

Module 3 WBL Research Project BMPF7008

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PROJECT PROPOSAL

1. **Project Title:** 'What would helpfully be included in a toolkit for teaching pop and rock vocal improvisation to Musical Theatre (MT) singers?'
2. **The context:** Contemporary MT repertoire increasingly encompasses rock and pop musical genres, demanding vocal improvisation and ad-libbing skills (Benson, 2020; Edwards and Hoch, 2018). In my private teaching studio, some of my 1:1 students either already work in professional musical theatre or are aspiring to work professionally. I run group singing classes online for the Sing Space, whose membership comprises professional and advanced avocational singers, and I teach undergraduates at a London drama school.
3. **The justification:** Singers need to acquire the ability to 'ad-lib' - to vocally improvise, to perform in today's evolving MT industry. Within my student cohort vocal improvisation ability varies, despite students' technical singing proficiency. Recent research looking into current MT training, suggests that genre-specific stylistic skills including vocal improvisation are not being taught (Cox, 2020). Therefore, I aim to develop a comprehensive toolkit for teaching vocal improvisation to MT students of differing abilities, containing exercises and strategies applicable in both 1:1 lessons and group classes.
4. **The intended impact:** In developing a toolkit to teach vocal improvisation and applying it to my practice, I will enhance the vocal skillsets and musicianship of my students, enabling them not only to perform MT repertoire but also, as improvisation is spontaneous musical creativity, to be a part of creating it during performance (Burton and Snell II, 2018). They may become more well-rounded musicians (Dobbins, 1980), enhancing their employability. Additionally, this toolkit could be used within my voice studio for developing the musicianship and improvisation skills in students who do not sing MT repertoire, and may be expanded on in future projects to include other genres. I hope the toolkit will increase my confidence in teaching ad-libbing, and for it to become a rewarding part of my practice.

5. **The outlined intention:** *See Figure 1 (below)*

I will gather peer-reviewed literature on vocal improvisation for analysis and evaluation, and will then explore grey literature such as books, and online resources to investigate other existing pedagogical approaches. After identifying areas for further exploration, I will write a framework of interview questions and contact potential research participants, from a convenience sample of experienced MT singing teachers who include vocal improvisation in their practice. I will then conduct semi-structured interviews online with them to gather data about how they teach it effectively, allowing participants the opportunity to share their practices and opinions, providing rich data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The interview data will then inform topics for further exploration, for which I will create a questionnaire using non-ambiguous language and some open questions to allow for the varied terminology in use within vocal pedagogy, to gather more specific data about approaches to teaching improvisation (Davies and Hughes, 2014) to be sent to further teachers. All interview and questionnaire participants will be provided with a consent form and information sheet about the project in advance of participation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Throughout this process, I will be keeping a reflective diary to record my thoughts on the research process itself ("reflection on action"), as well as reflections on any exercises and teaching tools I apply in my studio ("reflection in action") (Schön, 1983, quoted in Finlay, 2008). Both interview data and questionnaire data will then be transcribed and coded using In Vivo coding principles in order to capture and honour the variety of language voice pedagogues use to describe their work (Saldaña, 2016), followed by subsequent coding rounds to identify themes and teaching tools. This data will then be triangulated with the data collected through the literature review to increase confidence in the research findings (Saunders et al., 2012), analysed, and written up into a report and prepared for presentation.

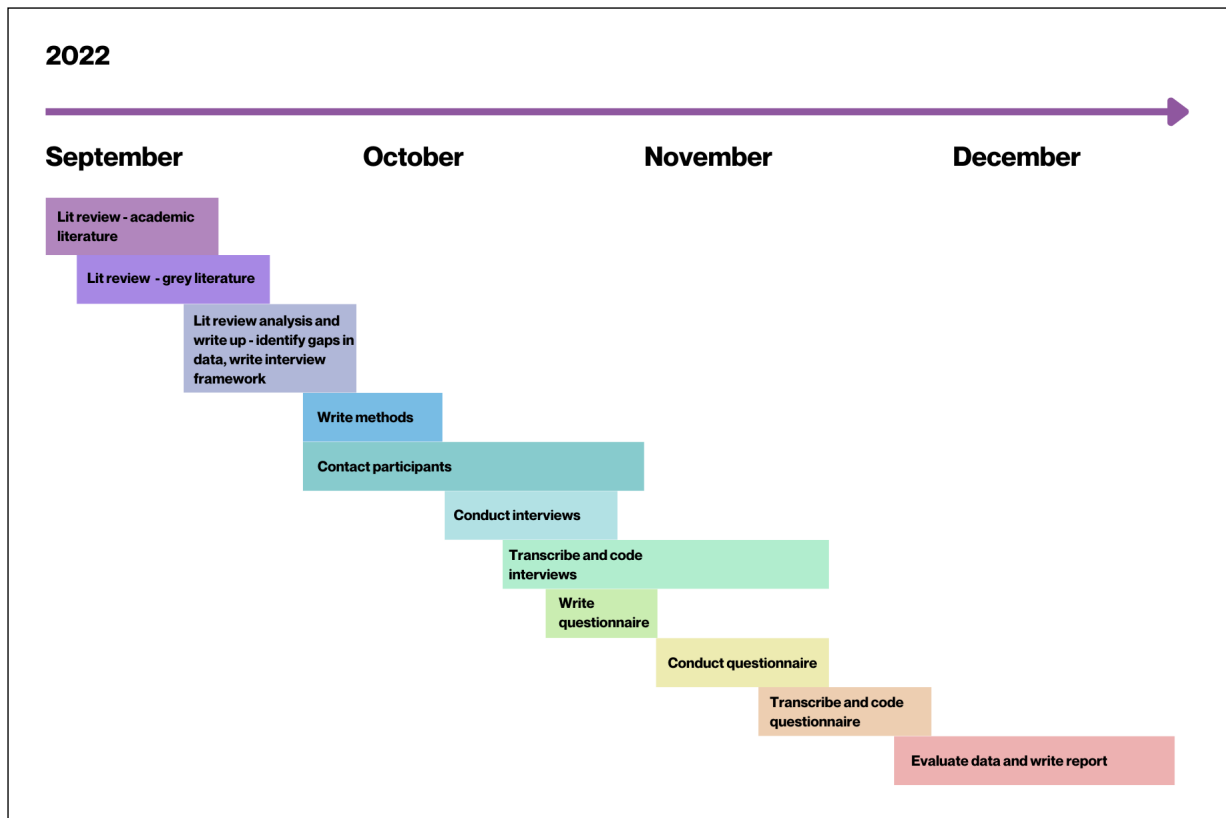


Figure 1: Timeline of Proposed Research Activities

6. The ethics and insider research: In this project there may be a conflict of interest with other voice teacher colleagues if they share their teaching strategies. To mitigate this I will ensure I obtain informed consent (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), being clear about the scope of the research in the information provided to them prior to participation, and ensuring I respect their intellectual property. The ultimate aim of this project is to improve student outcomes within my own workplaces, and so I have a vested interest in obtaining helpful data; it is essential that I am transparent about my perspectives in writing up the report (Costley, et al., 2010). This will involve being aware of bringing my own experience and preconceptions to the research and how that may influence both the questions I ask and the interpretation of the data I gather (Saidin, 2016).

7. Personal learning outcomes:

- To have a toolkit of strategies and exercises that enable me to confidently and effectively teach pop and rock improvisation to my MT students of all abilities.
- For teaching vocal improvisation to become a rewarding part of my practice.

PROJECT REPORT

Introduction:

I teach singing to professional, advanced amateur, and undergraduate singers in three different settings: as a 1:1 private singing teacher in a home studio setting; as a vocal coach for The Sing Space, running online group sessions for their membership; and as a singing tutor at a London drama school. In all settings, I teach Musical Theatre (MT) repertoire, ranging from pre-1930s to the latest contemporary musicals.

Many contemporary MT shows feature pop and rock scores (Peckham, 2003), that require the ability to '*ad-lib*' - to vocally improvise - skills that involve "in-depth study to attain mastery" (Edwards and Hoch, 2018, p.185). Although many singers find ad-libbing intuitive, it is not uncommon, even among proficient singers, to be apprehensive about it (Robinson-Martin in Benson, 2020). In order to prepare my students for the demands of the industry they are working in or aspiring to work in, I need to be able to teach them to ad-lib in a pop or rock style to be able to tackle the ad-lib sections in contemporary MT repertoire. Because improvisation is not given much attention in UK music education (Sorenson, 2021a), knowing how to incorporate it into teaching is challenging.

I find ad-libbing intuitive; it is not a skill I have been explicitly taught in an official learning context, so I have limited personal experience to draw on as a teacher. This project, therefore, aims to compile a comprehensive toolkit of exercises and strategies, to confidently teach vocal improvisation to MT students in all my teaching settings, based on current evidence and expert opinion. My objectives are to explore teaching strategies with pedagogue colleagues who include vocal improvisation regularly in their teaching practice through interviews and questionnaires to understand how it is taught by others, and to then consolidate and combine my existing vocal and music pedagogy with the new research data to create an effective teaching toolkit. If implemented successfully, I intend the toolkit to improve my students' ability to ad-lib in a pop or rock style, leading to enhanced musicianship and musicality, confidence with contemporary MT repertoire and ultimately, employability in the MT industry.

The intended learning outcomes are:

- For the toolkit to enable me to teach vocal improvisation with confidence and enjoyment, to singers of all different abilities and in different teaching settings
- To improve my ability to critically appraise research about vocal pedagogy and its application to my practice.

Literature Review:

In pop music, ad-libbing is a 'standard feature' of the genre (Chandler, 2014a). Yet many of the accessible pedagogical texts about vocal improvisation are about jazz scatting, such as Bob Stoloff's 'Vocal Improvisation' (Stoloff, 2012), or are geared towards choral groups or school-age children (Madura, 1999, and Agrell and Madura Ward-Steinman, 2014), rather than pop or Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) ad-libbing.

There are many pedagogical texts and peer-reviewed academic articles about CCM style and technique published in the last 20 years, but very few of them address teaching ad-libbing specifically. Online blogs (De Lillis 2018a, 2018b, 2019) and self-published authors (Reed, 2011) share practical information for singers about how to improvise, through individualised methods, teaching activities and games, but provide little information about how to teach it.

From my own experience of MT training and my current work teaching in higher education, ad-libbing does not appear to be consistently addressed as part of MT vocal training in the UK. Yet in one survey of entry-level job posts in the US theatre industry, over half were for contemporary rock or pop shows (Benson, 2018, p.10). Broadway shows often transfer to the West End (Wills, 2022), and some run in both the US and the UK simultaneously (New York Theatre Guide, 2022) so there is a clear need to ensure that MT trainees are able to perform the music from these shows with "appropriate style and embellishment" (Peckham, 2003, p.216). So to prepare my students for the demands of the MT industry, I need to explore ways of teaching them to ad-lib confidently (Tracy, 2013).

A review of the available literature identified several prominent themes: mindset, listening, ear training, and riffing and pop styling.

- **Mindset:** A person's mindset - their way of thinking and their opinions - is a key consideration in learning to improvise. Many adult singers have a deep fear of sounding "bad" (Robinson-Martin in Benson, 2020, p.232). Providing a supportive environment for the learner is crucial (Riviere, 2006); the singer needs to know they will not be judged for infringing any music theory rules so that they can freely sense and relate to the music (Bradshaw, 1980). Some practical ways to free students up, and unblock obstacles (Treseler, 2017), are singing gibberish lyrics to get the brain out of its normal motor system in singing (Baxter in Benson, 2020), and using recording technology to record vocal jams, as in the moment of performance, unlike humans, technology is a non-judgemental listener (Sichivista, 2007).

A variety of practical ways to help people overcome their psychological barriers to vocalising freely will be useful to have in a toolkit, to accommodate the different psychological and emotional states of singers learning to ad-lib, to be applied with care and intuition.

- **Listening:** This is the first stage of learning to ad-lib; like learning to freely speak and converse in a language, singers need to learn musical vocabulary first by listening, to 'imprint' it (Bell, 2013, p.42). For pop and rock ad-libbing, this means listening to the melodic patterns, inflections, ornaments, and phrasing of singers in these genres (Peckham, 2013 and Madura, 1999), making use of technology if necessary to slow tracks down (Chandler, 2014a). Some pedagogues encourage transcription and learning of improvised solos (DeLeo LeBorgne in Benson, 2020).

A teaching toolkit would helpfully include an up-to-date list of artists that would fit with the current MT repertoire, with specific suggestions of what singers can listen out for in learning this musical language.

- **Ear training:** Good aural skills are widely acknowledged in the literature to be a fundamental part of being able to improvise well, (Smallwood, 1980), and as pop music is traditionally learned and performed 'by ear', this means a practical understanding of certain scales and harmony (Chandler, 2014b, p.44). Pentatonic and blues scales should be readily available to the singer as a foundation for ad-libs (Jones, 2021); they can be incorporated into warm-ups, vocalises, and explored in activities like improvising the 12-bar blues (Edwin, 2015). Harmonic progressions should ideally be understood (Bell, 2013) and an awareness of the tonal centre developed (Dobbins, 1980), which can be learned by singing along to bass lines in songs (Ploeger, 2015), or through simple tonic and dominant exercises (Azzara, 1999).

Basic ear training frequently happens unconsciously during childhood, or in school classroom music education (National Curriculum in England, 2013). For adults in a 1:1 lesson context who find harmonising and aural skills challenging, an ad-libbing teaching toolkit would ideally include several ways of teaching ear training that build these skills in a musically rewarding way, without feeling too simplistic or childlike.

- **Riffing and pop styling:** Although improvising can be done within the scope of the singer's existing vocal capabilities, pop and rock ad-libbers are advised to optimise their vocal agility, range and pitch accuracy (Chandler, 2014b). To ad-lib in a pop or rock style appropriate for contemporary MT, singers need to be able to sing riffs (also called licks, runs or melismas) based on "a vocabulary of melodic and rhythmic ideas" (Peckham, 2003, p.218). These can be learned by breaking them into smaller sections and by using technology to slow them down and play them on a loop (Popeil in Benson, 2020). Rhythm, more commonly referred to as 'groove' in CCM is "probably the most communicative element in music" (Dobbins, 1980, p.38) and a singer needs to master back phrasing, anticipations, and syncopations to ad-lib authentically in this style (Edwards in Benson, 2020).

Having a full understanding of the fundamental technical skills required to ad-lib well in this style would be helpful in creating a teaching toolkit so that appropriate tasks can be allocated to develop them.

I aim to supplement these recommendations from the literature by conducting mixed methods research, collecting data from interviews and questionnaires with teachers themselves to explore practical ways to teach it. In 'Training Contemporary Commercial Singers' (Benson, 2020) Benson interviewed experts in the field about their teaching experience on various sub-topics within CCM. Although not geared towards teaching MT singers the chapter on improvisation (Benson, 2020, pp.199-207) was enlightening, as it illustrated how useful a focused expert narrative is in exploring tried and tested pedagogical tools.

Semi-structured interviews would allow me to gain a deeper insight into how experienced pedagogues teach improvisation, as they lend themselves to more nuanced discussions (Davies and Hughes, 2014). Additionally, a questionnaire sent to further teachers will be beneficial in finding out a greater breadth of strategies and practical tools than the interviews alone (Blaxter et al., 2006).

Methods:

This research was approached from a pragmatic perspective, focusing on the research question and allowing the methods most likely to provide the data (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006) to create a toolkit for teaching ad-libbing skills to MT singers. This approach does not fit neatly into any ontological or epistemological definitions (Morgan, 2014), but accepts both realist and relativist positions (Saunders et al., 2012), as teaching vocal improvisation has both subjective and objective elements. I appreciate that my teaching and improvising experiences are subjectively different to the research participants', for example, our perceptions of what constitutes 'good' improvisation may differ, and this will have an impact on the research (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). However, some of the elements in teaching the foundations for ad-libbing, like knowing a pentatonic scale, are more objectively real.

Mixed methods research was chosen to enable me to gain both qualitative and quantitative data. In-depth qualitative data about teaching practices from teachers' own perspectives enabled the inquiry to start with a broader focus and "become more focused as the study [progressed]" (Punch, 2005, quoted in Bell, 2010), through the use of a framework of open questions (Appendix 2, p.37). Quantitative data, such as information about how common certain teaching practices are amongst all participants, what Guba and Lincoln call persistent observation (1986), provided credibility for some of the qualitative data gathered and supported the selection of what to include in the teaching toolkit. By triangulating the quantitative, qualitative, and literature review data, the reliability of the research findings was enhanced (Gray, 2022).

Due to the aim of this study, to create a toolkit enabling me to teach vocal improvisation to singers in different teaching settings, generalisability was not my primary concern (Sarma, 2015). Therefore, I used a purposive sample of voice pedagogues when finding research participants, based on their

appropriate and varied experience in teaching vocal improvisation, this being “a major focus of the investigation” (Teddle and Yu, 2007), as they were information-rich cases (Saunders et al., 2012).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three experienced teachers, to reveal “ideas, described experiences, opinions, views, attitudes and perspectives” (Davies and Hughes, 2014, p. 180) about their experiences of teaching ad-libbing, to explore how their practice compares with the information uncovered in the literature review, and to provide some insight into the practical exercises they employ. I created a framework of open questions (Appendix 2, p.37) to mitigate the risk of bias I may have brought to the interviews in my line of questioning based on what I subjectively felt to be important as a result of my own experiences as a teacher and singer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012), so the participants could respond and elaborate freely on their ways of teaching ad-libbing, without being confined to the themes that I deemed pertinent from the literature review (Gill et. al., 2008). The interviews were all conducted online via Zoom, recorded, and then transcribed (Appendix 3, p.38).

Themes and tools identified in the literature review and in the interviews informed the design of a semi-structured questionnaire with a mix of closed and open questions, chosen as an additional data collection method due to its flexibility and its ability to gather data from a wider group of participants (Walliman, 2005). In formulating the questions, to some extent, I needed to link an “unobservable concept with an observable indicator” (Rose and Sullivan, 1996, quoted in Bell, 2010, p.143), to somehow link how singers learn ad-libbing, to some tangible exercises in the teaching studio, by formulating “the questions precisely in order to elicit the responses” that would be needed (Walliman, 2005, p.283). The questionnaire aimed to gather a broader spectrum of teaching tools and opinions, with the aim of triangulating the data from the literature review and interviews by combining more than one method (Golafshani, 2003). The questionnaire was constructed on Google Forms and the link was sent to nine further teachers of CCM and MT, all of whom include ad-libbing regularly in their practice, and drawn from the same purposive sample of my teacher networks; one colleague sent the questionnaire on to an additional participant whom they indicated had relevant experience. In structuring the questionnaire (Appendix 4, p.74), I tried to ensure the language used was unambiguous, as a way to minimise interpretation bias because, as Edwin states, “music is not a universal language”, (2015, p.614), where training and skills vary between genres, and in voice pedagogy, terminology is often particularly problematic, as concepts, vocal functions and even anatomy may have several descriptors (Edwin, 2020). Some selection questions provided some quantitative data about the popularity and usefulness of some of the teaching tools and added variety.

Non-participant observation was considered to observe vocal improvisation being taught and student-teacher interactions in practice (Costley et al., 2010), but as ad-libbing is a potentially fear-laden process (Chandler, 2014b), this may have resulted in reactivity (Cohen et al., 2004) making the student nervous and potentially impacting their behaviour (Davies and Hughes, 2014). It would also have been difficult to organise logistically and gather sufficient data within the timeframe of this

project (Gray, 2022). Therefore fuller discussion through interviews and broader data from the questionnaire were preferable.

As an insider researcher, working in the same industry in which I am conducting my research (Saidin, 2016), I had to consider the ethical issue that I am potentially competing with those who are sharing their practice with me (Bell, 2010). To mitigate risks to the participants, I provided them with information and a consent form for participation (Appendix 1, p.35) that outlined the aims of the study (to improve my own teaching, in both 1:1 and group settings), the scope of the research, and how their data would be used and stored. There were no essential questions on the questionnaire so participants could submit and share as much information as they were comfortable sharing.

The data gathered were coded using In Vivo coding principles to accommodate the array of language the participants used in their responses (Saldaña, 2016), followed by subsequent coding rounds to identify themes and extract the teaching tools that would most helpfully be added to the toolkit.

Findings:

Literature Review

The literature review provided me with sufficient information to form a framework of themes within which I could seek further data:

LITERATURE REVIEW - SUMMARY OF THEMES
An improvising mindset
Artists and repertoire
Vocal agility
Practical teaching exercises and activities
Listening tasks and musical language learning
Ear training / aural skills

Table 1: Literature review, summary of themes

Interviews

Of a total of five participants approached, three participants agreed to be interviewed (P1, P2, and P3):

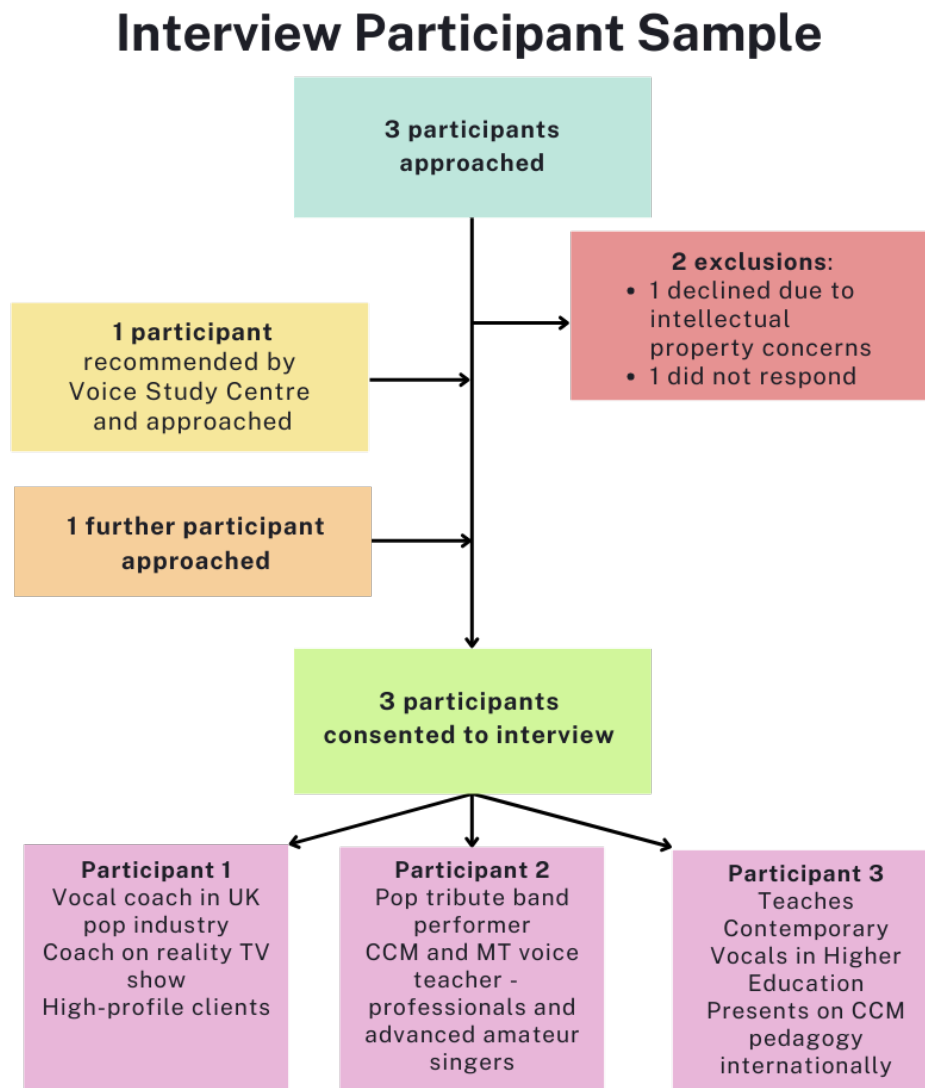


Figure 2: Interview participant sampling process.

The interviews (Appendix 3, p.38) yielded a broad selection of data which have been summarised below and arranged thematically. All themes arose in at least two of the three interviews:

INTERVIEWS - SUMMARY OF DATA	
THEMES	EXPANDED
Mindset	Get out of head, approach with a playful mindset, person-centred, giving permission, motivation and empowerment, fun, safe, chilled out, comfortable environment to encourage a positive playful approach, mistakes accepted as part of the process.
Ear training	Listening, practical theory, being responsive, structures, scales, patterns, breaking it down, harmony and musical language
Vocal technique	Expressive toolkit, agility, technical ability
Practical tasks	Use repertoire, make vocalises, use technology, call and response, warm-ups, everyday activities
Repertoire	Selected artists to listen to and draw from
Technology	To record vocalises, as accompaniment

Table 2: Interviews, summary of data

Questionnaire

The questionnaire response rate was 80% (8 /10) (Appendix 5, p.78). All respondents were voice teachers, who teach ad-libbing. Questions were based on the interview themes, and a summary of the data collected from the respondents (R1-8) is shown below, grouped thematically:

QUESTIONNAIRE - SUMMARY OF DATA	
Mindset	Mistake-making, play, experimentation, exploration, trial and error, freedom and creativity, encouragement, collaboration, trust, safety, environment
Vocal style	Agility, flexibility, technique, ornamentation, progressive pacing, in riff learning - accuracy before speed
Ear training	Scales, harmony, chord work, a cappella, intonation accuracy
Listening	Transcription, singing along to instrumentals, hearing and choosing the notes, selected artists/repertoire
Activities	Call and response, chord work, jamming, a cappella and to recorded exercises, taking lyrics out, just doing it - having a go, ad libbing, seeing what happens, in and outside of lessons
Technology	Accompaniment, exercises, speed, key, inspiration

Table 3: Questionnaires, summary of data

Analysis

An in-depth tabulated analysis of the coded data from the interviews and the questionnaires was conducted (Appendix 7, p.100). The combined data are summarised and visually represented as a table of themes (Figure 3), which forms the foundation of the teaching toolkit:



Figure 3: Teaching toolkit for ad-libbing - themes

Context and Justification

Data from the questionnaire (Q2, Appendix 5, p.79) shows that 62.5% of respondents had received training in ad-libbing as part of a formal training programme, a higher proportion than I anticipated based on my own experience as a student and a teacher in higher education in the UK and recent evidence from the literature about MT training in Australia (Cox, 2020). The questionnaire, however, did not ask a follow-up question about whether the training programme the respondents had completed was MT or CCM, whether it was in the UK, nor how recently the training had been completed, all of which would have provided more useful information, and could be investigated in a future research project.

This research project is designed to help MT singers because if they wish to remain employable, the repertoire they are expected to sing is very challenging, and includes technical skills that may not have been covered historically in MT training. The justification for this project was supported in interview 2,

“I think as time goes on, that's getting... wider and wider... what musical theatre singers need to be able to tackle. And I can imagine, [it's] probably quite daunting for some singers” (P2).

An additional justification for the study is that 100% of questionnaire respondents, all of whom were teachers, believed that ad-libbing in a pop/rock style could be taught (Q3, Appendix 5, p.79). A student perspective on this question was not sought but may be useful in a future project to validate, refine and test the efficacy of the toolkit.

An improvising mindset

Both interview participants and questionnaire respondents considered the singer's psychological state to be an important part of learning to ad-lib. In my own teaching experience, some singers find even the thought of improvising frightening. Improvisation can, however, challenge singers' attitudes to their own voices and imaginative potential, and can be very releasing from “the slavery of adhering to psychological/emotional and vocal expectations of the music from earlier periods” (Mabry, 2004, p.400). This vocal freedom is an outcome I hope to achieve with my students who are mastering contemporary pop/rock MT scores.

Worrying about how we sound was deemed an obstacle to this freedom, “we limit ourselves a lot with our own ego... we're worrying about sounding good” (P2). A discussion about the genre of Gospel music during Participant 1's interview, suggested a way to overcome this; “what you can really learn from that style is it's in service to something else... I think it's easier to get out of your own way, because it's not about you.” (P1) Being able to channel a higher purpose, whether through worship, being in service to the story in MT, or thinking about the deeper meaning of your music “the more understanding you have in general... it's going to deepen your practice and your relationship with the material” (P2), may be a good way to encourage such vocal freedom.

All interview participants and 50% of questionnaire respondents confirmed that a playful approach to learning, full of mistake-making and silly sounds, was a good way to support the development of a positive attitude towards ad-libbing, encouraging singers by helping them to accept “clangers” (P3) as an essential part of the process, “expect that you're going to sing notes that don't work. It doesn't matter. The more you do it, your ear gets quick at picking up where the chord is going” (P3); “silly, silly exercises” and permission to make “silly noises” featured in two interviews (P1 and P2) alongside “play around” in the third (P3). This was supported by the questionnaire data, where one respondent suggested a teacher “[foster] the approach that the student is there to play, to try things, and to develop the confidence to make mistakes” (R3).

Emotional safety is crucial for singers in their learning environment, and vocal improvisation can be an obstacle to this (Ploeger, 2015). The location these skills are practised can be influential; both questionnaire and interview data suggest that home, as a place of safety, may be a conducive environment. One activity is getting students to “record (audio) themselves singing a song of their choice at home where they are most comfortable” (R1) and bring that to a lesson. Another broader recommendation is to “encourage them to just burst into spontaneous song... around the house, put on a backing track... Just start” (P3).

It is necessary to consider how each student best learns (Ploeger, 2015). Participant 1 describes such a person-centred approach to their teaching, stating “I'm led by them in terms of their own learning generally” (P1), with participant 2 acknowledging that “everyone wants to learn differently” (P2). Because all students have different abilities, and different experiences, a teaching toolkit needs to have the flexibility to accommodate this.

Listening

As the literature review revealed, listening is a fundamental way to build the skills required for improvising. Sorenson explains that great jazz musicians would spend time listening and analysing melody, harmony, and rhythm, working out what exactly was going on (‘knowing that’) and then linking it to the ‘knowing how’ of actually improvising (Sorenson, 2021b). Questionnaire respondent 3 had a similar recommendation, not only to listen to relevant repertoire but to “transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality” (R3). Listening to relevant artists for inspiration, breaking down their riffs (P2), and immersing oneself in their style to learn their musical language (P3) are ways to build these foundations for ad-libbing.

To ensure the listening suggestions I include in the teaching toolkit are relevant, I asked interview participants and questionnaire respondents which artists they would recommend MT singers listen to. The following diagram shows the array of artists recommended and gives an indication of how frequently they were mentioned. It was refreshing to have some unfamiliar artists recommended, such as Five Finger Death Punch and Sounds of Blackness.



Figure 4: Word cloud of recommended artists

Skills:

To ascertain which skills were particularly useful for a pop and rock ad-libber to have, the questionnaire asked respondents to select options from a list, including giving them the option to select 'other' and make their own suggestions (Q6, Appendix 4, p.75). This was also the opening question for each interview (Appendix 3, p.38). This question was prioritised because the answers would provide fundamental information about the skills the toolkit would need to be able to develop.

The following chart shows the quantitative data from this question, about which skills the singers need to have:

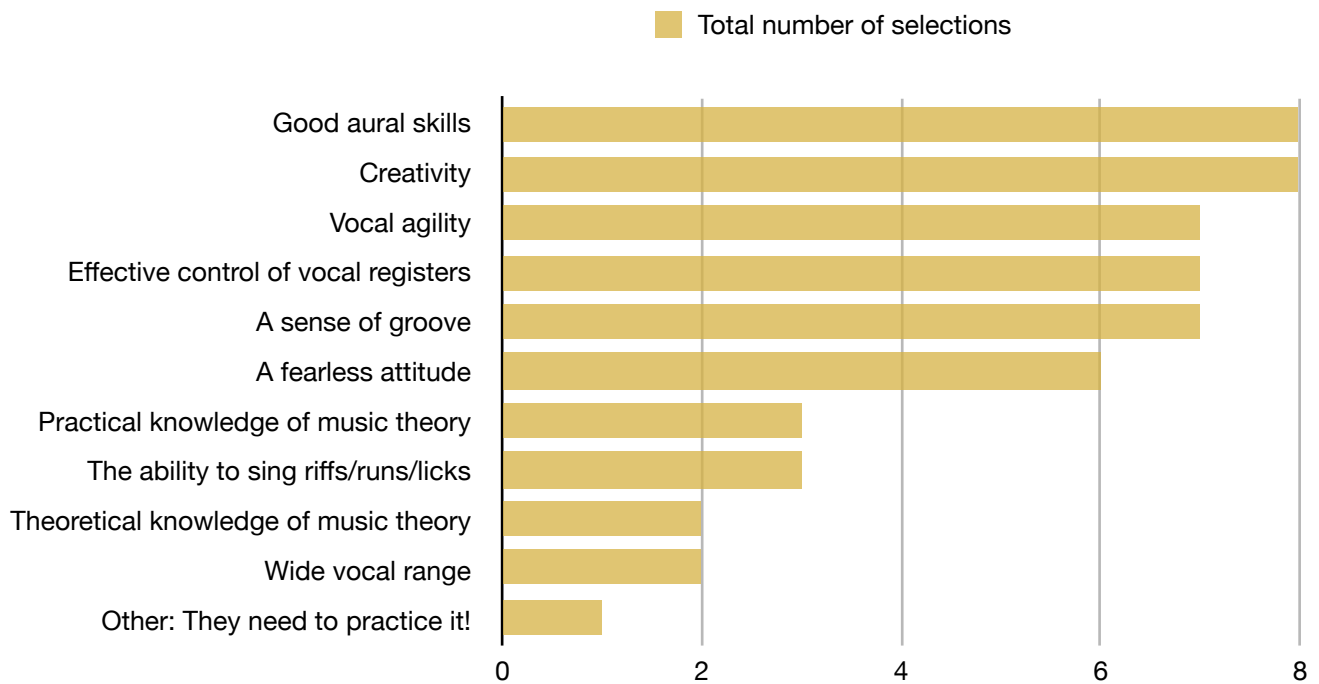


Figure 5: Required skills and their importance (Q6, Appendix 5, p.81)

Question 7 (Appendix 4, p.76) then asked which were the three most important skills, as this would potentially help to identify which of the skills may be worth prioritising in the toolkit:

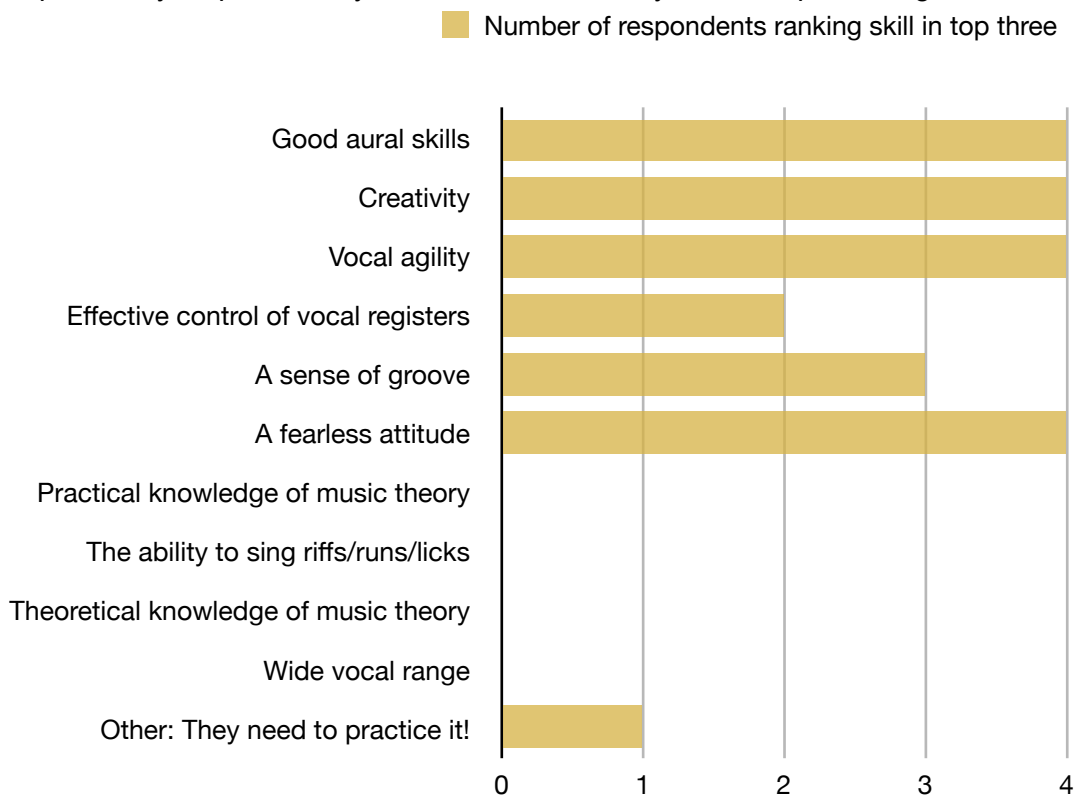


Figure 6: Top three required skills

When combined with the data from question 6 (see figure 5, above):

Good aural skills and **creativity** were selected by all respondents as essential skills and featured in 50% of respondents' top three essential skills.

Vocal agility and **a fearless attitude** were selected by 7 and 6 respondents respectively and also feature in 50% of respondents' top three essential skills.

Although **effective control of vocal registers** and **a sense of groove** were both selected by 7 out of 8 respondents, they were only selected by 3 and 2 respondents respectively for the top three essential skills.

Skills that didn't feature in the top three for *any* respondents are **practical knowledge of music theory**, **theoretical knowledge of music theory**, **a wide vocal range**, and **the ability to sing riffs/runs/licks**, showing that while they may be deemed worthwhile skills to master, they should not perhaps be prioritised in the teaching toolkit.

Two of the top three, aural skills (ear training) and vocal agility will be discussed in further detail below and triangulated with the data collected from the interviews. Addressing the second most popular skill, creativity, in the toolkit is perhaps a task worthy of a whole additional research project; however, as musical improvisation is believed to enhance creativity (Beaty, 2015) it may be both a helpful skill to possess in order to improvise and a by-product of some of the improvisation exercises and activities recommended in the toolkit (De Lillis, 2018a).

Ear training

Ear training is prioritised by Participant 1 as "probably the biggest thing" (P1) in terms of required skills for improvising. Although Participant 1 presents occasionally about pop singing in MT, their main experience is within pop music, where skills like improvising and harmonising are mostly done "by ear" (Chandler, 2014b, p.44). Most MT music is scored, which would call into question the relevance of "developing your ear" (P1), but increasingly the words "*riff ad lib*" or similar can be found over sections of sheet music in contemporary shows (Marlow and Moss, 2019, p.14 bar 176), and so, in combination with this being selected and prioritised as a necessary skill by the questionnaire respondents, ear training, the ability make musical sense of what you hear, undoubtedly has relevance (P1) and practical activities to foster it must be included in the teaching toolkit.

The research questions sought to provide data not only about *how* to incorporate ear training into the toolkit, but what the ear training should include that would be relevant to pop/rock ad-libbing for contemporary MT repertoire. Despite slight variations in language, the concept of having frameworks, structures or patterns to scaffold improvisation attempts was evident from both data sets, in the form of scales and harmony. Participant 2 described how "understanding the frameworks within which most pop and rock ad-libs come from... which is basically the pentatonic scale" (P2) was a good foundation for improvising; knowing the language and being musically informed is also encouraged, so that when listening to riffs to try and learn them, you can

“figure out what the scale is based on, because it's so much easier than for you to remember what it is ... if you know the language, you can create licks that are similar to it” (P3)

These frameworks and structures can be drilled by singers learning to ad-lib in the way instrumentalists do to imprint the language (Bell, 2013). Improvisations around scales and melodic patterns can be incorporated into practice through warm-ups, which “makes it ‘normal’” (R3). Another suggestion is that learning the piano is beneficial to ear training for singers as we are unique among musicians in not being able to see our instruments. “If [students are] visualising the piano... they can see where the semitones are and see where the tones are... for learning the language...” (P3), giving a “harmonic context for vocalisation”, and “a visual and kinaesthetic connection” to melody and harmony (Bell, 2013, p.42).

The most commonly mentioned scales across interview and questionnaire data, in order of prominence, and therefore of most potential use in the teaching toolkit (Appendix 7, p.100):

SCALES	
1	Pentatonic
2	Blues
3	Modes
4	Minor
5	Hexatonic
6	Chromatic

Table 4: Most commonly mentioned scales for pop/rock ad-libbing

Working a cappella is suggested in the data to enhance ear training for pop/rock ad-libbing as it can “[foster] independence... and intonation accuracy with given intervals” (R1). To develop a sense of harmony, so that singers know how the notes they sing fit with the music, taking the focus away from vocal melody lines is suggested in several different ways. Both Participant 3 and Respondent 5 encourage singing harmony lines “on top or below the original melody line” (R5) as “the more you do that, again, your ear gets quick at singing something that isn’t the melody” (P3). Additionally, learning the bass lines to songs can help to develop a sense of harmonic progression which can help immensely when improvising - the more you know about the music, the easier it is to make up melodies that will fit (Azzara, 1999).

Vocal Agility

Vocal agility, “vocal dexterity” (P1) is ranked very highly amongst questionnaire respondents as an essential skill, and this is backed up by the interview data - keeping the whole voice in good working order is crucial so that the singer has a complete expressive toolkit at their command,

“...even the bits they don’t want to use, keeping those all really fit because they feed into the whole instrument, and you don’t know when you might want to use that.” (P1)

Moreover, when the questionnaire respondents were asked what it is they ask their students to focus on when listening to recommended artists, vocal agility (R1 and 6) and similar language such as “fluidity in their riffs” (R2) feature prominently.

Riffing is a stylistic feature of pop/rock ad-libbing, and so was included on the questionnaire in the optional list of skills needed to ad-lib (Figure 5, p.18). Being able to sing riffs was only selected by 3 out of 8 questionnaire respondents as an essential skill, and it was not chosen as a top three skill by any questionnaire respondents. However, it was mentioned by every interview participant (Appendix 3, p.38), it does feature in contemporary MT repertoire (Bareilles, 2015) and I do have many students keen to master the skill, so a few tools for teaching it would be beneficial in the toolkit.

The seemingly universal advice for mastering riffing is careful pacing, and accuracy before speed (Popeil in Benson, 2020): riffs can and should be slowed down (R3) and broken down into chunks (P3) so that when the riff is mastered, the students “always get impressed that they managed that seemingly “impossible” riff in the end” (R6). Learning “a few little up-your-sleeve riffs” (P2) was suggested as a useful way to begin improvising. To sing authentically in this style, however, a crucial consideration for MT singers, who perhaps may habitually use more legato phrasing and fewer pop stylisms like creak or vocal fry (P1), is to pay attention to the details when breaking riffs down. The nuances of phrasing, onsets, stresses and rhythms all need attention as well as the notes (P3).

Harnessing technology

Technology is ubiquitous in teaching voice today. However, technology moves fast, so in an effort to stay current and potentially discover some new up-to-date tools for the teaching toolkit, questionnaire respondents were asked to select which programmes or apps they used in their teaching (Q11, Appendix 4, p.76). This bar graph shows their responses (Appendix 5, p.84):

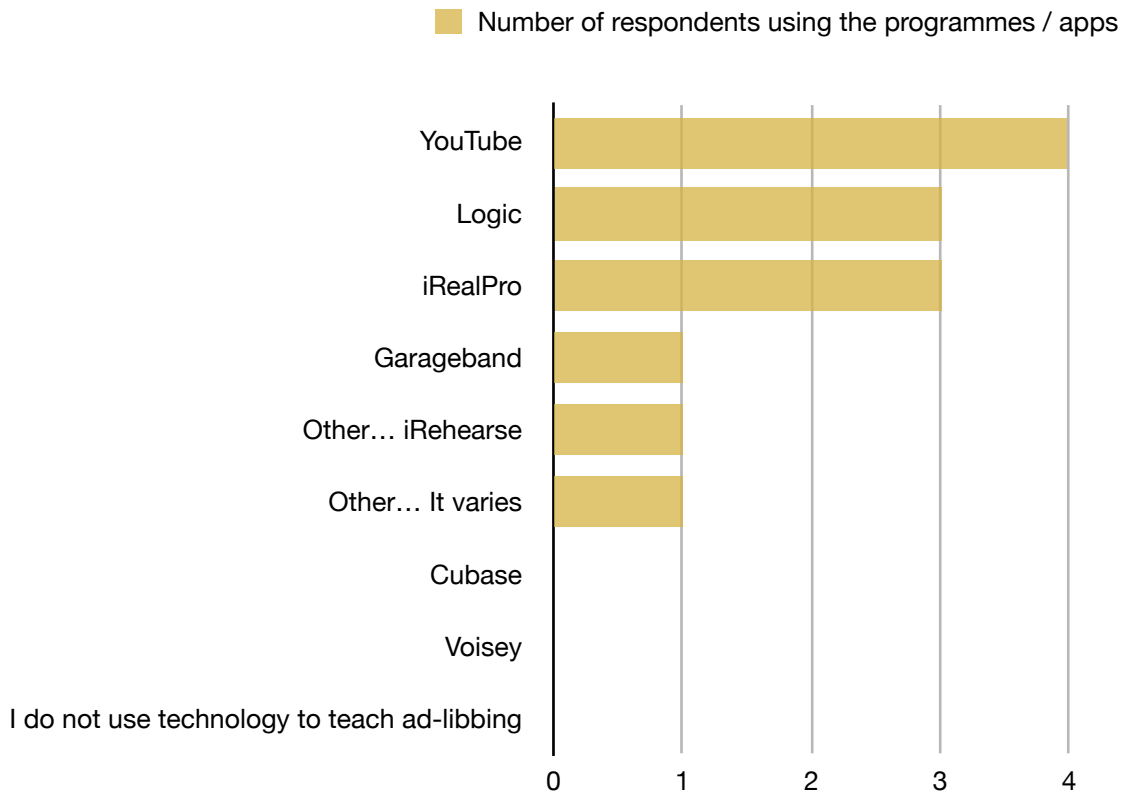


Figure 7: Programmes or apps used for teaching ad-libbing

It is notable that *all* respondents used technology in some form or other. A follow-up question asked about how they used them (Q12, Appendix 5, p.85). Uses can be summarised as:

- As **accompaniment**: either backing tracks or loops for jamming, or for workshopping ad-libs - going “round on iReal once with melody, then let them try to do it differently” (R7)
- For immersive practice, by creating a fun **atmosphere**:
“the more immersive it is... the more effective it is... If somebody's trying to do... blues riffs, I will get a backing track up of some really tasty-sounding guitar, that sounds like a live band, and I'll put them on the mic... So... it feels authentic. Because I think... if we like the sound that we're making, it's more motivating than in a dry room with a piano...” (P2)
- For finding **inspiration**: “I refer my students to youtube for almost everything, as they can always find music they like/can draw references from” (R8)
- To **create and record exercises**. One respondent recorded **exercises** to learn intervals (R6); one interview participant recorded vocalises for clients to take on tour (P1)
- To **change the speed or key** of an accompaniment (R6, R3).

Progressive pacing

A principle that is expressed in several ways across the data sets applicable to all ad-libbing, ear training and vocal agility exercises that may feature in the teaching toolkit, is to ensure that learning is paced progressively. Working within parameters like predefined rhythms, harmonies and structures (Zavalloni, 2006) can make improvising less daunting. Questionnaire data supports this “I believe it can be taught to anyone when teaching in segments at a slow pace just like any singing technique.” (R6).

The frameworks discussed above, such as the pentatonic scale, are a good base from which to find freedom and prevent the fear of the blank page, “I think sometimes throwing that stuff at them at the beginning can be just really overwhelming” (P2).

The blues scale is another framework from which to build improvisation skills in a progressive way. Participant 3 describes an ad-libbing exercise that would work with other scales:

“...this kind of works for all ages, [*sings ascending and descending blues scale*]. And when they have the blues scale in their head, [*improvises ascending and descending blues scale with different rhythm patterns and ascending two octaves*]. Do it at two octaves, then [*sings improvised pattern on the blues scale*]. And then have them play a little bit with the scale, so by the end of it they’re fully improvising but they’re using all the notes in the scale” (P3)

Mimicry is a way into improvisation (Thompson, 1980). Call and response is a versatile exercise, which as part of the teaching toolkit could be used in a progressively paced way. It may be particularly useful “to free up nervous singers” (R3), perhaps as “judicious copying is usually a good place to start” (Edwin in Benson, 2020, p.202), and made progressively more complex as the singer gains in skill and confidence.

Just do it

Putting all of these skills together is a challenge for a singer who does not find ad-libbing intuitive. To apply a well-known slogan, it appears that with improvising, singers really do need to let go and just do it. It may help them to remember that “no rules can be broken, because there are no rules to break” (Volz, 2005, p.50), or that “the best way to learn how to improvise is to improvise” (Sorenson, 2021a), because, as singing is a motor task, we learn by doing (Nisbet, 2003). Questionnaire respondents validate this by describing various activities that work well to get their students improvising:

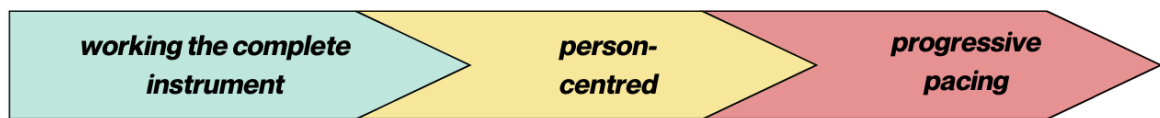
- “Turning on their favourite song and asking them to bring their voice into it” (R1)
- “It is okay to let go of the original song, and let them fly solo” (R5)
- “get started” (R8)
- “I also encourage students to ad-lib along to the radio or their favourite playlists!” (R8)

However, any teaching toolkit can only function in the context of an acknowledgement of the process, which must come through practice, from initial vocal exercises to mastery, emotionally connected communication, and ease. Ad-libbing has to become natural, through practice, so that it becomes an emotional outpouring instead of sounding like an exercise “so that it's really, really ingrained” (P3). Interview participant 1 suggests this journey from exercises to vocal ease through practice cannot be rushed, that singers need to “[understand] that mastery comes, but you can't have mastery straightaway” (P1) Questionnaire respondents also see a sense of ease in ad-libbing as an ultimate aim (R1, R5, R6). If singers find this difficult, they should not be disheartened - “if you haven't done it all the time, of course it's really difficult. So start somewhere and then it won't be difficult the more you do it!” (P3).

My students all have different voices, backgrounds and vocal capabilities, but the fundamental aim of the teaching toolkit applicable to all should be to give them confidence in their own voices and their ability to express it themselves, as “it doesn't really matter about experience, it more matters about what you're opening up yourself to, and what's coming out of you” (P1).

These findings can be summarised into a teaching ‘toolkit’ - a compilation of exercises and the fundamental skills that they are designed to develop (Figure 8):

POP AND ROCK IMPROVISATION TEACHING TOOLKIT



PRINCIPLES

ACTIVITY	Benefits:	EAR TRAINING	MINDSET	VOCAL AGILITY Intonation, range, tonal colours	STYLISTIC AUTHENTICITY	CREATIVITY/ EXPRESSIVITY
						
Jam to chords on piano, guitar, or backing track/loop		•		•		•
12-bar blues jam - piano, guitar or backing track/loop		•		•		•
Get the mic and amp out for an immersive jam			•	•		•
Record ad libs at home for playback in lesson or to send to teacher			•			•
Channel a higher purpose - emotional connection, in service or worship, communication			•			•
Immerse yourself in listening to favourite pop/rock artists		•			•	
Sing along to bass lines of pop songs		•				
Sing along to harmony lines (or make one up)		•				•
Pick out melodies in instrumental music		•				
Reverse tonality of a song - major to minor and vice versa		•				•
Change a song from duple to triple time and vice versa		•				•
A cappella call and response				•	•	•
A cappella interval exercises		•		•		
Call and response to a backing loop or piano chords				•	•	
Collaborative call and response improvisation			•			•
Make silly sounds together			•	•		•
Use primal sounds to access appropriate tonal colours			•	•	•	•
Scale patterns for warm ups, vocalises and jams: Pentatonic, Blues, Modes, Hexatonic, Chromatic, Minor		•		•	•	
Identify scale patterns in repertoire		•				
Lyrical options: oohs/aahs/ nonsense syllables or repeated lyrics, narrate your day			•		•	•
Break riffs down into chunks - using technology to slow down, or the piano, or by ear, accuracy before speed		•		•	•	
Transcribe your favourite riffs, notes and nuances		•		•	•	

Figure 8 - Teaching toolkit: exercises and benefits

Discussion:

During the literature review process, I narrowed the scope of the research question from my Ethics Form (Appendix 8, p.110) to fit within the timeframe of this project, focusing on teaching MT singers as they were the least familiar of my student cohort with ad-libbing skills. It had also been the aim to create a systematic approach to teaching ad-libbing but upon reflection on my own teaching - “reflection on action” (Schön, 1983, quoted in Finlay, 2008) it became clear that this would not be possible, as every student had a different set of vocal strengths and challenges, so a student-centred approach would be more beneficial. Therefore the research question became about creating a teaching ‘toolkit’ for ad-libbing, as that metaphor fit much better with the realities of the teaching studio than a systematic approach and would allow greater responsiveness from me as a teacher and improved learning outcomes for my students (Crocco and Meyer, 2021).

At the beginning of the project, I sought higher-profile participants to interview, believing they would offer the greatest wealth of expertise. I have reflected that this approach risked selection bias (Collier and Mahoney, 1996). I ultimately interviewed three participants with differing levels of music industry exposure and types of professional experience within the industry, not just exclusively within MT, and they all offered highly valuable insights. The breadth of their combined professional experience proved beneficial. Selection bias was further mitigated by sending the questionnaire to a broader range of teachers. Only two people did not respond to the request to complete the questionnaire. This may be because the project’s timeframe fell over one of the busiest times of year for voice teachers and performers; it could also be because the questionnaire seemed too lengthy, or uninteresting. However, effort was made to design a questionnaire that looked “easy, attractive and interesting” for the respondents (Cohen et al., 2004), and a subsequent 80% response rate was achieved, which I found satisfactory. Because the group of teachers I interviewed and surveyed was relatively narrow, I may have missed potentially useful teaching tools that teachers from other improvisational genres, such as jazz and Indian classical music, may have had to offer. However, I do have confidence that my participant sample of teachers with specific experiences, who were available and accessible within the timeframe and scope of this small work-based learning research project, has pragmatically enabled me to uncover practices and teaching tools that will help my students learn to ad-lib.

It is important here to reflect on my bias and acknowledge the musical and teaching experiences that I have had, and how this will have influenced the interpretation of the results (Cresswell, 2014). Improvisation is a skill that luckily I have always found intuitive and derive pleasure from, but lack experience in teaching. I am always keen to learn from other teacher colleagues, to stay current and relevant as a teacher, and so I am very interested in harnessing technology in teaching, and in keeping up to date with relevant repertoire. These factors will have inevitably influenced both the data I sought from the participants and the interpretation of the results.

When considering the validity and credibility of my study, it is possible, because I reached out to all participants personally and was explicit about the scope of the project and that I was the sole

researcher, there was a risk of responder bias, where their responses may have been filtered or limited if they had concerns about being judged by me. The applicability of this project is also limited, as the data collected was so specific to my own teaching context that it may not be easily transferable to other genres (Pandey and Patnaik, 2014), or other learner groups, although other teachers in similar contexts to my own may find the toolkit useful if they seek such information (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Conclusions:

Using Driscoll's model of reflection (2007) based on Borton's three questions *What? So What? Now What?* (1970), the process, relevance and potential of the research that has been conducted can be evaluated.

What?

This project aimed to compile a comprehensive toolkit of exercises and strategies, based on current evidence and expert opinion, to confidently teach vocal improvisation to MT students in all my teaching settings. From the data I gathered, I now have an abundance of strategies to draw on to help my students master this skill, and so fundamentally, the project aim has been achieved.

So what?

Due to the methods I used, asking open questions in interview and questionnaire format, and encouraging teachers to share their thoughts around the topic, I feel I have gained additional understanding about how ad-libbing skills fit more broadly within a singer's experience; to be able to improvise is high "up on the cognitive ladder" (Thomas, 1980), and so a simple series of exercises would be insufficient to truly nurture the whole singer and all that entails - creativity, aural skills, a good relationship with their teacher, an emotional connection to the material they are singing, a desire to communicate, an understanding of the musical language of pop and rock, not to mention technical vocal ability. My toolkit can only go so far; as ever, the most nuanced part of teaching voice is to see the whole person in front of you and to respond to their needs.

Now what?

In the future, it would be useful to expand the level of detail and potential exercises that address the differences in style between contemporary pop/rock MT music, and pure pop/rock, the particular nuances and differences between the genres in terms of vocal technique, as was alluded to in the interview:

"it's less things like creak, vocal fry [in MT], there's little nuances - their audible breaths, their breathy offsets, all those kinds of things that are often a feature [of pop music]" (P1).

The toolkit has already proved useful for my students singing other CCM repertoire as opposed to purely MT, such as pop, rock, R&B, blues, jazz standards, and country songs. Another potential future project would be to find a way to measure the effectiveness of the toolkit.

Having created this toolkit, and thought deeply about its application throughout the project, I have become a great deal more confident in teaching vocal improvisation as I am able to easily and creatively respond to my students' ad-libbing challenges with suitable exercises and activities, and have found the process hugely enjoyable and rewarding.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview consent forms

Consent form for Academic Research - Interview

Consent form for academic research.

* Required

Project Director: Laura Boon laura.boon@yahoo.co.uk

PLEASE USE THE ABOVE EMAIL FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR TO WITHDRAW FROM PARTICIPATION.

You are invited to participate in an interview about teaching pop/rock ad-libbing to Musical Theatre singers. This is a research project conducted by Laura Boon through the Voice Study Centre as part of the University of Wales Trinity St David's. The interview should take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

AIM OF THIS STUDY:

The current Musical Theatre industry in the UK encompasses shows from many different genres, including contemporary rock and pop, and jukebox musicals. Performers wishing to have a successful career in this industry benefit from the ability to sing this repertoire authentically, using stylistically appropriate vocal technique and being able to ad-lib.

I am conducting a research project to look at what would helpfully be included in a toolkit for teaching pop and rock vocal improvisation to Musical Theatre singers, in order to prepare them for the demands of the genres currently being performed in the UK industry. The research will be used to improve my own 1:1 and group teaching.

You have been invited to participate on the basis of your experience as a vocal coach.

CONSENT FORM:

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participation involves a short interview.

I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and transcribed to be included in an appendix in the final research report.

I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the research report, dissertation, and research presentation.

I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

I understand that signed consent forms, original audio recordings and a transcript of the interview will be retained on the project director's personal password-protected computer to which only they have access, until the completion of the project and then deleted.

I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

I understand that I am free to contact Laura Boon to seek further clarification and information.

* I consent to participating in this study ☒
I do not consent to participating in the study

Three interview participants consented to participation via Google Forms:

Submitted 8/11/22, 9:50 PM

Submitted 14/11/22, 7:21 PM

Submitted 18/11/22, 10:34 AM

Appendix 2: Interview Questions framework

TECHNICAL ABILITY / FEATURES

Rhythm
- what are the best ways you've found at helping people to feel a groove?

- how do you encourage rhythmic creativity in your clients?

Riffs/runs
- what have you found to be effective ways of teaching this?

LISTENING

Are there any specific listening tasks that you've found more useful than others?

How do you encourage active listening
- guided in lessons together? Assigned as homework/practice?

Who do you think MT singers should be listening to to hear great examples of pop/rock ad libbing?

Are there any listening tasks that you think are particularly suited to people unfamiliar with singing in this style?

***What have you found in your experience to be an effective way to...
Can you tell me more about how you...***

**What are the fundamental skills you think
a singer needs to be able to ad lib well
in a contemporary pop style?**

How do you teach them?

**How do you encourage the creativity
required to put the technical skills into
ad libbing?**

**How do you help singers translate the
input into creative output?**

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

What are your favourite activities to get people improvising?

Do you use a vamp / piano / guitar / technology (apps?) / a cappella?

MUSICIANSHIP (scales/harmony):

How do you incorporate musicianship skills and development into your coaching sessions?

Are there any resources that you draw on regularly?

Do you create your own vocalises and exercises?

What exercises or teaching tools have you found to be effective in teaching people to harmonise?

Especially adults (childhood learning/natural ability)?

MINDSET

For those who find it daunting, can you tell me more about how you help people overcome their fear of ad libbing?

What have you found ineffective?

Appendix 3: Interview transcripts and coding process

In Vivo Coding

INTERVIEW: Participant One (P1)

Stage One - Transcript of interview:

LB: Have you got any questions about aims of the study?

P1: No. But actually, what would be useful is for you to let me know what themes you are focusing on, actually. So yeah, I have got a question.

LB: Okay. Well, the kind of themes that are coming up in my review of the literature so far are: listening tasks, to kind of 'learn the language', the musical language of pop and CCM style singing; the technical ability to do it, so vocal agility; musicianship, which scales and how to incorporate those; and mindset, how to overcome the fear, because I find I've got lots of singers who are technically very proficient singers, but they are terrified when they get the chance to make it up themselves.

So I guess the first question I would ask you is, what are the fundamental skills that you think an accomplished pop/rock ad-libber would need?

P1: That's a really good question. What are the skills they need? I think, probably in pop rock, a really good ear is the most important thing. Because a lot of the work you get, a lot of the ways that you deliver music is not written, it's listened. So I think that's probably the biggest thing is that, developing your ear and knowing that, and you can do that. To be honest, there's lots of singers who do that in a very instinctive way, and that's still absolutely fine. But for some people, I think what I'm trying to do on my [social media], is encourage people to have lots of pathways into their knowledge base from a practical basis, rather than a theoretical basis. So I'll break down the theory, from a practical point of view so they can hear what's going on, because that's a lot of people's strength in that world. And then when they can hear what's going on, then maybe they can start to apply it. I think actually, what I could do better in that, because [social media videos] are so short now, is maybe give them real life examples of songs, which I can do when I've got more one to one time, but on [social media], I can't do so much.

LB: Yes. Okay. So, are there any particular artists, if you were to give examples, are there any particular artists that you think musical theatre singers should listen to? Because there's a slight difference, isn't there?

P1: Mm. There's a big difference. I think.

LB: Yeah.

P1: We talk a lot about pop styles, coming into musical theatre, and I'm actually doing a masterclass at a musical theatre school, two masterclasses next week. The reality is that it's still very musical theatre, it's not as nuanced... it's still a lot of line, it's less things like creak, vocal fry, there's little nuances - their audible breaths, their breathy offsets, all those kinds of things that are often a feature, I mean, I think a lot of singers in the pop realm have what I would call a signature sound. And that is, as soon as you hear them, you know, as soon as you hear it, you know it's them. And I don't mean that the musical theatre world doesn't because I think at the most sort of well-known level it does, but I'm not sure, generally that it does in the same way.

LB: No, and they're always having to sing within the confines of a character...

P1: Confines of a character, confines of a key, even if it's not their right key. I mean, there's a lot of things really. Often if you're an understudy, you've got to sing it exactly as the lead would. There's a template to follow, and I think that pop is all about your individual musicianship and your individual sound.

LB: So with that musicianship, are there any resources that you draw on regularly and put into your coaching sessions? How have you found effective ways to put those into your lessons? Do you just make up your own vocalises like you do on [social media]?

P1: Yeah, pretty much. But also, there's a few things I do. So say, within the confines of an exercise, say with a singer who is more confident or we work together well, or they've just got a kind of aptitude for it, I will just play some chords and let them find their way through it and just kind of vocal their way through it. And that's a really nice way of working when someone's comfortable with that, but you can start quite early on, like, give them an exercise and then just say, 'Okay, I'll play this, just make some sound', or 'what can you hear?'. And I'll do that quite early on with some particular people who want to learn music theory, but don't have any foundation in it. I'll just play a major, and they have to pick out, and then a minor and then something else, and they have to pick out the notes that I'm playing. And so on like that. So that's not an improvisation, but it is a way of developing the ear for foundation for improvisation because if you can hear what's going on, you can respond to it.

And the other thing I do a lot is, and I'm sure most coaches do this, get singers to sing their song in their way. And usually my key to unlocking that is for them to tell me what the song is about emotionally. And often they'll say, 'Well, they've lost the person they love, and they're sad about it'. But that's not the emotion. 'What's the emotion in this line? Like, is it regret?' And then we'll really break it down. And that might move throughout the song. And I find often an emotional intention informs technique, as much as technique informs an emotion

intention, probably more than it informs emotional intention, because a lot of the sounds that we make... So say a singer, like Beyonce, who's got a very excited kind of high end sound, you can't do that if you're afraid, your body's not engaged, to be like, "go for it, yay, yeah!" And everyone can make those sounds when they're doing it in real life, but when it comes to applying it to a song, a big note, or whatever their psychological barrier might be, that changes.

So I just kind of do a lot of sort of silly, silly exercises, and just little physical things, like we have like a magic lever that you pull down. Just so you're thinking down rather than up because if you're thinking up, the whole body starts reaching for it. And just little things, you know, getting singers to play around with a melody, around the timing, how can they phrase that differently? Where would they pull it? What word do they want to emphasise? What's the important message for them? Finding their way through a song I think is improvisation. But it's not improvisation as in ad-libbing.

LB: No, but I get what you mean. So it's building their confidence in being able to make decisions and try things, change things and apply different emotions and so on? Is that what you mean?

P1: Yeah. And also you can do that with exercises, too. Like, you can play with something. Say, 'give me something that sounds hopeful', or 'give me something that sounds joyful', 'give me something that sounds sad'. And automatically those kind of those signals, those nonverbal signals, like, if you're tired, you've got a creak in your voice, and it's lower, and it's slower. You know, if you're excited it's up here... And then they're easy ways to access voice qualities that can then open up different parts of the voice and the expressive toolkit, I suppose.

LB: So do you find that to be a good way to get those singers who are reluctant to be more free to just start to break away from having to do things in set, ascribed ways?

P1: Yeah. And to be honest, my role, in the work field that I work in, my role for me is about helping people express themselves in the most emotional, confident, aligned, sustainable way. So it's about them using their voices really freely, but also really dynamically. So they've got their full expressive range that they want to use. And also, even the bits they don't want to use keeping those all really fit because they feed into the whole instrument, and you don't know when you might want to use that. I always think about it as more colours to paint with. If you've got that expressive range, it's just helpful.

LB: Yeah. And so, once you feel that a student or client is getting confident in accessing all of these colours, how do you then bridge that gap between those kinds of technical skills and then encouraging their creative output?

P1: Actually I don't wait till that's in place. So there's a gospel song I use called Hold on. And the version I know is by a group called Sounds of Blackness. It's very simple. It's just:

Hold on / Just a little while longer /

and there's loads of room for ad-lib. So once we've learned it, I might sing it and then get them to ad-lib over the top. So it might be like:

hold on (hold on) / Just a (just a little) /

and I'll show them where the placement of the ad-lib will go, but then they'll do their own thing with it.

LB: So right from the very beginning?

P1: Early on, yeah. I mean, maybe not lesson one but within the first five. Yeah.

And everyone responds differently. Everyone kind of ...Yeah, you're trying to work kind of quite holistically around everything. Not go, 'You can only do this, when's this happened.' I don't really work in a linear way, and I tend to work with what the singer tells me they want. And sometimes they may not know. And then I'll help them or I'll point out things that will get there in a different way. But generally I'm trying to work... the way I think of it is to be artist-centred or person-centred. So I'm led by them in terms of their own learning generally, or responsive to them in their own learning.

LB: I think that responsiveness probably does apply, doesn't it, across the board with where they are emotionally and mentally as well in each lesson.

So do you have any particular scales or modes or arpeggios or things that you think are absolutely fundamental to be able to ad-lib in this style?

P1: I think, just that very ability, so you're well versed in lots of modes, and lots of styles and lots of things. So [on my social media] they're all exercises that I use and kind of do, that they're kind of in my repertoire if you like, and sometimes I make them up on the day or whatever, just because I feel like something's come up in the week or something.

Generally, I do do major and minor, but I also do blues, pentatonic Phrygian mode, hexatonic, major minor hexatonic, major minor pentatonic. You know, and I think that kind of language of variability is really, really important because most songs aren't... we tend to use a lot of major and minor scales, but there's so much more than that. And a lot of pop stuff is

hexatonic. The pentatonic is so useful to know, so's the blues, and all those things are really, really useful to know.

So yeah, I don't stick to one at all I really mix it up. And I'll mix voice qualities up and the registrations up. And we often work with either where the singer needs to develop or relative to the song we're going to be singing that day, I'll warm them up aligned to where their voice is gonna go.

LB: So drawing inspiration from the repertoire?

P1: Yeah. Some of them. Like I would say, I've been inspired by things like Stevie Wonder... one of the patterns I do is [sings hmm on 1 b7 1 b3 1 b5 4 b3 1] it's kind of taking that little bit from it, because it's usable.

LB: Adapted a little bit of it?

P1: Yeah, yeah. Or getting people to kind of listen to how a certain artist does riffs and then breaking that down, slowing it right down looking at how that works. Because part of the ability to riff is actually having an instrument that has vocal agility and vocal dexterity if we're talking about stylistic, r&b, pop, pop-infused r&b or gospel, gospel or those kinds of styles.

And actually, that's an interesting thing about gospel I would say, even though I'm not a gospel singer or teacher, particularly, what you can really learn from that style is it's in service to something else. So it's not about you, I think it's easier to get out of your own way, because it's not about you. It's about something else, or that expression, that devotional aspect to it. The singers from that background are really good at improvising and really good. It's a generalisation. And maybe jazz singers as well, because it's part of the genre. So that improvising and that responsiveness is part of the genre, then you learn it more readily, because you understand it's part of the kind of rules of the game, I suppose in it to put it in a cold way. But more or less a responsive thing to that genre.

LB: Yeah, I understand. Any other last practical activities? Do you ever use technology to make loops, or play loops, or vamps or do you do that on the piano?

P1: Yeah, I do use technology. And actually, I've got a whole thing that I'm developing, which is an app, which is around technology. So for singers that are going away on tour, and they can't necessarily check in and they want to warm up every day, I've got tracks that I've created, and then sung vocalises over and all that kind of thing so they've got a warm up and a technical thing to take with them. So yeah, I completely use technology and use Logic and record.

LB: Okay. Yeah, I think it probably helps, doesn't it, because it just gives you that better sense of groove.

P1: Exactly that. I mean, most songs in the pop idiom are groove based. And obviously, like, everyone loves to sing a ballad, but generally the songs that are hits are groove based.

LB: So they make people move...

P1: Yeah. And that I think that thing that you said at the beginning about improvising, it's all of it. Because improvisation can be rhythmic. It can be melodic, it can be playing with your expectation.

Oh, that's something that's really inspired me actually is a brilliant and Herbie Hancock masterclass. And he talks about blues things and he kind of gives you a little piano starting point, and then you can take it off in a direction. So those kind of things are useful. And he says, basically, if you make a mistake, repeat it and it's not a mistake. He learnt that from working with Miles Davis! And another thing I find, don't worry about being wrong. Like I'll often make mistakes when I'm improvising in the studio. But what I'll have is a germ of an idea, and then be able to develop it from that and make it better. So throwing it all out there is really important and understanding that mastery comes, but you can't have mastery straightaway. And so, you know, making mistakes, playing around and play is like a massive part of our learning process.

LB: So quantity over quality to begin with?

P1: Yeah, and I think you can do both, like you can have... you can have quantity and then refine it. So it becomes quality. So I think sometimes someone who doesn't know anything about it can come up with something brilliant, because they don't know the rules. So to me, learning is not linear at all. And it doesn't really matter about experience it more matters about what you're opening up yourself to, and what's coming out of you because you're going to come up with something that I'm not going to come up with. And it's that, it's about really giving people the confidence in their own instrument and their own expressive language. And then, 'yeah, that's you! You came up with that, you did that, where do you want to take it? How you can develop it?' All that kind of thing.

LB: Amazing. Thank you so much.

P1: You're welcome. It's really lovely to meet you.

LB: I really do appreciate it.

Stage Two - extraction of meaningful data:

a really good ear is the most important thing / a lot of the ways that you deliver music is not written, it's listened... that's probably the biggest thing is ... developing your ear

encourage people to have lots of pathways into their knowledge base from a practical basis, rather than a theoretical basis... break down the theory, from a practical point of view so they can hear what's going on, because that's a lot of people's strength in that world... then when they can hear what's going on, then maybe they can start to apply it

give them real life examples of songs

The reality is that it's still very musical theatre, it's not as nuanced... it's still a lot of line, it's less things like creak, vocal fry, there's little nuances - their audible breaths, their breathy offsets, all those kinds of things that are often a feature, I mean, I think a lot of singers in the pop realm have what I would call a signature sound. And that is, as soon as you hear them, you know, as soon as you hear it, you know it's them. And I don't mean that the musical theatre world doesn't because I think at the most sort of well-known level it does, but I'm not sure, generally that it does in the same way... Confines of a character, confines of a key, even if it's not their right key... Often if you're an understudy, you've got to sing it exactly as the lead would. There's a template to follow, and I think that pop is all about your individual musicianship and your individual sound.

I will just play some chords and let them find their way through it and just kind of vocal their way through it... 'Okay, I'll play this, just make some sound', or 'what can you hear?'... they have to pick out the notes that I'm playing... it is a way of developing the ear for foundation for improvisation because if you can hear what's going on, you can respond to it.

get singers to sing their song in their way. And usually my key to unlocking that is for them to tell me what the song is about emotionally... often an emotional intention informs technique, as much as technique informs an emotion intention, probably more than it informs emotional intention

So say a singer, like Beyonce, who's got a very excited kind of high end sound, you can't do that if you're afraid, your body's not engaged, to be like, "go for it, yay, yeah!" And everyone can make those sounds when they're doing it in real life, but when it comes to applying it to a song, a big note, or whatever their psychological barrier might be, that changes.

So I just kind of do a lot of sort of silly, silly exercises, and just little physical things, like we have like a magic lever that you pull down. Just so you're thinking down rather than up because if you're thinking up, the whole body starts reaching for it.

getting singers to play around with a melody, around the timing, how can they phrase that differently? Where would they pull it? What word do they want to emphasise? What's the important message for them? Finding their way through a song I think is improvisation. But it's not improvisation as in ad-libbing.

Say, 'give me something that sounds hopeful', or 'give me something that sounds joyful', 'give me something that sounds sad'. And automatically those kind of those signals, those nonverbal signals... they're easy ways to access voice qualities that can then open up different parts of the voice and the expressive toolkit

So they've got their full expressive range that they want to use... even the bits they don't want to use keeping those all really fit because they feed into the whole instrument, and you don't know when you might want to use that.

there's a gospel song I use called Hold on... It's very simple... and there's loads of room for ad-lib. So once we've learned it, I might sing it and then get them to ad-lib over the top...and I'll show them where the placement of the ad-lib will go, but then they'll do their own thing with it.

you're trying to work kind of quite holistically around everything... I don't really work in a linear way, and I tend to work with what the singer tells me they want. And sometimes they may not know. And then I'll help them or I'll point out things that will get there in a different way. But generally I'm trying to work... the way I think of it is to be artist-centred or person-centred. So I'm led by them in terms of their own learning generally, or responsive to them in their own learning

Generally, I do do major and minor, but I also do blues, pentatonic Phrygian mode, hexatonic, major minor hexatonic, major minor pentatonic... that kind of language of variability is really, really important because most songs aren't... we tend to use a lot of major and minor scales, but there's so much more than that. And a lot of pop stuff is hexatonic. The pentatonic is so useful to know, so's the blues, and all those things are really, really useful to know... So yeah, I don't stick to one at all I really mix it up.

And I'll mix voice qualities up and the registrations up. And we often work with either where the singer needs to develop or relative to the song we're going to be singing that day, I'll warm them up aligned to where their voice is gonna go.

I've been inspired by things like Stevie Wonder... one of the patterns I do is [sings hmm on 1 b7 1 b3 1 b5 4 b3 1] it's kind of taking that little bit from it, because it's usable.

getting people to kind of listen to how a certain artist does riffs and then breaking that down, slowing it right down looking at how that works... part of the ability to riff is actually having an instrument that has vocal agility and vocal dexterity if we're talking about stylistic, r&b, pop, pop-infused r&b or gospel, gospel or those kinds of styles

an interesting thing about gospel I would say... what you can really learn from that style is it's in service to something else. So it's not about you, I think it's easier to get out of your own way, because it's not about you. It's about something else, or that expression, that devotional aspect to it. The singers from that background are really good at improvising and really good. It's a generalisation.

maybe jazz singers as well, because it's part of the genre. So that improvising and that responsiveness is part of the genre, then you learn it more readily, because you understand it's part of the kind of rules of the game, I suppose in it to put it in a cold way. But more or less a responsive thing to that genre.

Yeah, I do use technology... I've got tracks that I've created, and then sung vocalises over and all that kind of thing so they've got a warm up and a technical thing to take with them. So yeah, I completely use technology and use Logic and record.

if you make a mistake, repeat it and it's not a mistake... don't worry about being wrong. Like I'll often make mistakes when I'm improvising in the studio. But what I'll have is a germ of an idea, and then be able to develop it from that and make it better. So throwing it all out there is really important and understanding that mastery comes, but you can't have mastery straightaway. And so, you know, making mistakes, playing around and play is like a massive part of our learning process.

I think sometimes someone who doesn't know anything about it can come up with something brilliant, because they don't know the rules... learning is not linear at all. And it doesn't really matter about experience it more matters about what you're opening up yourself to, and what's coming out of you because you're going to come up with something that I'm not going to come up with.

it's about really giving people the confidence in their own instrument and their own expressive language. And then, 'yeah, that's you! You came up with that, you did that, where do you want to take it? How you can develop it?' All that kind of thing.

Stage Three - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Codes extracted
<i>"that's probably the biggest thing... developing your ear"</i>	Developing your ear
<i>"encourage people to have lots of pathways into their knowledge base from a practical basis, rather than a theoretical basis"</i>	Practical basis
<i>"give them real life examples of songs"</i>	Examples
<i>"it's still very musical theatre, it's not as nuanced"</i>	Musical Theatre
<i>"they have to pick out the notes that I'm playing... it is a way of developing the ear for foundation for improvisation"</i>	Developing the ear Foundation Pick out the notes
<i>"if you can hear what's going on, you can respond to it"</i>	Respond

<i>"often an emotional intention informs technique... probably more than [technique] informs emotional intention"</i>	Emotional intention
<i>"everyone can make those sounds when they're doing it in real life, but when it comes to applying it to a song, a big note, or whatever their psychological barrier might be, that changes."</i>	Psychological barrier
<i>"I just kind of do a lot of sort of silly, silly exercises, and just little physical things"</i>	Silly Physical
<i>"getting singers to play around with a melody, around the timing, how can they phrase that differently? Where would they pull it? What word do they want to emphasise?"</i>	Play around
<i>"those nonverbal signals... they're easy ways to access voice qualities that can then open up different parts of the voice and the expressive toolkit"</i>	Nonverbal signals Expressive toolkit
<i>"even the bits they don't want to use keeping those all really fit because they feed into the whole instrument, and you don't know when you might want to use that."</i>	Whole instrument Fit
<i>"once we've learned it, I might sing it and then get them to ad-lib over the top...and I'll show them where the placement of the ad-lib will go, but then they'll do their own thing with it."</i>	Ad-lib over the top
<i>"I'm led by them in terms of their own learning generally, or responsive to them in their own learning"</i>	Responsive
<i>"Generally, I do do major and minor, but I also do blues, pentatonic Phrygian mode, hexatonic, major minor hexatonic, major minor pentatonic... that kind of language of variability is really, really important"</i>	Major Minor Blues Phrygian Hexatonic Pentatonic
<i>"I'll warm them up aligned to where their voice is gonna go."</i>	Aligned
<i>"I've been inspired by things like Stevie Wonder..."</i>	Inspired

<i>"listen to how a certain artist does riffs and then breaking that down"</i>	Breaking down riffs
<i>"part of the ability to riff is actually having an instrument that has vocal agility and vocal dexterity"</i>	Vocal agility Vocal dexterity
<i>"what you can really learn from that style is it's in service to something else... I think it's easier to get out of your own way, because it's not about you."</i>	Get out of your own way In service
<i>"improvising and that responsiveness is part of the genre... you understand it's part of the... rules of the game"</i>	Responsiveness Rules of the game
<i>"I've got tracks that I've created, and then sung vocalises over and all that kind of thing so they've got a warm up and a technical thing to take with them... I completely use technology and use Logic"</i>	Vocalises Logic Technology
<i>"don't worry about being wrong... So throwing it all out there is really important and understanding that mastery comes, but you can't have mastery straightaway... making mistakes, playing around and play is like a massive part of our learning process."</i>	Mistakes Mastery
<i>"it doesn't really matter about experience it more matters about what you're opening up yourself to, and what's coming out of you"</i>	Experience Opening up
<i>"giving people the confidence in their own instrument and their own expressive language"</i>	Confidence Expressive

Stage Four - Refining into second order codes and subcodes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Practical ear training	Developing your ear, practical not theoretical, listening and improvising going hand in hand, as a foundation Responding to the music and to what you hear, input to output Major, minor, blues, hexatonic, pentatonic, Phrygian scales and patterns.

Repertoire	Examples - using repertoire for inspiration for vocalises, making it relevant, applicable Using repertoire for practice - using a song as a framework for ad-lib practice over the top.
Psychology	Using emotion to benefit and link between technique and intention, e.g.using primal sounds, to help unlock the psychological barriers to improvising. Being silly, physical, playing around. Advantages of gospel, getting out of your own way, singing in service to something bigger. Make mistakes, as part of the path to mastery. Opening up and developing confidence in own expressive language.
Expressive vocal toolkit	Accessing different registers, vocal qualities through emotion, colours to play with. Including vocal fitness of whole instrument. Vocal agility, dexterity required.
Holistic, person-centred approach	Non-linear learning, every student needs different things, teacher to be insightful and responsive, align teaching to needs.
Techniques	Breaking down riffs, slowing them down. Using technology, create tracks, exercises.

Stage Five - Refinement into Major Themes:

Themes	Comments
Psychology	Get out of head, approach with a playful mindset, person-centred
Ear training	Listening, practical theory, being responsive
Vocal technique	Expressive toolkit, agility, technical ability
Practical tasks	Use repertoire, make vocalises, use technology, person-centred

INTERVIEW: Participant Two (P2)

Stage One - Transcript of interview:

LB: And we're away. So my first question is have you got any questions? Are you happy with purposes of the study and so on?

P2: All good.

LB: Wonderful. Okay, so we're talking about ad-libbing skills for musical theatre singers trying to learn that pop-rock ad-libbing style that's featuring in musicals nowadays. So I'd like to ask you, what do you think are the fundamental skills, technical skills perhaps, that you think a good ad-libber needs to have?

P2: For pop and rock ad-libbing, I would say there are two things that make it more authentic. One is understanding the frameworks within which most pop and rock ad-libs come from, originate from, which is basically the pentatonic scale. In the main, not always, but mostly. And the other thing is tone. So, understanding tonal colour, and understanding that even singing a pentatonic scale, if you're using a very dark, legit classical sort of tone, is not going to sound like a pop record. I would say, they're probably the two main aspects that I would address with a musical theatre singer, depending on the singer. I mean, there's a lot of musical theatre these days, and a lot of the younger generation are coming into the more modern musical theatre productions and, you know, singing dear Evan Hansen songs, and that's their first exposure to musical theatre. Whereas perhaps a generation ago, it still might have been the Wizard of Oz. But you know, the chances are, they're exposed a lot more to that sound, and to those types of riffs and patterns. So they might be a little bit more familiar if they're younger than they might be if they're older. But that's not all, doesn't always hold true.

LB: It's a good point though, I think there's definitely a generational aspect to it, of what the influences that we receive are throughout our formative musical years.

P2: It also depends on who they've been taught by and what they've been exposed to. And, you know, I'll get some students who will come in to me thinking they've got to sing "properly". And then that sort of means something to them that singing has to be done a certain way, depending on who and what they've been exposed to.

LB: So there's lots of breaking down of language and meaning and things that has to go on isn't there?

P2: Definitely. And of course, there are still syllabuses that want you to do a pre-1965 legit thing, and a lot of drama and theatre colleges and things will actually ask you for a really old school, they want to know that you can do, you know, Windy City or Wizard of Oz. So there is still that requirement for that as well.

LB: So there's a baseline expectation, would you say, of versatility for a musical theatre performer?

P2: Definitely. Yeah, I think as time goes on, that's getting more, you know, wider and wider. In terms of what musical theatre singers need to be able to tackle. And I can imagine, probably quite daunting for some singers who have sort of already started cutting their teeth in their career, and now we're getting thrown these kinds of things, you know, 'now you've got to ad-lib a blues riff in the middle of this.'

LB: Yeah. Totally. And so, with that in mind, what are your favourite activities, say, or exercises, or things you do in lessons to get people ad-libbing? Perhaps for those who are reluctant to do it, because, I don't know whether you agree, but in my experience, some people do it instinctively. And others are less instinctive about the whole thing. So I'm thinking about the people that need to be taught here.

P2: Yes. I think mostly with anything like that improvisation can feel like a bit of a blank page to people, and they don't know where to begin. So the first thing that I always do is show them some structures. And we work out together a few short melismatic riffs perhaps, or we might look at a song and take a piece of that song and play with that riff, and go up and down with that riff, so that they at least have a two or three note riff, if not more, depending how ambitious they're feeling or how good they're, you know, how quick they pick stuff up. I'll just give them a few paints for the paint box that they can just use and paint with. And then I might change key and move stuff around and go, "Throw that riff in there! Throw that riff there. What happens if you throw it in here?" And just get them using that colour straightaway that, you know, whatever. Colour is a bad word I suppose to use because I'm talking about tone separately, but, you know, that particular thing.

LB: So do you mean like a pattern?

P2: Yeah. I'll give them maybe two or three. And then I might, if they're feeling comfortable enough, I might then, if they've learned two or three, and they're able to kind of throw this out... So a really good one that I use often is Walking on Sunshine by Katrina and the Waves. And you've got the chorus [sings] "Walking on sunshine, woah, I'm walking on sunshine, woah!" And then you've got [sings] "and don't it feel good? All right now. And don't it feel.." like [sings] "all right now!" is quite good one. Very short.

LB: A little descending riff.

*P2: Then at the end. She does lots of different ones, [sings] "I say it, I say it, I say it again now." And you know, things like that. [Sings] "Oh, baby, my baby", they're very easy to pick up. And there's only a couple of notes, you know, and they're just something that I'll say, "Throw that one in, throw riff one in, throw riff two in, throw three in. And now let's mix them up. Now **you** do them in whatever order **you** want." So they're improvising. But they're not completely with a blank page. So then I might take them on from there and say, "right, this is*

all based on the pentatonic scale. And here are the notes in the pentatonic scale, I can start it here, or I can start it there. And I can use any combination. So you tell me what notes and let's make up a riff." And then we make up something, we might use, you know, a vocal burst or vowel or something for that. And get them writing some riffs, get them thinking about those patterns, and empowering them to do it. But I think sometimes throwing that stuff at them at the beginning can be just really overwhelming. So just having a few little up-your-sleeve riffs that you can... that are pretty good. You know, sometimes for auditions or something, you know, I had, what was she auditioning for? Was it Little Shop of Horrors? Or one of those, and there was a bit where it just said 'ad-lib' on the score. And she was like, "aargh!" She came to me just going, "what am I supposed to do here, oh my god!?" And that's what we did, we found a few little things. And went, "Here's three or four things. Now for you to feel like it's vital and live, you can throw those in in any order you want. And they will always work because of the pentatonic framework, they will always sound good. Doesn't matter which one you do in what order. Do the same one four times if you need to. But if you mix it up, it's going to feel a lot more, you know, original and authentic. And if you have to, then learn those riffs in the order that you're going to do them. But the whole point is that we want to move away from getting stuck in learning something parrot fashion, and give yourself the freedom to be able to paint with that paint box however you want. But learn the bits, learn the tools. Understand the framework. Get the tone right. Express yourself. Have fun with those tools."

LB: Oh, brilliant. So Katrina and the Waves is a good one.

P2: I like that one because there's lots of little ad-libs at the end, really simple.

LB: Are there any other artists that you think or other songs perhaps that are particularly useful to for them to listen to...?

P2: It depends on the style. So if they're... if it's something quite bluesy, I really like pointing them at Tennessee Whiskey, because it's got some beautiful runs in that. And again, it's all pentatonic. So anything bluesy, really. But that one's got some some longer runs. So if they're quite ambitious, and they want to learn longer things... there's also loads of, you know, popular soul-y stuff that's got lots of lots of runs in, Whitney Houston, and, you know, the Mariah Carey's of this world and all those kinds of people again, sometimes it's a nice little bit of Beyoncé, you can just pick out bits, you know, and sort of say, "Well, this, this riff could work anywhere in a major pentatonic situation", you know, and these singers will have all been emulating Aretha Franklin, and you know... so the thing is, whilst it needs to be original, and feel like it's authentic, the bottom line is that these are all frameworks. And the reason the blues works is so that people could jam together. So they understand where they're going, one, four or five, and everyone knows where they're going in the chord structure and everybody knows how to improvise over it,

LB: So how important do you think that an understanding of the kind of cultural background of this music is? Do you think it's important that they know that it's evolved from that music? Or do you just take it as it comes with each student?

P2: I do tend to take each student as it comes because everyone wants to learn differently. And I throw different things at the wall and see what sticks. So if they're particularly interested in the technical aspect of riffing, we might concentrate on that. Or if they are interested in the sort of the tonal aspect, I might say to them, "Well, what emotion is this kind of conveying? And why, you know, if somebody's singing, you know, about the railroad, why are they singing about that?" You know, and we might have a little history lesson, but it depends on the student. But I think the more... the more understanding that somebody has about what they're doing, whether that's a physical understanding of what they're doing in their body, whether that's a historical understanding, which helps them bring to bear the storytelling of the song, which then has an effect on the tonal colour of what they're doing, or whether it's simply that they're very good mimics, and they like to just kind of listen to something and use their ear. Any of those are valid. So I wouldn't force any of those things on any particular student. But I think the more understanding you have in general, whichever direction you want that to take, it's going to improve your practice, it's going to deepen your practice and your relationship with the material.

LB: Absolutely. That's so helpful. One more question, actually two more questions, if that's okay. First of all is, do you ever use... So, when you're encouraging people to do these songs do you tend to accompany on piano or guitar? Or do you ever use technology like tracks or loops so people have got a slightly fuller sense of groove?

P2: Again, it depends on what it's for. I try and remain contextually sensitive. But, if I'm trying to give somebody the feel of something, the more immersive it is, I find the more effective it is. So for example, if somebody's trying to do, you know, blues riffs, I will get a backing track up of some really tasty sounding guitar, that sounds like a live band, and I'll put them on the mic. And I'll get them to work on mic. So they really get the feeling that they're making that sound. And it feels authentic. Because I think sometimes, if we like the sound that we're making, it's more motivating than in a dry room with a piano. So it depends, really.

LB: I think that is a real key...

P2: If they're enjoying it.

LB: So back to the people, then, who do find it slightly daunting. So you say putting them on the mic, if it's the right context, making them feel like they enjoy it... Are there any other ways that you... kind of practical things that you do, to help alleviate the fear factor for them?

P2: I make lots of silly noises, that's just, like, something that I do, anyway! Just because I love the voice, and I think it's amazing. And I think we limit ourselves a lot with our own ego about... we're worrying about sounding good. So I generally make at least as many, if not more, stupid noises than anybody else in this studio, simply to give students permission. And I think the whole subject of permission is something that comes up again and again, in my teaching of all ages, of all styles, is that permission to make whatever sound we want to make. And I think sometimes, in this particular context that we're talking about for musical theatre singer comes in with a certain image of themselves and a certain image of their voice, and I give them Tennessee Whiskey, and they go "I can't sing that! That's not me, I don't do blues, I'm not a blues singer." And I go, "You're any kind of singer you want to be. So let's make this sound, you know, let's make the sound together." And suddenly, they're making that sound. And they realised that they actually could always make that sound. I didn't teach them to make that sound. That's a natural sound.

LB: And you just gave them permission.

P2: And that's sort of a really big theme, a lot of the time. And when I... when I teach, I spend probably as much time on the psychology of things as I do on the practical aspects of things. And I think anyone that's taught for any time you know, you'll appreciate that, singing is never teaching just the singing.

LB: 100%

P2: Ever. And so much comes out in those lessons. And so, you know, people use their voice in a way that is biopsychosocial. So there's lots and lots of reasons why they're making the sounds that they are, and/or benefit from uncovering sounds that they already can make, but perhaps don't give themselves permission to.

LB: Thank you so much.

P2: My pleasure! I hope that's useful.

Stage Two - extraction of meaningful data:

For pop and rock ad-libbing, I would say there are two things that make it more authentic. One is understanding the frameworks within which most pop and rock ad-libs come from, originate from, which is basically the pentatonic scale. In the main, not always, but mostly

And the other thing is tone. So, understanding tonal colour, and understanding that even singing a pentatonic scale, if you're using a very dark, legit classical sort of tone, is not going to sound like a pop record.

a lot of the younger generation are coming into the more modern musical theatre productions and, you know, singing dear Evan Hansen songs, and that's their first exposure to musical theatre. Whereas perhaps a generation ago, it still might have been the Wizard of Oz. But you know, the chances are, they're exposed a lot more to that sound, and to those types of riffs and patterns. So they might be a little bit more familiar if they're younger than they might be if they're older. But that's not all, doesn't always hold true.

I think as time goes on, that's getting more, you know, wider and wider. In terms of what musical theatre singers need to be able to tackle. And I can imagine, probably quite daunting for some singers who have sort of already started cutting their teeth in their career, and now we're getting thrown these kinds of things, you know, 'now you've got to ad-lib a blues riff in the middle of this.'

improvisation can feel like a bit of a blank page to people, and they don't know where to begin. So the first thing that I always do is show them some structures. And we work out together a few short melismatic riffs perhaps, or we might look at a song and take a piece of that song and play with that riff, and go up and down with that riff, so that they at least have a two or three note riff, if not more, depending how ambitious they're feeling or how good they're, you know, how quick they pick stuff up. I'll just give them a few paints for the paint box that they can just use and paint with. And then I might change key and move stuff around and go, "Throw that riff in there! Throw that riff there. What happens if you throw it in here?"

So a really good one that I use often is Walking on Sunshine by Katrina and the Waves. And you've got the chorus [sings] "Walking on sunshine, woah, I'm walking on sunshine, woah!" And then you've got [sings] "and don't it feel good? All right now. And don't it feel.." like [sings] "all right now!" is quite good one. Very short.

So then I might take them on from there and say, "right, this is all based on the pentatonic scale. And here are the notes in the pentatonic scale, I can start it here, or I can start it there. And I can use any combination. So you tell me what notes and let's make up a riff." And then we make up something, we might use, you know, a vocal burst or vowel or something for that. And get them writing some riffs, get them thinking about those patterns, and empowering them to do it

I think sometimes throwing that stuff at them at the beginning can be just really overwhelming. So just having a few little up-your-sleeve riffs that you can... that are pretty good.

But the whole point is that we want to move away from getting stuck in learning something parrot fashion, and give yourself the freedom to be able to paint with that paint box however you want. But learn the bits, learn the tools. Understand the framework. Get the tone right. Express yourself. Have fun with those tools.

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popular soul-y stuff that's got lots of lots of runs in, Whitney Houston, and, you know, the Mariah Carey's of this world and all those kinds of people again, sometimes it's a nice little bit of Beyoncé, you can just pick out bits, you know, and sort of say, "Well, this, this riff could work anywhere in a major pentatonic situation", you know, and these singers will have all been emulating Aretha Franklin,

And the reason the blues works is so that people could jam together. So they understand where they're going, one, four or five, and everyone knows where they're going in the chord structure and everybody knows how to improvise over it,

I do tend to take each student as it comes because everyone wants to learn differently. And I throw different things at the wall and see what sticks.

I think the more... the more understanding that somebody has about what they're doing, whether that's a physical understanding of what they're doing in their body, whether that's a historical understanding, which helps them bring to bear the storytelling of the song, which then has an effect on the tonal colour of what they're doing, or whether it's simply that they're very good mimics, and they like to just kind of listen to something and use their ear. Any of those are valid. So I wouldn't force any of those things on any particular student. But I think the more understanding you have in general, whichever direction you want that to take, it's going to improve your practice, it's going to deepen your practice and your relationship with the material.

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I make lots of silly noises, that's just, like, something that I do, anyway!

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And I think the whole subject of permission is something that comes up again and again, in my teaching of all ages, of all styles, is that permission to make whatever sound we want to make. And I think sometimes, in this particular context that we're talking about for musical theatre singer comes in with a certain image of themselves and a certain image of their voice, and I give them Tennessee Whiskey, and they go "I can't sing that! That's not me, I don't do blues, I'm not a blues singer." And I go, "You're any kind of singer you want to be. So let's make this sound, you know, let's make the sound together." And suddenly, they're making that sound. And they realised that they actually could always make that sound.

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Stage Three - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Code extracted
<i>“understanding the frameworks within which most pop and rock ad-libs come from... which is basically the pentatonic scale”</i>	Frameworks Pentatonic
<i>“understanding tonal colour... if you're using a very dark, legit classical sort of tone, [it's] not going to sound like a pop record.”</i>	Tonal colour
<i>“the younger generation... they're exposed a lot more.. to those types of riffs and patterns. So they might be a little bit more familiar if they're younger than they might be if they're older.”</i>	Exposure Familiar
<i>“I think as time goes on, that's getting... wider and wider. In terms of what musical theatre singers need to be able to tackle. And I can imagine, probably quite daunting for some singers”</i>	Daunting
<i>“the first thing that I always do is show them some structures... And we work out together a few short... riffs”</i>	Structures Riffs
<i>“a really good one that I use often is Walking on Sunshine by Katrina and the Waves”</i>	Walking on Sunshine
<i>““here are the notes in the pentatonic scale... I can use any combination. So you tell me what notes and let's make up a riff.” And then we make up something... and get them writing some riffs... empowering them to do it”</i>	Pentatonic scale Empowering
<i>“I think sometimes throwing that stuff at them at the beginning can be just really overwhelming. So just having a few little up-your-sleeve riffs... that are pretty good.”</i>	Overwhelming Up-your-sleeve riffs
<i>“give yourself the freedom to be able to paint with that paint box however you want. But... understand the framework. Get the tone right. Express yourself. Have fun with those tools.”</i>	Freedom Framework Express yourself Fun
<i>“if it's something quite bluesy, I really like pointing them at Tennessee Whiskey”</i>	Bluesy Tennessee Whiskey

<i>"popular soul-y stuff that's got lots of lots of runs in, Whitney Houston, ...the Mariah Carey's of this world... sometimes it's a nice little bit of Beyoncé, you can just pick out bits... and these singers will have all been emulating Aretha Franklin"</i>	Whitney Houston Mariah Carey Beyoncé Aretha Franklin
<i>"the reason the blues works is so that people could jam together. So they understand where they're going, one, four or five, and everyone knows where they're going in the chord structure and everybody knows how to improvise over it"</i>	Jam Chord structure
<i>"everyone wants to learn differently"</i>	Learn differently
<i>"the more understanding you have in general... it's going to deepen your practice and your relationship with the material"</i>	Understanding
<i>"the more immersive it is... the more effective it is... If somebody's trying to do... blues riffs, I will get a backing track up of some really tasty sounding guitar, that sounds like a live band, and I'll put them on the mic... So... it feels authentic. Because I think sometimes, if we like the sound that we're making, it's more motivating than in a dry room with a piano... If they're enjoying it."</i>	Immersive Mic Authentic Motivating Enjoying
<i>"I make lots of silly noises"</i>	Silly
<i>"I think we limit ourselves a lot with our own ego... we're worrying about sounding good."</i>	Ego

<i>"And I think the whole subject of permission is something that comes up again and again, in my teaching of all ages, of all styles... [In] this particular context that we're talking about... a musical theatre singer comes in with... a certain image of their voice, and I give them Tennessee Whiskey, and they go "I can't sing that! That's not me, I don't do blues, I'm not a blues singer." And I go, "You're any kind of singer you want to be. So let's make this sound... together." And suddenly, they're making that sound. And they realised that they actually could always make that sound."</i>	Permission Image of their voice
<i>"people use their voice in a way that is biopsychosocial"</i>	Biopsychosocial

Stage Four - Refining into second order codes and subcodes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Frameworks	Structures, pentatonic scales, riffs, patterns - up-your-sleeve riffs. Preventing overwhelm and the 'blank page'. Building freedom from within a framework. Knowing chord structure for jamming. Knowing the notes of the scales.
Repertoire	Katrina and the Waves Walking on Sunshine, Chris Stapleton Tennessee Whiskey, Beyoncé, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston - listening and learning and breaking down their riffs.
Psychology	Keeping ego out of it. Giving permission. Biopsychosocial voice use - awareness of context. Self-perception. Silliness - making silly sounds, playfulness. Motivation and empowerment important. Understanding - helps authenticity.
Context	Musical Theatre very challenging genre - daunting.

Generational differences	Younger people possibly more familiar with pop/rock ad-libbing patterns from MT as well as pop/rock itself.
Jamming - practical set up.	Immersive practice - good backing track, microphone. Fun. Awareness of chord structure.
Person-centred	All students learn differently, need different things.

Stage Five - Refinement into Major Themes:

Themes	Expanded
Frameworks	Structures, scales, patterns
Psychology	Get out of head, giving permission, person-centred, motivation and empowerment.
Repertoire	Artists to listen to and draw from.
Immersive learning	Use technology, mics, amps, set up for jamming, for enjoyment and motivation.

INTERVIEW: Participant Three (P3)

Stage One - Transcript of interview:

LB: So are you okay for me to press record? Thank you. Okay, have you got any questions before we start?

P3: Not at all, not at all, fire away.

LB: Okay, so first of all, what do you think are the fundamental skills that a singer needs to be able to ad-lib in a pop-rock style?

P3: Okay, so there are a few of them, I think. So first of all, immersing yourself in the style, and listening... listening to the artists who ad-lib, who they need to emulate, they need to know the style, they need to know the phrasing and the timing of these... these runs and stuff that they're trying to copy. They need to know what the notes are. So lots of times people try and, you know, they'll slow it down and they'll try and get an approximation, but if they don't know... For me, I have to go to the piano, break it down, figure out what the scale is based on, because it's so much easier than for you to remember what it is because if you know the language, you can create licks that are similar to it. So which is actually kind of

cooler, because, you know, maybe it depends on... I know this is a musical theatre context, but especially for pop stuff, you would want to recreate a lick in the style of somebody rather than giving me the exact lick. It's great to copy the exact lick as a musical exercise and to learn the language of the artist, but I would always have students listen to, like, say for instance, if it was Christina Aguilera or they were trying to learn some of her licks, to listen to every live version of that song that she's done, copy every single lick, write it out, and then the more you're learning her language then. And so when you recreate the lick, you're doing it in a Christina Aguilera style, but you're putting your own stamp on it but it's not a direct... I think the direct kind of exact cover of it is a great musical exercise, but the next step then is doing it in your own... with your own stamp on it, you know, but bearing in mind what her phrasing is like, how her onsets are, what her timing is, what notes she's using.

LB: So deconstructing those licks...

P3: But it depends on what the musical director wants you to do.

LB: Absolutely.

P3: It's all good musical training either way, I think.

LB: So when you are talking about getting a student to listen to these artists, I guess the follow on question for that is, and you've mentioned Christina Aguilera, are there any other artists that you would suggest people listen to?

P3: Oh, absolutely there's loads of them! Obviously Yebba is huge at the moment. She is just the queen of runs. It's phenomenal, what she's done. Now I don't know what her background is. But I imagine she has, you know... she's very musical. She knows what she's doing, she's ingrained those runs. Sometimes people are more able to naturally do runs like that, but they can be practised. So you have to practice it to a point where it doesn't sound like an exercise so that it's really, really ingrained and it has to be like a musical emotional response, for an emotional reason. And if you listen to Yebba doing it, it's very emotional. It's not 'I just want to be fancy and do a complicated technical riff here'. It's part of the emotional response that's her outpouring. So definitely something like that, that can be tricky for somebody who hasn't lived in that style.

LB: Yeah, there's some intention behind it.

P3: Yeah, especially with Yebba because it's so connected, because she's running all over the place! It's so connected to her emotional state, but she's phenomenal at it. Obviously, Ariana Grande, Beyoncé, Demi Lovato, Lizzo even, there's loads. There's a Tik Tok one at the moment that people are obsessed with, it's from Gnarles Barklay 'Crazy', and I have all

these students coming into me saying "Oh my gosh, did you hear this?!" It's six notes guys, break it down! It's just a minor pentatonic or whatever it is.

LB: So these kind of active listening tasks that you've mentioned, transcribing the riffs, breaking them down, are these things that you tell them to go away and do on their own or are they things that you might actually do in a lesson?

P3: I would have them break it down in class for sure. So we'd slow the track down, you have to stop and start it like five or six times to try and figure out, 'Okay, what exactly are they doing? What exactly are the notes?' Because sometimes there's a little bend in between it. So you're like 'what exactly are they doing?' So you have to try to get it exactly. Then I would just have them sing it straight, then, you know, mess around with the rhythm of it. So [sings] "baa ba baa ba baa ba" long-short-long-short-long-short five times in a row, then short-long-short-long-short-long, so that you're really kind of, you know, you're training the muscles and building coordination on those notes. Do it in triplets, do it backwards, do it in different voice quantities, do it to different syllables so that you're running through that riff in every single way possible. Change the key, then use similar notes and change the pattern so you're really, really working that in there. It depends how much time I have.

LB: So they really embody the riff.

P3: Yes, living with those notes, living with the scale, putting on a backing track and trying to repeat it over a different chord sequence or over a different track altogether. There's a few tracks like Beyoncé 'Work It Out', in that tune, it's all based on a blues scale. So I use that as a warm up sometimes. So I just put on the track, and I can give you an example if you'd like, and so what I would do, and this kind of works for all ages, [sings ascending and descending blues scale]. And when they have the blues scale in their head, [improvises ascending and descending blues scale with different rhythm patterns and ascending two octaves]. Do it at two octaves, then [sings improvised pattern on the blues scale]. And then have them play a little bit with the scale, so by the end of it they're fully improvising but they're using all the notes in the scale. So it's kind of musically informed, what they're doing there, not just singing random stuff hoping it'll work because sometimes it'll work and sometimes it doesn't. And then you'll hit a clanger of a note and you're like, "Oh no!" So when you know what you're singing and you know what the notes are, it's much easier than to kind of, you know, to build up your skills, really, over the chord sequence that you just improvised over.

LB: So you get that kind of musicianship training with the scales, building that into your lessons through warm ups and mixing up the warm ups, mixing the scales up. You mentioned blues scale, you mentioned pentatonic, are there any others that you typically might cover?

P3: Yeah, the main ones are, for a lot of the pop riffs are usually major pentatonic, minor pentatonic, or blues. We work on a whole range of scales here, lots of whole tone stuff, lots of chromatic stuff. Just again, just a bit of technique. So we do lots of work on with the modes as well. So for instance, I teach fourth year on the BA in pop music here and one of their exercises, it's a modes exercise... so they have a track, and it goes... so they sing a one octave, Ionian mode, then they improvise for four bars, then it goes straight into Dorian, improvise for four bars, straight into Phrygian, improvise for four bars. So that way, they're really learning to improvise over a particular chord, and they know what scale and mode goes with that. And the previous years are simplified versions of that and it kind of leads to that full improvisation. Now, that's more if you're heading towards jazz singing, but it's just giving them the tools so that if they have a chord, and they know what the chord is and they have a riff there, they've got a toolkit of things, that they can know how to improvise over it, using the right kind of musical language really, I suppose. Just so that they're musically as informed as the instrumentalists that they may be playing with.

LB: With singers, because they don't have that external point of reference that instrumentalists do to be able to play the scales, it is a whole different ballgame, isn't it, to internalise those patterns?

P3: Yes, it is, absolutely. Sometimes I have the singers play the scales as well, so as the track is going I have them play the scales and then improvise the modes so that they're using the piano as a reference. They can visually... because sometimes when they're trying to think of a Locrian mode really quickly, you're trying to think 'Right, there's a flat two...' and when it moves so quickly, sometimes it's hard to know what the modes are. Whereas if they're visualising the piano and they're visualising B to B, in the key of C, they know, they can see where the semitones are and see where the tones are, and they can go a bit quicker like that.

LB: So do you think do you think having a chordal instrument like that, either the piano, or the guitar I guess might be quite useful...

P3: Oh God, absolutely. It's vital.

LB: It is helpful?

P3: Yeah, piano is better because it more applies to the... like guitars is shapes and stuff like that... the chords aren't the same, are not in the same places, as the piano is. So for learning the language, and for the accompaniment, yeah, I think that definitely piano is probably better.

LB: And so you mentioned that sometimes when people might sing the wrong note or a note that they *feel* is wrong, what practical ways have you found encouraging those students who might find

ad-libbing one of the more challenging things they have to do as a singer, what ways have you found of helping them to overcome that kind of fear and the nerves about 'getting it wrong'?

P3: Loads of ways, loads of ways. That was me. I was a classical girl. I was a classical flute player, saxophone, violinist...and I studied some opera at the start, and when I started pop singing at first I was in this really cool band where all the musicians were like serious musicians. So they'd do sound checks and they'd improvise... be playing away and then they'd get to me and I'm like, "Oh, my god.... [sings major triad 13531] da da da da da... I'm dying! Oh my god it's fine, please stop looking at me!" So I used to be so afraid to improvise, unless I'd had a practice, or was reading the sheet music, I did not want to do in public and and over microphone - are you insane? It's going to go horribly wrong! So I found lots of tools, because I teach lots of teenagers and people who are experimenting with this stuff for the first time. And lots of degree students are terrified of it as well. So I think first of all, doing it every single day in the most fun way you possibly can and not being worried about getting something wrong, because if you approach it from getting it wrong, you will freeze and you're very unlikely to you know, to progress with it. So picking really, really simple things like putting on a track... Actually, the first thing I would normally do... I do lots of group work, so just taking call and response, [sings single pitch] "Yeah", have them all repeat it, and just build up, [sings rising minor third] "Yeah-eh", and they'll all repeat and they're building up this kind of language in a nice, fun, chilled out way. And then when they're comfortable, I'll go round the room and I'll explain, "Guys, it does not matter what you sing. If you don't know what to sing just go, [sings single pitch] 'Yeah'" so that they know, even if they're afraid to go further, because some students will totally go off and sing something awesome and then it comes round to the next person and they're dying because they don't know what to sing, so once they know 'Sing anything. Repeat the note. [Sings single pitch] Yeah. Yeah, yeah.' And when you're brave enough [sings short melodic pattern] 'Yeah, yeah, yeah!' And eventually, you're like "Ooh actually, yeah, I can do this!" and you start making it a little bit more complicated and encourage them to just burst into spontaneous song like that around the house, put on a backing track... Just start. Just start somewhere. And if you sing a clanger, expect that you're going to sing notes that don't work. It doesn't matter. The more you do it, your ear gets quick at picking up where the chord is going. Between giving them those kind of fun little exercises to do at home over songs that they're listening to all the time, then giving them little basic pentatonic exercises, that they can build up in part of their warm ups, they're building up all those skills then, in a fun... it has to be in a fun way because if you go into it from a 'I'm gonna get this wrong, improvising is gonna be terrifying', you just build it up week by week.

LB: Yeah, you have to have that kind of environment.

P3: Absolutely it has to be fun, it has to be a fun environment. And even, lots of people will listen to a song on the radio, they automatically veer towards singing the melody. Try and

encourage them to sing a harmony line. And the more you do that, again, your ear gets quick at singing something that isn't the melody, because lots of people get stuck in singing something the exact same way as the artist, and if you've sang something 40 times the same way, it's very hard to think of alternatives. So then, I include it into the song. Sometimes it can be tricky. "Sing me this song, but imagine it's like 100% a new melody, you've never heard this song before in your life. Sing me a whole new thing over this track." And that's actually really tricky to do. And I'll just explain, "Look, if you end up going back to the original, just get off it as soon as you can. So don't worry if you go back to it, just get off it when you can. And then do it 10 times! Then do it like 50% original melody 50% your improv, now 75% the original melody, 25% your improv, now 80%..." So that they're always playing around with it. And by the end of it, they'll sing it totally differently. So that's taking a song, doing your own style but based on what the artist has done. So again, it's more applicable to, like, pop stuff where the personal interpretation is really important. But it all helps, it's all good for your musicality anyway.

LB: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much. I don't want to take up any more of your time. It's absolutely fascinating to hear some of these really practical things because, you know, in the literature there's lots of things that kind of say what needs to be done, but less information about how to actually apply them. I mean, there obviously are ways that I do make up, various things in lessons... I'm trying to build a toolkit of things that I can pull out because, you know, obviously everybody's coming with a different baseline, from naturally intuitive ability for this kind of thing, or not, and completely different backgrounds of how much music theory they know. So it's all of these kind of things I'm trying to put together. So it's been really fascinating, really helpful. Thank you.

P3: Cool. Great, not at all, and if there's anything else, just shout. If I think of anything else I'll pop it in. I think it's just making people feel comfortable, so they don't feel, 'I can't, I could never do this', because when somebody busts out a riff and if you've never done it before you think, 'oh my god that's impossible!' Or, 'it's really difficult!', but if you haven't done it all the time, of course it's really difficult. So start somewhere and then it won't be difficult the more you do it!

LB: Break it down.

P3: Break it down, start somewhere! And have fun doing it and it'll open up a world... Now I would improvise until the cows come home, and 10 years ago, I wouldn't. Oh my god, it would have been my worst nightmare. So this is definitely something that you can learn to do.

LB: Yeah, this is why I'm trying to get the information on how to teach it because I'm coming from the opposite side is that I've been somebody that would intuitively do it for my whole life. So to try and deconstruct it somewhat to help people who need that, is the challenge, and it's fascinating.

P3: Absolutely, yeah.

LB: Thank you so much. Hope you have a lovely rest of your day.

P3: Best of luck with all this. When you're finished, when you transcribe it, would you mind just sending it to me it? So if there's any evidence that I could add in or anything like that I can send it back to you.

LB: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I'll email you the transcript.

Stage Two - extraction of meaningful data:

first of all, immersing yourself in the style, and listening... listening to the artists who ad-lib, who they need to emulate, they need to know the style

For me, I have to go to the piano, break it down, figure out what the scale is based on, because it's so much easier than for you to remember what it is because if you know the language, you can create licks that are similar to it

It's great to copy the exact lick as a musical exercise and to learn the language of the artist, but I would always have students listen to, like, say for instance, if it was Christina Aguilera or they were trying to learn some of her licks, to listen to every live version of that song that she's done, copy every single lick, write it out, and then the more you're learning her language then. And so when you recreate the lick, you're doing it in a Christina Aguilera style, but you're putting your own stamp on it

bearing in mind what her phrasing is like, how her onsets are, what her timing is, what notes she's using

Oh, absolutely there's loads of them! Obviously Yebba is huge at the moment. She is just the queen of runs.

Sometimes people are more able to naturally do runs like that, but they can be practised. So you have to practice it to a point where it doesn't sound like an exercise so that it's really, really ingrained and it has to be like a musical emotional response, for an emotional reason... It's part of the emotional response that's her outpouring.

Obviously, Ariana Grande, Beyoncé, Demi Lovato, Lizzo even, there's loads. There's a Tik Tok one at the moment that people are obsessed with, it's from Gnarles Barklay 'Crazy'

It's six notes guys, break it down! It's just a minor pentatonic or whatever it is.

So we'd slow the track down, you have to stop and start it like five or six times to try and figure out, 'Okay, what exactly are they're doing? What exactly are the notes?' Because sometimes there's a little bend in between it. So you're like 'what exactly are they doing?' So you have to try to get it exactly.

Then I would just have them sing it straight, then, you know, mess around with the rhythm of it. So [sings] "baa ba baa ba baa ba" long-short-long-short-long-short five times in a row, then short-long-short-long-short-long, so that you're really kind of, you know, you're training the muscles and building coordination on those notes. Do it in triplets, do it backwards, do it in different voice quantities, do it to different syllables so that you're running through that riff in every single way possible.

There's a few tracks like Beyoncé 'Work It Out', in that tune, it's all based on a blues scale.

So I just put on the track, and I can give you an example if you'd like, and so what I would do, and this kind of works for all ages, [sings ascending and descending blues scale]. And when they have the blues scale in their head, [improvises ascending and descending blues scale with different rhythm patterns and ascending two octaves]. Do it at two octaves, then [sings improvised pattern on the blues scale]. And then have them play a little bit with the scale, so by the end of it they're fully improvising but they're using all the notes in the scale. So it's kind of musically informed, what they're doing there, not just singing random stuff hoping it'll work because sometimes it'll work and sometimes it doesn't. And then you'll hit a clanger of a note and you're like, "Oh no!" So when you know what you're singing and you know what the notes are, it's much easier than to kind of, you know, to build up your skills, really, over the chord sequence that you just improvised over.

Yeah, the main ones are, for a lot of the pop riffs are usually major pentatonic, minor pentatonic, or blues. We work on a whole range of scales here, lots of whole tone stuff, lots of chromatic stuff... So we do lots of work on with the modes as well.

a modes exercise... so they have a track, and it goes... so they sing a one octave, Ionian mode, then they improvise for four bars, then it goes straight into Dorian, improvise for four bars, straight into Phrygian, improvise for four bars. So that way, they're really learning to improvise over a particular chord, and they know what scale and mode goes with that. And the previous years are simplified versions of that and it kind of leads to that full improvisation. Now, that's more if you're heading towards jazz singing, but it's just giving them the tools so that if they have a chord, and they know what the chord is and they have a riff there, they've got a toolkit of things, that they can know how to improvise over it, using the right kind of musical language really, I suppose. Just so that they're musically as informed as the instrumentalists that they may be playing with.

Sometimes I have the singers play the scales as well, so as the track is going I have them play the scales and then improvise the modes so that they're using the piano as a reference. They can visually... because sometimes when they're trying to think of a Locrian mode really quickly, you're trying to think 'Right, there's a flat two...' and when it moves so quickly, sometimes it's hard to know what the modes are. Whereas if they're visualising the piano and they're visualising B to B, in the key of C, they know, they can see where the semitones are and see where the tones are, and they can go a bit quicker like that.

guitars is shapes and stuff like that... the chords aren't the same, are not in the same places, as the piano is. So for learning the language, and for the accompaniment, yeah, I think that definitely piano is probably better.

So I think first of all, doing it every single day in the most fun way you possibly can and not being worried about getting something wrong, because if you approach it from getting it wrong, you will freeze and you're very unlikely to you know, to progress with it.

the first thing I would normally do... I do lots of group work, so just taking call and response, [sings single pitch] "Yeah", have them all repeat it, and just build up, [sings rising minor third] "Yeah-eh", and they'll all repeat and they're building up this kind of language in a nice, fun, chilled out way. And then when they're comfortable, I'll go round the room and I'll explain, "Guys, it does not matter what you sing. If you don't know what to sing just go, [sings single pitch] 'Yeah'" so that they know, even if they're afraid to go further, because some students will totally go off and sing something awesome and then it comes round to the next person and they're dying because they don't know what to sing, so once they know 'Sing anything. Repeat the note. [Sings single pitch] Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.' And when you're brave enough [sings short melodic pattern] 'Yeah, yeah, yeah!' And eventually, you're like "Ooh actually, yeah, I can do this!" and you start making it a little bit more complicated and encourage them to just burst into spontaneous song like that around the house, put on a backing track... Just start.

And if you sing a clanger, expect that you're going to sing notes that don't work. It doesn't matter. The more you do it, your ear gets quick at picking up where the chord is going.

giving them little basic pentatonic exercises, that they can build up in part of their warm ups

it has to be in a fun way because if you go into it from a 'I'm gonna get this wrong, improvising is gonna be terrifying', you just build it up week by week. Absolutely it has to be fun, it has to be a fun environment.

lots of people will listen to a song on the radio, they automatically veer towards singing the melody. Try and encourage them to sing a harmony line. And the more you do that, again, your ear gets quick at singing something that isn't the melody

"Sing me this song, but imagine it's like 100% a new melody, you've never heard this song before in your life. Sing me a whole new thing over this track." And that's actually really tricky to do. And I'll just explain, "Look, if you end up going back to the original, just get off it as soon as you can. So don't worry if you go back to it, just get off it when you can. And then do it 10 times! Then do it like 50% original melody 50% your improv, now 75% the original melody, 25% your improv, now 80%..." So that they're always playing around with it. And by the end of it, they'll sing it totally differently. So that's taking a song, doing your own style but based on what the artist has done. So again, it's more applicable to, like, pop stuff where the personal interpretation is really important. But it all helps, it's all good for your musicality anyway.

I think it's just making people feel comfortable, so they don't feel, 'I can't, I could never do this', because when somebody busts out a riff and if you've never done it before you think, 'oh my god that's impossible!' Or, 'it's really difficult!', but if you haven't done it all the time, of course it's really difficult. So start somewhere and then it won't be difficult the more you do it!

Break it down, start somewhere!

Stage Three - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Code extracted
<i>"immersing yourself in the style, and... listening to the artists who ad-lib, who they need to emulate"</i>	Listening Style
<i>"I have to go to the piano, break it down, figure out what the scale is based on, because it's so much easier than for you to remember what it is ... if you know the language, you can create licks that are similar to it"</i>	Break it down Language
<i>"It's great... to learn the language of the artist... if it was Christina Aguilera... listen to every live version of that song that she's done, copy every single lick... And so when you recreate the lick, you're doing it in a Christina Aguilera style, but you're putting your own stamp on it"</i>	Language Copy Christina Aguilera Own stamp on it
<i>"bearing in mind what her phrasing is like, how her onsets are, what her timing is, what notes she's using"</i>	Phrasing Onsets Timing
<i>"Yebba is huge at the moment."</i>	Yebba
<i>"Sometimes people are more able to naturally do runs like that, but they can be practised. So you have to practice it to a point where it doesn't sound like an exercise so that it's really, really ingrained and it has to be like a musical emotional response, for an emotional reason..."</i>	Practice Emotional response
<i>"Ariana Grande, Beyoncé, Demi Lovato, Lizzo even, there's loads"</i>	Ariana Grande Beyoncé Demi Lovato Lizzo
<i>"It's six notes guys, break it down! It's just a minor pentatonic or whatever it is."</i>	Break it down Pentatonic

<i>"So we'd slow the track down... 'What exactly are the notes?' ... you have to try to get it exactly."</i>	Slow [it] down
<i>"have them sing it straight, then...mess around with the rhythm of it. ... so that you're really... training the muscles and building coordination on those notes. Do it... in different voice quantities, do it to different syllables so that you're running through that riff in every single way possible."</i>	Mess around Rhythm Building coordination Different
<i>"There's a few tracks like Beyoncé 'Work It Out', in that tune, it's all based on a blues scale."</i>	Beyoncé Blues scale
<i>"put on the track... what I would do, and this kind of works for all ages, [sings ascending and descending blues scale]. And when they have the blues scale in their head, [improvises ascending and descending blues scale with different rhythm patterns and ascending two octaves]. Do it at two octaves, then [sings improvised pattern on the blues scale]. And then have them play a little bit with the scale, so by the end of it they're fully improvising but they're using all the notes in the scale"</i>	Play Blues scale
<i>"a lot of the pop riffs are usually major pentatonic, minor pentatonic, or blues...lots of chromatic stuff... we do lots of work on with the modes as well."</i>	Major pentatonic Minor pentatonic Blues Chromatic Modes
<i>"a modes exercise... learning to improvise over a particular chord, and they know what scale and mode goes with that... it's just giving them the tools so that if they have a chord, and they know what the chord is and... they've got a toolkit of things... using the right kind of musical language... Just so that they're musically as informed as the instrumentalists that they may be playing with."</i>	Chord Scale Mode Musical language Musically informed

<i>"as the track is going I have them play the scales and then improvise the modes so that they're using the piano as a reference... if they're visualising the piano... they can see where the semitones are and see where the tones are... for learning the language... I think that definitely piano is probably better."</i>	Piano Visualising Language
<i>"doing it every single day in the most fun way you possibly can and not being worried about getting something wrong, because if you approach it from getting it wrong, you will freeze and you're very unlikely to... progress with it."</i>	Fun Every day Worry
<i>"call and response, [sings single pitch] "Yeah", have them all repeat it, and just build up, [sings rising minor third] "Yeah-eh", and they'll all repeat and they're building up this kind of language in a nice, fun, chilled out way... and you start making it a little bit more complicated and encourage them to just burst into spontaneous song like that around the house, put on a backing track... Just start."</i>	Language Fun Chilled out Call and response Encourage Around the house
<i>"expect that you're going to sing notes that don't work. It doesn't matter. The more you do it, your ear gets quick at picking up where the chord is going."</i>	Notes that don't work Ear Chord
<i>"giving them little basic pentatonic exercises, that they can build up in part of their warm ups"</i>	Pentatonic Warm ups
<i>"it has to be a fun environment."</i>	Fun environment
<i>"Try and encourage them to sing a harmony line. And the more you do that, again, your ear gets quick at singing something that isn't the melody"</i>	Harmony Ear
<i>"So that's taking a song, doing your own style but based on what the artist has done... it all helps, it's all good for your musicality anyway."</i>	Own style Musicality

<i>"I think it's just making people feel comfortable... if you haven't done it all the time, of course it's really difficult. So start somewhere and then it won't be difficult the more you do it!"</i>	Feel comfortable Start somewhere
<i>"Break it down, start somewhere!"</i>	Break it down Start somewhere

Stage Four - Refining into second order codes and subcodes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Listening	Learning the style Breaking it down Onsets Phrasing Timing Rhythms Different artists: Ariana Grande Beyoncé Demi Lovato Lizzo Yebba
Musical language	Scales: modes, chromatic, blues, major and minor pentatonic Harmony and chords Ear training Using the piano to visualise
Interpretation	Own style Emotional outpouring, embodying the patterns Messing around Playing
Fun	Fun, enjoyable, safe environment Feeling comfortable Chilled out Encouragement Accepting clangers and notes that don't work, trying not to worry

Exercises	Call and response Progressively more complex Modes exercises over chords Warm ups Practising every day Listening to the radio, starting somewhere, around the house
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Stage Five - Refinement into Major Themes:

Themes	Expanded
Musical language	Listening, scales, breaking it down, harmony and ear training
Repertoire	Selected artists
Practical exercises	Call and response, warm ups, every day activities
Enjoyment	Fun, safe, chilled out, comfortable environment to encourage a positive playful approach, mistakes accepted as part of the process

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

1. Project Director: Laura Boon laura.boon@yahoo.co.uk

You are invited to participate in an interview about teaching pop/rock ad-libbing to Musical Theatre singers. This is a research project conducted by Laura Boon through the Voice Study Centre as part of the University of Wales Trinity St David's. The questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

AIM OF THIS STUDY: The current Musical Theatre industry in the UK encompasses shows from many different genres, including contemporary rock and pop, and jukebox musicals. Performers wishing to have a successful career in this industry benefit from the ability to sing this repertoire authentically, using stylistically appropriate vocal technique and being able to ad-lib.

I am conducting a research project to look at what would helpfully be included in a toolkit for teaching pop and rock vocal improvisation to Musical Theatre singers, in order to prepare them for the demands of the genres currently being performed in the UK industry. The research will be used to improve my own 1:1 and group teaching. You have been invited to participate on the basis of your experience as a vocal coach.

CONSENT:

- ☐ I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study, and that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my questionnaire within two weeks after completion, in which case the material will be deleted. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I understand that participation involves completion of a short questionnaire. I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially, and that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my answers which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about. I understand that disguised extracts from my questionnaire responses may be quoted in the research report, dissertation, and research presentation. I understand that signed consent forms, and questionnaire responses will be retained on the project director's personal password-protected computer to which only they have access, until the completion of the project and then deleted. I understand that under freedom of information legislation, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified

above. I understand that I am free to contact Laura Boon at the email address above to seek further clarification and information.

2. Have you ever received training in pop/rock ad-libbing as part of a formal training programme?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. Do you think pop/rock ad-libbing is a skill that can be effectively taught?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. Why, or why not?

.....

.....

5. What are your most effective ways of incorporating ear training into your voice coaching work? (For example, assigning active listening tasks, applied practical theory such as learning scales, harmony exercises like identifying parts of a chord.)

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6. What skills do you think an accomplished pop/rock ad-libber needs to have? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Good aural skills
- ☐ Practical knowledge of music theory (e.g. being able to sing a natural minor scale without knowing the pattern of tones and semitones)
- ☐ Theoretical knowledge of music theory (e.g. knowing key signatures)
- ☐ Vocal agility
- ☐ Wide vocal range
- ☐ Effective control of vocal registers
- ☐ The ability to sing riffs/runs/licks
- ☐ Creativity

- ☐ A sense of groove
- ☐ A fearless attitude
- ☐ Other...

.....

7. Of these, which do you think are the three most important skills?

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.....
.....

8. Which artists do you think singers should listen to, to hear great examples of pop/rock ad-libbing?

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9. What is it about these artists that you would ask your singers to listen out for?

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10. What are your favourite activities to get singers ad-libbing?

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11. Which, if any, programmes/apps do you use to support singers learning to ad-lib? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Logic
- ☐ Cubase
- ☐ Garageband
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Voice
- ☐ iRealPro
- ☐ I do not use technology to teach ad-libbing
- ☐ Other...

.....

12. If you use any of these programmes or apps, please give an example of how you use them to teach ad-libbing skills.

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13. What practical tasks have you found to help people overcome their fears of ad-libbing?

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Appendix 5: Questionnaire Responses

QUESTIONNAIRES: Sent to 10 voice teachers, 8 respondents.

Respondents labelled R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7 and R8

1. Project Director: Laura Boon laura.boon@yahoo.co.uk

You are invited to participate in an interview about teaching pop/rock ad-libbing to Musical Theatre singers. This is a research project conducted by Laura Boon through the Voice Study Centre as part of the University of Wales Trinity St David's. The questionnaire should take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

AIM OF THIS STUDY: The current Musical Theatre industry in the UK encompasses shows from many different genres, including contemporary rock and pop, and jukebox musicals. Performers wishing to have a successful career in this industry benefit from the ability to sing this repertoire authentically, using stylistically appropriate vocal technique and being able to ad-lib.

I am conducting a research project to look at what would helpfully be included in a toolkit for teaching pop and rock vocal improvisation to Musical Theatre singers, in order to prepare them for the demands of the genres currently being performed in the UK industry. The research will be used to improve my own 1:1 and group teaching. You have been invited to participate on the basis of your experience as a vocal coach.

CONSENT: I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study, and that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind. I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my questionnaire within two weeks after completion, in which case the material will be deleted. I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I understand that participation involves completion of a short questionnaire. I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research. I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially, and that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my answers which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about. I understand that disguised extracts from my questionnaire responses may be quoted in the research report, dissertation, and research presentation. I understand that signed consent forms, and questionnaire responses will be retained on the project director's personal password-protected computer to which only they have access, until the completion of the project and then deleted. I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as

specified above. I understand that I am free to contact Laura Boon on the email address above to seek further clarification and information.

R1: I consent to participating in this study

R2: I consent to participating in this study

R3: I consent to participating in this study

R4: I consent to participating in this study

R5: I consent to participating in this study

R6: I consent to participating in this study

R7: I consent to participating in this study

R8: I consent to participating in this study

2. Have you ever received training in pop/rock ad-libbing as part of a formal training programme?

R1: No

R2: Yes

R3: No

R4: Yes

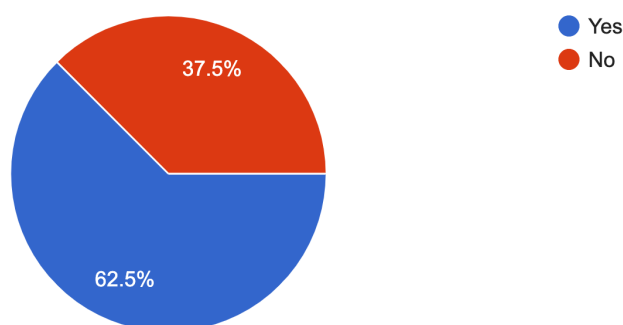
R5: Yes

R6: Yes

R7: Yes

R8: No

8 responses



3. Do you think pop/rock ad-libbing is a skill that can be effectively taught?

R1: Yes

R2: Yes

R3: Yes

R4: Yes

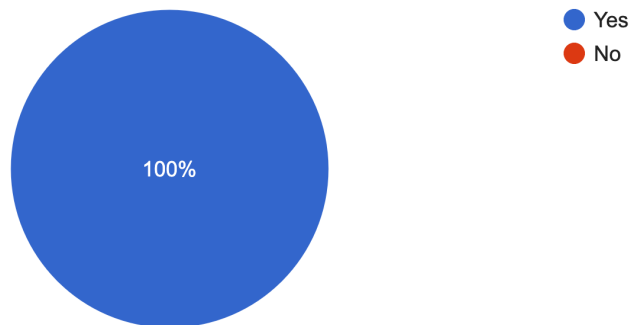
R5: Yes

R6: Yes

R7: Yes

R8: Yes

8 responses



4. Why, or why not?

R1:

R2:

R3: *I think it's both. Some singers have this in their musical DNA - the music they were immersed in growing up. I think you need to learn the right techniques from the right people, and accept the styles are completely different.*

R4: *When we know the artistic possibilities and how to play with them with our instrument, we create our own New things....*

R5: *Because there are several tricks like for instant ornamentation, for learning how to ad-lib.*

R6: *I believe it can be taught to anyone when teaching in segments at slow pace just like any singing technique.*

R7: *It involves agility, flexibility, hearing and choosing the right notes for the music. All of which can be practised.*

R8: *Teaching is creating the space for a student to explore, and that is what improvisation is.*

Honestly, I don't think I've hit on any particularly great methods for teaching it, but I maintain that it is possible!

5. What are your most effective ways of incorporating ear training into your voice coaching work? (For example, assigning active listening tasks, applied practical theory such as learning scales, harmony exercises like identifying parts of a chord.)

R1: *I use auditory skills listening exercises where the student relays a short melody, riff or exercise after only hearing it a few times. I use these exercises after vocal warm-ups in order to meld*

practical theory work (scales in the warm-ups) and vocal freedom/agility. I find that this fosters independence (singing the melody back acapella) and intonation accuracy with given intervals.

R2: During warm up exercises and when working on specific sections within songs

R3: I usually start by teaching a pentatonic major scale and play a standard pop 1-5-6-4 chord progression and two sounds 'do, ba' etc. Explain that any of these notes will work with the chord progression, and encourage play. I also use call and response to free up nervous singers.

I make sure minor scales and blues scales are incorporated into warmups, and modes for those learning jazz

Asking singers to transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality

R4: Depends on the level. Beginners: just play on a tone. Advanced: play in a scale

R5: Letting them sing along with improvisation (instrumental jazz solo's), letting them sing along with the piano and letting them make up their own harmony on top or below the original melody line.

R6: Mostly working with different scales to incorporate more ear training and using recorded exercises for learning intervals.

R7: Harmony exercises, scales, chord work, and I post a view videos online about harmonies and ear training

R8: I believe vocal warm ups help the student to improve their aural awareness, but I do find it difficult to find time to incorporate theory into lessons, especially as my students tend to come on a more casual basis to work towards a specific event/goal.

6. What skills do you think an accomplished pop/rock ad-libber needs to have? (Tick all that apply)

- **Good aural skills**
- **Practical knowledge of music theory (e.g. being able to sing a natural minor scale without knowing the pattern of tones and semitones)**
- **Theoretical knowledge of music theory (e.g. knowing key signatures)**
- **Vocal agility**
- **Wide vocal range**
- **Effective control of vocal registers**
- **The ability to sing riffs/runs/licks**
- **Creativity**
- **A sense of groove**
- **A fearless attitude**
- **Other...**

R1: Good aural skills;Vocal agility;Wide vocal range;Effective control of vocal registers;Creativity;A sense of groove;A fearless attitude

R2: Good aural skills;Vocal agility;Effective control of vocal registers;Creativity;A fearless attitude

R3: Good aural skills;Vocal agility;Effective control of vocal registers;The ability to sing riffs/runs/licks;Creativity;A sense of groove

R4: Good aural skills;Practical knowledge of music theory (e.g. being able to sing a natural minor scale without knowing the pattern of tones and semitones);Theoretical knowledge of music theory (e.g. knowing key signatures);Vocal agility;Effective control of vocal registers;The ability to sing riffs/runs/licks;Creativity;A sense of groove;A fearless attitude

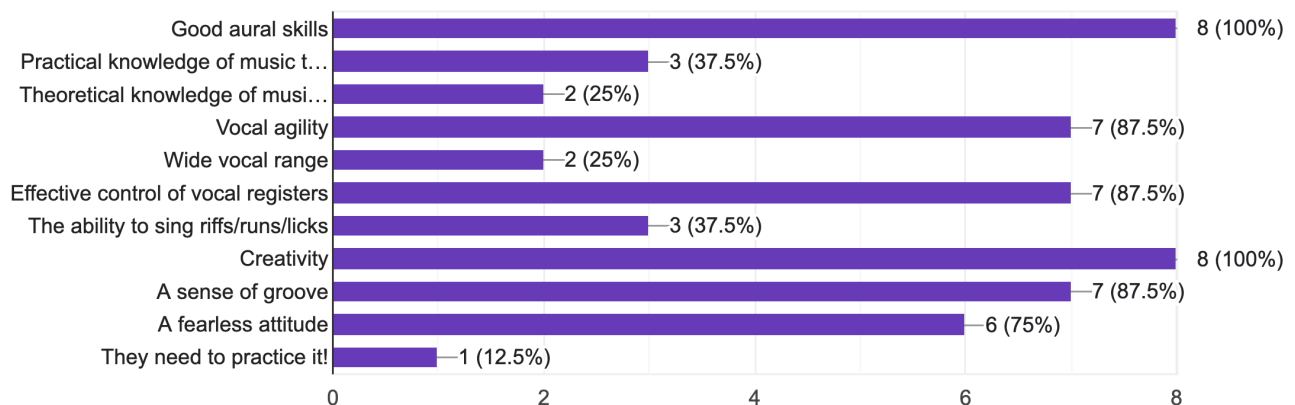
R5: Good aural skills;Practical knowledge of music theory (e.g. being able to sing a natural minor scale without knowing the pattern of tones and semitones);Theoretical knowledge of music theory (e.g. knowing key signatures);Wide vocal range;Effective control of vocal registers;Creativity;A sense of groove;A fearless attitude

R6: Good aural skills;Vocal agility;Effective control of vocal registers;Creativity;A sense of groove

R7: Good aural skills;Practical knowledge of music theory (e.g. being able to sing a natural minor scale without knowing the pattern of tones and semitones);Vocal agility;Effective control of vocal registers;The ability to sing riffs/runs/licks;Creativity;A sense of groove;A fearless attitude

R8: Good aural skills;Vocal agility;Creativity;A sense of groove;A fearless attitude;They need to practice it!

8 responses



7. Of these, which do you think are the three most important skills?

R1: Aural skills, vocal agility, and effective control of vocal registers

R2: Effective control, creativity and a fearless attitude

R3: Creativity, groove, aural skills

R4: Vocal agility, theory, fearlessness

R5: A fearless attitude, Effective control of vocal registers, Creativity

R6: To have developed a good ear/musicality, vocal agility(a certain level of vocal technique), a sense of groove(good rhythmic ability)

R7: Aural Skills, agility, creativity

R8: Practice, a fearless attitude, a sense of groove

8. Which artists do you think singers should listen to, to hear great examples of pop/rock ad-libbing?

R1: Beyonce, Halsey, Lana Del Rey, Ariana Grande, Mariah Carey

R2: Yebba, Beyonce

R3: Yebba, Chaka Khan, Stevie Wonder, Natalie Weiss, Tori Kelly, Ariana, Mariah

R4: Dont know

R5: Graig David, five finger death punch, Pink

R6: Adele, Yebba, Stevie Wonder

R7: Bruno Mars, Christina Aguilera, Rhianna

R8: I think this will depend on the nature of the genre the student is ad-libbing in, and I would probably recommend based on their genre. I would, however, encourage them to look up live performances by that artist so they can hear how it differs from the recording.

9. What is it about these artists that you would ask your singers to listen out for?

R1: Vocal agility. A sense of ease throughout the vocal line and understanding how to create "ease" without over-controlling or over-thinking.

R2: the fluidity in their riffs

R3: PHRASING! This is something that is a crucial difference between MT and Pop /Rock. Clarity of notes!

R4: Dont know

R5: Agility of the voice, tilting, use of effects on the voice, height with easy.

R6: The seemingly effortless flow within the ad-libbing, the creativity and use of rhythm

R7: sense of timing, creativity, ad-libs, feeling

R8: It depends on what tool I'm trying to offer them. If, for example, I was giving them a pentatonic scale to play with in improvisation, I would choose examples to highlight the use of that idea.

10. What are your favourite activities to get singers ad-libbing?

R1: Turning on their favorite song and asking them to bring their voice into it in an experimental and nonjudgmental space. Once they start ad-libbing, we can go back and workshop and discuss what happened and how they might have done it in order to either recreate or revamp it.

R2: depending on the pupil, lots of slowing it down and accuracy games

R3: Call and response, learning an iconic riff, using a repeated pop phrase in a vocal warmup (and i will always love you for instance) going a semitone higher each time

R4: Me playing chord sequences, they improvise on that

R5: Trying to convince them it is okay to let go of the original song, and let them fly solo on their hearing

R6: Call and response, I do one - they do next and so on :) makes them feel not so left out to play around with their voice if I also "fail" sometimes or go off track. Another one is to really slow down the pace and then gradually increase and they always get impressed that they managed that seemingly "impossible" riff in the end.

R7: start by taking out lyrics and replace with oohs and ahhs or humming. Ask them to be ok with messing it up - even do that on purpose.

R8: I taught a short improvisation module in a FE setting; as the material had to be used by a wide range of musicians, and over the course of six weeks (I think!) I offered them a different stimulus each week - the major/minor scale (just simply going up and down), the major/minor pentatonic, types of articulation, compositional devices like repetition and sequences and so on. I found it difficult to assess how effective this was as singers had time away from us to prepare for tasks so I'm not sure how much true improvisation I witnessed. I do, however, praise any attempts to get started with ad-libbing, and this is true of my private teaching and my classroom teaching. So for example if a student is replicating an ad-lib in the track, but it lands in slightly the wrong place, I will often note that as a soloist, they are allowed to place those extra expressions where they wish. If they sing an incorrect note that sounds nice, or offer a different interpretation, I point this out to them as a choice. I also remind them that ad-libbing, like any musical skill, takes time to become something you can do fluidly, and that it's more than okay to begin by getting comfortable with composing a new idea, and working that into the song as a starting point. I also encourage students to ad-lib along to the radio or their favourite playlists!

11. Which, if any, programmes/apps do you use to support singers learning to ad-lib? (Tick all that apply)

- Logic
- Cubase
- Garageband
- YouTube
- Voice
- iRealPro
- I do not use technology to teach ad-libbing
- Other...

R1: Logic;Garageband

R2: Logic;YouTube;iRealPro

R3: YouTube;iRealPro;Irehearse

R4:

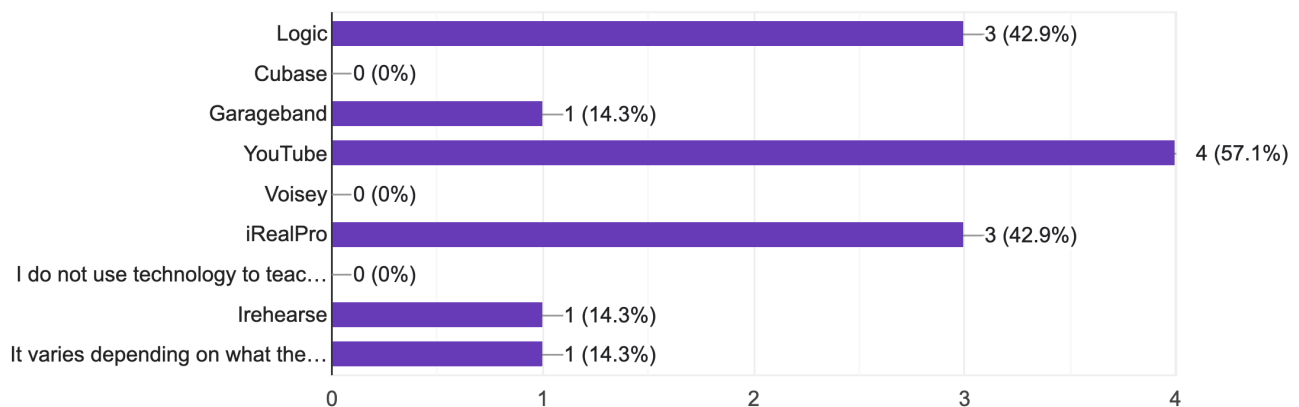
R5: YouTube

R6: Logic

R7: iRealPro

R8: YouTube;It varies depending on what the student is interested in

7 responses



12. If you use any of these programmes or apps, please give an example of how you use them to teach ad-libbing skills.

R1: Once a student is comfortable enough to record a pass at the vocals, I use these programmes to workshop the ad-libs with my student as explained above. These recordings also allow us to look at other facets of the vocal line.

R2:

R3: changing keys / slowing down riffs

R4:

R5: I just put on the song or instrumental version of the song on you tube.

R6: Recording riffs and slowing them down for them to have different paces to practice. Plus recording interval exercises

R7: Go round on ireal once with melody, then let them try to do it differently

R8: I refer my students to youtube for almost everything, as they can always find music they like/can draw references from on that site/app.

13. What practical tasks have you found to help people overcome their fears of ad-libbing?

R1: To start working on ad-libbing I often start having the student record (audio) themselves singing a song of their choice at home where they are most comfortable and can belt it out. They are welcome to either send it to me virtually or play it for me in the lesson. From there, constructive feedback and praise is given and overall it fosters trust. If they are still reluctant to ad-lib in person, I will turn on a random back track and have them repeat melodies or runs back to me until they're comfortable creating their own (meaningless) melodies. I then transfer this exploration into a song of their choice to workshop the ad-libbing via trial and error and experimentation.

R2: getting them to move away from notation and experimenting.

R3: The basics of any studio should be - it's okay to make mistakes. Foster the approach that the student is there to play, to try things, and to develop the confidence to make mistakes. Learning riffs the octave below first can be useful if it's a very high and the riff doesn't span large intervals Building ad-libbing into warmups makes it 'normal'.

R4:

R5: helping them with ornamentation by making them imitate the sound of a goat, and then applying different notes to that sound, which makes the voice train agility and speed.

R6: Again the call and response as an improvisation. We play around together. Learning easy riffs to start with.

R7: Let go the need for perfectionism, have them mess up on purpose "be ok with letting this go off the rails" or "colour outside the lines"

R8: I'm afraid I haven't had a student long enough to witness the ultimate outcome!

Appendix 6: CODING QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Question 1: Consent

100% of respondents consented to completing the questionnaire.

Question 2: Have you ever received training in pop/rock ad-libbing as part of a formal training programme?

62.5% of respondents have received training in ad-libbing as part of a formal training programme.
37.5% of them had not.

The majority had - the questionnaire did not specify which type of formal training programme.
Potential flaw in the question: was it MT training? Pop training? In the UK?

Question 3: Do you think pop/rock ad-libbing is a skill that can be effectively taught?

100% think ad-libbing can be effectively taught - so supports that my research project is worthwhile.
External validity.

Question 4: Why or why not?

Stage One - extraction of meaningful data:

I think you need to learn the right techniques from the right people, and accept the styles are completely different.

When we know the artistic possibilities and how to play with them with our instrument, we create our own New things....

there are several tricks... for instant ornamentation

I believe it can be taught to anyone when teaching in segments at slow pace just like any singing technique.

It involves agility, flexibility, hearing and choosing the right notes for the music. All of which can be practised.

Teaching is creating the space for a student to explore, and that is what improvisation is.

Stage Two - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Codes extracted	Notes
<i>"learn the right techniques from the right people"</i>	Techniques	Right people - with experience?

<i>"When we know the artistic possibilities and how to play with them with our instrument, we create our own New things...."</i>	Play Possibilities Create	
<i>"there are several tricks... for instant ornamentation"</i>	Tricks Ornamentation	Focus on ornamentation, quick access to this stylistic feature
<i>"I believe it can be taught to anyone when teaching in segments at slow pace just like any singing technique."</i>	Segments Slow	Progressive pacing
<i>"It involves agility, flexibility, hearing and choosing the right notes for the music. All of which can be practised."</i>	Practised Flexibility Agility Hearing Choosing	Listening Ear training Technique
<i>"Teaching is creating the space for a student to explore, and that is what improvisation is."</i>	Explore	Environment conducive to exploration

Stage Three - Refining into second order codes and subcodes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Play	Exploration and play
Technique	Agility, flexibility, style e.g. ornamentation
Segments	Progressive pacing of learning
Hearing	Listening, hearing, choosing notes

Stage Four - Refinement into Major Themes:

Themes	Comments
Vocal Style	Agility, flexibility, technique, ornamentation
Play	Environment for exploration, freedom and creativity
Ear training	Hearing and choosing the notes, listening
Segments	Breaking it down, progressively

Question 5: What are your most effective ways of incorporating ear training into your voice coaching work? (For example, assigning active listening tasks, applied practical theory such as learning scales, harmony exercises like identifying parts of a chord.)

Stage One - extraction of meaningful data:

<i>I use auditory skills listening exercises where the student relays a short melody, riff or exercise after only hearing it a few times. I use these exercises after vocal warm-ups in order to meld practical theory work (scales in the warm-ups) and vocal freedom/agility. I find that this fosters independence (singing the melody back acapella) and intonation accuracy with given intervals.</i>
<i>when working on specific sections within songs</i>
<i>I usually start by teaching a pentatonic major scale and play a standard pop 1-5-6-4 chord progression and two sounds 'do, ba' etc. Explain that any of these notes will work with the chord progression, and encourage play.</i>
<i>I also use call and response to free up nervous singers.</i>
<i>I make sure minor scales and blues scales are incorporated into warmups, and modes for those learning jazz</i>
<i>Asking singers to transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality</i>
<i>Letting them sing along with improvisation (instrumental jazz solo's)</i>
<i>Letting them make up their own harmony on top or below the original melody line.</i>
<i>using recorded exercises for learning intervals</i>
<i>Harmony exercises, scales, chord work</i>

Stage Two - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Codes extracted	Notes
<i>"I use auditory skills listening exercises where the student relays a short melody, riff or exercise after only hearing it a few times... this fosters independence (singing the melody back acapella) and intonation accuracy with given intervals."</i>	A cappella Intonation accuracy Relays	Kind of call and response? A cappella good for intonation
<i>"when working on specific sections within songs"</i>	Within songs	Incorporation into repertoire

<i>"teaching a pentatonic major scale and... a standard pop 1-5-6-4 chord progression and two sounds 'do, ba' etc. Explain that any of these notes will work with the chord progression, and encourage play."</i>	Play Pentatonic Chord progression	Basic jamming Provide syllables
<i>"I also use call and response to free up nervous singers."</i>	Call and response	
<i>"I make sure minor scales and blues scales are incorporated into warmups"</i>	Minor scales Blues scales Warm Ups	
<i>"transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality"</i>	Transcribe Listen	Listening skills enhanced by active transcription - not just musicianship skills like scales but stylistic nuances as well
<i>"sing along with improvisation (instrumental jazz solo's)"</i>	Sing along Instrumental	Not just vocal
<i>"Letting them make up their own harmony on top or below the original melody line."</i>	Harmony	
<i>"using recorded exercises for learning intervals"</i>	Recorded exercises Intervals	Technology
<i>"Harmony exercises, scales, chord work"</i>	Harmony Scales Chords	

Stage Three - Refining into second order codes and subcodes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Scales	Pentatonic, Blues, Modes
Harmony	Sing along, chord work, listening
Transcribe	Listening skills - technical nuances
Instrumental	Sing along to instrumental music, listening skills
Intonation accuracy	A cappella, intervals, recorded exercises
Warm Ups	Incorporate into beginning of lessons

Within songs	Incorporate into songs - applicability
Call and Response	Good for nervous beginners

Stage Four - Refinement into Major Themes:

Themes	Comments
Listening	Transcription, singing along to instrumentals
Timing	Warm ups, within songs
Activities	Call and response, chord work, jamming, a cappella and to recorded exercises
Musicianship	Scales, harmony, chord work, a cappella, intonation accuracy

Question 6: 6. What skills do you think an accomplished pop/rock ad-libber needs to have? (Tick all that apply)

- Good aural skills
- Practical knowledge of music theory (e.g. being able to sing a natural minor scale without knowing the pattern of tones and semitones)
- Theoretical knowledge of music theory (e.g. knowing key signatures)
- Vocal agility
- Wide vocal range
- Effective control of vocal registers
- The ability to sing riffs/runs/licks
- Creativity
- A sense of groove
- A fearless attitude
- Other...

100% of respondents selected good aural skills, and creativity.

The next three most popular answers (87.5% of respondents) were vocal agility, effective control of vocal registers, and a sense of groove.

75% selected a fearless attitude.

37.5% selected Practical knowledge of music theory, and the ability to sing riffs/runs/licks.

25% of respondents selected theoretical knowledge of music theory, and a wide vocal range.

12.5% of respondents selected 'other' - and specified the need to practice: "they need to practice it!"

Good aural skills and creativity were the top two skills.

Question 7: Of these, which do you think are the three most important skills?

When asked to select the three most important, these are the most popular:

50% (4 out of 8) selected good aural skills, one of which described this as “to have developed a good ear/musicality”

50% (4 out of 8) selected creativity

50% (4 out of 8) selected vocal agility

50% (4 out of 8) selected a fearless attitude, one of which described this as “fearlessness”

37.5% (3 out of 8) selected a sense of groove

25% (2 out of 8) selected effective control of vocal registers

12.5% (1 out of 8) selected practice

Good aural skills and **creativity** were selected by all respondents as essential skills and featured in 50% of respondents top three essential skills.

Vocal agility and **a fearless attitude** were selected by 7 and 6 respondents respectively and also feature in 50% of respondents top three essential skills.

Although **effective control of vocal registers** and **a sense of groove** were both selected by 7 out of 8 respondents, they were only selected by 3 and 2 respondents respectively for the top three essential skills.

Skills that didn't feature in the top three for ANY respondents are: practical knowledge of music theory, theoretical knowledge of music theory, a wide vocal range, the ability to sing riffs/runs/licks.

Essential skills ranked:

1 Good aural skills, creativity

2 Vocal agility, fearless attitude

3 Sense of groove

4 Effective control of vocal registers

5 Practical knowledge of music theory, theoretical knowledge of music theory, a wide vocal range, ability to sing riffs/runs/licks.

6 Practice

Question 8: Which artists do you think singers should listen to, to hear great examples of pop/rock ad-libbing?

Yebba (3)	Ariana Grande (2)	Mariah Carey (2)	Stevie Wonder (2)
Beyonce (2)	Chaka Khan	Tori Kelly	Craig David
Lana Del Rey	Halsey	Natalie Weiss	Five Finger Death Punch

Pink	Adele	Bruno Mars	Christina Aguilera
Rihanna			

Question 9: What is it about these artists that you would ask your singers to listen out for?

Stage One - extraction of meaningful data:

<i>"Vocal agility", "Agility of the voice"</i>
<i>"A sense of ease", "height with easy", "seemingly effortless flow"</i>
<i>"fluidity in their riffs"</i>
<i>"PHRASING!"</i>

Stage Two - First order codes extracted - simplified as themes:

Quotations	Codes extracted	Notes
<i>"Vocal agility", "Agility of the voice", "fluidity in their riffs"</i>	Agility	Vocal agility features in several respondents answers
<i>"A sense of ease", "height with easy", "seemingly effortless flow"</i>	Ease	We don't hear the effort involved in the artists' voice - it sounds easy. Something to listen for and emulate

Question 10: What are your favourite activities to get singers ad-libbing?

Stage One - extraction of meaningful data:

<i>Turning on their favorite song and asking them to bring their voice into it in an experimental and nonjudgmental space.</i>
<i>slowing it down and accuracy games</i>
<i>Call and response</i>
<i>learning an iconic riff</i>
<i>using a repeated pop phrase in a vocal warmup</i>
<i>Me playing chord sequences, they improvise on that</i>
<i>convince them it is okay to let go of the original song, and let them fly solo on their hearing</i>
<i>Call and response, I do one - they do next and so on :) makes them feel not so left out to play around with their voice if I also "fail" sometimes or go off track</i>

<i>really slow down the pace and then gradually increase and they always get impressed that they managed that seemingly “impossible” riff in the end</i>
<i>start by taking out lyrics and replace with oohs and ahhs or humming</i>
<i>Ask them to be ok with messing it up - even do that on purpose</i>
<i>praise any attempts to get started with ad-libbing</i>
<i>it's more than okay to begin by getting comfortable with composing a new idea, and working that into the song as a starting point</i>
<i>I also encourage students to ad-lib along to the radio or their favourite playlists!</i>

Stage Two - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Codes extracted	Notes
<i>“Turning on their favorite song and asking them to bring their voice into it”, “Me playing chord sequences, they improvise on that”, “it is okay to let go of the original song, and let them fly solo”, “get started”, “I also encourage students to ad-lib along to the radio or their favourite playlists!”</i>	Fly solo Bring their voice into it Improvise Get started Ad-lib along to the radio	Just do it - just starting to improvise
<i>“Call and response”</i>	Call and response	Turn taking to encourage and provide ideas
<i>“really slow down the pace and then gradually increase”, “slowing it down and accuracy games”</i>	Slow it down Slow down	Pacing - accuracy before speed
<i>“makes them feel not so left out to play around with their voice if I also “fail” sometimes or go off track”, “Ask them to be ok with messing it up - even do that on purpose”</i>	Messing it up Fail Go off track	Mistakes are part of the process
<i>“taking out lyrics and replace with oohs and ahhs”</i>	Oohs and aahs	Practical exercise

Stage Three - Refining into second order codes and themes:

Themes	Comments
Mistakes	Mistake-making is part of the process and should be encouraged - and even demonstrated, so help people free themselves of needing to get it all right
Exercises	Call and response, and taking lyrics out
Improvising	Just doing it - having a go, ad-libbing, seeing what happens, in and outside of lessons
Pace	In riff learning - accuracy before speed

Question 11: Which, if any, programmes/apps do you use to support singers learning to ad-lib? (Tick all that apply)

- Logic
- Cubase
- Garageband
- YouTube
- Voisey
- iRealPro
- I do not use technology to teach ad-libbing
- Other...

87.5% (7 out of 8) of respondents answered the question.

Of those, the most popular response was YouTube, 57.1% of votes (4 out of 7).

Logic and iRealPro both received 42.9% of the votes each (3 out of 7).

Only 14.3% of respondents selected GarageBand (1 out of 7)

And 14.7% of respondents (1 out of 7) chose options not on the list :

- iRehearse and
- It varies depending on what the student is interested in

Nobody selected Voisey or Cubase, and nobody selected 'I do not use technology' - so I can assume that all respondents use some kind of technology to help them teach.

Question 12: If you use any of these programmes or apps, please give an example of how you use them to teach ad-libbing skills.**Stage One - extraction of meaningful data:**

I use these programmes to workshop the ad-libs with my student
changing keys

<i>slowing down riffs</i>
<i>I just put on the song or instrumental version of the song on you tube</i>
<i>Recording riffs and slowing them down for them to have different paces to practice</i>
<i>recording interval exercises</i>
<i>Go round on ireal once with melody, then let them try to do it differently</i>
<i>I refer my students to youtube for almost everything, as they can always find music they like/can draw references from on that site/app</i>

Stage Two - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Codes extracted	Notes
<i>“workshop the ad-libs”, “Go round on ireal once with melody, then let them try to do it differently”</i>	Workshop	
<i>“changing keys”</i>	Changing keys	
<i>“slowing down riffs”, “Recording riffs and slowing them down for them to have different paces to practice”</i>	Slowing down riffs	
<i>“recording interval exercises”</i>	Recording exercises	
<i>“I refer my students to youtube for almost everything, as they can always find music they like/can draw references from on that site/app”</i>	Draw references	

Stage Three - Refining into second order codes and themes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Accompaniment	As backing tracks, for accompanying ad-libbing
Exercises	To record backing for specific exercises
Speed	To change speed, for facilitating riff learning and building agility
Key	To change key
Inspiration	To draw references, to find music they like, to listen and learn from

Question 13: What practical tasks have you found to help people overcome their fears of ad-libbing?

Stage One - extraction of meaningful data:

<i>start having the student record (audio) themselves singing a song of their choice at home where they are most comfortable and can belt it out</i>
<i>constructive feedback and praise is given and overall it fosters trust</i>
<i>turn on a random back track and have them repeat melodies or runs back to me until they're comfortable creating their own (meaningless) melodies. I then transfer this exploration into a song of their choice to workshop the ad-libbing via trial and error and experimentation.</i>
<i>move away from notation and experimenting</i>
<i>it's okay to make mistakes. Foster the approach that the student is there to play, to try things, and to develop the confidence to make mistakes.</i>
<i>Learning riffs the octave below first can be useful if it's a very high and the riff doesn't span large intervals</i>
<i>Building ad-libbing into warmups makes it 'normal'.</i>
<i>the call and response as an improvisation. We play around together.</i>
<i>Learning easy riffs to start with.</i>
<i>Let go the need for perfectionism, have them mess up on purpose "be ok with letting this go off the rails" or "colour outside the lines"</i>

Stage Two - First order codes extracted:

Quotations	Codes extracted	Notes
<i>"record (audio) themselves singing a song of their choice at home where they are most comfortable"</i>	At home Comfortable	Not all teaching and learning has to be done in a lesson
<i>"constructive feedback and praise is given and overall it fosters trust"</i>	Fosters trust Praise	

<i>"turn on a random back track and have them repeat melodies or runs back to me until they're comfortable creating their own (meaningless) melodies. I then transfer this exploration into a song of their choice to workshop the ad-libbing via trial and error and experimentation."</i>	Repeat Exploration Workshop Trial and error Experimentation	Repetition important in workshopping, experimental phase
<i>"Foster the approach that the student is there to play, to try things, and to develop the confidence to make mistakes."</i>	Mistakes Develop confidence Play	Playful experimentation includes mistakes
<i>"Building ad-libbing into warmups makes it 'normal'."</i>	Building into warmups Normal	Normalise it
<i>"call and response as an improvisation. We play around together."</i>	Together	Collaborative learning
<i>"Learning easy riffs to start with."</i>	Easy to start with	Not trying to go too fast or too complex at the beginning
<i>"Let go the need for perfectionism, have them mess up on purpose "be ok with letting this go off the rails" or "colour outside the lines""</i>	Mess up on purpose Go off the rails Colour outside the lines	Make mistakes, encourage mistakes

Stage Three - Refining into second order codes and themes:

Codes Extracted	Comments
Play	Experimentation, exploration, trial and error
Mistakes	Encourage them
Collaboration	Improvise together - take the pressure off; fostering a trusting relationship
Normalise	Do it as part of warming up, regularly, not a rare occasion
Safety	Record at home where students feel safe and comfortable

Pacing	Start simple
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Appendix 7: Analysis and comparison of interview and questionnaire data

Category	INTERVIEW DATA	Supporting interview quotations	QUESTIONNAIRE DATA	Supporting questionnaire quotations	Analysis: similarities / differences to lit review - new info? Any themes seem more important than in lit review?
Current pedagogy	MT a very challenging genre - daunting prospect P2	<i>"I think as time goes on, that's getting... wider and wider. In terms of what musical theatre singers need to be able to tackle. And I can imagine, probably quite daunting for some singers" P2</i>	62.5% of respondents had received training in ad-libbing as part of a formal training programme.		This is more than I thought it would be. EVALUATION: My questionnaire did not ask a follow on question about which type of training programme, MT or not, whether it was in the UK, and how recently. This would have been more useful information to justify my study.
			100% think it can be effectively taught		Provides external validity for my project.
Familiarity	Younger people possibly more familiar with pop/rock ad-libs in MT if they listen to contemporary stuff P2	<i>"the younger generation... they're exposed a lot more.. to those types of riffs and patterns. So they might be a little bit more familiar if they're younger than they might be if they're older." P2</i>			
MINDSET	Repertoire - artists to listen and draw from, break down their riffs P2	<i>"you can just pick out bits" P2</i>			Relevance of repertoire.
	Immerse yourself in style of artists you hope to emulate every live version — learn their musical language P3	<i>"immersing yourself in the style, and... listening to the artists who ad-lib, who they need to emulate" P3</i>			

		Active transcription - notes and nuances	<i>"transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality"</i>	
	Repertoire - artists to listen and draw from, break down their riffs P2	<i>"you can just pick out bits" P2</i>		Relevance of repertoire.
	Immerse yourself in style of artists you hope to emulate every live version — learn their musical language P3	<i>"immersing yourself in the style, and... listening to the artists who ad-lib, who they need to emulate" P3</i>		
		Active transcription - notes and nuances	<i>"transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality"</i>	
	Repertoire - artists to listen and draw from, break down their riffs P2	<i>"you can just pick out bits" P2</i>		Relevance of repertoire.
Exposure / Listening	Immerse yourself in style of artists you hope to emulate every live version — learn their musical language P3	<i>"immersing yourself in the style, and... listening to the artists who ad-lib, who they need to emulate" P3</i>		
		Active transcription - notes and nuances	<i>"transcribe a verse of a pop song and listen to nuances, timing, onsets, vocal quality"</i>	
	Repertoire - artists to listen and draw from, break down their riffs P2	<i>"you can just pick out bits" P2</i>		

ARTISTS	Stevie Wonder P1 Sounds of Blackness P1 Beyoncé P1 P2 P3 Katrina and the Waves P2 Mariah Carey P2 Chris Stapleton (Tennessee Whiskey) P2 Aretha Franklin P2 Whitney Houston P2 Yebba P3 Ariana Grande P3 Demi Lovato P3 Lizzo P3		Stevie Wonder x 2 Beyoncé x 2 Mariah Carey x 2 Yebba x 3 Ariana Grande x 2 Tori Kelly Craig David Lana Del Rey Halsey Natalie Weiss Five Finger Death Punch Pink Adele Bruno Mars Christina Aguilera Rihanna		Show in chart for toolkit: Beyoncé 5, Yebba 4, Ariana Grande 3, Stevie Wonder 3, Mariah Carey 3, Demi Lovato, Lizzo, Tori Kelly, Craig David, Lana Del Rey, Natalie Weiss, Fine Finger Death Punch, Pink, Adele, Bruno Mars, Christina Aguilera, Rihanna, Chris Stapleton (Tennessee Whiskey), Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Sounds of Blackness, Katrina and the Waves.
Theory / Ear Training	Essential for ear training, having a good ear most important P1	<i>“that’s probably the biggest thing... developing your ear” P1</i>	Voted MOST required skill along with creativity - good aural skills. Ability to HEAR music and make sense of it.		Developing ear - justification (P1) because it’s an aural industry (pop) but MT is more sheet music bound, But ad-libs are not on sheet music. Voted most required skill so should feature prominently in the toolkit.
	Practical theory helps to develop a good ear P1	<i>“encourage people to have lots of pathways into their knowledge base from a practical basis, rather than a theoretical basis” P1</i>			Learning by DOING
	Learn frameworks, structures, scales, patterns, pentatonic P2	<i>“understanding the frameworks within which most pop and rock ad-libs come from... which is basically the pentatonic scale” P2</i>			Patterns, frameworks, structures, scales: In order of prominence in data (Interview

Pentatonic P1, P2, P3		Mentioned		and questionnaire together): Pentatonic Blues Modes Minor Hexatonic Chromatic
Hexatonic P1				
Blues P1, P2, P3		Mentioned		
Modes P1, P3		Mentioned		
Chromatic P3				
Minor		Mentioned		
Need to know the language - easier to work out and break things down if you have the language; being musically informed P3	<i>"figure out what the scale is based on, because it's so much easier than for you to remember what it is ... if you know the language, you can create licks that are similar to it" P3</i>			
		Singing short riffs back after hearing them a few times, a cappella - helps intonation accuracy.	<i>"I use auditory skills listening exercises where the student relays a short melody, riff or exercise after only hearing it a few times... this fosters independence (singing the melody back acapella) and intonation accuracy with given intervals."</i>	A cappella helps with intonation
		Incorporate into warm ups - NORMALISE	<i>"Building ad-libbing into warmups makes it 'normal'."</i>	Timing of when to incorporate - throughout, at the start and within repertoire.
		Incorporate into songs - applicability		
Play piano, helpful to visualise language P3	<i>"if they're visualising the piano... they can see where the semitones are and see where the tones are... for learning the language..." P3</i>			Visualising - also featured in lit review.

			Sing along to instrumental parts	<i>"sing along with improvisation (instrumental jazz solo's)"</i>	Take the focus away from solely vocal music - to help with ear training, links to lit review about singing bass lines: hearing more of the structure of the music
	Get them to sing the harmony line	<i>"Try and encourage them to sing a harmony line. And the more you do that, again, your ear gets quick at singing something that isn't the melody" P3</i>	Get them to make up harmony above or below melody line		
Agility	Vocal technique - aim to have a full expressive toolkit, whole instrument, technical ability, agility, dexterity P1	<i>"part of the ability to riff is actually having an instrument that has vocal agility and vocal dexterity" P1</i> <i>"even the bits they don't want to use keeping those all really fit because they feed into the whole instrument, and you don't know when you might want to use that." P1</i>	Agility, flexibility, technique for ornamentation, all valued as teachable skills.	<i>"It involves agility, flexibility, hearing and choosing the right notes for the music. All of which can be practised."</i>	Valued very highly in questionnaire as an essential skill and referenced in 1 interview - so exercises fostering this should feature in toolkit.
			Agility is what students are asked to listen for in their artists that they listen to.	<i>"Vocal agility", "Agility of the voice", "fluidity in their riffs"</i>	
TECHNOLOGY	Use repertoire to jam over P1	<i>"once we've learned it, I might sing it and then get them to ad-lib over the top...and I'll show them where the placement of the ad-lib will go, but then they'll do their own thing with it." P1</i>			Technology ubiquitous in teaching voice now: Uses: - As accompaniment /loop for jamming - To add atmosphere and

		Workshopping ad-libs - as an accompaniment	<i>"workshop the ad-libs", "Go round on i real once with melody, then let them try to do it differently"</i>	and boost motivation - For finding inspiration - To create and record exercises - To change the speed of an accompaniment - To change the key of an accompaniment
		Use recorded exercises to learn intervals	<i>"using recorded exercises for learning intervals"</i>	
		Drawing references - INSPIRATION	<i>"I refer my students to youtube for almost everything, as they can always find music they like/can draw references from on that site/app"</i>	
Make vocalises based on repertoire P1	<i>"I've got tracks that I've created, and then sung vocalises over and all that kind of thing so they've got a warm up and a technical thing to take with them... I completely use technology and use Logic" P1</i>			
Use technology to boost mood and atmosphere - immersive practice - environmental set up - mics, amps, good tracks, makes it more fun P2	<i>"the more immersive it is... the more effective it is... If somebody's trying to do... blues riffs, I will get a backing track up of some really tasty sounding guitar, that sounds like a live band, and I'll put them on the mic... So... it feels authentic. Because I think sometimes, if we like the sound that we're making, it's more motivating than in a dry room with a piano... If they're enjoying it." P2</i>			

			To change key		
			To change speed for learning	<i>"slowing down riffs", "Recording riffs and slowing them down for them to have different paces to practice"</i>	
PROGRESSIVE PACING	Start simple - use frameworks as a base from which to find freedom - prevent overwhelm and the blank page P2	<i>"I think sometimes throwing that stuff at them at the beginning can be just really overwhelming. So just having a few little up-your-sleeve riffs... that are pretty good." P2 "understanding the frameworks within which most pop and rock ad-libs come from... which is basically the pentatonic scale" P2</i>	Basic jamming - give framework, chords, syllables and notes (a scale)		Not running before you can walk applicable to all exercises - ear training and vocal agility
	Start with a scale eg Blues, do ascending and descending, then play around with it P3	<i>"put on the track... what I would do, and this kind of works for all ages, [sings ascending and descending blues scale]. And when they have the blues scale in their head, [improvises ascending and descending blues scale with different rhythm patterns and ascending two octaves]. Do it at two octaves, then [sings improvised pattern on the blues scale]. And then have them play a little bit with the scale, so by the end of it they're fully improvising but they're using all the notes in the scale" P3</i>	Breaking it down into segments to work progressively	<i>"I believe it can be taught to anyone when teaching in segments at slow pace just like any singing technique."</i>	

	Mess around - with rhythm, patterns, to help build coordination P3	<i>"have them sing it straight, then... mess around with the rhythm of it. ... so that you're really... training the muscles and building coordination on those notes. Do it... in different voice quantities, do it to different syllables so that you're running through that riff in every single way possible." P3</i>	Not going too complex at the beginning of the learning.	<i>"Learning easy riffs to start with."</i>	
	Call and response P3	<i>"call and response, [sings single pitch] "Yeah", have them all repeat it, and just build up, [sings rising minor third] "Yeah-eh", and they'll all repeat and they're building up this kind of language in a nice, fun, chilled out way." P3</i>	Call and response - especially good for nervous beginners - collaborative, takes the pressure off them	<i>"I also use call and response to free up nervous singers."</i> <i>"call and response as an improvisation. We play around together."</i>	Call and response versatile exercise; corroborates literature review
Lyrics			Replace lyrics	<i>"taking out lyrics and replace with oohs and ahhs"</i>	
Just doing it	When you copy, you put your own stamp on it P3	<i>"taking a song, doing your own style but based on what the artist has done" P3</i>			
	Have to practise so that it becomes natural, and an emotional outpouring not like an exercise P3	<i>"So you have to practice it to a point where it doesn't sound like an exercise so that it's really, really ingrained and it has to be like a musical emotional response, for an emotional reason..." P3</i> <i>"understanding that mastery comes, but you can't have mastery straightaway" P1</i>	Also a sense of ease - this is the ultimate aim. We don't hear the effort in their voices.	<i>"A sense of ease", "height with easy", "seemingly effortless flow"</i>	Acknowledgement of process - through practice - from exercises to mastery and emotionally connected communication and ease.

	Experience and opening up - giving them confidence in their own voice and expression P1	<i>"it doesn't really matter about experience it more matters about what you're opening up yourself to, and what's coming out of you" P1</i>			
			Repetition of runs/melodies	<i>"turn on a random back track and have them repeat melodies or runs back to me until they're comfortable creating their own (meaningless) melodies. I then transfer this exploration into a song of their choice to workshop the ad-libbing via trial and error and experimentation."</i>	Practice, repetition, pacing...
			Just doing it.	<i>"Turning on their favorite song and asking them to bring their voice into it", "Me playing chord sequences, they improvise on that", "it is okay to let go of the original song, and let them fly solo", "get started", "I also encourage students to ad-lib along to the radio or their favourite playlists!"</i>	Learning by doing again.
Practice	PRACTISE it!! P3	<i>"if you haven't done it all the time, of course it's really difficult. So start somewhere and then it won't be difficult the more you do it!" P3</i>			

Nuances / Style	Riffs - start slow and break them down, get progressively more complex P3	<i>"they're building up this kind of language in a nice, fun, chilled out way... and you start making it a little bit more complicated" P3</i>	Slow and progressive work on riffs	<i>"really slow down the pace and then gradually increase", "slowing it down and accuracy games"</i>	Riffing - universal advice for careful pacing and accuracy before speed.
	Phrasing, onsets, timing, rhythms, all need attention in terms of style P3	<i>"bearing in mind what her phrasing is like, how her onsets are, what her timing is, what notes she's using" P3</i>			Attention to detail for authenticity of style

Appendix 8: Signed and dated Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Laura Boon			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
3	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student

4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR
5	Campus:	Carmarthen
6	E-mail address:	laura.boon@yahoo.co.uk
7	Contact Telephone Number:	07977440368
For students:		
8	Student Number:	2116222
9	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)

10	Director of Studies/ Supervisor:	Debbie Winter/Louise Emanuel
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SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

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

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

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

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of UWTSD?	YES	☐	NO	☒
2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared as part of this collaboration.				
3	Institution				
4	Contact person name				

5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on the form?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
8	Is your research externally funded	YES	☐	NO	☐	
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
10		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐
12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

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

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

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Teaching vocal improvisation to Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) and Musical Theatre (MT) singers: a systematic approach			
2	Proposed start date:	19/9/22	Proposed end date:	20/1/23	
3	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below: • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>				

4	Purpose of Research Activity Contemporary Musical Theatre and other CCM genres demand vocal improvisation and ad-libbing skills; with the exception of jazz, there does not seem to be an established or systematic way of teaching it in these genres. Therefore the purpose of this research activity is to develop a toolkit for teaching vocal improvisation skills to CCM and Musical Theatre singers, particularly to those who are technically proficient singers but to whom improvising does not come naturally. (this box should expand as you type)
5	Research Question Is there a systematic and effective way of teaching vocal improvisation to CCM and MT singers? Can a toolkit be developed that caters to the needs of students of different levels of ability within these genres? (this box should expand as you type)
6	Aims of Research Activity To develop a systematic approach and teaching toolkit for vocal improvisation skills for CCM and MT singers. To develop my own pedagogy, understanding and experience of teaching vocal improvisation, to enable me to run a regular group course on this topic. (this box should expand as you type)
7	Objectives of Research Activity • To gather data and consolidate my knowledge of existing pedagogical approaches to teaching vocal improvisation within the CCM and MT genres • To gather information about existing pedagogical approaches to teaching vocal improvisation in jazz and Indian Classical Music where vocal improvisation is fundamental to the genre and to evaluate whether similar strategies will be effective in teaching CCM and MT • To discuss experience and strategies with pedagogue colleagues who include vocal improvisation regularly in their teaching practice to understand how it is taught by others • To consolidate my existing vocal and music pedagogy and combine with new research data to create an effective toolkit for teaching vocal improvisation in my voice studio, and to apply it to running a regular group lesson. (this box should expand as you type)
8	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.

9	Mixed Methods Research: As my research is focussed on pedagogy, I will be aiming to gather the viewpoints of other voice teachers, and I will also include my own reflections on applying the toolkit throughout its development in my own studio. Document analysis: Review and analysis of primary source data and grey literature such as books, courses and online resources to establish existing pedagogical approaches to teaching vocal improvisation. Semi-structured interviews: These will be conducted with experienced pedagogues from the UK voice community who regularly include improvisation in their teaching, which will be recorded and transcribed Questionnaire: These will be sent electronically via email to a broader group of experienced pedagogues from the UK voice community who regularly include improvisation in their teaching Reflective diary: This will record my reflections about the improvisation teaching toolkit and the effectiveness of the teaching strategies or exercises it contains throughout its development, as it is tested and modified in my own teaching practice. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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10	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
11	The research with participants will all be conducted online, via Zoom, or via email. Document analysis will take place in my teaching studio in Canterbury using resources accessed online. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants
13	n/a <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐

15	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the c in question and England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
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SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
3	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
4	Use of diaries?	☒	☐
5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
7	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☐	☒
16	Details of any other primary data collection method: <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

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

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

SECTION G: Intended Participants

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

12	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?			
13	How many participants are expected?	I expect a maximum of 4 participants to take part in semi-structured interviews, and a maximum of 10 to answer the questionnaire. (this box should expand as you type)		
14	Who will the participants be?	All participants will be voice teachers who regularly include vocal improvisation tasks in their teaching. (this box should expand as you type)		
15	How will you identify the participants?	I will identify appropriate participants through the communities of voice professionals of which I am a part on social media		
16	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐

18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			
28	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
29	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☐	☐
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	The interviews will be conducted via Zoom on my personal iMac computer at home, using the in-built camera and microphone. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
2	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐
		No	☒
3	Risks to participants For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
4	Risk to Participant: Interviews will be recorded and stored on my personal computer so there may be a risk of a data breach. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant I will protect the participant's data by ensuring that it is stored securely on my personal computer, which is password protected and to which only I have access. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
5	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities.		
	n/a <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
6	Risks to investigator For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to Investigator: There may be a conflict of interest if other voice teacher colleagues are sharing their teaching strategies. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator: I will ensure that I am clear about the scope of the research in the information provided to participants prior to their participation. I will also be explicit in acknowledging the source of any particular methods or strategies that are subsequently used in a regular improvisation class where distinctive, unique or if the participant requests it.	
7	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
	Risk to University: Data protection. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How will you mitigate the Risk to University: All data will be anonymised and stored securely on my personal computer, which is password protected and to which only I have access. it will be destroyed at the end of the project.	

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

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when? I will provide my email address to participants so that they can contact me for further details or to request the final report. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. All participants will be fully informed of the scope and purpose of the research, and their involvement in it. I will ensure interview participants sign a consent form which will be emailed to them to sign. Participants completing the online questionnaire will confirm consent online at the start of the questionnaire by clicking the appropriate box. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case. Participant names will be coded and anonymised, with a key that will only exist on my personal iMac computer, which is password protected and to which only i have access. I will not name participants in the final report. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

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

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
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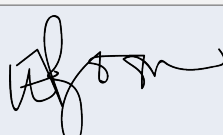
	“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.	☒	☐
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected: The names, email addresses, and social media handles/usernames of the participants will be collected, their signed consent forms, the audio and video recordings of their interviews and their transcriptions. (this box should expand as you type)		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes)	☐	☒
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected: n/a (this box should expand as you type)		

5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	YES	NO
6	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
7	University computers?	☐	☒
8	Private company computers?	☐	☒
9	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
11	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☐	☒
12	Other – specify:	☐	☒

13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be stored on my password protected personal iMac computer, to which I have sole access, in a password protected file. Participant data will be anonymised to ensure their confidentiality, and all participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
14	All Data Storage		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	☒	☐
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
22	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
23	Data archiving?	☐	☒
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	All data will be stored on my password protected personal iMac computer, to which I have sole access, in a password protected file. All data transfers will be encrypted and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	The principal researcher. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		

	The principal researcher. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be stored on my password protected personal iMac computer, to which I have sole access, in a password protected file. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	n/a <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
		NO	☐
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒
		NO	☐

SECTION K: Declaration

31	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
	Signature of applicant:		Date: 1/8/22

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/ Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel	Date: 13-9-22
33	Signature:	Louise Emanuel	

For STAFF Submissions:

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

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

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

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name. You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

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

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages: <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Application Process

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

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

Appendix 9: Presentation slides

January 2023 Voice Study Centre University of Wales Trinity Saint David	MA PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE VOICE PEDAGOGY WBL Research Project BMPF7008	LAURA BOON Student Number 2116222
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What would helpfully be included in a toolkit for teaching pop and rock vocal improvisation to Musical Theatre (MT) singers?



Context and aims



My teaching context

- Musical Theatre (MT) students
- Settings - 1:1, drama school, online for Sing Space
- All levels



Industry Context

- Pop and rock scores in contemporary MT >50% (Benson, 2018)
- Require pop styling including ad-libbing (Edwards and Hoch, 2018)



Aims & Objectives

- Create teaching toolkit of strategies and exercises
- Suitable for all students
- Based on expert opinion and experience

Methodology

Paradigm: Pragmatic

Mixed Methods: Qualitative and quantitative

Sampling: Purposive

- Voice pedagogues who taught vocal improvisation
- Information-rich cases (Saunders et al., 2012)



Methods



Literature Review

Available literature

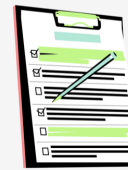
- CCM styles
- Vocal improvisation
- Grey literature



Semi-structured Interviews

3 Participants

- Framework of open questions
- Experiences, teaching strategies, exercises
- Qualitative data



Questionnaires

8 Respondents

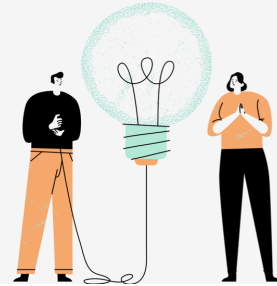
- Mix of open and closed questions
- Broader spectrum of tools
- Quantitative and qualitative data

Insider Research and Ethics

- Intellectual property - competition (Bell, 2010)

Mitigations:

- Information and consent form
- Open questions in interview
- No essential questions in questionnaire



Findings



Literature Review – summary of themes



Mindset

- Fear of sounding "bad" (Robinson-Martin in Benson, 2020, p.232)

Listening

- Learn musical vocabulary (Bell, 2013)
- Listen to nuances of style (Peckham, 2003)

Ear training

- Fundamental to improvisational ability (Smallwood, 1980)

Riffs and styling

- Riffing skills - break into chunks (Popeil in Benson, 2020)
- 'Groove' - phrasing and syncopations (Edwards in Benson, 2020)

Interviews and Questionnaires – summary of data

Coding: In Vivo (Saldaña, 2016)

- Mindset
- Ear training
- Listening
- Vocal technique
- Vocal style
- Practical tasks / activities
- Repertoire
- Technology



Analysis – An improvising mindset

- Literature review, interview and questionnaire data
- Ego
- Playful approach
- Environment
- Student-centered



"...the student is there to play, to try things, and to develop the confidence to make mistakes"
(Questionnaire Respondent 3)

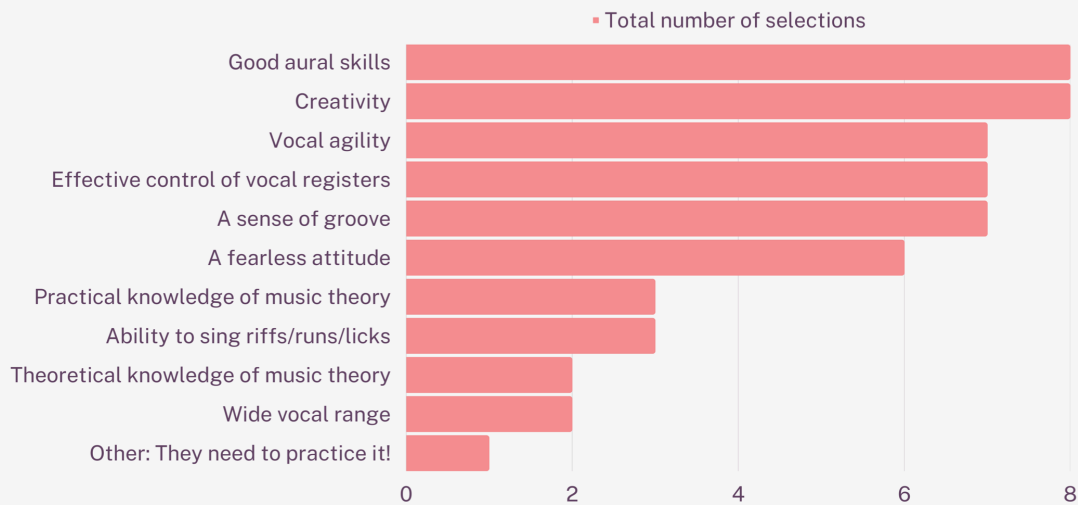
Analysis – Listening

- Fundamental to building required skills
- Active tasks
- Relevant repertoire



Analysis – Skills

Which skills to pop-rock ad-libbers need to have?



Analysis – Skills: Ear training

- Frameworks / structures as foundation
- Scales
- Harmony
- Normalise
- Play the piano, "a visual and kinaesthetic connection" to melody and harmony (Bell, 2013)
- A cappella work

SCALES	
1	Pentatonic
2	Blues
3	Modes
4	Minor
5	Hexatonic
6	Chromatic

Most frequently mentioned scales across all data sets

Analysis – Skills: Vocal agility

- Vocal agility ranked highly in all data sets
- Whole voice - expressive toolkit

Riffing:

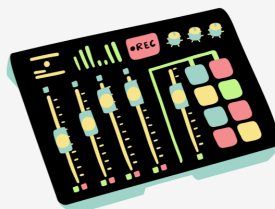
- Accuracy before speed
- Phrasing, onsets, offsets, stresses, rhythms

"[Keep] even the bits they don't want to use... really fit because they feed into the whole instrument, and you don't know when you might want to use that"
(Interview Participant 1)

Analysis – Harnessing technology

Uses:

- As accompaniment
- To create a fun atmosphere
- For inspiration
- To record exercises and vocalises
- To change speed
- To change key



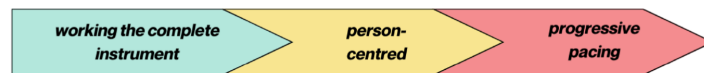
Programmes / Apps

1	YouTube
2	Logic
3	iRealPro
4	Garageband
5	iRehearse

Ranked in order of popularity among questionnaire respondents

Pop and Rock Improvisation Toolkit

POP AND ROCK IMPROVISATION TEACHING TOOLKIT						
working the complete instrument	person-centred	progressive	pacing			
PRINCIPLES						
ACTIVITY	Benefits	EAR TRAINING	MINDSET	VOCAL AGILITY intonation, range, tonal colours	STYLISTIC AUTHENTICITY	CREATIVITY/ EXPRESSIVITY
Jam to chords on piano, guitar, or backing track/loop	•	•	•	•	•	•
12-bar blues jam - piano, guitar or backing track/loop	•	•	•	•	•	•
Get the mic and amp out for an immersive jam	•	•	•	•	•	•
Record ad libs at home for playback in lesson or to send to teacher	•	•	•	•	•	•
Channel a higher purpose - emotional connection, in service or worship, communication	•	•	•	•	•	•
Immerse yourself in listening to favourite pop/rock artists	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sing along to bass lines of pop songs	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sing along to harmony lines (or make one up)	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pick out melodies in instrumental music	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reverse tonality of a song - major to minor and vice versa	•	•	•	•	•	•
Change a song from major to minor and vice versa	•	•	•	•	•	•
A cappella call and response	•	•	•	•	•	•
A cappella interval exercises	•	•	•	•	•	•
Call and response to a backing loop or piano chords	•	•	•	•	•	•
Collaborative call and response improvisation	•	•	•	•	•	•
Make silly sounds together	•	•	•	•	•	•
Use primal sounds to access appropriate tonal colours	•	•	•	•	•	•
Scale patterns for warm-ups, vocalises and jams	•	•	•	•	•	•
Portaband, Blues, Modes, Hexatonic, Chromatic, Minor	•	•	•	•	•	•
Identify scale patterns in repertoire	•	•	•	•	•	•
Lyrical options, adlibs/naïf/ nonsense syllables or repeated lyrics, rap-style your day	•	•	•	•	•	•
Break riffs down into chunks - using technology to slow down, or the piano, or to mix, according to tempo	•	•	•	•	•	•
Transcribe your favourite riffs, notes and nuances	•	•	•	•	•	•



PRINCIPLES

ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY	Benefits:	EAR TRAINING	MINDSET	VOCAL AGILITY intonation, range, tonal colours	STYLISTIC AUTHENTICITY	CREATIVITY/ EXPRESSIVITY
Jam to chords on piano, guitar, or backing track/loop	•	•	•	•	•	•
12-bar blues jam - piano, guitar or backing track/loop	•	•	•	•	•	•
Get the mic and amp out for an immersive jam	•	•	•	•	•	•
Record ad libs at home for playback in lesson or to send to teacher	•	•	•	•	•	•
Channel a higher purpose - emotional connection, in service or worship, communication	•	•	•	•	•	•
Immerse yourself in listening to favourite pop/rock artists	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sing along to bass lines of pop songs	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sing along to harmony lines (or make one up)	•	•	•	•	•	•

Discussion

- Narrow scope
- Selection bias and subsequent limitations
- Transferability - limited as specific to my own teaching context (Pandey and Patnaik, 2014) (genre, learner groups)
- Useful for those in similar teaching contexts (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016)



Conclusions

What? So what? Now what? (Driscoll, 2007)

What?

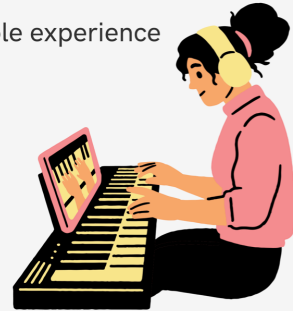
- Teaching strategies compiled, toolkit created
- Increased confidence and enjoyment

So what?

- Greater understanding about how ad-libbing fits within singer's whole experience
- Nuances of teaching whole person and responding to their needs

Now what?

- Nuances of style/genre: MT and pop/rock
- Expand to be more genre specific - R&B, jazz, Country, Blues
- Test efficacy of toolkit



January 2023

Voice Study Centre
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

MA PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE VOICE PEDAGOGY

WBL Research Project BMPF7008

LAURA BOON

Student Number
2116222

Thank you for listening!



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