are the social and historical contexts that form TGNC identity and experience. It will therefore require an interdisciplinary approach, requiring me utilise literature regarding TGNC issues in the fields of medicine, education, politics and history.

December 2020 saw Keira Bell win a landmark case against The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust. After consulting with the NHS GIDS² clinic, Keira Bell started puberty blockers³ at the age of 16 and testosterone at 17. Bell eventually decided to detransition⁴ citing inadequate assessment and her ability to make informed consent

¹ Short for *trans/gender non-conforming* is an umbrella term that will be us over *transgender* to speak as inclusively as possible to a variety of gender identities and expressions (Simmons & White, 2014). Not all *transgender* and *gender non-conforming individuals* identify with both terms (GLAAD, N.D.).

² Gender Identity Development Service

³ Used most commonly in TGNC adolescents, gonadotropin-releasing hormone analogues (GnRHAs), colloquially referred to as “puberty blockers,” halt the production of testosterone and oestrogen to suppress puberty (Turban, et al., 2020).

⁴ To stop or reverse social, legal or medical changes pertaining to gender (Detransition, n.d.). Detransition may only be temporary and can occur for a variety of reasons (Stonewall, 2019).

at a young age (Bell v Tavistock, 2020). Whether in agreement or not, one of the outcomes has been to place professionals working with TGNC individuals under scrutiny and force some to reassess how they work with TGNC people. Davies, et al. (2015) previously stated, ‘...there are no minimal standards for the assessment of voice and communication in transgender clients’ (Davies, et al., 2015, p. 131). Although the recent development of the *Trans and Gender-Diverse Voice and Communication Therapy Competency Framework* (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, 2018) may have brought clarification to SLTs, it still focusses on the practical knowledge with a relatively small attention given to understanding the TGNC experience. Largely, voice teachers and vocal coaches are left to devise their own standards and ethical framework for TGNC clients.

Vocal coaches and singing teachers seeking frameworks that can be utilised from other fields may also struggle. Existing frameworks in education, for example, often fail to make accessible the aspects of the TGNC experience (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018). Often the opinion can form, that issues pertaining to some minorities such as LGBTQIA+⁵ persons should not be broached until they enter the classroom (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). It is the responsibility of the teacher of TGNC voices to have a basic understanding of not only the processes of the mechanism and the impact hormones can have (Davies, et al., 2015), but also an awareness of the specific social and psychological issues that would potentially shape a student’s voice goals. Looking at this in the context of the TGNC singer, the prospect arises for a voice teacher who is under prepared and has the potential to do either physical or emotional harm.

Although there are no accurate figures for the amount of TGNC individuals living in the UK, the estimate is at about 1% which accounts for 600,000 individuals (Stonewall, n.d.), whilst a 2017 study of TGNC analysing data from 2006-2016 in the United States, suggested numbers were close to 1 million (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). As neither country takes this into account on their national census, for now estimates are

⁵ An umbrella term for those who identify as having a non-normative gender or sexuality. This is no correct variation of this acronym as it is dependent on the individual who uses it (Hearn & Kremer, 2018). Often used in this assignment when sources are talking in broader terms rather than *TGNC* specific.

all that are known. WPATH's *Standards of Care* (2012) recommend that health care professionals providing care for TGNC individuals meet a certain set of criteria including understanding of TGNC issues and language protocols. As singing starts to play more of a role in healthcare at large (Mills, et al., 2017), they highlight the importance that other professionals – such as vocal coaches and singing teachers – may play in the vocal goals of a TGNC individual (WPATH, 2012). With the understanding vocal coaches and singing teachers will be working alongside SLTs, it is important that some sort of criteria or framework is given to the people working in these arenas to maximise the benefits for the student.

For example, there may be the temptation to coach a TGNC singer as you would anyone else in a similar stage of vocal development. Stave (2017), comments on teaching a grown transmasculine⁶ singer in a similar way she would an adolescent cisgender⁷ individual navigating vocal change (Manternach, et al., 2017). She later goes on to point out that this approach was circumstantial and still needed some degree of editing to accommodate the individual practical and emotion stresses of the singer. Whilst this does work from a practical sense (Constansis, 2008), had this approach been within a framework that would still acknowledge TGNC identity and experience some of the vocal problems arising due to high levels of social anxiety (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) could have been reacted to quicker or avoided all together. Whilst voice teachers and pedagogues alike are making steps to improve the experience and quality of teaching for TGNC voice users, at the *Transgender Singing Voice Conference 2017* Cayari (2019) noted a lack of presence on subjects such as dysphoria, experiences of TGNC vocalists and TGNC self-identity - to name a few. It would seem that although the education for teachers of TGNC voices in gaining positive ground, it is not doing so in conjunction with the social and historical context of TGNC individuals. They go on to say that, 'Research on the effects being trans*+⁸ has on a musician would provide further insight into how educators can better work with students' (Cayari, 2019, p. 11).

⁶ The degree to which someone views themselves as *masculine*, whilst *transfeminine* is the degree to which someone views themselves as *feminine* (Stryker, 2017).

⁷ Identifies someone who is not *TGNC*, whilst inherently acknowledging the assumed privilege that come with being binary and non-*TGNC* (Stryker, 2017).

⁸ Another term for TGNC. The asterisk originated from internet searches, whereby using the * after a word would find the word with a variety of characters after (Stryker, 2017)

With an increase of individuals – especially adolescents – wanting to explore their gender in the singing studio (Manternach, 2017; Lessley, 2017), voice teachers are now presented with opportunities in which the decisions they make in the classroom carry the potential of being beneficial or harmful (Wren, 2019; Kozan & Hammond, 2019). A feeling of inadequacy can often put-up barriers between the teacher and TGNC student (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012; Cayari, 2019). In addition to a gap in knowledge of TGNC voices, the fear of causing offence or not creating a transformative experience for the student (Aguirre, 2018) speaks to the lack of any sort of framework to which a teacher of little experience with TGNC individuals can model their lessons on. It goes therefore, that research into creating a tool to facilitate interactions with TGNC students is necessary in preparing teachers (Cayari, 2019; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008)

The rationale for this study is further my knowledge of TGNC identity and experience, engaging critically in historical and social aspects of the TGNC experience to assess fully the restrictions, or erasure, of crucial elements that are significant in creating an ethical framework for TGNC students (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018). Shifting the focus of study to encompass aspects of the social and historical contexts of being a TGNC individual, will help create a framework that is not just academically comprehensive, but is ethically sound.

2. Planned Programme of Study

Aims:

- To broaden my knowledge in aspects of the TGNC experience and the relevance it may have in the singing studio
- To show further understanding to the considerations I can give to TGNC individuals and the ways in which that can be implemented into my teaching
- To develop a set of ideas that can contribute toward the building of an ethical framework to be used as reference by myself and my peers when teaching TGNC singers
- To conduct research that benefits the wider TGNC community
- To develop further areas of research
- To improve in the process of literature review and research

Objectives:

- To identify significant texts and contributions to the TGNC singer
- To identify significant texts and contributions to the understanding of TGNC experience
- To compare and analyse the literature with a thorough review
- To identify how history, culture and gender perception can affect the TNGC singer
- To consider the pedagogical implications for my teaching and development

Below is a proposed timescale of study

WEEKS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Consider topic and agree with tutor																					
Preliminary literature																					
Finalise aims and objectives																					
Start devising essay structure																					
Rationale Written																					
Methodology literature																					
Methodology Written																					
Organising and sourcing of literature																					
First draft written																					
Critical reflection																					
Re-writes and edits																					
Submission																					

Literature Review Process – Hermeneutics

For this independent study, a review of the literature that can contribute toward an ethical framework for teachers of TGNC singers will be conducted. It is also important to consider the ethicality that goes into conducting such research. Whilst carrying out and this independent study it is therefore important to keep in mind how the article itself will be perceived and read. Adams, et al. (2017) outline nine provisional criteria that can be used to assess the ethicality of research being undertaken with TGNC individuals in a health care setting. Although not all applicable to this study, criteria that were entwined into the literature review process are:

- Language and framing of research should be non-stigmatizing
- Research should be disseminated back to the community
- The diversity of the TGNC community should be accurately and sensitively reflected (Adams, et al., 2017)

Although this is to be a tool primarily for teachers of TGNC singers, it is important to remember that the voices that contribute to its creation are TGNC individuals themselves. Therefore, it is the agenda of the researched group (TGNC people) – well-rounded approaches to teaching in the singing studio – that must be kept central to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1989; Wojar & Swanson, 2007). The ‘participants’ – in this case the TGNC community – must not be robbed of that which they have contributed toward (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

Whilst recognising that the borders between paradigms are not rigid (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), a pragmatic paradigm is best suited in guiding my research. Methodologically, hermeneutics will play a large part in how the literature is searched, acquired, classified and developed throughout the assignment. The hermeneutic methodology is not the method by which the research will be carried out, but the creative approach to which understanding is formed (Laverty, 2003). As the inquirer of the study, it is important to point out that research utilising this methodology will carry an element of bias, as the meaning from the text will pertain to issues that *I*, the inquirer, feel are relevant (Crowther, et al., 2016). To mitigate this as much as possible, I must ensure that researched is framed not as definitive but an interpretation of human experience (Crowther, et al., 2016).

As there are philosophic roots in the hermeneutic approach (Kakkori, 2009), this would lend itself well to me as the inquirer, but also the way in which literature regarding the TGNC experience is interacted with and interpreted. In conducting research through a hermeneutic lens, not only can I examine aspects of the TGNC experience whilst acknowledging my personal history (Laverty, 2003) as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, but its relation to the assignment as a whole (Kakkori, 2009). Hermeneutics permits us to explore how our place in the world is connected with our understanding of it (Kakkori, 2009). Our personal ‘historicality’ (Laverty, 2003) refers to cultural privileges – or lack thereof – that have been afforded to us, and how they inform our understanding of the world. In that, understanding of historical consciousness is not just something that can be set aside. It is continuously carried with us (Laverty, 2003; Smythe & Spence, 2012). A hermeneutical approach will therefore lead me not to only recreate meaning of the TGNC experience, but to

question and inquire as to how that should play a transformative role in the teaching of TGNC students (Lavery, 2003).

The method used in this independent study will be a desktop review of available literature. Heidegger's hermeneutic circle can be utilised in the literature review process (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). The 'understanding' of a part informs the 'pre-understanding' of a whole (Lavery, 2003). The 'part' in this case is the text and the 'whole' is the context in which it is viewed and visa-versa (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). In going through the literature review process, it is possible to identify volume and quality of research in the area of study (Hart, 1998). This study will require me to access literature from a multitude of different fields of study and disciplines, including literature that takes a non-analytical approach; texts that reflect a TGNC experience that is true and lived rather than academically analysed (Smythe & Spence, 2012). As the literature is from varied fields and academic disciplines, it is unlikely that 'verbatim' pertaining to my research will exist. Therefore, interpreting the texts and the social and individual implications they could hold for the TGNC community is paramount (Lavery, 2003; Crowther, et al., 2016). From previous research, the lack of literature related to TGNC voices (Aguirre, 2018) is clear, but the necessity for it to be viewed through a gender-diverse lens before being disseminated back to the community - in the context of the teacher of TGNC singers - has become more apparent and creates the impetus for this study.

Due to the diversity of disciplines I anticipate to access, secondary literature will be the best place to start to help develop and understanding in areas I am unfamiliar with; specific terminologies, research approaches, further reading etc (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Using the hermeneutic circle will allow me to initially be precise in the literature I choose. Whilst there may be a need to expand the scope of literature (Boote & Beile, 2005), it is also likely that other questions will evolve and illuminate as the research continues (Crowther, et al., 2016). As I 'circle' back other literature will therefore inevitably be picked up (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). The constant development of understanding will start to inform search terms as I delve further into the research (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010); literature will only be relevant in a particular point in time. It is likely that as the reflective process takes place, parts of the research will be less relevant (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Initial general

search terms that have garnered results include; *transgender history, transgender rights, transgender ethics, transgender ethics in education, gender ethics*. One risk of taking a hermeneutic approach to reviewing literature is getting caught in the circle of understanding and expanding. Time constraints of the assignment will somewhat dictate when the review phase must end (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

As my search crosses academia and fields there will potentially be a large volume of literature, therefore reflection and re-interpret of TGNC experience (Smythe & Spence, 2012) will be preferable over trying to read *all* literature pertaining to TGNC individuals. Consequently, an integrative approach will be taken (Snyder, 2019), to facilitate the incorporation of new themes and perspectives into a framework. This paper will address history, current rights and visibility and perception of gender in the context of the TGNC experience. Therefore, the format of the research will be both conceptual and historical (Randolph, 2009). Due the interwoven nature of these areas, both the research process and assignment structure will not be strictly linear. In turn some of the considerations put forward in this assignment may be better interpreted as concepts, as the building of an ethical framework for TGNC singers will not be wholly definable (Smythe & Spence, 2012).

Using a hermeneutic approach will be reflected in the aims of the assignment. The desired outcome is not for empirical proof (Crowther, et al., 2016; Kincheloe, 2004), but rather to reconstruct aspects of the TGNC experience which were previously thought to be known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Not only can the hermeneutic circle be used in the different phases of the literature review process, but also in assessment of the 'understanding' of the assignment as a whole (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). In creating a research experience that has encouraged reflection, it illustrates to me going forward my ability to attain new knowledge and seek out alternate perspectives (Kakkori, 2009).

Taking into account the assignment as a whole piece, it is likely that there will be no 'answer' but rather a re-interpretation of that which was previously understood (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). In using a hermeneutic methodology, the experience between me, the inquirer, and the literature becomes dialectic (Kakkori, 2009). In turn the research becomes not so much about gathering new information as it is about

observing and presenting information through a different lens with a view to having a different outlook on the subject of the TGNC experience and how that can play a role in the singing studio.

The undertaking of this research is therefore born out of my desire to improve the standards by which we teach TGNC singers. Being able to assess the implications of the research on both individual and social levels (Laverty, 2003), carries the potential for the research to be utilised by other professionals working within the TGNC community.

3. Critical Reflection

After taking the time to ‘reflect-on-practise’ (Schon, 1983) I was able to identify what I felt was a critical aspect of teaching TGNC singers, namely the historical and cultural context of TGNC individuals and how that may play a part in the teaching of TGNC singers. Although I have already explored the area of TGNC singers, the majority of my focus concerned the phonation process and how this may differ for the singer who is TGNC over those that are cisgender. Whilst an exploration of aspects of TGNC experience were necessary as a ‘backdrop’ to contextualising the voice, I had not delved far beyond facets that did not directly affect phonation. Therefore, I felt there was still much to learn in the area of the TGNC singer. For critical reflection in general, I have come to favour Gibbs’ (1988) ‘reflective cycle’. Although initially it can look to be confining (Finlay, 2008), I have found that in being concise in the initial phase, it allows me to have a foundation on which to build and expand. I will therefore use the ‘reflective cycle’ on the understanding that it is flexible and adaptable (Bulman, 2013), whilst still retaining the focus of the process (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998).

The ‘what now?’ phase (Rolfe, et al., 2001) brought me to wanting to focus on an area – still connected to the TGNC singer – that spoke more to TGNC experience, as previous research had proven there was still much to explore. Having reflected on my previous research and interactions with students in the classroom, I had come to consider the ethical implications of masculinising or feminising TGNC voices. Through being involved in various TGNC forums and searching the internet, I had realised there are a wealth of the voice teachers out there who offer voice masculinisation and feminisation. Whilst it is not for me to speak to the quality of the teaching or outcomes, as a cisgender teacher taking on TGNC students, I acknowledge that there will also be a number of cisnormative⁹ biases (Ashley, 2019). For example, with my younger TGNC students where the teacher is often seen as an ‘absolute authority’, I could easily lead them down a path of masculinisation or feminisation that felt correct to *me* and they would follow with little question. Ultimately, it is the student’s perception of their voice and degree of satisfaction with the outcomes that should take priority

⁹*cisnormative/cisnormativity* is often used when describing a societal or systematic bias in favour of *cisgender* individuals (Simmons & White, 2014).

(Thornton, 2008), over our interpretation as teachers. Upon consultation, I decided if I could broaden my search terms and examine some of the historical and cultural considerations of the TGNC community, this could be tied in with my previous research on the mechanism with a view to eventually creating an ethical framework for teachers of TGNC singers.

Although at this stage there was still not full clarity on how my assignment would take shape, I was still sure that TGNC experience would be central to it. With that decided, I was able to find a starting place in the literature. For the most part I was re-reading literature such as *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (Stryker, 2017) and *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves: A Resource for the Transgender Community* (Erickson-Schroth, 2014), but the process of being able to re-read known literature through a different lens (Hart, 1998) proved valuable. Whereas previously I was consulting such literature to speak to impact it would have on phonation – e.g., the history of body shaping garments or emotional impact on the voice – this time I was looking to speak to the impact it had on TGNC individuals and the world around them. Eventually I was able to start to identify aspects of TGNC experience that I thought should be examined in the context of the TGNC experience -TGNC history, TGNC rights and perceptions of gender.

When starting out I had a few apprehensions. Firstly, I had concerns as to whether an MA in Voice Pedagogy was the correct place to be discussing broader TGNC issues. Even though they would be used to execute better voice teaching I was wary, as I felt the exclusion of 'science of the mechanism' would affect its validity both in terms of study and the TGNC community as a whole. On consultation with my tutor, I did feel better about this. If not here, then where? I was also introduced to *Voice and Communication Therapy with Trans and Non-Binary People: Sharing the Clinical Space* (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), albeit rather late, but found this to be the only text that was fully in-line with what I was hoping to achieve, both during and beyond this assignment. Secondly, it was an area of study that I had little experience. Previous research of TGNC voices still managed to speak to my experience as a voice teacher and interactions with TGNC students. This would involve me not only comprehending, but also attesting to the lived experience of TGNC individuals outside the studio.

My other major concern was that I, a white cisgender male, would be carrying out research and exploring potentially sensitive topics on behalf of the TGNC community. From previous assignments I had already seen that numbers of TGNC individuals involved in research generally can be small (Wren, 2019; Davies, et al., 2015). I therefore had to acknowledge from the outset that just mere existence of this paper becomes part of the solution and the problem, as a prevailing amount of literature becoming available is a cis-gender view of the TGNC experience (Cayari, 2019; Wren, 2019; Gerritse, et al., 2018; Ashley, 2019).

As has been the case in previous assignments, I felt it important for me to assess and review the language that was used in this assignment. Recently language surrounding the TGNC community has been evolving rapidly (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), indicative of the individuals that it pertains to gaining authority over the language used to describe them (Romano, 2018). The importance of defining language when talking about this subject can seem rather long-winded at times, but as Macgillivray & Jennings (2008) point out, that texts can often assume the reader already has an adequate understanding of terms that pertain to the specific subject (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Although I do mention briefly about problematic terminologies, I believe it best not to define them – even on the understanding that they hold negative connotations. Often, we see these listed in literature without any historic context or explanation (Markman, 2011) which I felt would also be the case in this study as both time and space within the assignment would somewhat dictate the content. I do believe that the language used within this study is important. Words carry power and meaning, and I believe it is important that the reader recognise – whenever and wherever that may be – that care was taken when broaching subjects around these specific communities.

Whereas in previous assignments the concern has been not finding sufficient texts, I forecast that the problem during this assignment may be that I would be overwhelmed by the amount of and scope of literature I had. Initially I had tried to utilise literature that I had used in previous research, but this proved to be largely unhelpful as it would focus more on the mechanism rather TGNC experience. I was therefore going to have to call upon a diversity of literature (Hart, 1998). Although re-reading texts had given me the insight to identify what I thought were important areas of the TGNC experience,

the fields that spoke to these areas were varied. In previous assignments I felt that the literature held the answers to my questions, this one required me to extrapolate further as to how the literature could impact the TGNC singer in the studio. For example, there is no text that mentions how the historic perception of TGNC individuals in a musical context could affect learning for the TGNC singer in the studio.

Earlier assignments had given me a sense of unity with the TGNC community. I very much felt that I was on a journey with the TGNC community – I could literally try ideas and concepts as I wrote about them. This assignment called for me to accept that the exploration of considerations to an ethical framework is going to be in the context of my own social, cultural and professional communities (Wren, 2019). It therefore required constant internal reflection; an acknowledgement of privilege and a degree of re-evaluation of the self as it pertains to gender, anxiety and voice (Mills & Stoneham, 2021).

I was able to collate the information in a table, that I had divided by different areas of TGNC experience. As I constructed the body of the text, this made it easier for me to cross-reference specific points. As these areas are so heavily intertwined, being able to cross reference information and concepts quickly was important. Therefore, the resulting structure of the assignment is also reflective of the TGNC experience in that it tries to appreciate areas of TGNC history, culture and gender perception simultaneously.

This study has required me access literature from a variety of fields. It has required me to understand literature in history, medicine, education and culture. Whilst this has helped develop my knowledge and understanding of the TGNC community as a whole, it has given me a greater appreciation for fields and professions that I have not previously needed to explore in the depth that was required for this study. I often found the lack of understanding I would have on initial readings of some of the literature frustrating, but feel I was able to go through the process of selecting what I felt was appropriate information fairly well.

In the future I would definitely take steps to make sure that I am in the correct frame of mind to tackle such literature. Not only would this greatly improve the efficiency with

which I delegate my time, but help mitigate the personal mental cost to writing. Being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, it is easy to perceive oneself as having an inherent understanding of the TGNC community. Whilst this is not wholly wrong, taking the time to delve into the marginalisation of any community can take its toll. It is easy for feelings of guilt, inadequacy and despondency to rise, especially when talking about a wider social issue that you feel passionate about. Fortunately, I was able to use Schön's (1983) reflective method and 'step back' to appreciate the bigger picture rather than getting entrenched in a particular moment.

Throughout this process there have been other areas of research that have presented themselves. Most of these have to do with intersectional factors of the TGNC community, and how they might play a role in TGNC voice use. Another thing that research has highlighted to me is the extent to which TGNC individuals can be affected by historical and social oppressions on a day-to-day basis and the degree to which I am qualified to address such issues. Whilst vocal coaches and singing teachers may play an important role in a TGNC singer's journey, it is also important to delineate the boundaries as to where our expertise ends. The scope of our knowledge is often outside that of the medical professions of doctors, therapists and SLTs (Lessley, 2017; Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Further research into how these professions can actively compliment and appeal to each other would also be an area of interest.

Going forward, I would like to merge the cultural considerations from this assignment with practical considerations from previous assignments and monitor the success of such a framework for TGNC singers and their teachers. In more general terms, this assignment has encouraged me to critically examine my beliefs and incorporate elements of social justice into both my writing and role as educator (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). In the future I hope to further develop my research into contributions that are both culturally competent and beneficial for the TGNC community.

The Assignment

A study of the considerations to be given in the building and implementation of an ethical framework that shapes our approach to the teaching of trans/gender non-conforming (TGNC) voices

This independent study aims to examine and explore literature regarding TGNC history, culture and gender in society with a view to highlighting some considerations that should be given in devising an ethical framework for teaching TGNC singers. Whilst the implication and knowledge of the mechanism is undeniably necessary for successfully teaching any sort of voice, one also has to consider other factors that would affect TGNC individuals entering the singing studio. Whilst some of the information presented in this study may have implications in broader social terms, for as much as possible it will be kept in relation to the singing studio. The desired outcome is that the 'considerations' in this study can ultimately be combined with practical knowledge on the phonation processes for TGNC singers in order to create a framework that is culturally competent (Mills & Stoneham, 2021).

Campbell (2003) encourages educators to develop an ethical knowledge. That is, how educators choose to exercise their moral agency in the classroom and the moral and ethical impact that has on the student both in an educational and social sense (Campbell, 2003). The concept of ethical knowledge can encompass anything from language used, how material is selected, how kindness is expressed to tone of voice used with students (Campbell, 2010). With this in mind, ethical knowledge can be entwined into ethical teaching frameworks of all kinds. As it pertains to TGNC voices, the working toward a broader understanding of TGNC individual's historical, cultural and social contexts will largely inform how interactions with TGNC students occur in the singing studio.

In building a framework for teaching the TGNC singer, it is important to have an appreciation and understanding of TGNC history both in a social and musical context and the relevance that it holds when teaching TGNC individuals. It is important to understand the history of TGNC individuals, as these laws and systems are often cited as justification - both for and against - the human rights of TGNC individuals today

(Voss, 2008). Being able to simultaneously view the historical and current oppression of TGNC individuals will play a part in the ability of teachers to recognise and rationalise the ethical requirements when in the singing studio (Wren, 2019).

From the outset teachers of TGNC individuals should be aware that they are currently working within a system that has historically sought to oppress 'gender transgression'. When we look at the history of TGNC individuals and its relevance to modern day society, the question is not necessarily one of *when the first TGNC individuals are documented* but rather *when did society start regulating their gender*. Archaeological sexual and gendered expressions often fall outside the modern theories of identity (Voss, 2008; National Park Foundation, 2016). Indeed, the *galli* priests of ancient Rome and Greece were celebrated and acknowledged androgynes (Roscoe, 1996), whilst Native American cultures identified multiple genders; a third, two-spirited gender (National Park Foundation, 2016). It was not until the mid to late 19th century that saw laws introduced¹⁰ to criminalise cross-dressing and the perceived inherent threat gender non-conformity brought (Stryker, 2008).

The idea of regulating gender was echoed in music at the time (VanderHart & Gower, 2020). As castrati singers started to fade from popularity, the soprano voice was seen as exclusively feminine (Charton, 2020). This coupled with the arrival of the *fach* system of classification in the 19th century (McGinnis, 2010), meant that the notion of flexibility in parts or cross-gender roles were largely eliminated (Charton, 2020) in favour of gender binary casting and classification. A binary *fach* system was also applied to technical approaches to singing (Miller, 1997). In instances where ranges overlapped, the technical or modal approach to would be different to create what was seen as a more masculine or feminine sound, with the use of something contrary to this – e.g. falsetto in male singers, use of chest voice in sopranos – usually carrying a level of distaste or negative judgement (Charton, 2020). Cross-gender roles that were written; females portraying adolescent males or males portraying witches such as Humperdinck's *Hänsel and Gretel*, would have often carried stigma and negative

¹⁰ In the United States specific laws prohibiting appearing in clothes of the opposite sex appeared in the 1850s (Stryker, 2017), although no such law existed in the United Kingdom, the first sodomy laws appeared in 1533 whilst the *Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885* prohibited gross indecency between men (The British Library, n.d.)

connotations for both character and performer (Charton, 2020). Whilst today, the *fach* system does appear to have its uses in singer classification for those that fall within its binary limits, although the inclusion of factors such as physical build and timbre (McGinnis, 2010) diminishes the possibility of TGNC singers being able to fulfil all classification criteria. In the context of the singing studio, these ideas can often be perpetuated in terms of repertoire or assumed goals of the individual; criteria led rather than singer led.

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, medical professionals and individuals grappled for new words and theories as to explain the TGNC phenomena (Stryker, 2017), with the medical community introducing terminologies in the 1970s for TGNC individuals. Whilst this is the case, they still perpetuated notions of the binary. Terms such as *gender dysphoria syndrome* or *gender identity syndrome* often helped perpetuate the idea of transitioning from one binary state to another (Markman, 2011). Stryker (2008) notes that all too often TGNC issues are referred to as either a medical or psychological, ‘...deviation from social norms of healthy gender expression’ (Stryker, 2008, p. 11). Indeed, medical intervention was often denied to those who did not fulfil the binary criteria required (Markman, 2011). The pathologizing of TGNC individuals and their identities has – and does - limit the access to medical and health care; a psychiatric diagnosis may be required (Markman, 2011; McCarthy, et al., 2016). In pathologizing TGNC issues as mental health issues or sexual deviance, a ‘diagnosis’ further lends to the notion that there are curative measures (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), that can be taken, being cited as support for unethical treatments¹¹ delivered to TGNC individuals (Lessley, 2017). This can also be apparent in regard to TGNC voices (Aronson & Bless, 2009; Boone, et al., 2014), therefore in the singing studio, it may serve in asserting the notions of binary voice upon the individual.

The way that history is engaged with now also holds gender biases. An erasure of LGBTQIA+ contributions and other minority and marginalised groups saw that they were largely – and still are – neglected from musical dictionaries and historical texts (VanderHart & Gower, 2020; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Additionally, for many

¹¹ No rigorous scientific evidence exists to support conversion therapies and the claim that they can change an individual’s sexual or gender identity (Drescher, et al., 2016; Brill & Kenney, 2016)

years historical narratives were largely told from a cisgender, heterosexual perspective, with notions of gender and sexual politics being presented as a fairly recent phenomenon (Voss, 2008). Taking this into account, we can start to see how a modern-day society's opinion of TGNC individuals has – in part – been informed by a manipulated perception of the past (Voss, 2008). Furthermore, relationships that were not heteronormative¹² were often not explored and therefore overlooked (Dowson, 2000). This attitude and sentiment is still witnessed today in teaching spaces, as teachers may avoid addressing such issues due to administrative repercussions (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012). Whilst the cisgender experience has been to see themselves throughout history, some TGNC singers may arrive in the singing studio, having never seen their experiences – both musical and historical – reflected back at them. These prevailing attitudes may also contribute to the relatively small – and only recent – amount of literature concerning TGNC voices, with some based just on expert opinion rather than researched carried out with TGNC participants (Davies, et al., 2015). Research that is carried out often uses single digit small sample groups (Constansis, 2008; Irwig, et al., 2017), in potentially different stages of transition (WPATH, 2012) and does often not account for the full scope of TGNC individuals (Singh, et al., 2013; Adams, et al., 2017).

So why is considering TGNC history important to building an ethical framework for TGNC voices? It is what has brought us up to the point we are at now. Looking to how TGNC individuals have historically survived oppressive environments, may also give insight into changes that need to be made (National Park Foundation, 2016). Although this is useful in a societal context, this can be applied in the voice studio in terms how we curtail negative interacts and experiences reoccurring for the individual.

As well as an historical context, in building an ethical framework it is important to consider attitudes towards TGNC individuals and the rights they hold today. Research tends to show that TGNC individuals have a higher number of stressors, in multiple facets of their lives, than the general population (Singh, et al., 2013; McCarthy, et al., 2016; WPATH, 2012), whilst transphobia in education has been identified as a human

¹² *Heteronormative/heteronormativity* is often used when describing a societal or systematic bias in favour of heterosexual relationships (Simmons & White, 2014).

rights issue (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018). Although mental health issues within the TGNC community are high, Markman (2011) points out in regard to TGNC children that, ‘...it is not their identity that is causing these children pain, it is their identity in a culture of oppression, fear and misinformation’ (Markman, 2011, p. 320). All too often we have seen issues relating to TGNC individuals – both vocal and otherwise - reported in academia alongside sexual disorders and dysfunctions (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008), which can often cause reluctance in broaching TGNC issues. Interviews conducted in research by Kintner-Duffy, et al, (2012) revealed part of the discomfort some teachers may feel in broaching subjects surrounding TGNC individuals is that it is – mistakenly – seen to be a conversation about sexual behaviour rather than identity (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012).

Although broadly positive, research published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission saw that attitudes toward certain aspects regarding TGNC individuals have declined since 2016 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). Results drawn from the 2019 BSA survey illustrates that attitudes toward TGNC individuals vary greatly depending on race, age, political affiliation, education, religion and geography (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020; Page, 2017). The practical implications of this in classroom therefore require the teacher to draw these into consideration when constructing an ethical framework for teaching. Kintner-Duffy, et al. (2012) noted in their study of teachers enrolled on an LGBT inclusivity course, that due to the location of the participants in the ‘bible belt’ of America, that religion impacted the ‘confusion’ and biases of the educator toward TGNC individuals (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). For example, what differences would be made in the approach a singing studio based in the West Midlands where positive attitudes toward TGNC people were lowest, in comparison to the same in North East where they were highest; how are TGNC students from these two different regions with different attitudes going to interact with the teaching process.

Exposure that is given of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the context of inclusion and safety can backfire as it gives a prevailing portrayal of persons belonging to these groups as victims, or places them alongside topics such as depression, HIV or drug abuse (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). In doing this, negative stereotypes of these communities are further asserted. Until recently, media has only covered TGNC lives

and experience as tragic stories rather than people living their lives (Brill & Kenney, 2016). It is important then to not let this perception of TGNC people come into singing studio under the pretence of being a 'cisgender saviour' for TGNC individuals. Sympathy toward TGNC individuals, does not necessarily translate into a full understanding or recognition of their identity (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). Participants in Heinz's (2018) study *Communicating While Transgender: Apprehension, Loneliness, and Willingness to Communicate in a Canadian Sample* cite the importance of not setting out to demonstrate depth of knowledge on TGNC issues as it goes to exacerbate an imbalance against the minority (Heinz, 2018). In an attempt to break some of negative stereotypes of the TGNC community, Ashley & Ells (2018) propose three different potential identity relationships TGNC individuals may have. As well as *gender dysphoria*¹³, they propose *gender euphoria*¹⁴ and *transfiguration*¹⁵ (Ashley & Ells, 2018), highlighting the point that not all TGNC experiences carry negative connotations for the individual. Taking this into consideration, not all TGNC individuals have voice goals that are embedded in dysphoria (Ashley, 2019).

Whilst Stryker (Stryker, 2017) asks us to accept that some people are just 'that way' (Stryker, 2017, p. 7), it is also worth considering how we view the rights of TGNC individuals. Powell, et al. (2016) suggest that 'born this way' argument of many TGNC rights supporters is fallible. Stronger support comes for TGNC individuals when support develops from a human rights perspective (Powell, et al., 2016). It could therefore be that an ethical framework with a 'transgender rights as human rights' viewpoint engrained in it, enables us to build a framework that is inclusive to all. If we look at this in the context of the singing studio where there are multiple different gendered individuals, such a framework would serve to not exclude or isolate.

Another important consideration in building an ethical framework is how we perceive gender. In order to deconstruct our understanding of gender, it is important to understand its meaning. In societal terms, gender is often defined within the context

¹³ The unease an individual may have with their gender identity or biological sex (NHS, 2020)

¹⁴ The joy or satisfaction an individual may have with their gender identity in association toward aspects of a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth (Ashley & Ells, 2018)

¹⁵ Presenting the body as art with creative or aspirational aesthetics (Ashley & Ells, 2018)

of being binary and that to fall outside of this is not ‘normal’ (Markman, 2011). In the most basic sense, although often thought of in binary terms (Cayari, 2019) – male and female – gender is a social construct that is not integrally linked to an individual’s sex (Brill & Pepper, 2008). Therefore, it would seem that many of the attributes that exist within the ideas of gender are far less rigid than originally thought (Powell, et al., 2016). Additionally, we must address our own biases that have formed our perception of gender. Taking steps toward understanding the lens through which we view ourselves, we can in turn be more conscious of the implicit biases that shape us in an effort to reframe perspectives (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Using this idea in the context of the singing studio, it is possible that cisnormative bias may shape an understanding of what is masculine and feminine (Ashley, 2019). For example, trying to get a transmasculine student to sing in a way in which *the teacher* perceives as masculine.

In vocal pedagogy, the larynx is often thought of in terms of gender (Romano, 2018). From the outset, the approach to training the TGNC voice may already be veiled in gender biases and binary systems. It has been noted that most of the current conventions pertaining to TGNC voices do not include bimodal speech or singing as a goal¹⁶ (Davies, et al., 2015). A reassessment of both language and attitudes around masculinisation and feminisation may therefore be pertinent when in the singing studio (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Although for the most part teachers may use these terms to describe a ‘scale of degrees’, it may be the case that a non-binary individual is not going to identify with these terminologies. Mills & Stoneham (2021) suggest it in terms of *de-gendering* or *queering* the larynx.

Whilst an individual has the right to determine and explore gender, it must also be considered that – especially in young people – developmental ideals and perspectives can shift (Wren, 2019; Powell, et al., 2016). It is therefore important when exploring voice with TGNC singers to acknowledge it as such, rather than working on the assumption that the ‘end goal’ is a perceptually masculine or feminine voice (Davies, et al., 2015). In creating an environment where the TGNC student can properly explore

¹⁶ switching between voice patterns; having a different speech and singing pattern or a voice that is gender-neutral

their voice, the opportunity is afforded to them evaluate to what degree their voice is intrinsic to their identity (Hearns & Kremer, 2018).

Where Wren (2019) seems to point toward a gender exploration that is pre-transition, Ashley (2019) puts forward the point that aspects of the exploration of gender are ongoing throughout an individual's life (Ashley, 2019). It is possible that a TGNC individual's vocal choices and goals may be constantly shifting and the teacher of TGNC voices has to be equipped to evolve alongside the student. Even for professional singers, there will be a degree of exploration and unfamiliarity. The necessity to bring the singer back to basics of voice production may help facilitate the exploration of a new voice (Manternach, et al., 2017). For example, transmasculine singers on HRT¹⁷ especially, may struggle navigating registers and passaggi, especially in the 4-6 month period (Romano, 2018; Hearns & Kremer, 2018) resulting in vast vocal changes over a short space of time. Michael Chipman noted for one of his TGNC singers taking HRT, that the changes resulted in a, '...new voice at nearly every lesson' (Manternach, et al., 2017, p. 85). Taking time to educate and inform a TGNC student on some basic aspects of voice production, listener perception and effects of hormones places tools in the hands of the individual to make well-informed decisions pertaining to vocal goals (Davies, et al., 2015). In the context of the singing studio the need for flexibility of teaching will also apply to the voice in addition to an evolving identity (Manternach, et al., 2017).

Although – in terms of gender identity – it is often easy to talk about the oppressive nature of binary gender systems, it must be pointed out that some TGNC individuals may see themselves as falling within those systems (Markman, 2011). The importance of not assuming gender cannot be overstated (McCarthy, et al., 2016; Hearns & Kremer, 2018). An individual's perception of their gender does not have to line up with societal expectation. In reflecting on our own beliefs and perceptions of gender, we can start to look at how to build an ethical framework for our TGNC students (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). This in turn will be reflected in the approach to lessons, activities therein and the immediacy with which we interact with decisions in the singing studio (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). Although for the purpose of this study a degree of

¹⁷ Hormone Replacement Therapy

examination toward the gender identity of TGNC individuals, it must be pointed out that in the context of the singing studio and society at large that this is just one aspect of a TGNC individual. Just as we would not take on a cisgender female singer and only think and talk about her experiences as a woman, we must take care to not diminish TGNC singers in the same way (Hearns & Kremer, 2018).

Having looked at TGNC issues from the perspectives of history, TGNC rights and gender, we can start to consider ways in which this ethical framework would practically influence teaching and communication in the singing studio. It is likely that many TGNC students would have had negative interactions with previous teachers or even health-care professionals who are ill-informed as to the needs of a TGNC individual (Davies, et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a possibility that a TGNC student can be initially wary about opening up or using their voice. Building an initial rapport with the student is therefore pivotal for sessions to continue constructively.

TGNC singers¹⁸ in *Teaching Transgender Singers. Part 2: The Singers' Perspective* cite one of the main struggles as being *what* to sing over *how* to sing (Manternach, 2017). Repertoire that is specifically designed with TGNC singers in mind not plentiful and often not easily accessible (Hearns & Kremer, 2018; Charton, 2020). Therefore, considerations on how we approach repertoire are also important (Cayari, 2019). Whilst often arrangements of songs and voice classification make is difficult in facilitating gender-diverse singers, it is not always necessary to fall within these structures when choosing repertoire (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Whilst there are always questions of range, style etc that contribute toward this, gender can at times be a prevailing factor, with teachers often searching for repertoire by identifying whether the song is 'for a man or a woman' and then fulfilling the necessary criteria within that. In refusing to allow repertoire to be dictated by gender, the teacher may better serve the needs of the TGNC singer whilst gaining insight as to the different meaning repertoire can take on when viewed through a gender-diverse lens (Manternach, 2017).

¹⁸ All singers remained anonymous

Unethical behaviour can often pertain to discrimination or discomfort a group of individuals receives (Lincoln & Guba, 1989), therefore gender inclusivity should permeate into how we use language in a general sense in the singing studio. Even conversations not about gender or identity can perpetuate cisnormative or cisgender elements. For TGNC individuals to be able to comfortably partake in these, a degree of erasure of cisnormativity needs to be enacted (Heinz, 2018). For example, how language is used address a class as a whole; 'good morning everyone' over 'good morning ladies and gentlemen', to how we reference voice classification in gender-neutral way; 'high voices and low voices' over 'sopranos and tenors' (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Although it may give them impression of being non-specific, language that is less targeted may be helpful in the singing studio; 'generally, often, some, most' etc (Romano, 2018). For example, 'Men's voices will get lower because of testosterone' would become '*Most*, men's voices will get lower because of testosterone'. If we combine this notion with the idea of giving scientific understanding to the individual, the idea may be better conveyed, 'Testosterone causes most voices to get lower'. This language then acts to be both informative and non-exclusionary to an individual who does not identify within a binary system.

It is important also to remain flexible in the use of language with TGNC individuals. Assuming the exploration of gender is an ongoing process, it would stand to reason that the possibility of changing names and pronouns would also occur (Ashley, 2019; Markman, 2011). It is therefore necessary to create an environment whereby these changes can be expressed without fear of prejudice and that initial statements of these are not an unchangeable commitment (Ashley, 2019). Small acts such as using correct pronouns and names can form an alliance between teacher and student (McCarthy, et al., 2016). Pronoun choice is up to the individual (Brill & Pepper, 2008), so it is therefore important to note when using terminologies, that they may still carry different meanings for different people (Stryker, 2008). Efforts should be made to approach these – as with the voice – on a case-by-case basis.

Using simple approaches – such as questionnaires (Hearns & Kremer, 2018; McCarthy, et al., 2016; Mills & Stoneham, 2021) – can be a useful tool for teachers. As well as pronouns and names, it will give the teacher the opportunity to explore vocal history too (Davies, et al., 2015; Hearns & Kremer, 2018). It also allows for us to take

into account any TNGC-specific elements that may affect the mechanism or processes of vocalisation – e.g., body shaping garments, hormones etc. Whilst this is case, it is also important to remember that histories or invasive questions relating to assignment surgeries, identity etc are not necessary in the context of the mechanism (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Questionnaires and discussion may also be a useful way to monitor progress. In allowing the individual to self-evaluate their voice they can explore not only the vocal goals and outcomes they wish to achieve, but also their perception of the voice and how it aligns with their sense of self (Davies, et al., 2015). If deciding to use questionnaires or a similar device in the singing studio, it may be best served to be one that is applicable and filled in by all students. McCarthy, et al. (2016) suggests the same process when receiving inpatients at hospitals, to help alleviate any potential anxiety associated with such enquiry (McCarthy, et al., 2016). Additionally, this then serves to normalise these questions and behaviours, but – in a classroom setting in particular – does not look to elevate one student's needs over another.

Transition – whether medical or otherwise - can often be a confusing time for TGNC singers. As well as trying to get to adjust to a new voice, a TGNC singer is also adjusting to (a) potentially presenting as a gender and (b) being a TGNC individual in a society that favours heteronormative relationships and identities (Wren, 2019; Cayari, 2019). The confusion of a TGNC singer 'finding' a new voice is described by Joy Ladin (2010) in *Gender Outlaws* as '...a voice estranged from masculinity but not yet, perhaps not ever, the voice of the woman I was struggling to become' (Ladin, 2010, p. 246). We often talk in terms of looking to find an 'authentic voice' for TGNC individuals. We should look to self-define what 'authentic voice' really is. As cisgender individuals, we use different voices to help us navigate the world. Our telephone voice compared to how we speak with young babies for example. The uses of different voices do not necessarily make them inauthentic (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), rather they all contribute within our own personal vocal tapestry. Ashley (2019) asserts that exploration of gender should be set as an, 'ethical good', without the need for constant assessment of authenticity (Ashley, 2019). The role of voice teacher for TGNC individuals should not be to attest to authenticity of the voice – either literally or figuratively – but to provide the specialist tools – both skills and limitations (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) - necessary for exploration of the voice.

We can see from the literature examined, that there are many other considerations to be made for TGNC singers outside of the practical workings of the mechanism. Although specialist knowledge and instruction are important in teaching the TGNC singer, cultural and historical contexts of the individuals and the TGNC community as a whole must also play a role. When crafting an approach to TGNC students, it is important to address our own bias and perception of our own gender identity. This facilitates a reflective dialogue about the expectations we put upon gender – both as teacher and student (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). In reflecting on our own interactions in the ‘world through the lens of gender’ (Hearns & Kremer, 2018, p. 27), we can better assess advantages or obstacles that have been presented that are perhaps based on gender-normative expectations.

The main theme that has emerged – on a personal note – is the privilege that is afforded to me as a cisgender white male. If we can develop a consciousness of societal structures and the placement within it that we take, we can – for many of us – acknowledge our position of privilege and how that in turn can be used to elevate others (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Although this study looks at the aspects to consider in building an ethical framework for teaching TGNC voices, it is important to point out that it does not include intersectional factors such as race, religion, economic status etc – all of which are going to play a role in the ‘real life’ setting of the classroom (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018; Davies, et al., 2015; Singh, et al., 2013). The hope is, that an ethical framework for TGNC singers intertwined with ethical knowledge will create allyship both inside and outside the classroom. Ethical knowledge requires advocacy (Giancola, 2014). Mills & Stoneham (2021) state, ‘Once we know what we know, we cannot unknow it’ (Mills & Stoneham, 2021, p. 46). Taking forth the knowledge we gain as TGNC voice teachers compels us to become agents for change outside the singing studio (Page, 2017; Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012).

In a broader social sense, institutions must also create spaces and programs that encourage the development of ethical knowledge amongst teachers (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012) and their interactions with TGNC individuals. VanderHart & Gower (2020) highlight the concern with having spaces and programs specifically for minorities when talking of female composers. The outcome could be that having TGNC specific spaces or frameworks – whilst well intentioned – still serves to keep them isolated away from

the mainstream (VanderHart & Gower, 2020). It may be then, that an emphasis on the importance of integrating LGBTQIA+ issues into educational settings (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Kaiser, et al., 2014; Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012) and into existing frameworks in general is necessary and another area of research that needs exploring.

Whilst the aim to is provide considerations for the voice teachers of TGNC singers, there is no universal template and approach, but we can be guided by an ethical framework that is culturally competent, combining an understanding of TGNC issues and practical knowledge of the mechanism. Teachers of voice are often called upon to apply knowledge flexibly (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) in a way that is best suited to the singer and this notion is in play to no lesser extent when teaching TGNC singers (Manternach, et al., 2017).

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General	With an increase of individuals – especially adolescents – wanting to explore their gender in the singing studio (Manternach, 2017; Lessley, 2017), voice teachers are now presented with opportunities in which the decisions they make in the classroom carry the potential of being beneficial or harmful (Wren, 2019). When considering how we ethically execute our sessions with TGNC students, it is important to realise our role and relationship within the context of the lesson. As a teacher of the student, it is often not possible to be an impartial pillar of morality (Wren, 2019). Our perception of the needs and desires of the student may not be in alignment with their own. The ethical framework in which we carry out lessons for TGNC students is going to be devised in the context of our own social, cultural and professional communities (Wren, 2019). It is therefore important to be reactive in our approach to teaching TGNC singers (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) as the context in which <i>they</i> approach lessons may be different from our own. It is the responsibility of the teacher of TGNC voices to have a basic understanding of not only the processes of the mechanism and the impact hormones can have (Davies, et al., 2015), but also an awareness of the specific social and psychological issues that would potentially shape a student's voice goals. Davies, et al. (2015) state, "...there are no minimal standards for the assessment of voice and communication in transgender clients." Therefore, SLTs and voice teacher alike are left to devise their own standards and ethical framework for TGNC clients. A feeling of inadequacy can often put up barriers between the teacher and TGNC student (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012; Cayari, 2019). In addition to a gap in knowledge of TGNC voices, the fear of causing offence or not creating a transformative experience for the student (Aguirre,
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		2018) speaks to the lack of any sort of framework to which a teacher of little experience with TGNC individuals can model their lessons on. It goes therefore, that research into creating a tool to facilitate interactions with TGNC students is necessary in preparing teachers (Cayari, 2019; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Whilst voice teachers and pedagogues alike are making steps to improve the experience and quality of teaching for TGNC voice users, at the <i>Transgender Singing Voice Conference 2017</i> Cayari (2019) noted a lack of presence on subjects such as dysphoria, experiences of TGNC vocalists and TGNC self-identity - to name a few. It would seem that although the education for teachers of TGNC voices in gaining positive ground, it is not doing so in conjunction with the social and historical context of TGNC individuals. They go on to say that, "Research on the effects being trans*+ has on a musician would provide further insight into how educators can better work with students" (Cayari, 2019). In some respects we need to start shifting our focus to encompass aspects of the social and historical contexts if being a TGNC individual to help create a framework that is not just academically sound, but is ethically comprehensive also. In much the same way that we describe the processes of voice production being inter-connected, so are the social and historical contexts that form TGNC identity and experience. Existing frameworks in education often fail to make accessible the aspects of the TGNC experience (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018). Although this study looks at the aspects to consider in building an ethical framework for teaching TGNC voices, it is important to point out that it does not include intersectional factors such as race, religion, economic status etc – all of which are going to play a role in the 'real life' setting of the classroom (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018; Davies, et al., 2015; Singh, et al., 2013).
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		Engaging critically in historical and social aspects of the TGNC experience is important when addressing it in the context of education. In doing so, we are able to assess fully the restrictions or erasure of crucial elements that are significant in creating an ethical framework for TGNC students (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018). Institutions must also create spaces and programs that encourage the development of ethical knowledge amongst teachers (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012) and their interactions with TGNC individuals. Through discussion of case studies, Kaiser, et al. (2014) highlight the multi-faceted considerations one must give when approaching TGNC issues in education (Kaiser, et al., 2014). Emphasis on the importance of integrating LGBTQA+ issues into educational settings (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Kaiser, et al., 2014; Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012) Whilst many intentions are well meaning in the teaching of TGNC voices, such issues can often be enacted and discussed in the classroom in a variety of ways (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). Interviews conducted in research by Kintner-Duffy, et al, (2012) revealed part of the discomfort some teachers may feel in broaching subject surrounding TGNC individuals is that it is – mistakenly – seen to be a conversation about sexual behaviour rather than identity (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). Often the opinion can form, that issues pertaining to some minorities such as LGBTQA+ persons should not be broached until they enter the classroom (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). If we look at this in the context of the TGNC singer, the potential arises for a voice teacher who is under prepared and has the potential to do either physical or emotional harm. The limited exposure that is given of LGBTQA+ individuals in the context of inclusion and safety can backfire as it gives a prevailing portrayal of persons belonging to these groups as victims, or places them alongside topics such as depression, HIV or drug
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		abuse (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). In doing this the negative stereotypes of these communities are further asserted. Whilst the opportunity to build and ethical framework for TGNC individuals is not unique to the singing studio, as an expanding aspect of Vocal Pedagogy it is worth considering in this context. Both the vocal development and vocal and emotional safety of the student should not be sacrificed for the curiosity or personal development of the teacher (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Although for the purpose of this study a degree of examination toward the gender identity of TGNC individuals, it must be pointed out that in the context of the singing studio and society at large that this is just one aspect of a TGNC individual. Just as we would not take on a cisgender female singer and only think and talk about her experiences as a woman, we must take care to not diminish TGNC singers in the same way (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Participants in Heinz's (2018) study <i>Communicating While Transgender: Apprehension, Loneliness, and Willingness to Communicate in a Canadian Sample</i> cite the importance of not setting out to demonstrate depth of knowledge on TGNC issues as it goes to exacerbate an imbalance against the minority (Heinz, 2018). As well as the literature pertaining to TGNC singers is sparse it is expensive. 'The Singing Teacher's Guide to Transgender Voices' (Hearns & Kremer, 2018), is well over £100 making it prohibitive for some to access. The prices of such literature are symptomatic of the rarity of its nature. Recently language surrounding the TGNC community has been evolving rapidly (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), indicative of the individuals that it pertains to gaining authority over the language used to describe them (Romano, 2018). It is important to also point out that the term cis-gender is used from individuals that choose to identify as male or female. Often in literature relating to gender, there can be a misconception that the
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		term cis-gender implies a group of individuals who have not yet identified the spectrum of gender. This is not case, to be cis-gender is also a valid gender expression. In fact, owning ones 'cisness' can be a way normalising the asking of preferred pronouns; "My name is...my preferred pronouns are...what are yours?" (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). The goals of the student and the educator may be different and need to be discussed (Thornton, 2008). Ultimately, it is the student's perception of their voice and degree of satisfaction with the outcomes that should take priority (Thornton, 2008). Although the aim to is provide considerations for the voice teachers of TGNC singers, it is important to note that there is no universal template and approach. Teachers of voice are often called upon to apply knowledge flexibly (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) in a way that is best suited to the singer and this notion is in play to no lesser extent when teaching TGNC singers (Manternach, et al., 2017). There may be the temptation to coach a singer as you would anyone else in a similar stage of vocal development. For example, Stave (2017), comments on teaching a grown transmasculine in a similar way she would an adolescent cis-gendered individual navigating vocal changes (Manternach, et al., 2017), although she does later go on to point out that this approach was circumstantial and still needed some degree of editing to accommodate the individual voice. Whilst this does work from a practical sense (Constansis, 2008), it is important that this approach is lays within a framework that would still acknowledge TGNC identity and experience. Although there are no accurate figures for the amount of TGNC individuals living in the UK, the estimate is at about 1% with account for 600,000 individuals (Stonewall, n.d.), whilst a 2017 study of TGNC analysing data from 2006-2016 in the United States, suggested numbers were close to 1 million (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017). As neither country takes this into account on their national census, for now estimates are all that are known.
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		WPATH's <i>Standards of Care</i> (2012) recommend that health care professionals providing care for TGNC individuals meet a certain set of criteria including understanding of TGNC issues and language protocols. As singing starts to play more of a role in healthcare at large (Mills, et al., 2017), they highlight the importance that other professionals – such as vocal coaches and singing teachers – may play in the vocal goals of a TGNC individual (WPATH, 2012). With the understanding vocal coaches and singing teachers will be working alongside SLTs, it important that some sort of criteria or framework is given to the people working in these arenas to maximise the benefits for the student. The current amount of literature for TGNC singers is limited (Lessley, 2017). Although there are practical considerations and knowledge to be given in developing of a well-rounded ethical framework for TGNC singers, these can often be viewed as the only considerations to take when teaching TGNC singers. Mills & Stoneham (2021) call this approach to TGNC voices being 'culturally competent' (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) The hope is, that an ethical framework for TGNC singers intertwined with ethical knowledge will create allyship both inside and outside the classroom. Ethical knowledge requires advocacy (Giancola, 2014). Mills & Stoneham (2021) state, 'Once we know what we know, we cannot unknow it' (Mills & Stoneham, 2021, p. 46). Taking forth the knowledge we gain as TGNC voice teachers compels us to become agents for change outside the singing studio (Page, 2017; Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). Vocal problems in TGNC students can arise due to high levels of social anxiety that TGNC individuals face on a day to day basis (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), creating an ethical framework can go some way to alleviating these stresses within the singing studio.
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		Acknowledging our anxieties – vocal or otherwise – allows us to re-address this concept when teaching TGNC students (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Taking time to become self-aware of our own voices again and help us in successfully crafting exercises and techniques to offer to the TGNC singer (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). To successfully teach TGNC students, there needs to be a degree of re-evaluation of the self as it pertains to gender, anxiety and voice (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). It is important for the vocal coach to be honest with both themselves and the TGNC student as to what they can offer (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Stryker (Stryker, 2017) asks us to accept that some people are just ‘that way’ (Stryker, 2017, p. 7) VanderHart & Gower (2020) highlight the concern with having spaces and programs specifically for minorities when talking of female composers. The worry could be that training TGNC singers in a safe space – whilst well intentioned – still serves to keep them isolated away from the mainstream (VanderHart & Gower, 2020).
A brief history	The backdrop on which lessons are taking place. What has brought us to this point? Why are TGNC issues important right now Why are TGNC issue so prevalent right now.	In the 1970s, feminists were often critical of TGNC individuals seeking to change their appearance, viewing these ‘personal solutions’ as a way to flee gender-based oppression rather than a desire to live as a different gender (Stryker, 2008). When we look at the history of TGNC individuals and its relevance to modern day society, the question is not necessarily one of <i>when the first TGNC individuals are documented</i> but rather <i>when did society start regulating their gender</i>. Indeed, the <i>galli</i> priests of ancient Rome and Greece were celebrated and acknowledged androgynes (Roscoe, 1996), although it is likely that our modern interpretation of sexuality and gender was not something that these historical figures would have identified with (National Park Foundation, 2016). For example, Native American cultures identified multiple genders; a third two-spirited gender (National Park Foundation, 2016),

		further highlighting the point that archaeological sexual and gendered expressions fall outside our modern theories of identity (Voss, 2008). It was not until the mid to late 19th century that saw laws introduced to regulate 'cross-dressing' and the perceived inherent threat that it brought (Stryker, 2008). It is therefore important to be aware as teachers of TGNC individuals that we are currently working within a system that has actively sought to oppress 'gender transgression', and part of our challenge within the classroom is the untangling of these notions. It is important to understand the history of TGNC individuals, as these laws and systems are often cited as justification - both for and against - the human rights against TGNC individuals (Voss, 2008). Being able to simultaneously view the historical and current oppression of TGNC individuals allows us as teachers to recognise and rationalise the ethical requirements when in the singing studio (Wren, 2019). It should also be noted that for many years, historical narratives were largely told from a cis-gendered, heterosexual perspective, with notions of gender and sexual politics being presented as a fairly recent phenomenon (Voss, 2008). Taking this into account, we can start to see how a modern-day society's opinion of TGNC individuals has – in part – been informed by a manipulated perception of the past (Voss, 2008). In addition to this, the exploration of relationships that were not heteronormative, were often seen as controversial (National Park Foundation, 2016). This attitude and sentiment is still witnessed today in teaching spaces, as teachers fear addressing such issues due to administrative repercussions (Kitchen & Bellini, 2012). These prevailing attitudes may contribute to the relatively small amount of literature concerning TGNC voices, with some based just on expert opinion rather than researched carried out with TGNC participants (Davies, et al., 2015). Research that is carried out often uses single digit small sample groups (Constansis, 2008; Irwig, et al., 2017), in potentially stages of transition (WPATH, 2012) from which to garnish data.
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		So why is understanding TGNC history important to building an ethical framework for TGNC voices? It is what has brought us up to the point we are at now. Although it may not directly play a role in the day to day teaching of TGNC voices, it is one of the 'nails' from which such a framework is to be hung. Problematic words and terminologies can also have historic connotations (Cayari, 2019). Furthermore, terminology that has often been used in reference to TGNC individuals has often implied the notion that the binary state is 'normal' (Romano, 2018). The AIDS pandemic was partly responsible for thrusting issues of sex and sexuality into mainstream media (Voss, 2000). Questions around sex, sexuality and gender theories were answered by a growing amount of literature, the focus of which was the social and political attitudes of sexual or gender minorities (Voss, 2000). Looking at how TGNC individuals have historically survived oppressive environments, may also give insight into changes that need to be made (National Park Foundation, 2016). Although this is largely useful in a societal context, this can be applied in the voice studio in terms how we curtail negative interacts and experiences reoccurring for the individual. We also see an erasure of LGBTQ+ contributions from historical texts (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). If we look at this in terms of music, minority and marginalised groups were largely – and still are – largely neglected from musical dictionaries and historical texts (VanderHart & Gower, 2020). It therefore goes, that some TGNC singers may arrive in the singing studio, having never seen their experiences – both musical and historical – reflected back at them. The medical community introduced terminologies in the 1970s for TGNC individuals that still perpetuated notions of the binary. Terms such as <i>gender dysphoria syndrome</i> or <i>gender identity syndrome</i> often helped perpetuate the idea of transitioning from one binary state to another. Indeed, medical intervention was
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		often denied to those who did not fulfil the binary criteria required (Markman, 2011). If we look at this in the context of the singing studio, these ideas can often be perpetuated in terms of repertoire or assumed goals of the individual. Historically, music was based in gender bias (VanderHart & Gower, 2020). With voices historically using the fach system of classification, the notion of flexibility in parts or cross-gender roles was largely eliminated (Charton, 2020). Whilst it does seem to have its uses in singer classification, including factors such as physical build, desire and timbre (DeWood, n.d.), it does almost eliminate any possibility of TGNC singers being able to fulfil all classification criteria. A binary system was also applied to technical approaches to singing. In instances where ranges overlapped, the technical or modal approach to the same note would be different to create what was seen as a more masculine or feminine sound, with the use of something contrary to this – eg falsetto in male singers, use of chest voice in sopranos – usually carrying a level of distaste or negative judgement (Charton, 2020). Cross-gender roles that were written; females portraying adolescent males or males portraying witches such as Humperdinck's <i>Hänsel and Gretel</i>, would have often carried stigma and negative connotations for either the character or performer (Charton, 2020). Although classical singing has often been seen as a place where gender expression has been seen for centuries, it has largely been binary gender roles reimagined through a cisgender lens (Charton, 2020). It was not until castrati singers started to fade from popularity, that the soprano voice was seen as exclusively feminine (Charton, 2020). In turn, when the role castrati singer played in musical history, it still focusses on sexual biology - body and genitalia - as a means of defining gender (Charton, 2020).
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		Whilst vocal coaches and singing teachers may play an important role in a TGNC singer's journey, it is also important to delineate the boundaries as to where our expertise ends. The scope of our knowledge is often outside that of the medical professionals of doctors, therapists and SLTs (Lessley, 2017). Until recently, media has only covered TGNC lives and experience as tragic stories rather than people living their lives (Brill & Kenney, 2016). It was not until the mid-twentieth century that conditions were right to enable a transgender movement (Stryker, 2017). Throughout the 19th century, medical professionals and individuals grappled for new words and theories as to explain the TGNC phenomena (Stryker, 2017). Media attention was first drawn to TGNC individuals in the mid-twentieth century with the arrival of Christine Jorgensen. Although reassignment surgeries had been taken place in Germany since the 1930s (Beemyn, 2014), Jorgensen caught the public's imagination as a former GI turned blonde bombshell. In a year of war, new monarchs and vaccine developments, 1953 saw Jorgensen as the most written-about topic in the media (Stryker, 2017).
TGNC individuals and their place in society, TGNC rights.	How are TGNC individuals viewed in society right now and how would it impact lessons? What rights to TGNC individuals have in society as a whole and how might it impact lessons Mental health	Stryker (2008) notes that all too often TGNC issues are referred to as either a medical or psychological, "...deviation from social norms of healthy gender expression." (Stryker, 2008). The pathologizing of TGNC individuals and their identities will inherently limit the access to medical and health care; a psychiatric diagnosis may be required (Markman, 2011; McCarthy, et al., 2016). Ergo it can be perceived as something to be 'fixed' (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), further asserting the notions of binary voice upon the individual. Often, cis-gendered individuals will be able to identify as having or being a gender without having to defend their choice (Stryker, 2008).

		Attitudes of toward gender minorities are changing over time, and with that comes As well as trying to get to adjust to a new voice, a TGNC singer is also adjusting to (a) potentially presenting as a gender and (b) being a TGNC individual in a society that favours heteronormative relationships and identities (Wren, 2019; Cayari, 2019). Research tends to show that TGNC individuals have a higher number of stressors, in multiple facets if their lives, than the general population (Singh, et al., 2013; McCarthy, et al., 2016; WPATH, 2012). Transphobia in education has been identified as a human rights issue (Martino & Cumming-Potvin, 2018). It also worth considering which lens we view the rights of TGNC individuals. Powell, et al. (2016) suggest that “born this way” argument of many TGNC rights supporters is fallible. Stronger support comes for TGNC individuals when support develops from a human rights perspective (Powell, et al., 2016). It could therefore be that an ethical framework with a ‘transgender rights as human rights’ viewpoint engrained in it, enables us to build a framework that is inclusive to all. If we look at this in the context of the singing studio where there are multiple different gendered individuals, such a framework would serve to not exclude or isolate individuals. Ashley & Ells (2018) propose three different potential body relationships TGNC individuals may have. As well as <i>gender dysphoria</i>, they propose <i>gender euphoria</i> and <i>transfiguration</i> (Ashley & Ells, 2018), highlighting the point that not all TGNC experiences carry negative connotations for the individual. Taking this into consideration, allows us to understand that not all TGNC individuals have voice goals that are embedded in dysphoria (Ashley, 2019). Although broadly positive, research published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission saw that attitudes toward certain aspects regarding TGNC
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		individuals have declined with that of 2016 (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). One in six respondents to the survey acknowledged their prejudice to TGNC individuals (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). Although it would seem there is sympathy toward TGNC individuals, it does not necessarily translate into a full understanding or recognition of their identity (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). Despite the rise in TGNC issues and rights into the public consciousness, little is known about how the attitudes toward TGNC individuals change over time (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). Despite high numbers of individuals tending to identify as not being prejudice themselves, the common trend was that <i>less</i> individuals in the same groupings would identify prejudice as being ‘always or mostly wrong’ (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). One thing that the results drawn from the 2019 BSA survey do illustrate though, is that attitudes toward TGNC individuals vary greatly depending on race, age, political affiliation, education, religion and geography (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020; Page, 2017). The practical implications of this in classroom therefore require the teacher to draw these into consideration when constructing an ethical framework for teaching. For example, what differences would be made in the approach a singing studio based in the West Midlands where positive attitudes toward TGNC people were lowest, in comparison to the same in North East where they were highest. Additionally, how are TGNC students from these two different regions with different attitudes going interact with the teaching process. Furthermore, Kintner-Duffy, et al. (2012) noted in their study of teachers enrolled on an LGBT inclusivity course, that due to the location of the participants in the ‘bible belt’ of America, that religion impacted the ‘confusion’ and biases of the educator toward TGNC individuals (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012).
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		All too often we see issues surrounding gender identity, perception and expression to be one for the individual to navigate within the confines of societal expectations, rather than identifying the issue with the expectations themselves (Markman, 2011). Although mental health issues within the TGNC community are high, Markman (2011) points out that, '...it is not their identity that is causing these children pain, it is their identity in a culture of oppression, fear and misinformation' (Markman, 2011, p. 320). New frameworks in how voice types and voices are viewed will help the majority of singer, not TGNC individuals (Charton, 2020). In pathologizing TGNC issues as mental health issues, a 'diagnosis' further lends to the notion that there are curative measures that can be taken, being cited as support for unethical treatments delivered to TGNC individuals (Lessley, 2017). No rigorous scientific evidence exists to support conversion therapies and the claim that they can change an individual's sexual or gender identity (Drescher, et al., 2016; Brill & Kenney, 2016) All too often we have seen issues relating to TGNC individuals – both vocal and otherwise - reported in academia alongside sexual disorders and dysfunctions (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Although there are considerations we need to give to the actual mechanism of the TGNC voice, it is important that our assessment of vocal requirements is not that of a voice disorder that we are setting out to fix (Davies, et al., 2015).
Deconstructing our notions of gender in voice	What are the differences between our cis-gendered experience of gender and how might that impact the lesson?	Whilst an individual has the right to determine and explore gender, it is also be considered that – especially in young people – that developmental ideals and perspectives can shift (Wren, 2019; Powell, et al., 2016). It is therefore important when exploring voice with TGNC singers to acknowledge it as such, rather than working on the assumption that 'end goal' is a perceptually masculine or feminine voice (Davies, et al., 2015).

	Repertoire? The risks/ethics of masculinising or feminising TGNC voices	It has been noted that most of the current conventions pertaining to TGNC voices do not include bimodal speech or singing as goal. That is switching between voice patterns, having a different speech and singing pattern or a voice that is gender-neutral (Davies, et al., 2015). Allowing the individual to self-evaluate their own voice either via discussion or questionnaires is a useful way of exploring not only the vocal goals and outcomes they wish to achieve, but also their own perception of the voice and how it aligns with their sense of self (Davies, et al., 2015). It is important to recognise as voice professionals as we seek out research into TGNC voices, that numbers of TGNC individuals in research in general can be small (Wren, 2019; Davies, et al., 2015) and does often not account for the full scope of TGNC individuals (Singh, et al., 2013; Adams, et al., 2017). It is therefore necessary to be flexible in both the approach and delivery of voice lessons. Just mere existence of this paper goes toward illustrating that the prevailing amount of literature becoming available is a cis-gender view of the TGNC experience (Cayari, 2019; Wren, 2019; Gerritse, et al., 2018; Ashley, 2019). The deconstruct our understanding of gender, it is important to understand its meaning. Often thought of in binary terms (Cayari, 2019) – male and female – gender is a social construct that is not integrally linked to an individual's sex (Brill & Pepper, 2008). Finding appropriate repertoire for TGNC singers is another consideration that teachers face (Cayari, 2019). It would seem that many of the attributes that exist within the ideas of gender are far less rigid than originally thought (Powell, et al., 2016). Whilst Wren (2019) seems to point toward a gender exploration that is pre-transition, Ashley (2019) puts forward the point the aspects of the exploration of gender as an ongoing exploration throughout an
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		individual's life (Ashley, 2019). In the context of the singing studio then, it is possible that a TGNC individual's vocal choices and goals may be constantly evolving and the teacher of TGNC voices has to be equipped to evolve alongside the student. Although it is not the job of the voice teacher to attain the psychological state of a TGNC individual,] For a cis-gender teacher taking on TGNC students, it is important to acknowledge that there will also be a number of cis-normative biases (Ashley, 2019). In reflecting on our own beliefs and perceptions of gender, we can start to look at how to build an ethical framework for our TGNC students (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). This in turn will be reflected the approach to lessons, activities therein and the immediacy with which we interact with decisions in the singing studio (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). Although – in terms of gender identity – it is often easy to talk about the oppressive nature of binary gender systems, but it must be pointed out that some TGNC individuals may class themselves as falling within those systems (Markman, 2011). In societal terms, gender is often defined within the context of being binary which again in turn reinforces the notion that to fall outside of this is not 'normal' (Markman, 2011). In creating an environment here the student can properly explore their voice, the opportunity is afforded to them evaluate to what degree their voice is intrinsic to their identity (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Considerations with how we approach repertoire are also important. Whilst often arrangements of songs and voice classification make is difficult in facilitating gender-diverse singers, it is not always necessary to fall within the these structures when choosing repertoire for TGNC singers (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). Whilst there are always questions of range, style etc that contribute toward this, gender can at time be a prevailing factor. Often as teachers are searching for repertoire for a singer, a starting point tends to be
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		identifying whether the song is 'for a man or a woman' and then fulfilling the necessary criteria within that. Repertoire that is specifically designed with TGNC singers in mind not plentiful and often not easily accessible (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). In vocal pedagogy, we often think of the larynx in terms of gender (Romano, 2018). Even for a professional singer, there will be a degree of exploration and unfamiliarity. The necessity to bring the singer back to basics of voice production may help facilitate the exploration of a new voice (Manternach, et al., 2017). The need for flexibility of teaching will also apply to the voice in addition to an evolving identity. Michael Chipman noted for one of his TGNC singers taking HRT, that the change was in the voice resulted in a, '...new voice at nearly every lesson' (Manternach, et al., 2017, p. 85). A TGNC singer cites one of the main struggles as being what to sing over how to sing (Manternach, 2017). Repertoire can sometimes take on a different meaning when view through a gender-diverse lens (Manternach, 2017). Pronoun choice is up to individual (Brill & Pepper, 2008). In understanding the lens through which we view ourselves, we can in turn be more conscious of the implicit biases that shape us in an effort to reframe perspectives (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). If we examine this idea in the context of the singing studio, not only is about a held view of a certain group of people but our understanding of what is masculine and feminine. For example, trying to get a transmasculine student to sing in a way in which we, the teacher, perceive as masculine.
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		If we can develop a consciousness of societal structures and the placement within it that we take, we can – for many of us – acknowledge our position of privilege and how that in turn can be used to elevate others (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). We can look to self-define what ‘authentic voice’ really is. As cisgender individuals, we use different voices to help us navigate the world. Our telephone voice compared to how we speak with young babies for example. The uses of different voices does not necessarily make them inauthentic (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), rather they all contribute within our own personal vocal tapestry. Maybe we need to assess our language around masculinisation and feminisation (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Although for the most part as teachers we would use this even to describe a scale of degrees for non-binary individuals, it may be the case that a non-binary individual is not going to identify with these terminologies. Mills & Stoneham (2021) suggest it in terms of <i>de-gendering</i> or <i>queering</i> the larynx.
Communication	How do we create an inclusive environment in a classroom setting How do we communicate best with TGNC students What can we do to prepare ourselves and our interactions with TGNC students.	It is important to note when using terminologies, that they may still carry different meanings to different individuals (Stryker, 2008). It is therefore important to make efforts to approach these – as with the voice – on a case by case basis. It’s likely that many TGNC students would have had negative interactions with previous teachers or even health-care professionals who are ill-informed as to the needs of a TGNC individual (Davies, et al., 2015). Therefore, there is a possibility that a TGNC student can be initially wary about opening up or using their voice. Building an initial rapport with the student is therefore pivotal for sessions to continue in a constructive way. As well as appreciating the historical context of TGNC individuals, it may also be worth exploring the <i>vocal</i> history too. What has been their previous experience with the voice and how have they used it in the past (Davies, et al., 2015; Hearn & Kremer, 2018). It also allows for us to take into account any TNGC-specific elements that may affect the mechanism or processes of vocalisation – eg BSG, hormones etc.

		Whilst this is case, it is also important to remember that histories or invasive questions relating to assignment surgeries, identity etc are not necessary in the context of the mechanism (Hearns & Kremer, 2018). With all this said, if we are to approach this ethically, care must be taken when gathering such information. Explaining to individual the relevance of the information and how this will be processed, stored and utilised in the sessions paramount. Taking time to educate and inform a TGNC student on some basic aspects of voice production, listener perception and effects of hormones places tools in the hands of the individual to make well-informed decisions pertaining to vocal goals (Davies, et al., 2015). It is important also to remain flexible in the use of language with TGNC individuals. Assuming the exploration of gender is an ongoing process, it would stand to reason that the possibility of changing names and pronouns would also occur (Ashley, 2019; Markman, 2011). It is therefore necessary to create an environment whereby these changes can be expressed without fear of prejudice and that initial statements of these are not an unchangeable commitment (Ashley, 2019). Small acts such as using correct pronouns and names can form an 'alliance' between teacher and student (McCarthy, et al., 2016). If deciding to use questionnaires or a similar device in the singing studio, it may be best served to be one that is applicable and filled in by all students. McCarthy, et al. (2016) suggests the same process when receiving inpatients at hospitals, to help alleviate any potential anxiety associated with such enquiry (McCarthy, et al., 2016). Additionally, this then serves to normalise these questions and behaviours, but – in a classroom setting in particular – does not look to elevate one student's need over another.
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		The importance of not assuming gender cannot be overstated (McCarthy, et al., 2016; Hearn & Kremer, 2018). An individual's perception of their gender does not have to line up with societal expectation. This could be for various reasons from freedom of gender expression to at what stage in transition those choosing to take hormones are at. When crafting an approach to TGNC students, it is important to address our own bias and perception of our own gender identity. This facilitates a reflective dialogue within ourselves about the expectations we put upon gender – both as teacher and student (Hearn & Kremer, 2018). In reflecting on our own interactions in the 'world through the lens of gender' (Hearn & Kremer, 2018, p. 27), we can better assess advantages or obstacles that have been presented that are perhaps based on gender-normative expectations. Students should not be in a position where they are having to explain or qualify their gender (Hearn & Kremer, 2018). Gender inclusivity should permeate into how we use language in a general sense in the singing studio. For example how language is used address a class as a whole; 'good morning everyone' over 'good morning ladies and gentlemen', to how we reference voice classification in gender-neutral way; 'high voices and low voices' over 'sopranos and tenors' (Hearn & Kremer, 2018). Despite best efforts, mistakes may happen (Hearn & Kremer, 2018). In these cases efforts can be made to not burden a TGNC individual with over-apologising (Mills & Stoneham, 2021). Safeguarding of TGNC individuals is also important to remember when in the singing studio. The way in which a TGNC student would like to be addressed inside and outside of the classroom may vary if they are not 'out' for example (Hearn & Kremer, 2018), along with particular aspects of transition.
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		Although it may give them impression of being non-specific, language that is less targeted may be helpful in the singing studio; ‘generally, often, some, most’ etc (Romano, 2018). For example, ‘Men’s voices will get lower because of testosterone’ would become ‘Most, men’s voices will get lower because of testosterone’. If we combine this notion with the idea of giving scientific tools to the individual, the idea may be better conveyed, ‘Testosterone causes the voice to get lower.’ This language then acts to be both informative and non-exclusionary to an individual who does not identify within a binary system. Even conversations not about gender or identity can perpetuate cisnormative or cisgender elements. For TGNC individuals to be able to comfortably partake in these, a degree of erasure of cisnormativity needs to be enacted (Heinz, 2018). Using gender neutral language (Brill & Pepper, 2008). If in a classroom setting, we look to represent gender diversity for all students in our language, repertoire choice etc (Brill & Pepper, 2008). Consider conversations that can be had around gender and music in the classroom if it seems appropriate (Brill & Pepper, 2008). In classes that are mixed gender, there is a need to be able to weave an ethical TGNC framework into a larger context. Feelings of resentment of ‘positive discrimination’, whereby the notion that a minority is receiving preferential treatment can manifest. The marginalisation of trans bodies for example, seeks to undermine transfeminine individuals by claiming they still retain masculine privileges (Mills & Stoneham, 2021).
Ethical responsibility		‘Moral challenges are here defined as situations in which the stakeholder who experiences the challenge is uncertain or in disagreement about what is morally right to do. An ethical challenge is seen as a challenge

		related to how to deal with or solve a moral challenge' (Gerritse, et al., 2018). Ashley (2019) asserts that exploration of gender should be set as an, 'ethical good', without the need for consistent assessment of authenticity (Ashley, 2019). The role of voice teacher for TGNC individuals should not be to attest to authenticity of the voice – either literally or figuratively – but to provide the specialist tools – both skills and limitations (Mills & Stoneham, 2021) - necessary for exploration of the voice. Campbell (2003), encourages educators to develop and ethical knowledge. That is, how educators choose to exercise their moral agency in the classroom and the moral and ethical impact that has on the student both in an educational and social sense (Campbell, 2003). The concept of ethical knowledge can encompass anything from language used, how material is selected, how kindness is expressed to tone of voice used with students (Campbell, 2010). With this in mind, ethical knowledge can be entwined into ethical teaching frameworks of all kinds. As it pertains to TGNC voices, the working toward a broader understanding of TGNC individual's historical, cultural and social contexts will largely inform how interactions with TGNC students occur in the singing studio. Aspects of reflective practise, can also help us to become more reactive within lessons when exploring voice.
Research essay		Whilst carrying out and this independent study it is important to keep in mind how the article itself will be perceived and read. Adams, et al. (2017) outline nine provisional criteria that can be used to assess the ethicality of research being undertaken with TGNC individuals in a health care setting. Although not all applicable to this study, criteria that were entwined into the literature review process were: • Language and framing of research should be non-stigmatizing

		• Research should be disseminated back to the community • The diversity of the TGGD community should be accurately and sensitively reflected (Adams, et al., 2017) Whilst obviously not the intention of the authors, through examining the literature it can often appear that those who it seeks to benefit – the TGNC community - seem to be a secondary feature. Care does not always seem to be made to use appropriate language and a clear outline of who is to benefit. Making sure research is taken from ethical sources that do not actively seek to stigmatise TGNC individuals. Ethical decisions are left the individuals enquirer and reflective of their own value structures, but they can provide markers especially when exploring areas that are new (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). unethical behaviour can often pertain to discrimination or upset used toward a group of individuals (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Ethically students should be provided with confidentiality and privacy protection (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). As a researcher, it is ontologically important to maintain an objective stance (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). A naturalistic paradigm would allow me to explore the various constructs held by individuals and accept their diversity (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). In doing so TGNC individuals are equal associates in the research process. Although this is to be a tool for TGNC teachers, it is important to remember that the voices that contribute to its creation are TGNC individuals themselves. Therefore, it is the agenda of the researched group (TGNC people) – well-rounded approaches to teaching in the singing studio – that
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		must be kept central to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). The 'participants' – in this case the TGNC community – must not be robbed of that which they have contributed toward (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). To create a framework that is culturally competent, we develop specific skills and understanding that allows us to identify the unique needs of the student through exploring their values, needs and beliefs (Giancola, 2014). Giancola (2014) noted that nurses who had not been exposed to certain cultural diversities we far more likely hold stereotypical views of these individuals (Giancola, 2014). Understanding of TGNC individuals and their experience is defined by the 'production of cultural and scientific knowledge' (Zieger, 2016).
Reflection		To successfully incorporate elements of social justice into both my writing and role as educator, it is important to be able to critically examine my beliefs (Kintner-Duffy, et al., 2012). The importance of defining language when talking about this subject can seem rather long-winded at times, but as Macgillivray & Jennings (2008) point out, that texts can often assume the reader already has an adequate understanding of terms that pertain to the specific subject (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008). Although I do mention briefly about problematic terminologies, I believe it best not to mention them – even on the understanding that they hold negative connotations. Often we see these listed in literature without any historic context or explanation (Markman, 2011) which I felt would also be the case in this study as both time and space within the assignment somewhat dictate the content. I do believe that the language used within this study is important. Words carry power and meaning, and I believe it is important that the reader recognise – whenever and wherever that may be – that care was taken when broaching subjects around these specific communities.

		As a cisgender teacher taking on TGNC students, it is important to acknowledge that there will also be a number of cisnormative biases (Ashley, 2019). Recently language surrounding the TGNC community has been evolving rapidly (Mills & Stoneham, 2021), indicative of the individuals that it pertains to gaining authority over the language used to describe them (Romano, 2018).
Other	Bits for further research or substantiation	From Voss 2000 <i>What emerged was a sense that theories of gender were not fully adequate to address sexuality, either as a social practice or as a vector of oppression (Vance 1984: 10): that 'it is essential to separate gender and sexuality analytically to more accurately reflect their separate social existence' (Rubin 1984: 308)</i> National Park Foundation 2016 <i>How have they responded when, as with psychologists "inventing" homosexuality at the turn of the twentieth century, they have had identities thrust upon them?</i> <i>If we look to more recent history, the implementation of section 28 prohibited the promotion of homosexuality within schools. Ergo, we have a generation of displaced individuals who have received no education in how to perceive or discuss issues relating to TGNC individuals. It must therefore be pointed out that as educators, we are also a product of this.</i> <i>Look for information about specialist treatment for TGNC people. Want to talk about cisgender jealousy. Positive discrimination, alienation.</i> <i>Lore-graham 2016 in regards to preferred names and pronouns.</i> <i>DSM-V, APA in pathologizing gender dysphoria as a mental health issue.</i>

Hermeneutics	A hermeneutical approach allows the acknowledgment of my lived experience and how it relates to the TGNC community (Kakkori, 2009). As there are philosophic roots in the hermeneutic approach (Kakkori, 2009), I feel that this would lend itself well to both me as the inquirer, but also the way in which I interact with and interpret the literature regarding the TGNC experience. The hermeneutic concept of seeing a 'lived experience' (Lavery, 2003) as chronological also speaks to one of the core ideas that runs through my research. We can only truly understand the present in the context of the past and future (Kakkori, 2009). In using a hermeneutic methodology, the experience between me, the inquirer, and the literature becomes dialectic (Kakkori, 2009). In turn the research becomes not so much about gathering new information as it is about observing and presenting that information through a different lens with a view to having a different outlook on the subject of the TGNC experience and how that can play a role in the singing studio. A hermeneutic approach not only serves as a research methodology. In creating a research experience that has encouraged reflection, it illustrates to me going forward my ability to attain new knowledge and seek out alternate perspectives (Kakkori, 2009). Hermeneutics permits us to explore how our place in the world is connected with our understanding of it (Kakkori, 2009). Our personal 'historicality' (Lavery, 2003) pertains to cultural privileges – or lack thereof – that have been afforded to us, and how they inform our understanding of the world. In that, understanding of historical consciousness is not just something that can be set aside. It is continuously carried with us (Lavery, 2003; Smythe & Spence, 2012). Hermeneutical approaches therefore lead me not to just recreate meaning of the TGNC experience, but to question and inquire as to how to how that should play a transformative role in the teaching of TGNC students (Lavery, 2003). Being able to assess the implications of the research on both individual and social levels (Lavery, 2003).
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	'This use of methodology requires the ability to be reflective, insightful, sensitive to language, and constantly open to experience' (van Manen, 2007). Methodology is not the method by which the research will be carried out, but the creative approach to which understanding is formed (Laverty, 2003). As the literature is from varied fields and academic disciplines, it is unlikely that 'verbatim' pertaining to my research will exist. Therefore, interpreting the texts and the social and individual implications they could hold for the TGNC community is paramount (Laverty, 2003; Crowther, et al., 2016). As the hermeneutic approach is an ongoing process on inquiry, research can be less confined by rules and procedure (Crowther, et al., 2016). It is likely that other questions will evolve and illuminate as the research continues (Crowther, et al., 2016). It is important to point out, that research will utilising this methodology will always carry an element of bias. The inquirer is going to take from the text meaning that <i>they</i> feel is important (Crowther, et al., 2016). Essentially, the inquirer is interpreting 'stories' (Crowther, et al., 2016). Due to the nature of subject and my relation to it, I must ensure that researched is framed not as definitive but and interpretation of human experience (Crowther, et al., 2016). We are not so much looking for empirical proof (Crowther, et al., 2016; Kincheloe, 2004). Aim to reconstruct something which was thought to be previously known (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).
	Ethical decisions are left the individuals enquirer and reflective of their own value structures, but they can provide markers especially when exploring areas that are new (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Ethically students should be provided with confidentiality and privacy protection (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). As a researcher, it is ontologically important to maintain an objective stance (Lincoln & Guba, 1989).

	A naturalistic paradigm would allow me to explore the various constructs held by individuals and accept their diversity (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). In doing so TGNC individuals are equal associates in the research process. Although this is to be a tool for TGNC teachers, it is important to remember that the voices that contribute to its creation are TGNC individuals themselves. Therefore, it is the agenda of the researched group (TGNC people) – well-rounded approaches to teaching in the singing studio – that must be kept central to the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). The ‘participants’ – in this case the TGNC community – must not be robbed of that which they have contributed toward (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). To create a framework that is culturally competent, we develop specific skills and understanding that allows us to identify the unique needs of the student through exploring their values, needs and beliefs (Giancola, 2014). Giancola (2014) noted that nurses who had not been exposed to certain cultural diversities we far more likely hold stereotypical views of these individuals (Giancola, 2014). Understanding of TGNC individuals and their experience is defined by the ‘production of cultural and scientific knowledge’ (Zieger, 2016).
Lit review	As my search crosses academia and fields, a integrative approach will be taken (Snyder, 2019). A hermeneutic approach is important in the context of the literature view process also. As I conduct the literature process and gain more knowledge, the process of understanding and discovery will be ongoing (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle can also be utilised in the literature review process (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). The understanding of a part informs the pre-understanding of a whole (Lavery, 2003). The ‘part’ in this case is the text and the ‘whole’ is the context in which it is viewed and visa versa (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Literature will only be relevant in a particular point in time. It is likely that as the reflective process takes place, parts of the research will be less relevant (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

	The dialogue can be expanded between texts and reveal broader body of literature from which to study (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Because of the diversity of disciplines I anticipate to access, secondary literature will be the best place to start to help develop and understanding in areas I am unfamiliar with; specific terminologies, research approaches, further reading etc (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Using the hermeneutic circle will allow me to initially be precise in the literature I choose. As I circle back other literature will inevitably be picked up (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). One risk of taking a hermeneutic approach to reviewing literature is getting caught in the circle of understanding and expanding. Time constraints of the assignment will somewhat dictate when the review phase must end (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Thus the review process will not be linear (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). May be a need to expand the scope of literature (Boote & Beile, 2005). The format of the research will be both conceptual and historical. Although certain concepts will be presented, there will at times be the a brief discussion of how the perceptions and rights of the TGNC community have evolved over time (Randolph, 2009). reflection and re-interpret experience (Smythe & Spence, 2012). The text becomes a 'partner' in the inquirer's understanding (Smythe & Spence, 2012). The result of the research is to encourage thought (Smythe & Spence, 2012) in this area of vocal pedagogy and it impact for the TGNC community. The some of the considerations but forward in this assignment may be better interpreted as concepts as there is the building of an ethical framework for TGNC singers is not definable (Smythe & Spence, 2012).
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	Including literature that take a non-analytical approach is appropriate also. Texts that reflect TGNC experience that is true and lived rather than academically analysed (Smythe & Spence, 2012). Taking into account the assignment as a whole piece, it is likely that there will be no 'answer' but rather a re-interpretation of that which was previously understood (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). In constant development of understanding, I will start to inform search terms as I delve further into the research (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010). The hermeneutic circle can be used in the different phases of the literature review process, but also in assessment of the understanding as it pertains to assignment as a whole (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010).
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