

Appendix A

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

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

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

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Craig Faulkner			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
					☒
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR			
4	Campus:	Carmarthen			
5	E-mail address:	1911118@uwtsd.ac.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	0778 799 1808			

For students:		
7	Student Number:	1911118
8	Programme of Study:	MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel/Julie Crossman/Debbie Winter

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☒	NO	☐
					Date
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative	☒	8/10/24	

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice ☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy ☒
3	[List any other relevant documents here] ☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

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

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7	paid or voluntary capacity?	Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa	If YES then the permission question	YES	☐	NO	☐

	Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	below does not need to be answered.				
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

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

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

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	An Investigation into the Efficacy of an Online Vocal Training Platform for Neurodivergent Singers to Develop a Phonemic Approach to Vocal Technique			
2	Proposed start date:	6/1/25	Proposed end date:	4/9/25	
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <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 Existing Research 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>				
3	Purpose of Research Activity To investigate whether vocal technique, delivered via an online platform, can be effective in the teaching of neurodivergent students.				
4	Research Question Can a phonemic prompt-based approach to vocal technique be beneficial for the technical development of neurodivergent adult students when delivered on an online platform?				
5	Aims of Research Activity - Research and devise a series of exercises that utilise phonemes to develop aspects of vocal technique - Research and develop an online training platform for neurodiverse adult singers - Recruit 10 singing student participants to test the platform - Recruit 10 singing teachers to beta test the platform				
6	Objectives of Research Activity - To produce a literature review to discover salient themes and best pedagogical practice				

	- To research and select one online learning platform suitable for the research - To develop a course to be hosted online that addresses an area of pedagogical practice, which, in this instance, will be focused the use of phonemes to elicit efficient vocal function. • To evaluate the efficacy of delivering the content by means specifically by the use of an online platform by seeking the views of neurodivergent singers who participate in the study. • To evaluate the efficacy of the platform by seeking the views of singing teacher participants, irrespective of their neurotype. (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	I am adopting the constructivist paradigm to conduct this research, on the basis that its ontological position assumes multiple realities, which may be a helpful position to gain an understanding of the experiences and views of the participants. As this is a qualitative study, the purpose of data collection will be to gain an insight into the views of those using the learning platform to develop their vocal technique. This will be achieved by a thematic analysis of the responses of participants. I will conduct a narrative literature search to identify salient themes and evidence base pertaining to the development of an online learning platform context for neurodivergent people. The platform will likely include a series of short explainer videos, exercises, and recordings of exercises for practice purposes. The singers' experiences of using this first iteration of the platform will be crucial in ascertaining its effectiveness, so evidence will be collected using several methods. This project will utilise online qualitative surveys and questionnaires to gain an understanding of what my prior research suggests is an underdeveloped area of practice. The use of closed questions may be helpful in reducing the potential for anxiety that decision making may cause. The use of surveys may be helpful in gaining the views of teachers without proving onerous on their time. The ability to gain consent, albeit anonymously, prior to completing the survey will be paramount. The use of semi-structured interviews may also be used to provide a deeper level by means of supplementary questioning. Given the anxiety that some neurodivergent participants may feel about an interview, it is unlikely that an unstructured interview would be appropriate. This will afford me the opportunity to inform participants of the general topics in advance to the interviews. This approach may also be adopted for singing teacher participants. If available on the selected platform, computer-generated log files may clarify user interface with the material, such as length of time spent, or the number of replays, for example. It is also possible that online focus groups, using a platform such as Zoom, will be used to understand the participant experience. My role as the interviewer in leading the discussion be crucial during the focus groups to collect qualitative data pertaining to the effectiveness of the explainer videos and exercises on the platform. Again, it is envisaged that participants will be informed of general topics in advance of the group taking place.
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	There will need to be a level of flexibility in accommodating research participants due the varied needs of neurodivergent people. For example, email communication will allow the participant time to process and respond without pressure. Where face-to-face research methods are employed,

	ensuring that there are planned breaks, and that the student is aware of these, will be important in providing the participant with structure. All participant-facing activities will take place online. Academic research and devising of the exercises will take place either in my home office/studio, within my workplace, or in my hotel room when working away from home.
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	Participants will be recruited from the UK and will all be over 18.

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11			

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐

4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☒	☐
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	Details of any other primary data collection method:	☐	☒
	(this box should expand as you type)		

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

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

SECTION G: Intended Participants

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

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

Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		
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Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?		
10	How many participants are expected?	20 maximum, consisting of up to 10 students and 10 singing teachers.
11	Who will the participants be?	The participants will be those who have, or identify as being of an autistic neurotype, as well as professional singing teachers.
12	How will you identify the participants?	I will utilise online forums, such as the Voice Geek group, The New Forum for Professional Voice Teachers, and the forum of the National Autistic Society, to identify potential participants. Recruitment will also occur through my professional networks, including my own students, and students of my colleagues.

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

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐

28	If YES to any question, please provide full details
	Participants will use of an online platform (specific medium yet to be decided) for learning and teaching purposes. Zoom will be used to record and transcribe interviews.

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.					
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td><td>☐</td></tr> <tr> <td>No</td><td>☒</td></tr> </table>	Yes	☐	No	☒
Yes	☐					
No	☒					
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information					
	Risk to participants: 1. The use of language could lead to confusion and a lack of informed consent. 2. The process may be a cause of anxiety for autistic participants. 3. There is the potential for data breaches. 4. Working online may pose some health and safety issues, such as studying for long periods without breaks, or making postural adaptations if sitting whilst viewing the screen of their devices.	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: 1. All contact with participants will attempt to use unambiguous language to ensure informed consent. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw at any point. Data from participants who have withdrawn from the project will not be used. 2. Participants will be informed of the process in advance, including general topics of discussion. Signposting to NAS for any health-related issues, such as managing overload. 3. All files are to be password protected with a randomly generated password. A VPN will be used to encrypt the connection when working away from home. 4. I will provide guidance on how long participants should be studying on the online platform, for example, taking regular breaks to stand up and stretch. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>				
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities					
	N/A <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>					
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest					
	Risk to the investigator:	How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:				

	1. Personal health and safety and dealing with other neurodivergent people 2. Accusations of harm/impropriety 3. Conflict of interests may be perceived due to my own interests and lived experience of neurodivergence.	1. All communication with participants will be conducted via Zoom or other digital means. 2. Participants will be informed of the purpose and methods used in the research prior to starting. Online focus groups and interviews will be recorded and transcribed, with participants approving the transcription. 3. Potential conflicts of interest will be included in the reporting of the project to ensure transparency. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: - The potential for data breaches that contravene the Data Protection Act - A failure to adhere to research integrity guidelines could harm the reputation of UWTSD.	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: - Ensuring that the work is password-protected. - I have read the guidelines and will keep a copy in Scrivener, my usual authoring application, for easy of referral. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: NA	How you will mitigate the risk to environment: NA

Disclosure and Barring Service				
	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
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☒	☐	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.	001834072861 (with subscription to the update service)		

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 create a separate email address for all communications with participants. Following focus groups and interviews, a copy of the transcription will be provided to participants for the purposes of accuracy. Member checks may be used to provide participants to test my reconstruction of their experiences of technical singing training through the online platform. It is anticipated that participants will be provided with either a copy of the report or a summary of its findings to ensure that neurodivergent people are not disenfranchised from research that concerns them.

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.
	Informed consent will be obtained via means of a digital form in pdf format, which will be signable. Methods such as surveys will rely on an agreement to proceed, prior to completing the survey. As per UWTSD's Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice (2022), participants will be informed of the nature of the research and the reason for it being conducted; what its purpose is and how it how the results may be used; access to the results, such as where they may appear and the potential audience for the findings; a clear outlining of participants' involvement in the conducting of the study and its likely timescale; and, finally, that participants involvement is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw without prejudice. All data and communication will be deleted on receipt of completion of the course. No data will be shared with third-parties.
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.
	Whilst it is not anticipated to be necessary to do so, the names of participants will not be released in the final report, nor will the names be shared with members of the academic faculty or other participants. After receiving informed consent, participants will be allocated a code to facilitate pseudonymisation in the reporting, with the file that could directly participant details being password protected. The password for this file will not be shared. This is preferred to providing full anonymisation, as this will enable participants to be contacted to confirm the veracity of the transcriptions of interviews and focus groups.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2 <i>expand as you type</i>	The process of obtaining the informed consent of potential participants will necessitate the collection of personally identifiable information. After consent has been given, participants will be allocated a unique identifier, providing pseudonymity, however this is still covered by GDPR regulations and will require the secure storage of data. It is anticipated that audio footage of interviews may be collected via interview to obtain participant feedback on their experiences of using the platform.		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	"Special category data" means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☒	☐

	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:
4	For the purposes of Schedule 1 of the Data Protection act, this would be for the benefit of the public interest in the field of academia and art, as the subject matter is both educational and musical. As the study aims to develop a platform that focuses specifically on the vocal training of neurodivergent adult singers, the collection of data from subjects will be necessary. Research methods, such as the use of online interviews, are likely to require playback to analyse participant responses. It will be of particular importance to collect informed consent from participants prior to their participation. Given that some participants, such as autistic individuals, may interpret language literally, it will be necessary to ensure that the conditions of participation are 'specific, informed and unambiguous (Information Commissioner's Office, 2024).

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation: Data will be kept in on my UWTSD's Office 365 account, which is protected by a dual-level encryption system. Zoom recordings will be stored on my teaching studio Zoom account, which is password protected. All files held on this system All audio/visual data will be transcribed, with a copy of the transcription being shown to participants to ensure accuracy of reporting. The nature of interviewing participants means that complete anonymity is not possible, however, pseudonymisation strategies will be employed to ensure that participants are not identifiable in the data. A password-encrypted folder will be added to the Office 365 account in which will be stored a separate password protected file containing unique identifiers for each participant. This research will be conducted using an Apple MacBook Pro and an iPad Pro, both of which are password-protected and use biometric protection. It is not envisaged that USB sticks or portable hard drives will be used, however, should this change, these will also be password encrypted.		

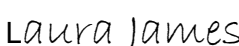
	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐

18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☒	☐
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	Data will be transferred between my devices and UWTSD Office 365 system, with Zoom interviews being stored on my private studio Zoom account. USB sticks or portable hard drives will be password protected, should the use of such devices become necessary. All files will be encrypted, and password protected. A separate file with password protection will be used to store participant contact details and will use unique identifiers to ensure confidentiality. This project will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018, affording participants the right to see the data being held about them, and the deletion of their data upon request. In this instance, data pertaining to this subject will be ineligible for inclusion within the project. My career requires periods of working away from home, requiring the use of other internet connections. Whilst I will endeavour to use my phone as a WIFI hotspot, it is likely that some use of public networks will be necessary. To mitigate any risk of data theft, a virtual private network (VPN) will be used to secure my connection and the loss of any personally identifiable information.		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Craig Faulkner		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Craig Faulkner		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	The MacBook Pro and iPad Pro which will be used for this project are both password-protected. These could be locked or erased in the event of theft or loss; however, files will be stored on the University's Office 365 system and will not be shared. It is not envisaged that USB sticks or hard drives will be used to store data, but if this does occur, these will be password protected and securely reformatted at the end of the project to ensure the destruction of the data.		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	No		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:		Date: 05.11.2024

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	Date: 31.01.2025
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

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

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY

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

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

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

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

Appendix B

Participant Information

Research Project Title: An Investigation into the Efficacy of an Online Vocal Training Platform for Neurodivergent Singers

Researcher Name: Craig Faulkner

Institution/Affiliation: Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Email Contact: admin@neurodiversevocaltuition.com

1. Introduction

Thank you for your interest in this study. My name is Craig Faulkner, and I am a singing teacher working both in Higher Education and in private practice. This study forms the sixth and final module of my MA course in Professional Practice (Vocal Pedagogy) at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. This project has received ethics clearance from the University's Ethics Board.

The purpose of this section is to provide you with information to be able to give informed consent to participate in this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is:

- To investigate whether an online learning platform can be beneficial for neurodivergent singers in developing aspects of vocal technique.
- To understand the views and perspectives of singing teachers on using online platforms and teaching neurodivergent students.

3. What Will Participation Involve?

If you agree to participate, you will complete a questionnaire consisting of 17 questions. This questionnaire will explore your experiences of online teaching before, during, and after the COVID-19 Pandemic.

4. Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. It is your right to decline or withdraw from the study without penalty, at any point, and for any reason.

4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

All information will be treated as confidential. Your email address is not being collected for this questionnaire, ensuring your anonymity. Research documents, such as videos, transcriptions, etc., will be stored securely on the University's online storage.

6. Data Protection Statement

Data will be stored on password-protected devices, or using online storage with two-factor authentication. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to this data, which will be retained only for the duration of the research project. This will be deleted on completion of the project. Please note that you have the right to request to access, to request corrections, or to request deletion of your data.

7. Benefits and Risks

Benefits: Your participation may lead to the development of new strategies to improve access to singing for neurodivergent singers.

Risks: There are no anticipated significant risks for participating in this project.

8. Use of Data

Any information collected will be used exclusively for this study, although the strategies developed through the study may be used to further teaching strategies when working with neurodiverse students.

9. Contact Details

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you can contact:

Researcher Name: Craig Faulkner, admin@neurodiversevocalcoaching.com

Supervisor Name: David Cane (david@voicestudycentre.co.uk)

* Indicates required question

Teaching online prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Did you teach online prior to the pandemic of 2020? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No *Skip to question 6*

Your experience of online singing tuition **prior** to the COVID-19 Pandemic

2. My experience of using online platforms to teach singing prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic was successful.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Disagree strongly

3. Did you experience any **problems** with any of the following whilst teaching online prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Internet connection
- ☐ Sound quality
- ☐ Video quality
- ☐ Student's/client's ability to use the platform
- ☐ Student's/client's engagement with online learning
- ☐ Other: _____

4. What medium did you use to teach online? Please tick all that apply *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Zoom
- ☐ Teams
- ☐ Skype
- ☐ WhatsApp
- ☐ FaceTime
- ☐ Facebook Messenger
- ☐ I didn't teach online
- ☐ Other: _____

5. How did you perceive your students'/clients' experience and engagement of online learning to prior to the Pandemic?

Online singing tuition **during** the COVID-19 Pandemic

6. Did you teach online during the pandemic? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No *Skip to question 11*

Your experience of online singing tuition **during** the pandemic

7. During the Pandemic, my experience of using online platforms to teach singing was successful.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Agree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Disagree strongly

8. Did you experience any **problems** with any of the following whilst teaching online during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Internet connection
- ☐ Sound quality
- ☐ Video quality
- ☐ Students'/clients' ability to use the platform
- ☐ Students'/clients' engagement with online learning
- ☐ Other: _____

9. What medium did you use to teach online? Please tick all that apply *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Zoom
- ☐ Teams
- ☐ Skype
- ☐ WhatsApp
- ☐ FaceTime
- ☐ Facebook Messenger
- ☐ Other: _____

10. How did you perceive your students'/clients' experience and engagement of online learning during the Pandemic?

Online singing tuition after COVID-19

11. Do you **currently** teach singing online? *

Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Your **current** experience of online singing tuition

12. My experience of using online platforms to teach singing is successful. *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Agree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Disagree strongly

13. Do you currently experience any **problems** with any of the following whilst teaching online

Check all that apply.

☐ Internet connection

☐ Sound quality

☐ Students'/clients' ability to use the platform

☐ Students'/clients' engagement with online learning

☐ Other: _____

14. What medium do you use to teach online? Please tick all that apply *

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Zoom
- ☐ Teams
- ☐ Skype
- ☐ WhatsApp
- ☐ FaceTime
- ☐ Facebook Messenger
- ☐ Other: _____

15. How do you perceive your student's/client's experience and engagement of online learning?

16. How often do you teach online? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ A few times a week
- ☐ A few times a month
- ☐ Rarely

17. What is your main mode of teaching? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ In-person
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Blended

18. Which mode do you prefer, and why? *

Participant Consent

19. · 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.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- 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 answering this 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.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by not collecting my email address when completing this questionnaire.

- I understand that the data that this questionnaire provides will be used in the MA dissertation and presentation associated with this research project.
- 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 and original audio recordings will be retained on the researcher's online storage account, which is protected by dual-factor authentication, with access by the researcher and their supervisor until December 2025.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ I give my consent to participate in this research project.
- ☐ I do not my consent to participate in this research project.

Thank you for taking the time to consider taking part in this project. Please close this window.

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Google Forms

Appendix C

Interview questions for singing teacher participants

1. Can you tell me about your experiences of working with neurodivergent singers?
2. How might, or how do, you approach the teaching of neurodivergent singers online?
3. Please tell me about any training that you've received to work with neurodivergent students, and how you've implemented it into your teaching.
4. In an ideal world, what kind of support would you need when working with neurodivergent singers?

Interview questions for neurodivergent participants

1. How would you identify yourself in terms of neurodivergence?
2. What are the parts of your neurodiversity that you need accommodations for?
3. Tell me how this was affected during online learning during the pandemic if this was the case.
4. What learning platform did you use for your singing lessons during the pandemic (Teams, Zoom, other)?
5. What do you feel worked for you, and what were the difficulties that you encountered when using these platforms?
6. The product at the end of this study will be a prototype of an online learning platform, which will feature digital content for neurodivergent singers. Are there any features that would you make such a platform useful and accessible to you?

Appendix D

Neuodivergent singers consent forms

Timestamp	Consent	Your full name	Date of birth
9/4/2025 0:56:33	I wish to give my conse		
9/4/2025 5:03:24	I wish to give my conse		
9/4/2025 8:58:18	I wish to give my conse		
9/5/2025 11:27:21	I wish to give my conse		
9/10/2025 12:09:27	I wish to give my conse		
9/11/2025 17:00:56	I wish to give my conse		
9/14/2025 22:59:30	I wish to give my conse		

[illegible]

Appendix E

Singing teacher consent forms

Timestamp	Do you wish to continue	Your full name
9/4/2025 11:11:22	I wish to give consent to	
9/4/2025 16:12:45	I wish to give consent to	
9/4/2025 23:56:20	I wish to give consent to	
#####	I wish to give consent to	

The setting or settings in which you t Your email address	
Higher education, Freelance	
Higher education, Freelance	
Higher education, Freelance	
Schools, Sixth form/tertiary education	

By typing below, you consent to participate in this research project.

S1 Interview

S1

Sat, Sep 6, 2025

1:01 - Unidentified Speaker

Hello. Hello.

1:01 - 1

How lovely to see you.

1:03 - CF

Gosh. Nice to see you too. It's been a while.

1:07 - Unidentified Speaker

Yeah. How many years is it now?

1:09 - CF

It must be... Two and a bit. Two and a bit.

1:13 - Unidentified Speaker

Yeah.

1:13 - S1

September would be... No, it's 2025. Yeah. Two years. Yeah. Two years. Crikey. And so how are you?

1:19 - CF

How are you keeping? I'm good. I'm, yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm living in London.

1:24 - S1

I'm working as a personal trainer, which has been a lot of fun. Yeah, not much anything crazy to report. Just been enjoying myself. Yeah, and still get to see a lot of people from before [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are all down in London as well. So I saw Bella

Commented [CF1]: Non-music related job

Commented [CF2]: Enjoying her new role.

last night, we went to the cinema together. So lots of old and new people around me, which is really lovely.

1:51 - CF

Yeah, brilliant. Well, yeah, it's such a funny, a funny thing that you folks seem to come out of my life and then come back into it.

2:03 - S1

Oh yeah.

2:04 - Unidentified Speaker

But thank you for taking part in this.

2:07 - S1

No, I saw it and I thought, you know, it's a very worthwhile thing. My flatmate is, so she's also neurodivergent and so like we're both very, we have lots of fun conversations about it and she's actually recently had this idea for like an app um specifically about like neurodivergent um just like catering to divergent people in terms of like organization and like emotional tracking but like that it's for them and not for the general population and then this came up and I was like yeah I wanna I'm intrigued by these I you know I think this is a very worthwhile thing I was very, yeah anyways ramble over.

Commented [CF3]: Lives with another ND person

Commented [CF4]: Positive discussions about ND

Commented [CF5]: Thinking about developing tools/software

Commented [CF6]: A need to be more organised

Commented [CF7]: A need for emotional tracking

Commented [CF8]: App specifically for ND, not NT

Commented [CF9]: Interested in interventions.

2:50 - CF

It sort of ties in with what I'm sort of looking at at the moment because I there is times when I've found that some neurodivergent people, just because of things like anxiety and stuff like that, just sometimes can't engage fully with the learning. And what I really feel strongly about is that that should always be there for us, for them.

Commented [CF10]: Attribute to CF

3:10 - S1

Yeah, absolutely.

3:11 - CF

And so what the end product of this is going to be is that you'll get your hands on a prototype based on what I get from everybody of a learning, online learning platform that's going to be specifically aimed at neurodivergent learners. But the thing is that I'm one neurodivergent person and we all diverge from each other as well.

3:43 - S1

So that's what this project's about.

3:46 - CF

and so what today is about is sort of finding out what your experience of online learning, well you've seen the questions probably, is what I'm aiming for. So it's going to be a pretty much a free-flowing conversation and I suppose really the things, just a couple of practical things, when what I'm going to do is this meeting is being recorded at the moment and then it has to all be transcribed, which it's doing at the moment. So what I have to do is to check all the transcriptions, and if it's okay if I could send that to you to just check that it's a sort of valid record. And then what happens is that your details are stripped out of it completely, and so you're anonymized. So in the final report, nobody will know it's you what's saying these things, Yeah. So it means that you can say what you like because nobody and it's literally only me that will have access to them. All of David who is my supervisor at the MA and it's quite it's quite a quick turnaround because the whole thing is going to be finished in three weeks.

5:04 - CF

Perfect yeah. So including the project report so yeah it's 12,000 words for me to write. That's going to be a fun time for you. Yeah, I'm loving life at the moment.

5:16 - Unidentified Speaker

I think it's worthwhile to do.

5:18 - S1

No, I think it sounds really, like, I mean, again, I'm very interested in all this stuff, so I think it's very worthwhile.

5:26 - CF

Yeah, and so really, I'm just going to bring up the questions that I've actually written, because you've probably realised that by now I have the world's worst memory. Experience should have taught you Let me just bring up the questions. So okay, so where are you, where would you identify yourself in terms of neurodivergence?

5:48 - S1

So I've been like clinically diagnosed with, I'm autistic and I've also got ADHD. So that's a really fun combination because I think that's potentially why it took me quite a while to while not even notice because I think I realized my autistic tendencies but I also was just like yeah but they don't quite line up because of X, Y and Z and then I kind of eventually well when I got the autism diagnosis I was like ah yes this makes sense but then it was still not the full piece to the puzzle and then about a year ago I got my ADHD diagnosis and I was like ah that makes a lot more sense because sometimes they correlate really nicely and they're kind of the same thing you know hypersensitivity all of that is for both of them but sometimes they kind of fight against each other which I think is again why it was really confusing to like diagnose either one because ADHD loves its novelty it loves its newness and stuff and then the autism in me loves its like routine and schedule and knowing x y and z and what's going to happen and like that lovely just knowing things and feeling comfortable with that So lovely little Read, got the two of those, feeling very happy and comfortable with that. Yeah, that's basically how I identify, got two of those lovely ones. Yeah.

7:15 - CF

And so how do you think, because I mean, obviously, we've worked together before, how do you think that manifests itself or manifested itself in your studies? How would it show?

7:28 - S1

I think, again, what I noticed from studies or any time where I needed to get work done, that's been set for me rather than just choice, is just that mix of hyper-focus to just complete inability to do the thing. So that once I'm in it, I'm there and I can get more work done in an hour than some people can get done in a week.

7:56 - CF

Commented [CF11]: Formal diagnosis

Commented [CF12]: Comorbidity

Commented [CF13]: Interesting wording

Commented [CF14]: Didn't notice ND at first

Commented [CF15]: Self-awareness of divergence from the divergence

Commented [CF16]: Recent diagnosis

Commented [CF17]: Similarities between conditions

Commented [CF18]: Sensory issues are common in ADHD and autism

Commented [CF19]: Conflict between conditions

Commented [CF20]: Conflicting features of different forms makes for a confusing diagnosis

Commented [CF21]: The need for stimulation

Commented [CF22]: Need for routine and schedule

Commented [CF23]: The personification of their neurodivergence

Commented [CF24]: At ease with diagnoses

Commented [CF25]: ND part of identity

Commented [CF26]: ND effects across multiple settings

Commented [CF27]: Set tasks v personal choice

Commented [CF28]: Hyper-focused on task

Commented [CF29]: Unable to do the task

Commented [CF30]: Internal conflict

Commented [CF31]: Getting started on a task

Commented [CF32]: Capable of intense periods of productivity

But the motivation to do that hour of work, it's not always there.

8:00 - S1

And that's the thing, again, where like, you know, the easier something is to do, the easier it is to get started, the more I know what it is and how to do it, the more likely I am to do it. Like, if I know what I'm expecting, I'm like, cool, I know what I've got to do so I can do X, Y and Z. Whereas if I'm going into something a bit more blind, I'm not fully what it's going to look like, I find that a lot more intimidating. So like, for example, this is like a really random one, but like, I've got to do my tax returns this year for the first time as a self-employed person. And like, I've been able to do that since April and I haven't gotten it done yet. I will get it done. I'm going to get it done very soon, but it's because I don't have not done it before. And so I don't know what I'm expecting. And so I'm a bit like, it's that thing where I'm like, I don't know what it looks like, I've got to get done so kind of like S1 just go on to it and then like you can see what it is and even if you don't do it in that moment at least you see it and then that will be less scary so I think like um whenever I have the more context that is provided to me the more likely I'm I'm gonna want to do it and feel comfortable doing it because if I know what's coming I'm like great I can do that or I can like set myself up for like this is how much energy that's gonna take me um whereas if I don't know what's coming I'm kind of like oh oh I don't want to I don't want to get started and again as well like context if I know why I'm doing something I'm much more likely to do it because I'm like I'm doing this thing because this is the outcome whereas if I'm just like do this thing because you're supposed to I'm kind of like I don't know if I well that's I don't know if I believe you like no tell tell me why I've got to do the thing and then I'll do the thing.

9:49 - CF

Well with your taxes that's because they'll fine you a hundred quid.

9:53 - S1

That's a good point. I'll do it soon, I'll do it soon. I'm gonna, I told myself I'd do it like before it became winter time and it's getting towards winter time so I'm, my mother's coming to visit me next weekend and I'm gonna, she's gonna be like mom you want to help me out you're gonna body double me and we're gonna get this done so that's my game plan. Love a bit of body I will say that's another bit with learning. Body doubling,

Commented [CF33]: Achievable tasks aid motivation

Commented [CF34]: Clarity of purpose aids engagement with the task

Commented [CF35]: Comfort in a task relies on setting expectations

Commented [CF36]: Clear instruction permits completion of the task

Commented [CF37]: Needs to know what the end product is

Commented [CF38]: Intimidated by tasks, if tasks are unclear

Commented [CF39]: Issues not related to singing can be affected by uncertainty

Commented [CF40]: Procrastination

Commented [CF41]: Determination

Commented [CF42]: Lack of prior experience affects engagement

Commented [CF43]: Explore the task to reduce the fear of the unknown

Commented [CF44]: Contextual information needed to proceed

Commented [CF45]: Being made comfortable with the task is important

Commented [CF46]: Clear explanations improve confidence in completing the task

Commented [CF47]: Awareness of effort involved can help to prepare for the task

Commented [CF48]: Lack of clear expectation prior to beginning can cause reluctance

Commented [CF49]: Context

Commented [CF50]: Clear outcomes can promote engagement

Commented [CF51]: Lack of rationale leads to mistrust in the task

Commented [CF52]: "Tell me why I've got to do the thing and then I'll do the thing"

Commented [CF53]: Setting deadlines is important

Commented [CF54]: Modelling the task can help with engagement

Commented [CF55]: The use of body doubling to complete a task

Commented [CF56]: Game planning to complete tasks

Commented [CF57]: Loves body doubling

very, very helpful. Even if they're not doing the same thing, just like having another human being there makes me more likely to do the task.

Commented [CF58]: Accountability from another

I get way less distracted if there's a body double.

Commented [CF59]: Body doubling removes distractions

10:32 - S1

And like literally like even like I've, there's been times where I've called my sister, so it's not actually even been an in-person body, but I'll just like have her on the phone. Even talk, but it's just like the presence of another human being makes me feel like I need to do the work. Don't know why, just does.

Commented [CF60]: Having a port of call for body doubling

Commented [CF61]: Support can be remote

10:52 - CF

So like an accountability thing? Kind of, yeah.

10:55 - S1

I think accountability is like, again, it's like, I think it's with a lot of people, it's like that feel like, you know, when people love, I mean, again, specifically ADHD more than autism here, but like, procrastinate until there's a deadline and then they've got that adrenaline rush and they'll get it done and I think it's like a similar feeling with that where it's like there's a person here that's gonna know if I didn't do the thing and so I think the accountability is very helpful even like I know like I use it with clients and I kind of myself but like if me and a client have said like that they're gonna train on a Wednesday and like let's say we train together on a Monday but we said that they're gonna train themselves on a Wednesday that I'll like message them. Let's say if they're doing a Wednesday morning workout, like we've established they'll do it before work, I'll message them at lunchtime saying, did you get your workout in? Cause it's like, they know I'm going to message them. And if they haven't done it, they're going to know that I know. And so almost this thing of like, if I don't do the thing, they're being like, not even like a reminder that says do the thing. Cause then I'll be like, oh, fuck off. Like, like if there's a reminder, I'd be like, leave me alone. Like, you know, duolingo. And it's like, you haven't done it. I'm like, I don't care. Go away, weird bird. But if it's like a, like not a go do it. If it's like a, have you done it? Then I feel a bit like, oh no, don't call me out like that. Okay, I guess I've got to go do it now. So I don't, and again, like

Commented [CF62]: Specific traits related to conditions

Commented [CF63]: Procrastinating to a deadline

Commented [CF64]: The need for time pressure to complete tasks

Commented [CF65]: Uses accountability in work situations to motivate clients

Commented [CF66]: A followup to action on a task

Commented [CF67]: Clear expectations of a follow-up for accountability

Commented [CF68]: Consequences of not engaging

Commented [CF69]: No sense of accountability undermines respect for the provider

it's just like a random little shift, but for some reason it does make a massive difference of the like, have you done it? Then a go do it. Yeah.

Commented [CF70]: "Have you done it? Then go do it. Yeah"

12:29 - CF

I think this sort of ties in with the second question really, because the second question is what are the parts neurodiversity that you need to come and mostly need accommodations for?

12:39 - S1

I think when it comes to online learning specifically I find reading things much more challenging than listening or watching so I even know myself like on my phone if I have a piece of reading I'm supposed to do I will like copy it all and then press speak like I've put speak on the little bar like we call got speak there so I just press speak and listen to it because the bigger the piece of writing I get it with like menus as well like when I'm eating out for food like I get it with menus but like if it's learning I look at the piece of paper and I just go I'm reading this none of it is being taken in whereas if I can like listen or watch way more likely to take it in and also because I am quite a fidgety person when I'm listening or watching I can like paint my nails, I can crochet, I can do something else to fidget while still listening. Whereas I can't Read and paint my nails, I can't do that. Whereas like I can watch and paint my nails or I can listen and paint my nails and I can then have my fidget going without like not be, it's not like a one or the other because reading you kind of have to sit still and just Read and I find sitting still quite challenging. Whereas if I'm sitting and listening I can do whatever little fidget I need. I can watch and so if it's watching maybe you can't fidget quite as much as you need to look at the screen but I still just take things in better visually and auditory than like I find reading just doesn't go in as fast unless it's like a two sentence thing if it's like two sentences fine but if it's like a power like if it's more than a paragraph I just get a bit like I just look at it and don't take it in and then I'm like oh I just Read that whole thing and none of it went in my brain. And I have to reread it like three times until I finally kind of go, the cat and the hat by Dr. Seuss. Okay, cool. So I think with online learning, the more, I always love when they have the sentence and they have a little speak button. I always love that. I'm like, oh fun, speak. When again, I know to an extent I can do that myself, but that would be more on my phone. I wouldn't know how to do that as much on the laptop or anything. Um so yeah I think like for online learning

Commented [CF71]: Reading can be more challenging than listening or watching

Commented [CF72]: Use of phones to access content

Commented [CF73]: The use of reading apps to listen to text

Commented [CF74]: General inability to process large amounts of text

Commented [CF75]: Needs auditory visual stimuli to process information

Commented [CF76]: Listening allows for the need to fidget or stim

Commented [CF77]: 'Fidgeting' is a need that can be met by listening

Commented [CF78]: The amount of text affects processing

Commented [CF79]: Large amounts of text needs rereading

Commented [CF80]: An easily accessible speech button is appreciated

Commented [CF81]: Accessing speech readers is easy on phones

Commented [CF82]: Accessibility features can be harder to find on some devices

for me that's very important like I find that a lot um more accessible and I also think it is again that kind of bit of like um I don't know again how neurodivergent this is or just in general but like the easier is to start because once I've started I'm in it like I'm once I've started I'm in it I'm I'm I am in and we're good and I'm I'm probably going to go longer than I meant to because I'm going to get in really interested and invested and I'm gonna be like oops I only meant to do 10 minutes now I've been here for an hour but the easier it is to start then it's fine whereas if I have to like go through 50 steps just to get like start going I'm gonna be like oh that's that's too much effort whereas if I could literally just be like start where I just need to like home page this then I'm like cool so like the the more yeah the easier it is to start and I also think busy, like the initial home screen is, the easier I find it. If it's like lots of different things, I'm kind of like, what, where am I looking? This is what I want, la la la. And it's not that I don't, like, I love lots of, again, this is kind of contradictory, I love loads of intricacies and loads of detail. And I love being able to like, find a million different things. Rather than it just being like stripped back to the very basics. I love having all those little fun things. But I like I think very specifically for like that like homepage that I just like it's very easy for me to identify what is what I can go click that done and I don't have to think too much about it. Once it's clicked, then I'm happy to do lots of thinking one time like on the on the line fine. But yeah, I think as to go back, the easier it is to get started, the more I'm going to do it because especially with that like slight procrastination type of thing, it just, it's getting started. It's the hard part. And then once I'm in, I'm hyper-focused as hell. And again, I think, and again, I'm kind of relating this specifically to the like singing online learning, where like, if I'm being told to do an exercise, let's say, I kind of want to know why I'm doing that exercise. I don't want to just be like, do lift trails. I'll be like, okay, I can, but like, why? What's this working? Because I think that makes it gives me incentive to do it and like again like that whole like reward system that like give me that dopamine that like reward of like I'm doing these things to achieve this I'm doing this thing to achieve this and now I've got this lovely thing. And again it gives me the capacity to then do that separate when I'm like this is what I specifically need. But again I just think like I know myself I know my talked about this as well where like if I I know a lot of people very happy to be like I'm doing this thing because I was told to do this thing so it must be right whereas we're a bit like I've been doing this thing but like why I'm not I'm not just gonna be like I don't know if I'm just gonna believe you I feel like I want to know why I'm doing it and then I'll do the thing so I feel like um again I

Commented [CF83]: Easy access makes it easier to start tasks

Commented [CF84]: Accessibility promotes prolonged engagement with the material

Commented [CF85]: Too many steps to the information makes it inaccessible

Commented [CF86]: A cluttered environment is distracting

Commented [CF87]: Loves intricate detail

Commented [CF88]: Loves lots of information

Commented [CF89]: The clarity of the homepage is important.

Commented [CF90]: A small number of steps to get to the information is appreciated

Commented [CF91]: Reserve the thinking for the task

Commented [CF92]: Procrastination is difficult.

Commented [CF93]: Easy access to information/strategies aids hyper focus

Commented [CF94]: Provide rationale for exercises online

Commented [CF95]: Specific rationale for an exercise is desired

Commented [CF96]: Clear rationale aids motivation

Commented [CF97]: A clear process for learning makes the learning rewarding

was gonna say the word context a million times but like context is just I think something that I really value so like if I'm doing something I want to know why um if there's like ads on the app I want to know why like oh it's because we're keeping the app free or like you know if you have to pay it's because like we're using this so that we can do upgrade like those things like um I just like to know why and then I feel much more like happy to partake yes um yeah I think I'm trying to think if there's anything else um that I can think of off the top of my head let's see I did I wrote I Got the message. Yeah, I feel like that was most of my little thoughts I jotted down when I originally saw the message. Yeah, kind of easy to get started, context, voice and like videos and speaking rather than reading. Because, yeah, that's kind of the main bit of it, I think.

Commented [CF98]: Understanding the need for ads makes them acceptable

18:59 - CF

Yeah, that'll be really interesting when it comes on to the design of the site. Because that's very different than what we did on when it came around to, you know, the pandemic, and the pandemic, you know, actually thinking about it, you were you were the first year that came back in that September after the lockdown.

19:28 - S1

Yeah, God.

19:29 - CF

Good times. Yeah.

19:31 - S1

But again like I think the online learning we had, and I know COLLEGE is different to my like secondary school which was more like academic learning, I know that was obviously two very different things, but I was reflecting on like, oh it's actually one of the questions you've later so I'll just go quick because we can talk about it more, but I was protecting that like with COLLEGE REDACTED because we were on video calls, I was a lot more like present and interactive because I was with human beings and there was talking and listening which was more my kind of street and when I was doing my secondary school stuff a lot of the time it was here's this page to write and Read and then like here's this thing to Read and then like summarize or answer these questions

Commented [CF99]: The context of online learning in vocational settings, rather than academic

Commented [CF100]: Video calls allowed for communication

Commented [CF101]: Videos calls allowed for socialisation

Commented [CF102]: 2-way communication of information was favourable

Commented [CF103]: School involved comprehension and exercises

and even if there were video calls it was very just like let me explain this workbook and then you can go do it minute call, explain it and go do. And to be honest with you, now I am quite lucky that I am pretty, like, academically set, like, it comes quite easy for me. I always found academic learning very easy. I've got a very nice memory and with, like, the general system of Irish learning, a lot of it is memorise, throw back, like, oh, don't have too much of an opinion, just, you know, re-say everything you've already learned. So I always found academic learning very easy and half the time when I was like in school online for a second school I was just like playing Popper's Freezeria on my laptop and then if they asked me a question I'd just go on to this I'll be like well done S1 and I'd be like yeah back to playing a game with my camera off you know which I didn't I didn't feel the need to do so much with COLLEGE REDACTED because I was actually like more interested in the stuff but like it was that bit where I was just like not at all invested in what was being done because I just found it not engaging at all. So again like having those like calls where I was again listening or speaking with another human being or again it just not being reading I was more likely to actually take like engage with it because like I could do those bits like I'd do the writing but it was just like done said rather than actually being like let me think about this, let me like take what I can from it, it was very much just like I don't really care, rather than actually like wanting it to be good and engaging with it.

Commented [CF104]: Video calls at school had some teacher input, but were mostly student led

Commented [CF105]: Finds academic tasks easy

Commented [CF106]: Tasks that involved memorising and repeating large amounts of information is easy

Commented [CF107]: Lack of challenge leads to distraction

22:02 - CF

Yeah. Cool, so thinking about then the next stage of that, so obviously we talked about neurodivergence, how was it affected with by online learning during the pandemic, if it was you know in terms of partly down to us as teachers, partly down to the whole thing, what was, you know, what, how was it created?

22:26 - S1

I'm trying to think. Okay, this is the one that I didn't have any answers to. I think, I'm trying to think now.

22:39 - S1

I'm trying to think what was like specific to my neurodivergence and wasn't just like a situation as a whole, I think. Because honestly, I mean, listen, because of the nature of what we were doing online, like it's a lot harder to sing and dance on a camera than it

Commented [CF108]: Unpicking neurodivergence from the situation of COVID was difficult

is in person. Um, but I don't think I, I don't, if anything, like realistically, I'm very comfortable in my own company and I'm quite, I think as the person I am, I am quite self-motivated. So I feel like I have the capacity that even though I was alone, I still had the motivation to do my work for the most part and to like go to my classes, log on. I know like, I know towards the end, a lot of people were just like, I just don't want to log on. Like, I just don't have, like, I just, I can't do another ballet class in my sitting room. I can't do it. Whereas I think I was very much like, I'm not missing a single class. Like I'm not taking anything for granted. Like I'm going to be at all of them. But I definitely, I can, Hmm. Yeah, I think that, like, realistically, I am self-motivated enough that I didn't find it massively, like, I didn't feel like it kind of got into my productivity spiral, where I was like, oh, well, it's not doing anything for me, so I'm just gonna, like, not bother. I feel like I was invested enough that I could keep on it. So I think that was like, but again, that's part of it as well is like that my investment was high so that I was willing to keep going. If it was something that I hadn't cared about or I'd found more like energetically challenging that I was like, I don't have the energy for this. Like I would have really struggled to log on and just like do any of it. Like, I think one thing I will say actually now that I think about it is like online if we were ever given like homework as such when we were doing online learning I found that challenging because that's actually that is where the energy kind of went in because I think the energy to give everything in those classes that were online which was like the energy is kind of reliant on you you can't really you're in a room with people you can kind of hype yourself up with other people's energy even if you're a little low you're like come on I can get through this but it's just you you are relying purely on yourself and I think when we were on calls that was actually taking like most of that energy was like I am in it this is for me I'm going to pay attention and I'm going to do the thing and then when I was outside of the call if I was asked to do like extra work outside of it I found that very challenging to do that without like, you know, like kind of just like half-assing it a little bit or just kind of like doing what like I know is like good enough rather than actually like putting my best foot forward. I'd say I found, I think that's, I've always, I think homework's always been a hard one for me. Cause again, it's that bit of like self-motivation. Something that you don't necessarily care about um so like again like in terms of like my my version of homework was I will do my like 10 minutes of like singing with my straw and like get that done I'll do that in the morning before I get to college lovely and in the evening I'll roll out my legs and my body so that my legs aren't broken after dance um but like that

Commented [CF109]: Singing and dancing online during COVID was challenging

Commented [CF110]: Being alone was not a challenging

Commented [CF111]: Self-motivation

Commented [CF112]: Capacity to log on and engage

Commented [CF113]: Loss of motivation during online learning for peers

Commented [CF114]: Inappropriate locations made engagement difficult

Commented [CF115]: Determination to engage

Commented [CF116]: Productivity aided by self-motivation

Commented [CF117]: Investment in learning fostered resilience

Commented [CF118]: Love of the subject was crucial to motivation

Commented [CF119]: Motivation to complete homework was problematic

Commented [CF120]: Online learning relied on the learner bringing their own energy

Commented [CF121]: Being with other learners can be a motivator in times of low mood

Commented [CF122]: Online learning took personal resources

Commented [CF123]: Little energy for tasks set outside of class time

Commented [CF124]: Homework is always a challenge

was like almost like repair and recovery my version of homework, when I was actually asked to do like written work or coming up with those sort of things, the motivation to do those was always really challenging. And especially when it was online, because it was almost this thing of like, if I don't do it, like, oh, sorry, my mic's not working, I can't hear you. Like, you know, like, it was almost this thing of it was, it was really, yeah, Actually, now that I think into it, it was quite challenging to do like any work separate to the calls because the calls did require a bit more energy because it was solely reliant on you. That's true. Okay. Now that I've dealt, I think the calls took a little more energy and I had the capacity to do that because I was interested and I could like push, I'll be like, no, I want to do this. I'm going to do these calls. But now that I'm like thinking about it, I definitely they were quite draining. Thankfully, I, you know, had when we had the really long stretch around Christmas, I was home for that. So and my family, I wasn't diagnosed at this point, but my family knew S1 needs her quiet time. So like, you know, I actually I had the space to take those recharges afterwards. But I do think they were it is that bit of you're relying on your energy. And it was probably it was a bit more draining, even if you weren't necessarily working as intensely because you're not maybe got the big studio to dance in, or you're not standing up and moving around to sing like them. But the like mental energy definitely was quite a lot. So I do think it was a bit energetically draining at times. And I definitely found the motivation to do the work that was like separate from it challenging. But I didn't find getting on the calls challenging. Cause I was like, I want to do these things. I've been given this opportunity. I'm excited for this kind of thing, you know?

Commented [CF125]: Depleted personal energy reserves affected practice

Commented [CF126]: Drive to succeed led to engagement

Commented [CF127]: Online classes draining

Commented [CF128]: Recovery time

Commented [CF129]: Support network understood need for quiet

Commented [CF130]: Needs time to recover after online learning

Commented [CF131]: Less intensive than being in the studio, yet more tiring

Commented [CF132]: Excitement about learning meant that she could log onto calls

28:48 - CF

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, obviously, you know, I know the circumstances of the online learning in your training, because I was part of it. Yeah. But it's really interesting because in one extent you've got the motivation and then the other extent you, you struggle with motivation depending on context.

29:07 – S1

Exactly. Yeah.

29:08 - CF

Do you think it was like the level of intensity, the duration of the whole day that made it more difficult to do that, to do like tasks that you're asked to do afterwards? Do you know what?

29:22 - S1

Yeah, I actually, I think that, and it was something that was, I kind of addressed within, I remember we never had a class longer than an hour where obviously in our normal timetable would have an hour and a half class. And so it was like doing an hour was more than enough on Zoom. And I think that was like a very good call because I definitely found the classes that were, I even feel like 45 minutes could have been perfectly fine to be honest. And I think also actually, and this is something I've found a bit recently with like my own work is not even necessarily the length of the day but the time within that that I get to like take a second to breathe because I could quite happily do like let's say I have like two calls back to back where it's like I'm doing two hours of work whatever online and then I get like two is to like chill, do my own thing, take a second, maybe if I got some work in one of those I can quickly get that done before it's off my mind, and I've got two hours to like sit back, do what I need to like unwind, and then go back to like maybe another two pulls. I actually sometimes find that doing that and having like, it might be the same amount of time, maybe it's like two hours in the morning, two hours in the evening, rather than a four hour burst, can just be a little better energetically in that, like, and again, I relate this back to like my work now where when I first started, I was like, oh, let me get like, if I had four clients in one day, I'd be like hour, 15 minute break, hour, 15 minute break, hour, and I'd be like, isn't that great that it's all done by lunchtime and I've got the whole rest of the day to do whatever I want. And in one sense, yes, but the energy we could needed after like practically four hours of working straight rather than if I had like two clients back-to-back, a little break, do what I want to do, and then another two clients. I don't need that much energy recuperation after only two clients because after four I'm knackered, I'm so tired, and I'm just like ugh. And I feel like that was kind of the same where if we had like breaks for whatever reason, I actually feel like that was that was more doable for me rather than like if we'd had like a 9 a.m till a 3 p.m day but it was like back to back we had like a 30 minute lunch I'm gonna be knackered at 3 p.m I'm gonna be like that was a really long day whereas I'd rather have like a nine to five but I had like a nice gap in the middle or like maybe even two gaps to like really spread it out I find that a lot more

Commented [CF133]: Duration of day was demanding

Commented [CF134]: Shorter lessons during online learning

Commented [CF135]: One hour length was ample for online classes

Commented [CF136]: Providers need to consider shorter length of class

Commented [CF137]: 45 minutes lessons advocated

Commented [CF138]: Learning breaks in the day necessary for recovery

Commented [CF139]: Equal length of work and break to do other things

Commented [CF140]: Ability to schedule work aids energy conservation

Commented [CF141]: Adopted a more compact schedule early in working life

Commented [CF142]: Manages her workload to leave energy for other things.

Commented [CF143]: Sustained online learning led to exhaustion

you're getting little recharges throughout the day. Um, and so then when you get to the end of it, you're actually like less worn out. Whereas if it's just been consistent, even if it was for overall a shorter period of time, um, I feel like I've just, I've just been running on empty for at least the last hour or two a bit. And I'm just like, I need to collapse now rather than it being like, Ooh, I'm a, I'm a little tired, but thankfully I had a break like this many, this while ago and so I kind of half recouped there and so I wasn't actually running on empty for this last bit like it was definitely going draining my energy but because I'd refilled a little bit I hadn't quite hit net zero yet. So I think the length of the day was less of an issue especially now again this is bringing the pandemic in where you might not necessarily have like plans in the evening because you're stuck inside but in that sense I didn't mind a longer day because I had going on. I'd rather have it a little more spread out, have the energy throughout the day then because I didn't have to worry about what was going on in the evening. Now that we're out of that potentially I would rather things you know be done a little faster so I have more time to myself in the evening maybe like you're more likely to have plans or something going on but all that to say I think the length of the day yeah I am and I do think this is probably a neurodivergent thing is that I'm much better at being locked in for like two or three hours a day and like really I am in there I'm listening to every word than six hours and I'm like honestly like you could have you could have covered all this in those three hours and I would have taken it in better than doing six hours and like trying to spread it out. Make it like we're gonna go a bit slower so it goes and so and I'm like no no what he needs to do was like absolutely just like down that we're going down the rabbit hole together we're all in for like a shorter period of time and like we are in that then trying to make it like a slower steadier process over a longer period of time yeah that could be more to do with like I'm a very I'm a very hyper focused lady I will get things done fast I recently did a pre- and postnatal degree I did it in like a week because I was like I'm in it I'm learning about what it's like to be pregnant I'm a little horrified I'm a little afraid but I'm in it and I'm gonna do it and I was like it's gonna get done and I remember like um so like I'm I'm employed freelance but so I have a boss but it's freelance but like I remember telling her it was done and she was like already and I was like yes yes I have not slept I have been I have been like in bed doing this just like oh my god okay right I'm getting this done like I'm it's done because when I'm in something I'm in it and I I'm gonna like I'm there so I feel like I'm I'm much more of like a I prefer an intense hours than like a softer six and be like a bit more and yeah I'm just

Commented [CF144]: The need for breaks to sustain learning through the day

Commented [CF145]: Concentration compromised during shorter periods with fewer breaks

Commented [CF146]: Difference between exhaustion and tiredness

Commented [CF147]: Had breaks for recovery

Commented [CF148]: Lack of social life meant alleviated demands on energy

Commented [CF149]: Post-covid, would prefer shorter days for clearer evenings

Commented [CF150]: Concentrated shorter bursts of learning better

like I because I'll be there I will be in it for those two hours I am I am locked in um maybe like you'll need a little break in the middle to like you know walk around because otherwise I'll get really fidgety but like um I think short shorter and like you know don't be afraid to really like really like test me like really you know the more engaging it is the more hyper focused I'm going to be like The more if it's if it's a bit more like soft and trying to like gently Gently, so you're not like overloading with you the information. I might zone out and I again, I think that's Like I don't know if that's whatever I think some people might get overwhelmed by information then be like, ah, I'm going out but for me I'm like no give it to me all I'm in like I am I'm in the zone now like the more they're like yes good like like I'm I'm moving fast. This is great. But um when it starts to kind of get a bit more, I'm just like, my brain starts to wander a little bit, unless it like has to work quite hard to stay in there.

36:11 - CF

So would you say, if I had to sort of try and distill it down, so sort of in-depth, but also very concise?

36:17 - S1

Yes, again, going back to my favourite word, context, like, I like to know what I'm doing, why I'm doing it. And as you said, like quite concise. So like the in-depth of like, we're doing this. This is what it's going to do for us. This is how to do it. Now do it. And so that I feel like fully comfortable and capable. So that, yeah, again, I know why I'm doing it. So I feel like on board with it. I'm like, yeah, okay, cool. I want to do that. But I feel like I have a pretty good description of how to do it because some like what what do you mean like you'll be like hop on the spot and I'm like one leg both legs is it a little hop or a big hop what's the other leg doing is it like up is it down on the floor like again half of those questions don't necessarily need to be asked but I want to know like that's I'm like give me all of the context information so I feel like with that bit about it being in depth it's like I I will find extra questions that don't necessarily need to be asked that like I feel you know if someone said say ah I'm sure most people just go ah but I'm like at a pitch for like a second or am I going for longer so like it's that bit where I just immediately come up with extra questions I want my context um so as you said like I wanted to be quite precise and we're doing this this is how to do it like this is I'm not just saying do it I'm saying this is how I'm saying this is why um yeah so definitely yeah

Commented [CF151]: Context of learning is key

like quite concise um and quite in depth because it just makes yeah it makes me feel more like secure I guess and then I'm like cool I know what I'm doing I feel good like yes where the me like I don't know what I'm doing I'm just gonna stop because I don't get it and I just it's causing me stress now so just I don't want to deal with it um whereas when I'm like yeah I know what I'm doing I'm like yeah great lovely 10 out of 10 I'm gonna do it I'm so great kind of I don't know yeah I feel like that's the feeling.

38:27 - CF

Brilliant. So what's, I know what learning platform you used during your singing lessons during the pandemic because it was, it was Zoom based or Teams. Was it actually, was it Teams or Zoom?

38:36 - S1

I think it was Zoom because I remember having a couple of issues like with like Zoom links and stuff. Cause I was trying to remember when you said it because for secondary school we use Teams. Yeah. And so then that's why like trying to, but we used zoom because I remember there being like issues with the links and stuff.

Commented [CF152]: Used Zoom for vocational classes

Commented [CF153]: Used Teams at school

38:56 - CF

That was my, that was my way of remembering. And that sort of draws me into question five. What do you feel worked for you?

39:05 - CF

What were the difficulties that you encountered when using the platforms like platform specific stuff?

S1

Um, I think in fairness, zoom is a pretty solid one for online, um, stuff because teams was always really, I feel like there's always sound issues on teams. I think Zoom was pretty, pretty helpful. I'm trying to think now. As in like, like Zoom, what I liked about Zoom or what I liked about learning online.

Commented [CF154]: Zoom was preferred because of better sound quality

39:32 - CF

Well, when you were using Zoom, because Zoom was what you sort of used. So, you know, what particularly about that?

39:41 - S1

I found it quite nice that you have option to not have your camera on and not have your mic on I think it's nice to have that kind of um especially when you're like you know maybe you're at home and you have like people moving around I know like my flatmate works from home three days a week and like she likes to work in the kitchen but I need the kitchen when I'm working at home so like it's one of those ones where sometimes she'll work in her room so I'm not disrupting her and sometimes she won't but it's that bit of she can put the mute button on while I boil the kettle you know if she's not talking it's fine and so it makes it was quite nice having that for if you when you are at home and you don't necessarily want to have like your space or you on show especially like if you've not got if you're like I'm hauling myself onto this call I'm in my PJs like I am I am here but I am I'm only just about here that it's nice having the ability to pull back with that I enjoy that you can have more, like it's, you know, with like Skype, it's like Skype only two people, isn't it more people on Skype? I don't know. But yeah, I think Zoom was always a pretty good one as well in terms of like connection. I very rarely had like lags or things like that. And it's helpful that you can send texts during the call. Especially when you're in groups that like, it can be really challenging. I will say something I do find a little challenging about Zoom is when, when it's a big group of people and you're all trying to like respect each other's like time talking and stuff like that, trying to like know when to speak, sometimes being like going off the mic, being like, oh, can I, oh, mic, mute, unmute, oh, oh, wait, they're talking, I'm gonna mute again so that we can hear them. It's quite nice having the text recognition like I'm just going to ask the question instead of you all trying to like figure out when to speak you can all just send it into the text bit um so it's nice that it kind of has although the whole point of it is that it's like a video call they still have that bit where it's like let's make this a little cleaner and also if you don't feel comfortable speaking um online it's nice that they have that where you can like listen but actually have that text and I'm sure that like specifically I mean I I'm a big talker that's all fine by but I can, I'm gonna make the assumption that for a lot of people who are less comfortable talking, that having that text bit where they can actually, let's say they're like me and they learn best from listening and watching, but they might not themselves be very comfortable

Commented [CF155]: Zoom allows for privacy during online learning at home

Commented [CF156]: Multiple people can work from home, if considerate

Commented [CF157]: Privacy and comfort

Commented [CF158]: Rarely had lags on Zoom

Commented [CF159]: Messaging function is useful, particularly in group classes

Commented [CF160]: Taking turns to speak is difficult in classes on Zoom

Commented [CF161]: Messaging avoids social confusion over turn-taking

Commented [CF162]: Messaging is an accessibility feature for those reluctant to speak

Commented [CF163]: Has no issues talking, but understands others

speaking, that they can actually send texts as their reply, that it gives that kind of like comfort of, communicate however you feel comfortable, even if, so like you have the options. If you want to chat, lovely, great. If you want to text, that's fine as well. If you don't feel very comfortable sharing one-on-one or in a group or anything, I always thought that was very nice. Yeah, very few things to complain about with Zoom really. And it's nice as well that you kind of can put in the code online or you can just click it.

Commented [CF164]: Multiple means of communication/engagement

42:57 - CF

Like it's quite accessible, I think.

42:59 - S1

Whereas with Teams, God, like, oh, my last job, you had to use Teams to get on the phone calls. And, um, I had to download the app every time. It would never let me just do it from Safari. And I was like, I use this once a month. I don't want it taking all my storage up. It's just a waste of my time. I was just downloading it every month. Fine. Okay. Use it.

Commented [CF165]: Lack of Safari functionality for Teams for phone calls

Commented [CF166]: Apps consume device storage space

43:20 - CF

Delete it again. Kind of thing. Yeah. Just to key into something that you said earlier on, and it's not a big thing, but you said your connection was really stable. Can I just ask, were you hardwired into it, uh, to your router or were you Wi-Fi'd?

43:31 - S1

I believe I was Wi-Fi'd. Yes, I was Wi-Fi'd, which is again why I am here as well. The only time I ever had issues with it was when I was in Ireland in the countryside, which is expected because there's always swans flying into the telephone poles and then there's no Wi-Fi. That's genuinely true, that's what happens. There's swans flying to the electricity poles and then we don't have electricity. It's a great, it's a great, it's a great, great time in Ireland.

Commented [CF167]: Used wifi for connections

Commented [CF168]: Location can affect access

44:05 - CF

I can't wait to read that bit back in the transcript, that's brilliant.

44:09 - S1

It literally is what would happen though, like that's, oh god, because it would rain and it would make little turlocks, like little, little part-time lakes.

44:17 - Unidentified Speaker
Yes.

44:17 - S1
And so they'd be moving between those as it rained or when they'd need to leave one, or it would start to rain, they'd be like, ooh, leak. And they'd just fly into our telephone poles and we wouldn't have electricity for like a day or two. Well, actually, no, in fairness, it would always turn around quite quickly because we were quite near farms and they like need their electricity for their cows and stuff. Like, you know, we don't want any dead cows. So it would, the farmers would kind of like immediately be on it. They'd be like, if you don't get this electricity back up, I'm going to have 20 dead cows. That's gonna be on you. So then it would be pretty quick. It'd be back overnight usually. We wouldn't have to wait more than a day. Yeah, those goddamn swans. Yeah, so in terms of like accessibility, it sort of depends on area as well, you know, in terms of being able to access just the technology side of things. Yeah, completely, yeah.

45:00 - CF
Great, thank you. So the product at the end of the study will be a prototype of the online learning platform. And it's gonna feature digital content. You've seen this because you've had the questions for neurodivergent singers. Are there any features that would make such a platform useful and accessible to you? And I know that we've covered some of these things anyway, so what would make it really work for you?

45:39 - S1
Yeah, I think a lot of this stuff I've said already, but that bit of the more kind of like videos or things that I can listen to, I find easier and like again if it is writing like smaller bite-sized pieces I am more likely to kind of take in rather than just look at and get a bit overwhelmed by um yeah the easier to just press start and get going because if it is a case of like if I'm learning if it's like let's say doing a vocal warm-up or like some sort of vocal work that I could just press start and it immediately has gone into it um Or it can

Commented [CF169]: Video content

Commented [CF170]: Audio content

Commented [CF171]: Small sections of text

Commented [CF172]: Too much text can cause being overwhelmed

be like a case of like, you know, very simple, what are you looking to work? And it can be like, well, I want to, this is what I need, this is what I need, this is what I need. And like the more, the more concise and digestible it is, the more likely I'm just going to get started. Because if getting started takes me less than a minute, I'm more likely to do it. If getting started takes me three, four minutes, I'm, the motivation for those extra three minutes. If I'm doing the work for 20 minutes, but getting started takes one, I'm more likely to do it than if the work is 10 minutes and getting started takes three. I'm just so much more, the easier it is to get started, I'm going to do it. And again, yeah, like the things that make me more invested are having the context, knowing why I'm doing something, knowing exactly how, so I feel confident that I'm doing it right. Because again, if I don't know why I'm doing it, I'm like, why am I doing this? And if I don't, if I'm doing it right, I'm like, am I doing this right? I don't know. I'm getting stressed. Bye bye. So yeah, knowing why and exactly how to do it. Also very helpful. I also think as well, accessibility in terms of like having it available in both like a phone and potentially laptop for but I know myself, I'm more likely to go onto my phone and do something. My phone comes with me everywhere, my laptop doesn't come with me everywhere, and my motivation peaks at random times, and I just have to ride the wave when it comes. This is something me and my flatmate were saying the other day actually, where it was just like, we were like trying to, we were talking about like not just monitoring when your energy drops, but also monitoring when you, you are in like a creative burst, and you are in like a, I'm gonna get stuff done kind of energy. And it's, I don't always know when that's gonna hit, And so having that be like, Oh, my phone's in my pocket. The energy is hit. I'm going to do it now while it's on my mind. Very helpful. So like even actually, and I don't know how, like how, you know, internet connection ties into it or not, but, um, if it is available without wifi, would again, like that bit of like it being available to you wherever, because also if some of it is like less about you, like vocally doing stuff, and it is more like learning like this is how we do this thing and like let's understand this thing so that you can then use it in your practice that's a case where like I can put my headphones in and listen to that on the tube because there is no wi-fi on the tube that like I usually just listen to some downloaded music but I love like reading on the tube it's one of the few times I'm actually much more motivated to Read because I have no other like option I can't go on my phone as much so if it was a case of like this is a really good time where I can put my headphones in do a bit of the like and like learn about things so that then when I'm home maybe later I can actually

Commented [CF173]: Concise and clear information

Commented [CF174]: Immediacy of access raises engagement

Commented [CF175]: Context raises investment in the subject

Commented [CF176]: Lack of success criteria is a barrier to engagement

Commented [CF177]: Compatibility with phones and laptops

Commented [CF178]: Personal preference for using phone

Commented [CF179]: Portability of content on phone

Commented [CF180]: Portability allows for access at 'random times'

Commented [CF181]: Monitoring for lulls in energy, but also creative bursts

Commented [CF182]: Having access on phone allows access at times of creative bursts

Commented [CF183]: Offline access for listening

Commented [CF184]: Use of text when nothing else is available

try it out or I can I'll understand better how to do that thing. So if it's available without Wi-Fi that then on those times where you don't have Wi-Fi it can be that thing of oh I'm a little bored why don't I why don't I learn why don't I listen to that thing why don't I do a bit of education you know instead of listening to like an audiobook or some music why don't I listen to that singing thing I wanted to listen to Yeah, so I think that would be another one that whenever the motivation does strike, it's very easy to get to. So you don't necessarily need Wi-Fi or this, that and the other, that you're like, it's on my phone, I don't need Wi-Fi, headphones in, I can listen while I'm on the tube.

Commented [CF185]: Time for theory, time for practical work

49:50 - CF

Yeah. So were you saying like some shorter stuff and then a deeper dive type thing into the topic for when you...

49:58 - S1

I think like because if I'm at home and it's like doing some exercises let's say in terms of like if it's a singing learning platform if it's like teaching you exercise I can do that at home very happily and I've got like whatever space it is but I think I am more motivated to do like singing exercises than I am to necessarily learn about what's going on in my voice box. That's less motivating for me. Again, I think it's that case of what I'm doing and I'm getting to sing and learn and I'm getting to do my two things. My singing is almost my fidgeting as well as learning. So both parts of my brain are switched on and I'm having a great old time. Whereas the bit where it's more like sit down and learn, I'm less motivated to do that. So almost in those situations where I can't distract myself with something else, it would be a really great opportunity to sit and listen to the more informative side about this is what's going on. Let's learn about, you know, what this actually is. Like, let me, I'm trying to think like, so like, like, let's say like the anatomy of it, like what we actually mean when we say raising your soft palate. So like that, like the, cause if you're learning, like, you're going to do X, Y, and Z, it's to do this, it'll say, do, like, you might say like, raise your soft palate, stick your tongue out, do this. It's not necessarily saying like, how to do those things, why we call that, whereas then there's like more informative bits like this is what we mean by that, this is what's actually happening when you sing. Those being like accessible when you don't have Wi-Fi, when you don't like have something there, I just feel like I'm more likely to listen to those things when I don't have other stuff to like distract me. So like again I'm just

Commented [CF186]: Connecting space with activity

Commented [CF187]: Less motivated by theory than practice at home

Commented [CF188]: Singing as a fidget/stim

Commented [CF189]: Needs information at a time when practical work can't occur

thinking of like if I'm on the tube if I don't have much Wi-Fi, if I'm in public maybe, that's when I'm going to listen to those informative bits. And then when I'm alone and I do have Wi-Fi, that's when I'm more likely to do the singing thing because that's like more fun. Whereas the learning bit, it's like not quite as fun, but it is still like interesting and helpful. So, yeah, I feel like they need a little extra motivation. This is it. The bits that I get to enjoy that those are fun the fun will motivate me the bits that are a bit more learny and a bit more like sit and Read sit and listen sit and watch rather than actually like sit and do those are going to require more motivation and so for me that that bit of like I don't have wi-fi so I'm going to do that thing because it's available to me and I want something to be interesting to distract myself or I don't know what else could motivate you with those things. Unless it's like, you know, there's like things, I don't know, like, unless you get like a learning streak again, like those bits, I don't know, like, I feel like they need a little more motivation, the bits where it is more sit and learn than like sit and do, if that makes sense.

Commented [CF190]: Learning about the voice needs motivation

53:22 - CF

Yeah, it does. Like, I know we all have our different preferences, and I'm trying to make this studio that I'm developing here, I've got my screen now to work with my neurodivergent students because sometimes they can't tell where things are in space, but they can when they've got their phone trained onto the screen and they can see themselves from the side. But we've all got preferences and so I'm thinking now like I've got this wall painted like this and I've got my specific light colours, I can change all that around. How important is that side of things when you're looking at some sort of a website to be able to make it more customisable to yourself? Would that be customisable? Would that be helpful?

54:15 - S1

I definitely, well I mean I just think of with my phone I've got it on like the dark mode rather than the light mode so like my screens go black rather than white. They go black with white writing rather than white with black writing.

Commented [CF191]: Use of dark mode on phones

54:31 - CF

I just, that is the thing.

54:33 - S1

I definitely find intense light a bit tiring on the eyes, even if it's sunlight, I don't care what it is, my eyes get a bit tired. So I think definitely having like, even if it is as simple as like a light and dark mode, that's honestly all I would personally need. I think, like for me, when I think of online stuff, that's like main one. I'm trying to think if there's any other bits for it. You mentioned text size earlier on.

Commented [CF192]: Sensitivity to light

Commented [CF193]: Personal need for dark mode

55:05 - Unidentified Speaker

Text size?

55:06 - S1

Oh, I mean, again, just like the clearer the screen is, as in like the volume of text, sorry. Yeah, volume of text, like, as in like, the like, if it's like this really busy screen, I'm going to be like, a bit kind of like, I'm going to look at it and not, again, it's that bit of I'm just not going to take all in. Whereas if it's a bit more like clean, clear cut, I'm more likely to take it in. I'm more likely to go X, Y, Z. I'm going to pick X, keep it going. Whereas if it's like the whole alphabet, I'm going to go, where the fuck is M? And is, wait, but now O sounds really similar to M. Which one do I want? Oh, now, oh God, now I'm overthinking if I want O or M. I'm going to be a little stressful. pick the wrong one or I'm like I'm gonna pick O but I'm still thinking should I have picked M whereas if it's like smaller like X Y Z I'm like cool like that sounds more and then if it then narrows down if it goes X then you pick X then it kind of goes A B C then I'm like okay it's like those smaller choices less overwhelming less decision-making not very good at it so the less choice the better even if there's multiple you do the first thing, the second thing and the third thing, and each time you have to make a choice. And realistically, the first question could have just been all of them. I would rather do one, two, three, pick the last one and be like, OK, cool, because it just like narrows it down.

Commented [CF194]: Less text, clearer screen

Commented [CF195]: Too much on the screen can affect engagement

Commented [CF196]: Needs less on the screen

56:33 - S1

So I'm going to overthink the choice if there's too many. Yeah.

Commented [CF197]: Too many choices causes overthinking

56:36 - S1

So, yeah, again, that kind of clear screen is very helpful, I think, for me.

56:41 - CF

Yeah. That's so useful. Thank you. I think we've sort of hit an end to it. And thank you, because we've gone way over the time. That's okay. I sort of expected, it's sort of the thing that, well, you know, for me, from my teaching, that when I get going on a subject, that's it, you'll have all of it.

END OF INTERVIEW

S2 Interview

CF's Zoom Meeting
Sun, Sep 7, 2025

So thank you for agreeing to do this. I am grateful to you, and I obviously know a little bit about you, but I'm not going to assume that I know anything about you today. This project is about is that I know from experience there are times when neurodivergent people find it difficult to participate in their learning. It just happens for some people and so what I'm looking at is I'm looking at can we use for those little stopgaps can we use an online learning platform so that people can still engage with the learning in a setting that suits them and for it to be beneficial to them. So how effective can it be? And so the outcome of this is slightly different than I said, so I'll just explain that, in that the final part of my project is going to be the development of the platform. So what I'm going to be doing today is I'm going to be finding out a lot about you and your thoughts. Then I'm going to be taking that away, analysing it. I'm going to send you a copy for you to just proofread the minutes about the transcription for me. It's going to be analysed for themes. Those themes I'm then going to use as my way of developing the platform. And then at the end of the project, when all this is done and the platform is sort of in I'm going to give you access to it, and then you can give me informal feedback at the end of it. And you can have that access for as long as you need on that one.

7:12 - Unidentified Speaker
That'd be great.

7:16 - CF
Does that sort of make sense?

S2- Yeah. Cool.

7:19 - CF
Now, I've got your questions, and I've got them on my phone here, because quite frankly, I wrote the questions. I've checked the questions through. Can I remember what the questions are?

7:31 - S2
No.

7:31 - CF
Not at any point.

7:33 - S2
I have them on my iPod as well.

7:36 - CF

Brilliant. And the reason I sent them out in advance was some people get really angsty here, S2, because they don't know what's going to happen. Including me. I have to plan everything in my head. So, question number one. How would you identify yourself in terms of neurodivergence?

7:55 - S2

So I guess I'm kind of, because I live with two neurodivergences that kind of mesh over. And so I relate to a lot because I have combined type ADHD, which is both hyperactive and inattentive.

Commented [CF198]: Comorbidity

Commented [CF199]: ADHD

8:10 - CF

So brilliant, thanks for that.

8:12 - S2

So yeah, I've got combined type ADHD and dyspraxia. So my, I find sometimes I, relate less to like there's some ADHD content like you know tiktokers or youtubers that talk about ADHD that I don't I find myself not relating to as much and then the dyspraxia and I relate to some of that and then I don't relate to other bits of it because they kind of cross over yes and they my two disorders kind of interact with each other and so I kind of find myself in a weird spot with neurodivergence I definitely because I'm I'm I'm dedicated for ADHD, so it is the one that has the most impact on my life in terms of my general living. Dyspraxia kind of comes into play when it comes to processing and stuff. So yeah, I think for all intents and purposes, I'm someone with ADHD who has differences in processing speed.

Commented [CF200]: Dyspraxia

Commented [CF201]: Videos about ADHD and dyspraxia don't quite fit

Commented [CF202]: Use of 'disorder'

Commented [CF203]: ADHD impacts daily life the most

Commented [CF204]: Dyspraxia affects processing

Commented [CF205]: ADHD with differences in processing speed

9:18 - CF

So in terms of like your processing speed what is it in terms of like for example is it a really fast one and then you miss things or is it a slow one and it just takes you a little bit more time to process and sort of where would you put yourself on that spectrum?

9:34 - S2

If it's like physical instruction like if I'm being like for example like a dance class if it's physical instruction it can be very slow in terms of like I could watch the same section over and over again and still you know, not quite understand how to do it. And in terms of like verbal instruction, it really depends. If I'm really interested in what you're talking about, I will process it like so fast. I'm probably make, I'm potential to make some like careless mistakes because I'm so excited about it. And if, if I'm less interested in it, I may need it repeated a few times before it kind of plans on me. Yeah, yeah.

Commented [CF206]: Learning via demonstration does not convert into doing the thing

Commented [CF207]: Success of verbal instruction depends on level of interest

Commented [CF208]: Overenthusiasm can lead to mistakes

Commented [CF209]: Topics of less interest need repetition

10:16 - CF

And that sort of ties into sort of moving on to the next part of it really is that, so what are the parts of your neurodivergent, I have to put neurodiversity and it's really neurodivergence that you need accommodations for?

10:31 - S2

Yeah, I think, with processing speed, I think it's just it's patience, like, a willingness for a, like a teacher, to understand that like I might not wait in ways that they teach other people might just not work for me and they might need to rephrase what they've said or like especially if I take something very literally that is also another aspect that needs to be sort of accommodated as like explaining things in a way that isn't like really like far-fetched because really far-fetched I've got like I I won't be able to understand

Commented [CF210]: Patient teacher

Commented [CF211]: A teacher who understands varying needs

Commented [CF212]: May need different explanations for things

Commented [CF213]: Accommodations for the literal thinker

Commented [CF214]: Abstraction is a barrier to learning

CF

when you say far-fetched can you just expand on that for me so that I know I mean. I think I know what you mean.

S2

but yeah so if they're like if if a teacher is like um because I find it okay actually what what I like is having very specific instructions so if it's like if you're talking about airflow or you're talking about

Commented [CF215]: Needs specific instructions

um support I like to be told exactly what's going on um anatomically um and sometimes a visual a visual aid can be useful as well like imagining something happening at the same time but if someone's like telling me like you should be feeling this and you should and you should be and it should feel like this and you should go like this and um and it's uh I'm trying to think of an example I guess metaphorical stuff like and uh I'm trying to think of how to word it in a way that makes sense. Yeah, it just needs to be grounded in actual, like, if it's science-y, I'll probably get it.

Commented [CF216]: Needs to understand anatomy and physiology

Commented [CF217]: Visual aids can be useful

Commented [CF218]: Difficulty with being told how singing should feel physically

Commented [CF219]: Understands science-based pedagogy

12:14 - CF
Yeah.

12:14 - CF
I'll just throw in a sort of researcher anecdote at this point, isn't it?

12:19 - CF
I had one singing teacher who had me trying to start the sound in, imagine I'm starting the sound in front of my forehead and drawing it in.

12:28 - S2
Yeah, no. No. 30-odd years Imagine a ball of light in your chest and you're, well, I just, I have no idea.

12:36 - CF
No idea.

12:37 - S2
Like if you're, if you're describing to me, like, you know, imagine that your voice is coming out, like your, the back of your shoulders and like that, I, I will understand. Cause I'm like, okay, it's not, that's not literally happening, but I can, that's a part of my body that I understand. And I know that your voice travels, so I can sort of put two and two together. But if it's like complete body, Google and then I can't, I don't get it.

Commented [CF220]: Can understand some imagery

Commented [CF221]: Understands literalism

13:05 - CF
Well I'm not going to ask you to critique my teaching because I know you've had me a few times.

S2
I always find it very useful.

13:13 - CF
Oh thank you, thank you.

13:15 - CF
I wasn't fishing you for a compliment. No, no, no.

13:17 - S2
I'll say it anyway, just put your mind at ease.

13:20 - CF
I mean, what I would say to you is that like whatever you say in here, nobody's going to know what you've said and you're anonymized so as soon as I've done the transcription you get given a code and that appears in the final report so nobody knows what you've said so you know obviously you know it's it's a tricky one for teachers I suppose because you know knowing how to to sort of how to engage with everybody that's got a different need yeah I'm somebody that's got a different need and even I find you know it's quite it's quite challenging and you know we went through that whole thing with the pandemic didn't we?

14:00 - S2
So how was all for you?

14:03 - CF

How was online learning during the pandemic?

14:06 - S2

Yeah I find it quite difficult because I'm someone that like I can get really invested in singing. Obviously, I love singing, I've done it all my life, but if I'm not like one-to-one with someone I can find it a bit difficult to invested in what's going on and it's very easy for me to feel disconnected from what I'm learning. I found as well like I wasn't, it didn't feel like a good way to be held accountable with a teacher because I was like leaving it to the last minute, not practicing, not engaging with it any more than like the 30 minutes before the call would start, which was unlike me because normally I would have come away from sing lesson in person and be, you know, beaming and, you know, ready, you know, I'm really excited to do this and I've got to work really hard on this bit and blah, blah, blah. I just find it really difficult to engage online. And then obviously there was the added technical aspect of like having to have backing tracks and having like, or piano recordings from the teacher or whatever, like it was, it just made it way more complicated than it needed to be. Like, yes, okay, it was from the comfort of my own home, but there were so many other moving parts that I had to manage, and it was kind of difficult to stay on top of it.

15:31 - CF

Yeah so I mean when you went through that whole thing was it was it all literally as we are at the moment one-to-one but via online or was some of it sort of pre-recorded watch the video do the thing type stuff what was it what was it like,

15:46 - S2

So I had I would go on to like FaceTime, which is the main one that we used FaceTime or like, um, like WhatsApp video. I think, I don't know if Zoom, I mean, Zoom was a thing at that stage, but it had like a 40-minute cap on it. So most of the time if I was doing like a lesson that was longer or whatever, like they wouldn't use Zoom. Um, so yeah, I had, sometimes I would have a lesson where the audio quality would be so bad because of the wifi or his, that's my teacher's end of it, that he would like give me a task and then send me away off the call to like record something for him and then give it to him so he could listen to it with a better with better quality yes which I find like quite if I didn't know what I was going into if in the lesson if you know I mean like sometimes I would I would join the lesson I'm like right I've set everything up ready to sing for him live on this then it would be different than what I would expect. I would come on and maybe the quality would be bad or whatever so I'd have to record it and then I'd have to set up a proper camera and like so it was very unpredictable for me. But, yeah, it was mostly one-to-one over Zoom.

17:03 - CF

I'm gonna sort of just throw in a sort of side question to it and you know you don't have to name names. I'm not looking for that it's not a name and shame thing, but like in terms of like how the teachers were, did the teachers make, did they make every effort to make that experience better? How, you know, to what extent, I suppose is more open-ended, to what extent did the singing teacher or teachers in general make the effort to accommodate like your specific needs?

17:41 - S2

I don't, I'm not sure it, like obviously that he adapted in terms of like, he, like, you know, as soon as lockdown was initiated, you know, it was like, right, we're going online and backing tracks and stuff like that. But I don't know if it was specific to me. I feel like it probably was just what he was doing with all those other students. The thing is, is like, I went on, it's important to know, like, I went undiagnosed during the WORD as well. So I did have specific needs that presented themselves and that I'm sure my teachers were aware of and just they just maybe just didn't have the terminology to explain why I would be struggling with those things. Yeah so I don't I don't think it was specific to me I think it was truly just as a means of getting by during lockdown.

18:35 - CF

So when you when you got a name for it, your teachers got a name for it, then did that change?

Commented [CF222]: Online learning was difficult

Commented [CF223]: Motivated to sing

Commented [CF224]: Singing is a long time interest

Commented [CF225]: Needs 1:1 contact

Commented [CF226]: Disconnected from learning when isolated

Commented [CF227]: Singing teacher provides accountability

Commented [CF228]: Procrastination (no accountability)

Commented [CF229]: Can be highly motivated

Commented [CF230]: Disengaged by online learning

Commented [CF231]: Working with accompaniments was a technical difficulty

Commented [CF232]: Being at home was comfortable

Commented [CF233]: Managing the technical component of online learning

Commented [CF234]: Used FaceTime

Commented [CF235]: Used WhatsApp

Commented [CF236]: Limit on Zoom call length

Commented [CF237]: Longer lessons not suitable for Zoom

Commented [CF238]: Poor audio

Commented [CF239]: Teacher had poor wifi

Commented [CF240]: Use of asynchronous task setting (poor audio)

Commented [CF241]: Recording singing meant better audio quality to assess

Commented [CF242]: Bad connection introduced unexpected change

Commented [CF243]: Unpredictability of online lessons

Commented [CF244]: Mostly 1:1 over Zoom

Commented [CF245]: Diagnosed after the pandemic

Commented [CF246]: Presented with needs

Commented [CF247]: Effect of no diagnosis on teacher's understanding

18:46 - S2

I think so, because I got diagnosed with dyspraxia in early 2023, and then ADHD in 2024, so I think I was able to advocate for my in a room with a teacher at that point, to be like, I don't understand what you've just told me because of my dyspraxia, can you re-explain it? I don't know if it changed particular approaches to me. I still felt like I was being interacted with the same way that I had been before, even though, because obviously it would go round on my teachers like in terms of like an adjustment plan, and I didn't feel like it changed much. Obviously it was different because when I was going to you for lessons, you had a lived experience with neurodiversity, so I automatically was like, oh, it was very clear to me that it was meeting my individual needs, but I don't know about the majority of other teachers that I had.

Commented [CF248]: Diagnosed with dyspraxia

Commented [CF249]: Diagnosed with ADHD

Commented [CF250]: Knowledge enabled self-advocacy

Commented [CF251]: Self-awareness led to asking for different explanations

Commented [CF252]: Unsure if diagnosis led to different approaches from teacher

Commented [CF253]: No particular change in interaction from teacher post-diagnosis

Commented [CF254]: No tangible changes following adjustment plan

Commented [CF255]: Neurodivergent singing teacher met student's need

20:00 - CF

Yeah, that's really interesting. I mean, there's lots of, you know, there's a lot of work about in that area that, you know, we can have, we can have this double empathy problem with people who aren't neurodivergent, so that they don't quite get us and we don't quite get them.

20:16 - S2

It's that sense of otherness, I think.

20:19 - CF

Yeah, yeah. They don't want to overstep.

20:21 - S2

They don't want to do something that's going to like make you feel like you're being like babied or like, so then they don't do anything. Anything.

Commented [CF256]: Fear on the part of the teacher can lead to no change of practice

Commented [CF257]: Interesting repeat of 'anything'

CF

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And which, you know, I wonder whether what you're saying is that, like, that, because you're working with a neurodivergent teacher, that even though we would, even though we're different, our presentations are different, that there's some commonality there that sort of allows us to, yeah, I think interface.

S2

I think there was just like, it was the acknowledgement of then it's whenever you're using a methodology or trying to explain some sort of technical thing that you ascribe to, so you're trying to explain it to someone, and it's whenever you acknowledge that, like, this might not work for you, and if it doesn't work for you, that's okay, and we'll figure out something that does work for you, or even an acknowledgement. I remember, like, in a lesson with yourself, you were like, oh yeah, you're really visual, I was like, no one has ever said that to me. No one has clocked the way that I learn and has then adapted what they're talking about to help me. And it's such a small thing to notice. And I think having it said to me was really useful because I was then, oh, I am, yeah, oh. So I just, at that point would have been like, oh, some things that X teacher said to be working on some things, I don't know why. So yeah, it's that acknowledgement, isn't it? Like the willingness to just say it how it is, like, oh, I've noticed that you do this. So I'm going to recommend this, you know?

Commented [CF258]: Teacher acknowledges own approach

Commented [CF259]: Teacher acknowledges differences in gaining understanding

Commented [CF260]: Teacher acknowledges difference and adjusts

Commented [CF261]: Teacher observation can bring student insights

Commented [CF262]: Observation is key to changing approach

Commented [CF263]: Comments led to reflection on what works for them

Commented [CF264]: Acknowledge-share-adjust

22:09 - CF

Yeah, that's really interesting. And how I address that as we move forward is online is going to be quite interesting, really. So, when you were using, sorry, which, you've answered this for me actually, number four, because you were saying you were using some WhatsApp messengers, some... Yeah, FaceTime as well.

22:34 - S2

FaceTime, yeah, but the quality of those could be variable.

Commented [CF265]: FaceTime could be unstable

22:39 - CF

Yeah. Yeah, and Zoom was a problem because, if I remember rightly, it sounds like the teacher wasn't using, paying for the subscription where... Where you get some limited court time. So when you were doing it, what do you feel worked for you? We've talked about the difficulties and it's easy to fall into that thing, but what worked, if anything?

22:59 - S2

I think the, I guess it's sort of that what comes with being on doing a lesson at home is like, I could just do it from anywhere. Like I could be in my house. I could be at my grandparents' house. Cause we had like a bubble at that stage during the pandemic. And yeah, I suppose the accessibility of it is like, is not to be, is not to be like sort of sneered at. Like it was, it was useful. There was times where like, if I was like, I was ill for one lesson and I was, we were able to use the lesson time to I was doing London College of Music diplomas at that point, so I was able to use the lesson time. Obviously, I couldn't sing because I wasn't well, but I was able to use the lesson time to plan aspects of my research for the program, because when you do a classical London College of Music exam, you have a program that needs to be quite well researched and stuff, stuff. And so I was able to use it in that sense, because obviously, if we were doing it socially distanced at that stage, and I couldn't have gone in if I had any symptoms at all.

Commented [CF266]: Online learning accessible from different locations

24:21 - CF

Yes.

24:21 - S2

And, or, you know, I might have been sent home, pre-COVID, maybe he would have sent me home because I would have been unwell. So because we were online, I guess it made teachers more creative of how they could use that time. And, yeah, and I think, I'm trying to think of anything else that was useful during that time and how it worked. It definitely gave me access, that's the thing, it definitely gave me access to like different, like I went to a lot of online workshops during COVID that I find really useful and that aren't really about anymore because COVID's finished. So yeah, it definitely gave me access to a variety of teaching.

25:06 - CF

I mean probably a mix I suppose but were they synchronous, were they real-time or were they asynchronous, were they recorded or was there a mix?

25:17 - S2

All the ones that I did was real-time so if it was an American workshop I was up at like 11pm doing it but yeah they were all real-time which I find a lot more useful, I need that, like the If it's not real time, there needs to be like some sort of time, time, what do you call it? Like time constraint or like a goal or a deadline or something. If there's no, if there's no reason for me to submit the work, I won't like, I won't, I won't manage to do it. I need to have some sort of like thing that I'm working towards. And so having real time is good because then you've only got one shot. You gotta do, you gotta do your best. And then you'll get notes after.

26:06 - CF

Why do you think that is?

26:09 - S2

I think, especially with ADHD, I really struggle between what task to prioritise. So if something has a deadline, a tangible deadline, I might procrastinate for a bit, but as soon as it gets to crunch time, I'm like, here we go, I'm going to get all this work done and hyper speed, but if something doesn't have a deadline or something to hold me accountable, I just won't do it. It just doesn't register to me as a thing that I have to do.

Commented [CF267]: Task management challenging with ADHD

Commented [CF268]: Procrastination followed by hyperfocus on task

Commented [CF269]: Accountability

Commented [CF270]: Awareness of deadlines highlights necessity of task

26:44 -

If it's not now, it's later, and later is never.

26:49 - CF

Yeah, I understand that one all too well.

26:52 - CF

So that's really helpful, thank you. Just moving on to the last one, The product at the end of the study will be a prototype of an online learning platform which will feature digital content for neurodivergent singers. That's a bit of a mouthful. Are there any features that would make such a platform useful and accessible to you? And I mean the whole shebang. How much customisation do you want? What do you need?

27:21 - S2

First of all if there's videos to be watched there needs to be a playback speed adjuster so that I can put it at like 1.5 or like one or slow it down if if there's like a it just depends if I find really sometimes on YouTube most of the time I'm cranking the video up to like 1.25 or 1.5 because if people take long gaps through speaking my focus is gone um so yeah playback be really useful. I think, yeah, some sort of forum for accountability, whether it's like a group or like, you know, you can post on it or something like that, or like that you've got to submit something, you know, you can't just click through all the videos and then like, bye, like, you know, I'm done, I've watched all the videos, like, I think there needs to be some sort of way of checking in with whoever's on the platform to prove that you've actually gone through and used it. It doesn't have to be scary or anything, it just needs to be clear that you've actually looked at it and applied it. I'm trying to think what else... Maybe a forum also would help with like a buddy sort of vibe to it, someone to check in with, or like you could chat to other people on it.

Commented [CF271]: Variable playback speed on video aids focus

Commented [CF272]: A forum for accountability and feedback

Commented [CF273]: Feedback from site admin/singing teacher

Commented [CF274]: Buddy system on forum for socialisation and accountability

28:57 - CF

Yeah, yeah that's an interesting one. So almost like a discussion forum type thing.

29:03 - S2

Yeah.

29:03 - S2

I mean sometimes these things can turn into a bear pit with singers, if you're going to listen to lots of singing teachers all my life. CHECK

29:10 - CF

But yeah, I get that one. I know we've talked a little bit about colour schemes. Do you find any particular colour scheme is more advantageous or disadvantageous?

29:21 - S2

I tend to use all my devices in like dark mode so normally like that for example like I can show you my iPad it's literally like a black background and white text which I find a bit more easy to like just look at. I think sometimes when it's like loads of information and it's a bright white page with loads of stuff I can find it quite overwhelming. I think that that's something you can customize though isn't it on like some of those platforms that you can like change yeah like oh I want the um oh what's that font called the dyslexic text you like you can like adjust that or put an overlay on it.

Commented [CF275]: Use of dark mode on devices makes it easier

Commented [CF276]: Overwhelmed by too much information on white page

Commented [CF277]: Aware of accessibility features

CF

Um, yes, I've been using one of those this afternoon. I've been looking at that, yeah.

S2

I sometimes I sometimes use like a blue when I did Alice by Heart. I had like I requested like a blue script and it was like suddenly, suddenly I could actually read, it was great.

Commented [CF278]: Preference for blue paper

Commented [CF279]: Learning experience improved by access to coloured paper

CF

Yeah, so how did you know it was blue?

S2

I don't know because they basically, TEACHER REDACTED, had printed a whole load of pink and blue ones just on the off-chance that someone would need them, and when I was presented with two options and I looked at a pink copy and I looked at a blue copy, I was like, "oh that looks really clear to me". Me like yeah um and I think it just quiets the noise I think white can be so um just harsh I think the blue was like dimmer so I was able to sort of focus better on the on it on the top.

CF

Yeah, i've got a yellow sort of very sort of pastelly yellowy color and that works for me so yeah I say yeah that's that's interesting you're talking about fonts as well do you feel makes a difference to you?

S2

Yeah I prefer, I think it's things like Arial, Arial and like Verdana I think these are the ones called, like I don't know why I just I think when a text is like really small because like Calibri and stuff's really tiny so I think when it's like Arial's a bit bigger the letters are like slightly bigger and And I know I read dyslexic font quite well too, because sometimes you've got like boldened letters, like certain letters are in bold. So yeah, when it's like very clear and I don't know, I don't know, I don't exactly know why, but that would be what I would gravitate towards.

32:00 - CF

Yeah, I mean that's, I think that's, that's fine knowing that you've got a preference towards something. So therefore if like we've got this online platform and you could change the fonts to what you wanted with, I mean you can't have every font obviously because there's millions of the things, but if you've got a choice of them those would be...

32:26 - S2

Yeah I think it's just the less frilly stuff the better. I think when it's just clear there's not anything for to get distracted by, I think that's what normally is good for me.

32:39 - CF

And how do you find in terms of like distraction, what does a website need to look like for it to be accessible for you to be able to concentrate I suppose is the thing?

32:50 - S2

Yeah I think it needs to be just a bit streamlined, like I think if there's like a bajillion things I can press Like I will just kind of just I'll be going through like, oh look, there's a sidebar with this thing in it. Or like, oh, there's a link that takes me off the site and somewhere else. I think it just has to be clear like when you're on the website and you're going into the lesson part or the educational portion that it needs to be like a way to toggle like a sidebar away or like just so that you can just focus on the thing that is there yeah I think that's it and ads usually aren't an issue for me because I'm kind of used to like getting not looking at those but I think it's just not having like like all the interesting stuff is great like on like a forum or like in a once you've completed everything now I've got access to everything yeah I can go back and look at all the fun stuff But I think when you're going through each, I don't know how it's gonna be laid out, but through each educational segment, I think the less stuff on a page for me to jump around, the better.

34:10 - CF

The better, yeah, that's great. Is there anything else that you would find useful?

34:13 - S2

Oh, I think every captions on videos all day, every day. If a video with someone speaking, or it's a PowerPoint with someone speaking, captions are all the way. Just in terms of, I'll digest that information way quicker. I know some online platforms; they might have captions and slash or a transcript of the video. Sometimes that can be useful. So, I can look at the transcripts and hear it at the same time.

34:52 - CF

Commented [CF280]: General availability to accessible resources led to personal discovery

Commented [CF281]: "Quiets the noise"

Commented [CF282]: White paper can be harsh

Commented [CF283]: Blue paper aided focus

Commented [CF284]: Likes Arial and Verdana fonts

Commented [CF285]: Font size

Commented [CF286]: Reads dyslexic font quite well

Commented [CF287]: Unsure why dyslexic fonts work for them

Commented [CF288]: Likes 'less frilly' fonts

Commented [CF289]: Streamlined webpages

Commented [CF290]: Too many options cause distractions

Commented [CF291]: Clarity of section headings

Commented [CF292]: Toggle sidebars on/off to aid concentration

Commented [CF293]: No problem with website ads

Commented [CF294]: Forums are interesting

Commented [CF295]: Ordering of site to promote learning followed by features

Commented [CF296]: The less distractions, the better

Commented [CF297]: Captions on videos are essential

Commented [CF298]: Captions aid acquisition of knowledge

Commented [CF299]: Captions and transcriptions

Commented [CF300]: Reads and listens simultaneously

So it's almost like you've got more than one input.

34:55 - S2

Yeah and sometimes that improves my like retention of information and just in terms of that's how I read as well like I'll have an audio book plan and the actual physical book or on a kindle.

CF

That's interesting. I must confess I've fallen in love with audio books.

S2

I think I love them yeah and they usually can keep me if it's if it's a topic that I love so like I'm like still obsessed with Elvis I've been obsessed with Elvis for like 10 years So like whenever Lisa Marie Presley and her daughter's autobiography came out, I didn't need to look at the book, I just had the audiobook on and I was able to focus because I found it so interesting. But if it's something that I need to read for, say for like university or something, I had a screen reader and I would have to literally listen to the screen reader and stare at the screen to remember anything.

CF

So if there was a body of text you need, just for your benefit, you need to perhaps just a sort of 'play' thing to to have it read out

S2

Yeah, I think also like, if it's not, if it's not available to the, if the if the platform itself can't read it to me though I think I think you can do it but if for whatever reason the platform can't read it to me there are particular fonts that screen readers can't pick up so because I have like a very basic screen reader that I use just for emails and stuff I I think I just use Speechify. I don't pay for it, I just use like the free version of Speechify. So yeah, it might be worth looking into what fonts screen readers can't use, so then you don't have those, and then it means if someone is using a screen reader, that it will work.

36:41 - CF

Yeah, that's fairly interesting, and that's really having you to go down, thank you for that, that's helpful.

END OF INTERVIEW

S3

CF's Zoom Meeting
Thu, Sep 11, 2025

0:49 - CF

Thank you so much. So what I wanted to do, just if you could just give me a little bit of an outline for about your sort of professional practice at the moment, sort of where you're at.

1:04 - S3

Yeah, so I did, well, I kind of trained in musical theatre for quite a long time, did a bit of U-turn, did classical training at REDACTED CONSERVATOIRE and then took that. I was still kind of teaching during my studies anyway, but now I'm teaching singing and piano full-time in schools and privately as well. So, I'm currently jam-packed with students, can't take any more on, so.

Commented [CF301]: Multiple inputs aids retention of information

Commented [CF302]: Uses audio book AND kindle book simultaneously

Commented [CF303]: Focuses easier when its a special interest

Commented [CF304]: Uses a screen reader

Commented [CF305]: More challenging when it's an assigned task

Commented [CF306]: Not all fonts can be read by screen readers

Commented [CF307]: Check fonts for screen reader compatibility

Commented [CF308]: Musical theatre trained

Commented [CF309]: Changed to classical singing

Commented [CF310]: Taught singing whilst studying

Commented [CF311]: Teaches in schools and privately

1:34 - CF

Oh, that's a brilliant place to be. And that's how it started with me as well. I started off in schools as well. I worked for a music service before I did any sort of conservatoire or drama school -type work. Great stuff. So how old are your kids then that you're working with at the moment?

1:52 - S3

So they could be four all the way up to like 82.

1:59 - CF

Right, great. It's quite a big range. So, hatches to dispatches then.

2:06 - S3

Yes, exactly.

2:07 - CF

So just to tell you a little bit about myself and sort of why I'm doing this thing. I'm an autistic practitioner. And I, in my time, I've worked with lots of neurodivergent people, and I know that sometimes some people can have a real problem just engaging with the learning because anxiety, sensory issues, the whole thing is, can be problematic at times. But what I do know is that during lockdown, some autistic people really, really thrived in it and neurodivergent people thrived in it. And so, what I thought was, well, what happens if we sort of take that sort of online learning and built a platform for that they could engage with as a general thing, just to help with their studies when they can't do their thing. And primarily I'm thinking about my own practice at home, but I'm also thinking about, you know, could this be could this go any further, like for home educated students, for example. So there's a whole host of applications. But first of all, I need to know, will it work? So the beauty of it is, is that. I'm asking people who are neurodivergent and I'm asking teachers about it, and you're in the funny cross category of having, how long ago was it since you graduated?

3:51 - S3

This will be the 3rd September.

Commented [CF312]: Recent graduate

CF

Yeah, so still a fairly recent graduate.

3:57 - S3

Very much so, yes.

3:58 - CF

And so did you go through all of the lockdown stuff?

S3

Yeah, so I had my first year, I was actually at the OTHER REDACTED UNIVERSITY, and then very conveniently kind of decided that it was academic music was not necessarily the way I wanted to go. And then dropped out just before the lockdown. But then the first year, it was all, like all my studies at REDACTED CONSERVATOIRE was online apart from my singing lesson.

Commented [CF313]: Online learning, apart from singing lesson

Commented [CF314]: Changed from academic to practical course during lockdown

4:26 - CF

Yeah, right. That's, that's really great. I'm really grateful for all this. Thank you. I'm just gonna find my questions because the one thing is I haven't the world's worst memory. And even though I've written these questions, I can't remember them.

4:40 – S3

That's okay. That's me on a daily basis.

4:43 - CF

So how would you identify yourself in terms of neurodivergence? Where are you?

S3

So I am part of a family that has ADHD and autism. I feel like I graduated from uni and then all of a sudden started to have a bit of a meltdown and realised that probably my brain works differently to other people. My sister has ADHD and, you know, ADHD is definitely on the differential. And then I also kind of as part of like my own therapy, it's kind of like the autism kind of became a little bit more signposted. And so I'm actually I have my assessment on Monday. So we'll see how that goes. But yeah, I find I find it really impacts my day-to-day and I find it really impacts, it really impacted me at the REDACTED INSTITUTION I probably didn't really realise it did. But like looking back it did.

Commented [CF315]: Familial ADHD and autism

Commented [CF316]: Leaving uni affected mental health

Commented [CF317]: Close family member has ADHD

Commented [CF318]: Autism suggested during therapy

Commented [CF319]: Impending autism assessment

Commented [CF320]: Autism impacts day-to-day activities

Commented [CF321]: Retrospectively recognises difficulties at college

5:58 - CF

Yeah. That sort of ties in though because the second part of that is what parts of the neurodivergence that you feel you need accommodations for. But I think just to expand from where you were, how did you find it was affecting you when you were at college?

6:18 – S3

So obviously, we would engage in quite a lot of masterclasses, like your performance and context classes, and you'd stand, and you'd sing, and then you'd receive, you know, feedback. But all that feedback was verbal. And then you, you had to apply that feedback straight away. And then, yeah, you would be expected to apply it and then try again, and it'd be applied. And there'd be times where like, I would have that feedback verbalized to me and I'm like, okay, I really don't know what it is you're saying. And then because you're under the pressure, and you've got lots of people watching you, you kind of just wing it. But then winging it either meant that I did it wrong or I did it right, but I didn't know how I did it right. So yeah, it was probably that. And then the assignments at uni, I kind of was always applying for extensions because I'm leaving it, but probably a bit too late to have the dopamine hit to give me the motivation to do it. But yeah, it was mainly like auditory. I guess like verbal is instructions were really difficult, especially in my singing lessons as well.

Commented [CF322]: Required to sing in masterclasses and contextual studies classes

Commented [CF323]: Only verbal feedback

Commented [CF324]: Expectation of instant application of feedback

Commented [CF325]: Didn't always understand verbal feedback

Commented [CF326]: Pressure led to 'winging it'

Commented [CF327]: Either wrong or right, but no idea how it was achieved

Commented [CF328]: Needed extensions to manage workload

Commented [CF329]: Dopamine hit

Commented [CF330]: Procrastination

Commented [CF331]: Verbal instructions are difficult

CF

What about do you think is difficult? Was it any particular language or was it literally just verbal instruction, full stop?

S3

I think there's some maybe individuals within the professional sphere that maybe don't necessarily acknowledge that neurodivergence is thing, or it's kind of like, oh, well, everybody has a bit of it. Like, I feel like maybe the accommodation of the language,

Commented [CF332]: Lack of recognition for ND

Commented [CF333]: Received "everybody has a bit of it"

and like, don't get me wrong, like, I, I understood what they were saying, like, I'm not stupid.

8:12 - CF

But it was just like the application of it.

8:15 - S3

It was like, and then almost like feeling like if I was to ask a question about, you know, to kind of like delve a little bit further into their instruction, that you would almost be feeling like you're taking up too much time and that there's other people in the room that can just apply it straight away. So yeah, I don't know if that makes sense.

8:36 - CF

It makes total sense.

8:40 - CF

It sounds an awful lot like my own training, to be honest. Yeah. My singing teacher, the first one I had there, asked me to start the sound as though it was in front of my forehead and draw it in. Now, if you can explain what that means to me, because I left in 1998, I started in 1994. I have no idea what that means to listen.

9:02 - S3

Yeah. Yeah. And I think like, obviously she was kind of teaching me about all the breathing and stuff. And like, I really felt like I was doing it and she was just adamant I wasn't doing it. So, then it was like, okay, well, there's clearly a discrepancy because how you're explaining it and me thinking I'm doing it and the result of me doing it is not what you want. And yet I was kind of met with a lot of like, the language wouldn't be changed. I obviously wasn't achieving the results.

9:33 - CF

And then obviously it's frustrating, isn't it?

9:35 - S3

Them having to explain it over and over again. I mean, our singing teacher was amazing. I love her very much. But very much of her time, maybe.

CF

That's fair enough. You know, that's a fair comment. I mean, I'm not out here to, you know, disparage your singing teacher. That's absolutely not what I'm here about. But, you know, we have needs and that's fine. So then if you could, perhaps this.

10:02 - S3

She also used to be like, put it here, put it here. What does that mean?

CF

Yeah. And with what?

10:11 - S3

Commented [CF334]: Lack of adjustment of language

Commented [CF335]: Wording "I'm not stupid"

Commented [CF336]: Gaining clarification felt like an inconvenience

Commented [CF337]: Comparison with peers that just do what's asked

Commented [CF338]: Difference of perception between teacher and student in achieving tasks

Commented [CF339]: No change of language for the student

Commented [CF340]: Focus on ability of student to attain

Commented [CF341]: Belief in quality of singing teacher

Commented [CF342]: Clear affection for singing teacher

Commented [CF343]: Acknowledgement of dated practice

Commented [CF344]: Placement imagery

Commented [CF345]: Meaning of placement imagery unclear

Yeah. And then I kind of say, well, is there any science behind it? Is there any anatomy that you can try and explain to me through more like, more that route? And she was like, no, it's just a feeling.

Commented [CF346]: Sought better understanding of the science

Commented [CF347]: Wanted an explanation of anatomy and physiology

Commented [CF348]: Teacher declined a more science-based approach

Commented [CF349]: Couldn't feel suggested location of sound

10:21 – S3

And I'm like, okay, but I don't feel it. So yeah, it was always like, put it here.

10:26 – S3

And I'm like, and then what, and then essentially what's happened is that I've learned to put it here [points to cheekbones] and my larynx has risen so much that then I can't tilt. And then there was a whole issue with that, so.

Commented [CF350]: New A&P language introduced to diagnosing issue

CF

Oh, that's a really interesting language because that's quite physiological language that you've sort of keyed into.

S3

Yeah.

CF

So where's that come from Um, I feel like my singing teacher, uh, TEACHER REDACTED, who I had before, um, her and TEACHER REDACTED, yeah, it's all...

CF

Oh, REDACTED TEACHER! Yeah. I know REDACTED TEACHER well.

10:52 – Unidentified Speaker

Yes.

10:52 – CF

I know REDACTED.

10:53 – S3

So yeah, I have, yeah, I've, I've kind of come from that mode. Yeah. Um, so yeah. Yeah, that's fine.

11:00 – CF

Cause I trained with REDACTED that's, uh, that REDACTED works for a REDACTED.

S3

Yeah, I love them.

11:07 – CF

They're great. Yeah, I'm one of their accredited teachers.

11:11 – S3

Oh, are you?

11:12 - S3

Oh, cool. I'd really love to do their training, but it's just so expensive.

Commented [CF351]: Expensive CPD

11:17 - CF

Yeah, I did it a few years ago, so I'm not sure how current I am nowadays, but I'm still there. So we sort of took that next question, which is. What are the parts of your neurodiversity that you need accommodations for? In some ways, perhaps it's a rewording of sort of what you've been saying. What would you need accommodations for, do you think?

11:42 - S3

Yeah, I think it's really hard in singing teaching, isn't it? Because obviously, without scope, you can't see the anatomy of what's going on. Whereas like with the piano, if you ask somebody to play a C or a D, you can see them play that. I don't know whether, like, I think just maybe avoiding what it feels like giving me a little bit more of a tangible method. Because the same thing like achieving a feeling, you can achieve that in so many different ways. Whereas I feel like I'm very methodical. So I'm like, okay, so if you tell me, right, okay, so first you do this, and then this, and then this, then like, hey, cool, I can do that. Like drop the jaw, bring the tongue forward, give me an /i/ vowel.

Commented [CF352]: Challenge of teaching an instrument you can't see

Commented [CF353]: Needs structured learning

Commented [CF354]: Provide sequential and practical instructions

12:31 - S3

It's like, I can do that.

12:35 - S3

I think it's maybe like avoiding the 'feeling' words. Whereas I have students who really love the feeling words and can really associate that.

12:47 - S3

But I struggle with that.

Commented [CF355]: Managing competing communication needs between student and teacher

12:50 - S3

I also recorded all my singing lessons so that then I could listen back to them. I found sight singing really, really, really difficult because I just felt like I couldn't process it enough. And again, it's not ability. I kind of laugh now, my piano sight reading is not great, but if you give me a week, I can get through a nice little sonata for you. It's not an issue. Ability isn't an issue, but it's the time. And obviously the industry doesn't really give for accommodations and timing, really. Hopefully something that will change, but it's going to take a lot of time before that, as I suspect.

Commented [CF356]: Developing strategies for retention

Commented [CF357]: Processing on-demand skills, like sight singing

Commented [CF358]: Learning over longer period works

Commented [CF359]: Time to process needed

Commented [CF360]: Industry demands on neurodivergent singers

13:40 - CF

And that's just my own view on it. But, you know, there are moves out there. There's actually an adapter plug guide for autistic practitioners that is released by, published by Equity. So there are moves to put in the industry. Yeah. But it's still not easy. What did you use when you were teaching online during the pandemic?

14:07 - CF

Do you teach online now as well?

S3

No.

CF
OK.

14:11 - CF

Yeah. Yeah. That's fine. So what did you use when you were on during the pandemic?

14:18 - S3

So in INSTITUTION REDACTED, obviously everything apart from my singing lesson was online. So I just used my Mac.

Commented [CF361]: Used Mac for online learning

14:26 - CF

Yeah. And that would be it. What did they use? Was it Teams or Zoom?

S3

It was a mixture of Zoom and Teams.

14:36 - CF

Right. Yeah. Thank you. What do you think worked for you and what were the difficulties you encountered when you were using the platforms?

14:46 - S3

I think obviously the advantages is that I didn't necessarily have to leave my comfort space. Obviously at uni when you kind of dealing with a room full of people that can be quite intimidating and so you know feeling part of the community without having to like physically be there was quite nice sometimes. It was a bit more flexible like you could be anywhere and still join the meeting and I feel like some of the disadvantages probably were that like it was almost easy to not go to because it was online I think as well, sometimes it would be quite easy to get distracted, whereas I feel like as somebody with a neurodivergent brain, I feel like if I'm in front of you, there's more pressure for me to almost hyper-focus onto you. Whereas if I'm not in front of you, I could get distracted more easily.

Commented [CF362]: Online learning in comfort zone

Commented [CF363]: Intimidated by a room of people

Commented [CF364]: Enjoyed community without physically being with people

Commented [CF365]: Online meant flexibility of location

Commented [CF366]: Motivation challenges in attending

Commented [CF367]: Sometimes distracted online

Commented [CF368]: "Pressure" is interesting. From where?

Commented [CF369]: More likely to hyper-focus on the teacher in person

15:49 - CF

Great, thank you. So at the end of this, as I mentioned at the beginning, I'm going to be developing a prototype of this learning platform. And it's going to feature digital content for neurodivergent singers. Can I just check, was everything that you did when you were going through the pandemic, was it synchronous? Was it in real time? Or was it videos as well?

16:15 - S3

Yeah, but I mean, I done, like, teacher training and it'd be all not in real time as well.

Commented [CF370]: Experienced asynchronous learning

16:23 - S3

Like with, yeah, with like the first aid for singers and stuff like that, that's all.

Commented [CF371]: Vocal first aid course an example of asynchronous learning

16:29 - CF

Yeah, yeah, sure. Great. So, I mean, obviously you've done sort of video courses before. Are there any features that would make, like, the platform that I'm developing useful and accessible to you? What do you need?

16:44 - S3

I feel like, so say for example if it was a Zoom, it'd be useful maybe to see like your like presentation notes so that then we can kind of like, well I could like read your notes as you're speaking as well and also maybe have them prior to the live session.

Commented [CF372]: Appreciates presentation notes

Commented [CF373]: Reads notes as was as listening

Commented [CF374]: Suggests providing notes prior to live sessions

17:04 - CF

Yeah. So that then, yeah and for them to be recorded and put up. Yeah. And did that and that was really helpful. Excuse me, I'm just going to get my battery out and stick myself on charge. Just excuse me for a second.

17:27 - CF

It doesn't help I've got the longest lead in the world here.

17:35 - Unidentified Speaker

Marvellous.

17:36 - CF

I'm charged. So sorry, yes.

17:40 - CF

Sorry about that. So carry on, what else would you need? Or if you're thinking about the other courses you did, what worked? Yeah, I feel like having the notes before and during would be good.

18:01 - S3

I feel like having maybe like references that you're making reference to, accessible to, so that then I can process what you're referencing as well. I feel like use of imagery, so visuals and drawings or images, as well as audio samples maybe. So if you're trying to explain how to achieve something, can we hear what that sounds like, And then also maybe can we see what that looks like on a student, like an example of what that looks like.

Commented [CF375]: Provide references for further study

Commented [CF376]: Wants visual and auditory stimuli.

Commented [CF377]: Wants demonstrations to support explanations

CF

Yeah, so you're kind of like hitting different ways of processing, I suppose. No, that makes total sense.

18:52 - CF

If you're looking at a website, is there anything that makes you direct away from it? What would make you switch off from it?

19:03 - S3

Like loads of words that maybe don't have any bold bits or key bits. So I remember something that REDACTED NAME used to do was, if she ever gave me anything written, she'd give me the heading of what it was that it was about, and then in a box be a brief overview of what this page is, basically, and then five key facts of what you would need to know, and then all the further information below it. So then it was like,

Commented [CF378]: Needs less text, but 'bold bit or key bits' are useful

Commented [CF379]: Previous teacher provided heading, overview, 5 facts, and full information

okay, in my own time, then I can read the proper bulk of it, but quickly I can pick up the other bits of what, of what it's about as well.

Commented [CF380]: Providing information for immediate use and deep dives

19:49 - CF

Yeah, yeah, that's great. That's actually the end of all of my questions.

19:54 - Unidentified Speaker

Wow, that was quick, wasn't it? Yeah, it was indeed. Sorry.

19:58 - CF

Just as a final thing, obviously you're one of the few people, in the study that is both a teacher and a singer themselves. Now that's both neurodivergent and a singer and a teacher. Has the knowledge that you are, well, assuming that it's all confirmed on Monday, has it changed the way that you provide your tuition to your students? Has it informed it in any way?

20:37 - S3

Yeah, I feel like I definitely have a lot more patience for children who might present slightly different to the average brain, maybe. I feel like it definitely made me a bit more creative in resources and stuff. So maybe not following as linear routes of, OK, we're going to through this method book and then move on to this. What other resources can I find that can engage them? I feel like for me as well, I have to do that, otherwise I get a bit bored. So I have to split the lesson up into bits that I can look forward to as well. I feel like language, I find difficult anyway. So, yeah, sometimes there's a bit of a, like I'm trying my best to explain what I mean, and sometimes it's not always translating. So it's allowed me to be a bit more patient with myself as well, maybe, and give myself a bit of grace.

Commented [CF381]: Has more patience when working with children

Commented [CF382]: Develops resources creatively

Commented [CF383]: Teacher engagement can be an issue

Commented [CF384]: Structures lessons to sustain interest

Commented [CF385]: Language as a teacher can be challenging

Commented [CF386]: Sometimes hard to get the point across

Commented [CF387]: Developed patience and grace with self

21:43 - CF

Yeah, yeah. Can I just ask, how long is it, because I know you're going on Monday, how long is the whole diagnostic process going on for you?

21:56 - S3

quick because I did the right to choose pathway and so yeah it was only actually about like four or five months yeah yeah so would definitely recommend the right to choose and I'm also yeah doing the combined assessment as well so that's pretty good but it's mainly like as a I guess working professional it's not necessarily the teaching that is the difficult bit it's everything else It's the admin and it's the invoicing and it's the liaising with parents.

Commented [CF388]: 4-5 months diagnostic process

Commented [CF389]: Managing the non-contact demands of teaching is challenging

22:29 - CF

You know, actually working with the kid is actually the easiest thing I find.

22:35 - S3

But it's all the other bits that is immensely stressful.

22:39 - CF

So, yeah. That's been really, really helpful. Thank you. What's going to happen now is I'm using all of your feedback to find out what the themes are and what people are thinking about when they're looking for a platform. I'm going to then put it into practice

and this prototype is going to happen. And then what's going to happen is that I'm going to give you access to it. And then because my project will have finished then rather than a formal feedback thing, I'm just going to ask you for informal feedback on it. And it just means then the future versions of it as I develop it will, um, we'll just. Be informed by, well, neurodivergent people. Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

S4

CF 00:00 Like you will see. Sorry, sorry. Can we go back to the start? Yeah. So if you could tell me a little about you. So?

S4 00:07 So. Yeah. So I just graduated from COLLEGE REDACTED on the actor musician course, which is basically a musical theatre course, um, plus playing instruments. So I did singing, dancing, acting, all of that. Um, and then beforehand I went to REDACTED DANCE SCHOOL home and did the musical theatre course there. Um, so I've been very much in the musical theatre singing world, like, for the majority of my life. Um, yeah. I'm from Scotland originally. Um, grew up in the countryside, then moved to Glasgow, um, when I was in high school. Um, and then. Yeah, I've been living in England for three years now and like I say, have just graduated. So I'm just trying to find find my way around the world as a as a graduatee [graduate]. Um, and not having university or a education timetable to follow. Um, yeah.

CF 01:10 Yeah. How do you feel about that? Because obviously at times very structured when you've been in, in college and all of a sudden that's taken away.

S4 01:18 It's very overwhelming to say the least. Um, it's been fine. Um, I've just had to kind of find routine and other things because routine is very, very important to me. Um, but, yeah, I teach at WELL KNOWN PART-TIME THEATRE SCHOOL. Um, I teach singing there with a bunch of young kids. Um, and that's all starting back this week. So now it's like, okay, at least I've got something. It's not quite as structured of a routine, but I've got I've got things each week that will be at the same time, and that's quite nice. But my, um. Yeah, my brain's been all over the place. Haven't know what day it is. And like last night, for example, I've just been like. But yeah, we're getting this week is kind of the getting back into routine week. So that will be nice. And then obviously auditioning um, first off alongside that,

Commented [CF390]: Just graduated from a leading drama school

Commented [CF391]: Trained as an actor-musician

Commented [CF392]: Studied MT at a dance school

Commented [CF393]: Long standing interest in MT

Commented [CF394]: Living without a timetable as a new grad

Commented [CF395]: Overwhelmed, yet fine

Commented [CF396]: Challenge of finding a self-devised routine

Commented [CF397]: Teaching at a part-time theatre school brings routine

Commented [CF398]: Structuring week for consistency of schedule

Commented [CF399]: Lack of routine has led to lack of concentration

Commented [CF400]: Looking forward to getting into a routine at the start of a new term

		um, but they just come as an as and when. So I can't plan for them.	Commented [CF401]: Can't plan for auditions
		And I need to be okay with that.	Commented [CF402]: "And I need to be ok with that" suggests that she isn't
CF	02:24	Yeah. Yeah. Quite. Well it's by the way, REDACTED ORGANISATION was my first teaching job. Uh, I mean, I'm from a classical background, so I didn't come from musical theatre at all for us to be. I've seen to if the town just turned to the dark side.	
S4	02:42	Yeah, I love I love teaching at REDACTED INSTITUTION. I find it very fulfilling. Um, and it's a good, a good thing to fill my time and not have to work in retail or hospitality or anything like that.	Commented [CF403]: Teaching role provides an anchor to the performing arts
CF	02:56	Yeah. It's like absolutely. So. And how would you identify yourself in terms of neuro divergence?	
S4	03:04	Um, yes. So I have, um, autism and OCD. Um, autism wise, I'm fairly kind of self-sufficient. Uh, it's not, you know, I can live by myself. I'm very independent. So I wouldn't say it's particularly high functioning, but it's definitely there. Um, yeah. And then in terms of OCD, um, it comes and goes. Recently it's been quite intense, um, again, with the big change. Um, but yeah, um, both of them definitely affected me. And it wasn't until I went to university that I actually realised, um, it was the, the being away from home that I think triggered a lot of like. Yeah, it triggered it a lot more. I've always. I've always had anxiety. I've always known. I've had an everything has been put under the generalized anxiety disorder. And it was only once I got to university that a tutor kind of reached out to me and was like, have you looked into a potential autism diagnosis? And I was like, no. And then, um, I did it through the university. And they were they were really helpful. And I found that since having that kind of diagnosis to tell people it's made my life a lot easier in terms of in professional environments, just being able to kind of outline my boundaries and not just seem like or not feel like I'm just being difficult. That's kind of being able to say, this is why, and it's not something that I can help or have very much control over. Yeah, yeah.	Commented [CF404]: Comorbidity: autism and OCD Commented [CF405]: Lower support needs for autism Commented [CF406]: Not familiar with terminology Commented [CF407]: OCD is variable Commented [CF408]: OCD affected by recently leaving university Commented [CF409]: Going to university triggered OCD Commented [CF410]: History of anxiety Commented [CF411]: Issues attributed to GAD Commented [CF412]: Tutor suggested investigating an autism diagnosis Commented [CF413]: University facilitated diagnosis Commented [CF414]: Diagnosis permitted self-advocacy in professional environments
CF	04:52	Well that's great. Thank you. Um, so like in terms, um, I think we sort of touching on them already. Um, but. So what are the parts of your neurodivergent. Do you need accommodations for?	
S4	05:06	Um, in terms of, I mean, with both of them. As so as I've already said about four times, it's routine. Um, structure is really important to me. Um, and, you know, if I have something, if something is planned and it doesn't happen, it can it can throw off my day. So, for	Commented [CF415]: Communication difference which could be misconstrued Commented [CF416]: Disruption to routine affects the whole day

example, like, if I sat on zoom this morning and you didn't show up like I did to you last night, so it would be completely valid. And, um, I would, it would just like, thrown off because I kind of plan. I like to have routine. Um, I, a lot of things are kind of sensory issues. Um, which an online platform tends to be quite good for. Um, I struggle. There is a couple times in university where, especially in dance classes actually, where, you know, um, teachers would come up and touch you to adjust you without asking. And that was very hard. It's like, don't do that. Okay. I need to know. Um, and another thing is kind of you. I struggle in places with lots of people. Um, I struggle, I love being at the theatre, but I hate the end of the show because I know that the clapping is coming, and it's like. It's like I've had this great experience and suddenly it's all ruined because everybody starts clapping. Um, so again, online platforms are great for that because it means that I can put the volume down. Um, yeah, that's kind of, uh, that.

Commented [CF417]: Thrown by change, but organisation meant that she introduced change to another

Commented [CF418]: Online platforms assist with sensory issues

Commented [CF419]: Instructional touch, without consent, is difficult

Commented [CF420]: Struggles in situations where there are crowds

Commented [CF421]: Clapping ruins the experience of theatre

Commented [CF422]: Online platforms give control over volume levels

CF 06:50 I totally understand about the clapping. And I enjoy going to see football as well, but. Oh, I have to wear my earbuds in because I just need the noise canceling. Because you have people clapping.

S4 07:05 I went to, uh, I went to a, uh, a slam poetry, um, event on, on Sunday with my partner and everybody. It was kind of like at the start of the night. They were like, yeah, this is very chill. You know, if something mid poem resonates with you, then feel free to like, click clap like show your appreciation. I was out there like, uh, it was like these a you're saying this beautiful poetry, but I cannot focus on anything that's coming your my with all uh.

Commented [CF423]: Noise from others affects ability to focus

CF 07:37 Uh, I remember playing for auditions and the person would come up and they needed sheet music, so I don't know why they would need to come down and actually stick their face in the sheet music, but then not thinking about it, they would come to give me the tempo, and if they weren't very experienced, they'd click in my face. Okay. Oh, okay.

S4 07:57 Just you just sing the song. Sing the song quietly. It's awful.

CF 08:06 Nice. We have an in our loft is an interesting one.

S4 08:11 Oh, definitely.

CF 08:13 So, like, when it came in to the, um, to online learning during the pandemic, um, how was your neurodivergence, um, affected by it?

Tell me how this was affected during, um, online learning. Uh, yeah, I'll just put that again. If this was the case, you know, was it affected?

S4 08:35 Um, yeah. Yes and no, but I actually it affected. It was great during it. I really liked it, but then affected it quite severely going back to in-person. Mhm. Um, and it took me a while to get used to not being able to mute people. The it was too much. And again, at this point in my life, I wasn't diagnosed. I didn't know what it was. I just thought that I had really intense anxiety. Um, and so again, it was it was really difficult for me going back to normal after the pandemic in more ways than one. Um, but yeah, especially with online learning, like being back at school. Um, because I was going into my final year at high school and at the, at the end of the pandemic, and going back was awful. Like suddenly I surrounded by all these people, um, and again, it was all people I knew, but people that I hadn't seen in over a year. Um, I found it really, really intense, and it kind of had quite a severe impact on my mental health, um, at the time as well. Um, and that's when I really started to notice, especially my OCD symptoms, um, kicking in and kind of maybe this is a bit more than just anxiety. Um, so yeah, I really enjoyed online learning. It was the it was the after. It was it was getting too comfortable with it. And then the aftermath was not so good.

Commented [CF424]: Liked online learning

Commented [CF425]: Reverting to inperson tuition severely affected her

Commented [CF426]: Couldn't mute people inperson

CF 10:15 Yeah. Yeah. And then of course, you've had it comes down as well to that massive change which you know could be challenging. Mhm.

S4 10:26 Yeah. Exactly.

CF 10:28 It's great. If it's any consolation I guess a teacher found it also extremely difficult. Um, my own diagnosis came after the pandemic because my masking just fell away. I got no strategy.

S4 10:42 Yeah. That was literally it was like all of a sudden again, because with online learning, I was in my own space. So, I was being myself. I wasn't feeling like I had to mask because I was sat in my bedroom and that was fine. And then going back, yeah, suddenly I was like, okay, I'm used to being sat in my bedroom and I haven't masked now in a year and a bit because when I'm at home with my family, I'm kind of, I can be myself. And this is weird. And yeah, it was, it was, it was a lot. But I think it led to probably quite a lot of diagnosis. So that's good.

Commented [CF427]: Enjoyed online learning, but aftermath was difficult

Commented [CF428]: Online learning can take place in own space

Commented [CF429]: Online learning allows unmasking

Commented [CF430]: Own space allows sustained unmasking

CF 11:18 Yeah, absolutely. I mean I got away with it for 47 years.

S4 11:22 Yeah. I only made it 18 years. So you didn't have to be.

CF 11:29 A friend of mine. She was in the 60s when she was diagnosed.

S4 11:34 Wow, that's so cool. I'm like, that's impressive. Yeah. Bless her heart.

CF 11:40 Yeah, I think that's about me. Um, and this is all about you. And then you'll sort of experience what learning platforms that you use during the pandemic.

S4 11:50 Um, so for school it was all um, teams. Um, and then because. So I did growing up I did weekly like musical theater classes as well. Um, a theater school. So those went on to mostly zoom. Um, um, yeah, it was, it was zoom for those, um, and we kind of just got sent the link via email, like we got send a weekly timetable and it just had all the various links. Um, so, yeah, between teams and zoom.

CF 12:24 So thinking about you, um, your theater group and 1 to 1 singing lessons, I'm assuming to during that. Yeah. Um, what film worked for you? Um, what were the difficulties that you encountered?

S4 12:37 Um, I liked something that worked for me personally, which I don't know if it would work for everyone. Was that, um, a lot of the time she would send me warm up stuff before. Mhm. Um, so she sent me a bunch of warm up materials um, that she'd created. And then I kind of did that in my own time before the lesson, which I really enjoyed. And then when we went into the lesson, she'd kind of say, "how did you find this"? And if I had any difficulties or anything, I noticed, then she. Then I discuss them with her. Um, I enjoyed that. Uh, the one thing that was annoying, um, in terms of singing lessons, was just like the delay sometimes, uh, and that sort of stuff. Um, yeah, I it worked better for me getting sent stuff. Doing it on my own time and then speaking about it rather than trying to do it live because so. Well what we do is like warm up before we come home and speak for a bit, and then we focus on that song. Yeah. So I'd have the track and I'd be singing the song, and then I finish and there'd be an awkward 32nd for. So she got up and that sort of stuff. Um, yeah. You're not thinking about that

CF 14:01 How did the how did that pause affect you? Did it? Did you have any?

Commented [CF431]: Used Teams and Zoom

Commented [CF432]: Enjoyed asynchronous warmups sent by singing teacher

Commented [CF433]: Teacher provided the opportunity to clarify the form of the warm ups

Commented [CF434]: Delays were annoying in online 1:1s

S4 14:06 I stopped myself every single time. I was like, she's going to say that was awful. Like, every single time without fail.

Commented [CF435]: Connection lag led to fears of criticism

CF 14:14 Yeah. Yeah. Well, um, there was something we said earlier on, and it's completely left my mind now. And, uh, and as these said.

S4 14:26 I liked getting sent stuff. I liked warming up before, like. Yeah.

CF 14:30 Thinking about that, um, how it was. So you received your stuff. Um, was it the teacher demonstrating or did you have something written or was it, by the way?

S4 14:40 Um, it was usually videos where I could see her and see the piano. Uh, and then occasionally it was like voice memos, but it was always of her doing. We're going to do, uh, on one, two, three, four, five. She'd do it twice and then she'd start, and I did that sort of thing.

Commented [CF436]: Providing context of pitch range by seeing the teacher AND where the pitches were on the piano

Commented [CF437]: Teacher modelled the exercises

CF 15:02 So when you're thinking about it that you know what the purpose of the exercise was and the form of the exercise. How we do it.

S4 15:11 Yeah. So most of the time she'd give a bit of an explanation at the start of the video. So she'd say, this is going to target this area of your voice because that's what we're working on. And then she'd say the set up for this would be, uh, like vocal set up. Then she'd do it twice and then and for me to do it. So it was very, kind of very clear. Um, and obviously at that point I would have been like 16, 17. So I was starting to understand the variance of my voice. I was starting to kind of I was aware of that. Um, obviously for someone younger, perhaps it maybe wouldn't be ideal. Um, but for me it was perfect. Just get the explanation. She did it, and I did it.

Commented [CF438]: Explanation at the beginning of the video

Commented [CF439]: Set focus on managing the range and the setup required to achieve it

Commented [CF440]: Repetition and space to do it for herself

Commented [CF441]: Questions whether success would have suited a younger learner

Commented [CF442]: This approach was perfect for her

CF 15:58 Yeah. That's great. Um, I think we've sort of covered that with acting through these. I think so that's basically what I'm doing at the moment, at the end of the study, how it was going to work was it was going to be do the interviews, create the thing, and then do more interviews. Um, I'm working in a slightly different way because it's the deadline is much, much earlier than this whole thing's going to allow. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to be making the product. Yeah, I've done all the study and then I've been participating and going to get access to it, and then we can just have a sort of informal conversation about how that works. Where you get that sort of access to it and you get whatever it comes out of alignment in terms of training. Uh, So I'm just. But thinking about

the product, the prototype. Um, it's going to feature digital content that's aimed towards helping you divergent singers.

S4 17:01 Um.

CF 17:02 What features are there any features that would make such a platform useful and accessible to you?

S4 17:09 Uh, I'm. Trying to think. I think for the most part, for me, like, digital digital platforms are entirely helpful. The fact that it is digital is great. Yeah. Um, the only thing would just be that everything is clearly labeled and that sort of stuff, because I can get I can get stressed out if it's like zero point, like, you know, if it's kind of got weird names and yeah, I can't, I can't work out where things are. So like clear labeling, um, saying X or this is exercise one and well as or, you know, something like that. Um, um, and like I said, that kind of explanation of what it does for the voice, whether that's a written or whether it's you saying it. Um, I, I'm comfortable with either, but I know for some people it might be helpful to have both options. Um, so like, yeah, one written explanation and one wasn't you explaining it, um, one video or audio, that would be probably the only thing that I would. Yeah, I think is me for.

Commented [CF443]: Online platforms are very beneficial

Commented [CF444]: Clear labelling needed to avoid anxiety

Commented [CF445]: Easy navigation to the work

Commented [CF446]: Spoken and/or visual explanations

CF 18:24 [DOG BARKS]. A few seconds. My co-researcher is letting me know that he wants my attention. But my attention is required over there. That's. I don't know if you can hear him barking. Yes.

S4 18:34 That's right.

CF 18:43 And here's my co uh uh.

S4 18:47 Hello?

CF 18:48 Uh. No. Relax. He's a little old man.

S4 18:52 He's so sweet. I miss my dog so much. My mom has a little Jack Russell, and she's the best. Um. And she is a little grumpy old lady, so he's. Yeah.

CF 19:05 And he's 14 years old now.

S4 19:07 Oh. Bless him.

CF 19:11 He has a terrible heart murmur, so we nearly lost him in January. Oh, he's doing okay on his meds.

S4 19:18 Yeah, it looks good. I wouldn't be able to tell you. Don't look a day over 21.

CF 19:26 Yeah. Nobody says that to me. Other than the, uh. But the research. Are you okay with me having a couple minutes?

S4 19:36 I'm very happy with it.

CF 19:39 This will make great reading on the transcripts. Going with my, uh.

S4 19:44 Yeah.

CF 19:45 Um. So. like in terms of. So let me just. Get myself back into the mindset of. So you like you to me. How do you like your information?

S4 19:58 I personally am happy with either written or video, but I think it would be helpful to have both option. Um, because also like for me, sometimes I'm like, I can't be off stream in that it's not going to go in if I read it like, you know what I mean? Whereas or sometimes I'm like, I can't listen to that. Like that won't work. So then I need to read it. So having both options would be to satisfying.

CF 20:25 Okay.

S4 20:26 Yeah. Yeah. It literally depends on it. Could depend on the I work depends on on my mood. Sometimes I have the capacity to take stuff in audio. Um, and sometimes I need to read it to actually like for it to actually sink in.

CF 20:43 Yeah. Yeah. Um, I find that sometimes there are websites that I can really engage and go, yeah, that's fine, I'm fine on them. There are other websites that I go, no, go. Um, what sort of things do you think you'd look for in, like to make the platform totally accessible? What if.

S4 21:09 Um, I think visuals are a big thing. Um, I think for me, the ones that stand out are ones that are really, like, concise and clear. I don't like when I go on to websites and there's like a bunch of things popping up and those like adverts popping up and I'm like, uh, I don't know what's happening. So I like, you know, very clear and concise. Like I said before, I like things to be labeled clearly. Um, and just like, yeah, a clear, a clear. This is what this is. Um, and obviously, I'll know what it is because you'll be sending it to me, so.

Commented [CF447]: Personal preference for video and/or written instructions

Commented [CF448]: Preferences for receiving information vary

Commented [CF449]: Preferences are mood dependent

Commented [CF450]: Visual element of websites are very important

Commented [CF451]: Clarity and conciseness are stand out features of a website

Commented [CF452]: Dislikes popups, which cause insecurity

CF- But, um, as, as a kind of website viewer or or whatever viewer, um, who wasn't part of the study?

S4- Yeah. Something clear, something that has perhaps an explanation of what you're doing and what this is. And I think in terms of like overall accessibility, even those kind of about me pages having an option for that to be audio described as well. I think is really important, and I don't think enough websites offer it. Um, I think with a lot of online platforms, it tends to be everything is written down and it says, look, this is online, this is amazing. But for people who that's not accessible to you, I think having everything with the ability to be audio described or just having a video version of everything, uh, is something that would be really? Yeah, really attractive to me as a neurodiverse consumer.

Commented [CF453]: Suggests option for audio description

Commented [CF454]: Audio description is lacking on many website

Commented [CF455]: Websites can be very text based, but this isn't always accessible

Commented [CF456]: The neurodivergent person as consumer

CF 22:51 I'm like as. Do you ever use any of the accessibility features of some of the websites?

S4 22:58 I know that they. I know that they do exist, but a lot of the time I kind of and this is like a personal an and whatever. But I kind of think, oh, well, I don't need it. So it's fine. Like I'll just make do with this and I know that I could use them. Um, but again, I think that's just a personal and probably lazy thing. I think, well.

Commented [CF457]: Knows accessibility features exist, but doesn't need them

Commented [CF458]: Tends 'make do', knowing that they are available

CF 23:23 What if there was a way of if there's, like, something easy to say 'press this'

CF 23:30 Yeah, exactly. And then it just gave you some simple options that you could change. Let's click.

S4 23:37 Yeah. That would be that would be ideal because I just I feel like with a lot of like Apple products, you have to like go into the settings and change all that. And I'd say, well, I don't need it. It's fine. I'll just make do. Whereas, yeah, if it was something on the website right there, I could click and it's yeah, that would be great.

Commented [CF459]: Accessibility options require going into settings on Apple products

CF 23:57 That's that's great. Um, I'm just trying to think, is there anything else, if anything else you'd like to tell me about what your thoughts are with it?

Commented [CF460]: Searching for accessibility is offputting

S4 24:05 I don't think so. I'm really excited to to see what it is. And I'm. Yeah, happy. Happy that I saw it on Instagram and that I can be.

CF 24:14 Happy with it is going to take me a little time to.

S4 24:17 Yeah, that's fine.

CF 24:18 Because the main thing is, first of all, I've got to get this assessment.

S4 24:21 Get it. Yeah.

CF 24:23 But once that's done I'm going to I'm going to go full pelt on it because I think it's I feel it's very much needed. And the feedback I'm getting is that it's very much needed.

S4 24:32 I agree, and I as a singing teacher as well, um, albeit a much lower level singing teacher, but I can see the use for it. Um, even amongst those the littler children. Um, there's a lot of them who are in the process of, of diagnosis and are finding it really difficult to to kind of go to REDACTED. So again, like, it would be really. Yeah. I can see it being very successful and helpful among the community. Um, yeah.

CF 25:07 And autistic practitioner too. You feel that you own neurodivergent. It helps you when you work with these kids?

S4 25:17 Yes. So much I think. I don't know what it is, but I think with part of that, I have this really great ability to be able to connect with the children. I don't know if it's because I have the same like I can. I have no filter. Um, especially now that I've kind of I'm comfortable with my diagnosis. I tend not to mask unless I feel unsafe in situations and with children. It's like I don't need to, like I can be so and so myself. And I think that really works. Works for that. Like it seems to bounce off them even. You know, a lot of the children are neurotypical, but when you're children, you just say what you think. And that is kind of it is. And that's how I function is what I say, what I think. So yeah, I do think it really it does age me a lot WORDING. And I have a lot of people saying, oh, like you can connect with them so well, like they love you. They, you know, they really understand what you're saying. And I was like, well, that's just because I'm on this guy thing. WORDING. But it seems to work.

CF 26:32 Yeah. It's so helpful. Thank you.

S4 26:35 That's all right.

CF 26:36 I'm going to stop the recording.

Commented [CF461]: Sees the potential platform as being more widely useful to the community

Commented [CF462]: Has connection with ND students

Commented [CF463]: Self-acceptance leads to no masking with children, which can be successful

Commented [CF464]: Approach seems to benefit neurotypical students as well

Commented [CF465]: Gets feedback that she connects with the students, so approach seems effective

END OF INTERVIEW

S5

SPEAKER1	00:00	Yes. There we go. I nearly had a nasty moment. So that's. So that's what it's all about. So thank you for doing this. So tell me, how would you identify yourself in terms of neurodivergence? What flavor are you?
SPEAKER2	00:19	Um, yeah, it's for me. I, um, not yet diagnosed, so I'm, like, on a waiting list to figure it out, but I'm suspected to be on the autism spectrum. Um, I took the quiz that's on linked to the university, and I got flying colours. So that's kind of the extent of what I know. [CF1]
SPEAKER3	00:46	Yeah, yeah. So how, how does your suspected autism. And I'm going to. The thing is, I'm going to just treat you as though that's the case because actually if it's not, I'm still going to treat you in a way that works for you. So how does it affect you in sort of every. Well, in your training, what's occurring?
SPEAKER2	01:13	The main thing for me is like the regulation of my emotions. [CF2] So for years I just thought I was very anxious and that's especially around, like, social situations. [CF3] So the adjustments for me is just making sure that like, tutors are aware or classmates are aware that I'm...I mean, I don't really know, like, have anxious tendencies and that if I'm ever closed off or I need a moment or I need five minutes[CF4], I'm not upset because of the work and I don't want to come across as disrespectful, but I may just need some, just more awareness from like the tutors mainly. [CF5] That's kind of like the main thing for me.

SPEAKER3	02:10	Yeah. Yeah.
SPEAKER1	02:12	Yeah, yeah, sure. Just excuse me for a second. What I'm going to do is I'm going to do a double. A double recording. I'm going to use my phone to audio record. I'm going to take these out so that I can. So that you come through.
SPEAKER3	02:25	That's fine. Okay.
SPEAKER1	02:28	Just going to set my voice for going here as well. Sorry. Great. So that's, that's fine. Okay. And like, in terms of, like, when you. Then you learn, is there any particular thing that you find more challenging in terms of sort of the environment, the teaching language, that kind of thing? Does it affect you in that way at all?
SPEAKER2	03:24	Maybe the main thing that's tricky for me is like, reading tone^[CF6], so I don't know whether that falls under, like the language of the tutors, but just like feeling like if someone has more of a harsh tone when they're giving feedback, ^[CF7] for example, which is totally fair, it's almost like it's an attack on me personally. ^[CF8] And I, I definitely would spend time, like, thinking over, is it like, me, do they hate me personally or are they just trying to give me feedback? ^[CF9] Trying to figure that out. I mean, in terms of environment, I guess, like, I really don't work well with disruption from other classmates^[CF10]. Like if we're in a class setting, not on the one. On one, obviously, but like, yeah, interruptions and chatting from other people. I, I, it does get on my nerves. ^[CF11]
SPEAKER1	04:33	Yeah, yeah, that's, it's good, it's good to know. Thank you for sharing that with me. What do you feel you need to accommodate your autism, if anything?

SPEAKER2	05:54	Honestly don't feel like there's too much that I need to accommodate. [CF12] I think that the main thing is just awareness from whoever's leading the session just of like, how I am or like, my main thing is that I come across as rude when I first meet people. [CF13] So having someone know that I'm not being rude or weird, like, I'm actually just trying to like, process what's happening in the session. Yeah, that's the main thing, I think, for me. [CF14]
SPEAKER1	06:37	Yeah. Cool. Moving swiftly on, actually. How did you go on during the pandemic, if, when it came to all the online stuff. Do you think your autism affect, was it an issue during that. What did you find? So I actually, during the pandemic was in a anti musical theater time, so I actually didn't have any one to ones, but I have had experience with online learning, which is why I still think I have relevant answers. But during the pandemic, I, Yeah, I wasn't doing singing lessons. It was 2022, I think or three that I started doing them again.
SPEAKER2		So I actually, during the pandemic was in a anti-musical theater time, so I actually didn't have any one-to-ones, but I have had experience with online learning, which is why I still think I have relevant answers. But during the pandemic, I, Yeah, I wasn't doing singing lessons. It was 2022, I think or three that I started doing them again.
SPEAKER3	07:36	Yeah. Yeah.
SPEAKER1	07:37	I'm just trying to think back Now. So when 2023, would that have been A level time for you then?
SPEAKER2	07:46	I finished my. Well, I did BTech. I'm old.

SPEAKER1	07:52	I've just realized. Yeah, I do have this. Just for the records, I do have this sort of knowledge of background knowledge about you.
SPEAKER1	07:59	Yeah. So what's the experience of the... so what's your experience of online learning? That's.
SPEAKER2	08:06	Yeah. So when I decided that I wanted to audition for drama schools again[CF15], I. Well, once one, I found a teacher that was local to me that used to teach me at another school and then she was in person and that almost seemed like back to normal. That wasn't anything really disrupted from COVID But I then found a teacher online and she's based in Bristol. So it was very much. It was basically half an hour sessions on Zoom. And I think I would have them bi-weekly or like every other week, I think, or maybe once a week. [CF16]
SPEAKER1	09:00	Okay, and so how did you find that experience?
SPEAKER2	09:07	It's hard to know whether it is because it was online or whether she was quite an expensive teacher. And a lot of my friends who, who I used to train with, who are in the West End now are like, use her as a teacher. [CF17] So, I was like, okay. She's like, she's good[CF18]. And I found it quite upsetting. It was very like, blunt[CF19], I would say, because it was a time constraint, half an hour and she was very aware of like not wasting anyone's money. [CF20] She wanted to get the most out the sessions for her students, which is nice. I at least on one occasion got upset in the session just about feeling the pressure of having to re audition again[CF21], I think. But I found it very hard to understand her like, tone or her what she was trying to, to convey to me because I think something about being online is like, it was really hard to know if she was like pissed off or, you know, not very happy at something that I was doing. [CF22] It was kind of, I found it difficult to read that online. And I guess also maybe you couldn't be more personal. Like for me, I've spent three years working on like an online industry. So for me, like having meetings online, like, this is like now I'm in work mode. And I found it was hard to like have a chat, just kind of like develop a

personal relationship to them because it was online and also because time was so precious.[\[CF23\]](#)

SPEAKER3 11:09 Yeah.

SPEAKER1 11:11 Yeah, that's really interesting. I mean at the moment it seems, you know, from my point of view, like this is a really easy-going chat that's working really well.

What do you think the difference might have been? And you know, this not an attempt again to have a go at the teacher.

Not interested in that.

No.

You know, what's, what's the difference?

SPEAKER2 11:36 I think obviously knowing you and having spoken to you last year so much. [\[CF24\]](#)

Like still though, when I've logged on and I'm waiting for the meeting to start, I'm like, okay, I've like have a crack. I think that's just how I am. But yeah, I suppose like already having a relationship with you as a person, like before this. [\[CF25\]](#)

And I think it also comes down to actually there was like a time restraint from the sessions before.[\[CF26\]](#) Yeah, like the, the lessons were, they were so rushed and she already like, she already thought that I was behind on prepping for my auditions[\[CF27\]](#). So it was very much like a panic in general from the sessions which it just[\[CF28\]](#). I don't know whether you need to have a personal relationship or a relaxed relationship where you can joke a bit with a teacher. But I think for me it, that's very much a make or break whether I'm going to like enjoy or want to put the work in or like feel like I'm growing as a performer or whatever it is.[\[CF29\]](#)

SPEAKER3 13:08 Yeah, that's really interesting. Could I sort of skip ahead because I think we're covering a lot of ground.

So what did you. Yeah, what did you use for the singing lessons when you're online, when you were.

This is post pandemic. What did you use?

SPEAKER2	13:35	We use zoom [CF30] and I would basically have to have the backing track on my, on my phone and then I would use my laptop to have the lesson on. Yeah, that did also mean I couldn't record any of the sessions. [CF31] So I, I oftentimes I'm like wish I just had a recording to like remember what was said in the session. [CF32]
SPEAKER1	14:04	Well did your teacher not record the sessions?
SPEAKER3	14:07	No.
SPEAKER1	14:09	It's really interesting because I, I've just been teaching, I've just been teaching a one to one and the, and I've got it set up to auto record and then I just send out the link afterwards so that you can go back and you get the steps.
SPEAKER2	14:25	Yeah, that would have been good [CF33] .
SPEAKER1	14:27	So, it's so like in terms of like then retention of the information, is that a thing for you just being able to get that call back and stuff?
SPEAKER2	14:38	Yeah. Yeah, I definitely utilise all my recordings that I have from my singing lessons from the past year. Like I do definitely look back on that. I wouldn't trust myself just to retain everything. And also I do take physical notes as well usually. [CF34]
SPEAKER1	15:16	Yeah.
SPEAKER1	15:17	Oh, I am. I don't know if this is anything but I'm also dyslexic, which I've got my diagnosis this year. So for me it's like recording the sessions and also recording lectures is something that I rely heavily on. [CF35] Yeah, yeah, that's. That's quite.
SPEAKER1	15:21	And to be honest, I think it's great. It wasn't a thing when I was at music college and then one way I was quite glad it wasn't! But then not having. Going away practicing and only thinking, oh, what's that person

said? How am I supposed to do this? What did I sound like when I did this? Yeah, those sorts of cues. Yeah, that makes total sense.

And it's not uncommon for people to have more than one thing going on with neurodivergence. So all of this sounds totally normal.

Could you tell me about how you use your recordings? What do you do with them when you. How do you get the best out of them?

SPEAKER2	16:08	Usually I will have something in my mind that I've remember, like be like what was that thing that I remember that was helpful to me in that moment? And I'll usually listen back, only I wouldn't listen back to the whole recording, but I'll listen back to specific moments that I have a small memory in my head of. [CF36] But mainly I use like the recordings of like the exercises that we've used in the class as well. [CF37] Like I would say I use that more than like recapping the information and then usually also I like have like a database for like singing exercises that I started to create last year[CF38]. Like an Excel spreadsheet. Sothen I'll put it into my spreadsheet.
SPEAKER3	17:15	That's brilliant. I love it!
SPEAKER2	17:19	Honestly, it's taken a bit of a pause since a few months. Well, I haven't been doing too much singing but. And this I'm getting it back on track next year. It's going to be amazing[CF39].
SPEAKER1	17:35	Yes. Yeah, I really. Oh yeah. I really like that. What it seems to me just to sort of talk about what I think I've heard is that it almost seems like like you like the one-to-one stuff. But also there's an asynchronous bit too. It's sort of not in real time bit that sort of does that sort of make sense. So, you do all your stuff in class, but you also like stuff that's not in real time where you can just go back to it and go back to it just to embed knowledge.
SPEAKER2	18:14	Yeah. I don't think I could trust just doing the work in class because I don't think I would make any

progress. But I think having that time myself to digest it, that's the most helpful. Yeah, I have to have that. I have to have like my routine, otherwise I won't do anything.

Like, I have to have the rules. [\[CF40\]](#)

SPEAKER1 18:23 Mhm. Mhm.

SPEAKER2 18:25 But I think having that time myself to digest it that's the most helpful. [\[CF41\]](#)

SPEAKER1 18:30 Yeah, that's really interesting. I love the fact that we've got something that's so structured.

SPEAKER2 18:41 Yeah, I have to have that. I have to have like my routine, otherwise I won't do anything. [\[CF42\]](#)

Like, I have to have the rules.

SPEAKER1 19:02 So we've sort of talked about this a little bit. Did you have any particular difficulties when you were using Zoom teacher, other than that, like, technological type stuff or just in general?

SPEAKER2 19:29 Yeah, I've already kind of mentioned like the difficulty.

One was like, not being able to listen back to the sessions as well as, like not being able to feel like I could personally have a relationship with my teacher, like solely over Zoom.

Yeah. I feel like just knowing that expectations, like, it wasn't very clear for me. [\[CF43\]](#)

Maybe it was just this teacher and there was a miscommunication. But like, when I first corresponded with her and I wasn't aware of like, what actually these sessions entailed before I started.

So, like arriving warm, for example, I wasn't. I didn't arrive like warmed up for the first session because I assumed that we would do that in the session. And then five minutes before the. It started, she said, oh, and arrive warm, by the way.

And that was like, okay, too late now. But oh, like, yeah, I guess also like, finding a place to have those online sessions. [\[CF44\]](#)

		Like sometimes they were at like 8 in the morning and I mean, I was lucky.
		I lived at home at the time and my parents have had me singing at whatever hours my whole life.
		But like, I suppose, like, just checking that, like, my mum isn't in a meeting in the room next door so that I can have a singing lesson. [CF45]
		Um, that's like. Yeah, another thing of online learning, I guess, with anything but yeah
SPEAKER1	21:37	Yeah, cool. So sort of looking then at what I'm aiming to do with all of this. So the product at the end of the study is going to be a prototype of the online learning platform and it will have digital content on it that's going to be directed towards the needs of neurodivergent singers.
		Are there any features that would make a platform useful and accessible to you?
SPEAKER2	22:15	Is this platform, like, it would be solely online?
		Like, no, like, connection to a teacher. It would just be like, this is how the exercise, how you perform it.
		.
SPEAKER2	22:59	I prefer a lot of like information in like what the exercise is. For example like why I need to perform this exercise and like when to perform it. Like how it fits into like my routine of. Singing my exercises. [CF46] Like. I think maybe that's fine if there is someone there. You know, I could ask that. But if it ever becomes like.
SPEAKER1	23:37	So some sort of interface between. Between yourself and me as the owner of the site, to be able to...
SPEAKER2	23:47	Yeah. Or just like. Yeah, I guess it doesn't have to be linked to, like, a person having to, like, answer all that, but maybe just in the first instance, like, making sure that every exercise does have all the information linked to it. Yeah, I would say. And I guess also if you're not led by someone specifically, it might be, I would worry that I would be performing it wrong. [CF47]

Like, sometimes if I'm doing, like, YouTube videos of, like, singing exercises, and I do if I'm doing it, like, every day or, like, for a long period of time, I think if actually, if I'm not in that singing, like, mindset, if I'm not, I'm like, oh, I've got to do this today^[CF48].

So I'll just sit and I'll put it on. And I'm actually, like, sat and I'm slumped and I'm, it's almost like having the extra information is actually helpful to me to know, okay, reminder, like, you have to sing this. Like, making sure, I don't know, your neck is supported, you know, like. Or making sure you remember to do this in the exercise. ^[CF49]

This is kind of a weird tangent, but, like, for example, I'm doing, like, Pilates YouTube videos at home. And in the middle of the exercise, once you're like, halfway through, she'll give you the reminders of, like, make sure you're engaging your abs and make sure your back's straight. And I don't realize that I'm not engaging my abs until she says it. ^[CF50]

And I think, oh, yeah, I really can do that more. So I guess, like, yeah, for me, it's like making sure that I am completing the exercise as best I can without having the human reminder of like, oh, and you're not doing this. ^[CF51]

Just like a general reminder this is how it should be, how you should stand, how you should be performing it.

SPEAKER1	26:16	So do you think there's like a correlation then between sort of learning the form of an exercise in like a physical exercise thing and.
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And then singing is, is what you say in that that it needs to be in the same?

I don't know, you tell me.

SPEAKER2	26:37	Well, I think so and I didn't think it was relevant at all until like this last year. I think it's from REDACTED. He says that like singing is like exercise and you're stretching your muscles and if you don't stretch your muscles, then it's like you're doing a new routine, a new like workout routine for the
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first time and your muscles aren't gonna know what to do. And then over time you'll build the muscles and you'll be able to do it and Yeah, I think, I guess, yeah, it could be looked at how people exercise. [\[CF52\]](#)

Like for me, like putting a YouTube video on at home, I'd say is like similar to like having singing exercise sometimes to put on like extend your lower range and it will walk you through the exercises or, yeah, having a PT is like having a singing teacher, but it is like you have to do it every day to improve and I didn't realize that was the thing. [\[CF53\]](#)

SPEAKER3	27:47	So when you watching any of these videos because obviously you have seen some of these things, how do you like to receive your information? Is there more than one way? Is there a particular favorite way? How do you like to take it in.
SPEAKER2	28:08	In terms of if I'm doing like a singing YouTube video or do you mean like in general teaching just.
SPEAKER1	28:15	Like in the way that it's presented? You know, watching video is. Do you have something else on? Do you use this like subtitle type things? Is there a speed?
SPEAKER2	28:34	Oh, well, the first time I'm very help happy to have all the information that like I will. I would want to, to know like why I'm doing it, etc. But then once I've done it a few times and I know exactly what they're about to say, I just have to skip through through the video. Like I find that really annoying when I'm like, I know exactly what you're going to say. I've watched this video 10 times. I just need the exercises. [CF54]
SPEAKER1	29:06	Yeah.
SPEAKER2	29:07	I personally prefer something that I can just listen to actually rather than pull up a whole video. [CF55] I don't need to. To see someone sat at the piano and Doing it. But maybe sometimes like visual can be helpful [CF56] . But usually I would put it on and then like maybe walk around and perform the exercises. [CF57]
SPEAKER1	29:38	[CF LAPTOP CHARGING ISSUE] When you're looking at websites or, um, or any of this stuff of some reason, except my computer's, um, my problem. Just

swapping. Oh. Which I think is. Something to turn into. Well, that's not what I'm looking for. Mhm. It's not all charging. Yes. It's just Pete. Good.

You know when you go on to a website and you just go oh no thank you.

What sort of turns you away from like as I'm thinking about the platform itself, sort of make you go, no thank you.

And what sort of things? What do you like?

SPEAKER2	30:35	Well, this is probably not relevant, but an obvious one for me is, is like ads and pop ups^[CF58]. I absolutely like if I have to click through so many things to get to a page. ^[CF59] I mean for me it's just having clear information. ^[CF60] Like if a web page is too busy or is too overwhelming, especially as someone who like can't read that well. ^[CF61] Like it's very clear. You know, sometimes on, on the, on your phone or something, you can like switch to like easy read or something. I'm not actually sure what it's called. Reader. Okay. Like just like having. Yeah. Yeah. But I mean sometimes it's, it doesn't really work that well because it would like remove the images or whatever. ^[CF62] Yeah. I mean I think for me it's just like being clear and, and being to easily, to be able to like easily understand. ^[CF63] Like don't know if this makes sense, like the journey of your time on the site. Like if I'm, if it's confusing what I have to do next, where I have to go. But that's just kind of web design in general, I think just having a clear piece of information. ^[CF64] No gimmicks. Yeah. ^[CF65]
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SPEAKER3	32:42	Yeah.
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SPEAKER1	32:42	Are there any colors or anything like that or fonts or that kind of design? Is there anything that you like there?
SPEAKER2	32:52	What does that mean?
		To me? I mean I don't really have any specific. I don't personally use colors. I, I actually just find it easy to read on white and yeah.
		Fonts. I don't really have a specific but you know, as long as it's clear, I think that's the main thing. [CF66]
		I also have like extensions to read web pages. [CF67]
		Okay.
		So I don't use it very often, but if there's a big chunk of text and I'm finding It hard to like concentrate. I think that's something that you can build into a site but you can obviously, like, if you know about it, you can get the extensions.
		So yeah, potentially that's like an accessibility thing of just having like text to speech if it's written information [CF68] .
SPEAKER	34:15	But yeah, because you like it taken. You like to take. Take things in auditory.
		Yeah. Well that's great.

END OF INTERVIEW

S6

CF	00:21	Hello.
S6	00:24	Hi. I'm sorry faff with the emails and stuff
CF	00:30	Oh, not a problem. Not a problem at all. It's absolutely fine. Thank you for being so accommodating. It's much appreciated.
S6	00:37	I've just got the questions up. Is that okay? Just to perfectly.
CF	00:45	That's absolutely fine. To be honest with you, I have to get them up myself because my memory's so awful that I. I'll just forget otherwise.

It's lovely to meet you and thank you for taking part. So do you want to tell me a little bit about yourself and what you do?

S6 01:09 Yeah. So I'm S6 and I'm 22. I did performing arts from age three^[CF1], was gearing up to go into the industry^[CF2], and I finished my, like, official training at 19 just before turning 20^[CF3].

And I kind of made a shift in my last year to from musical theater to go into stage management because my^[CF4]... The musical theater industry just isn't very accommodating of neurodivergent people and chronically ill people. ^[CF5]

So I wanted to keep my love for theatre alive. And so literally impulse decision decided, you know what? I'm gonna apply for the stage management course at COLLEGE^[CF6]. And I went to the interview and came to learn that it's one of the most competitive courses in the country. So I was like, great, have no chance. And I ended up getting a place.^[CF7] So I was like, okay.

And then just after turning 20, I had a huge mental health crisis and had to defer my place. ^[CF8] And during that year that I had to kind of figure things out and recover. I was kind of told, I don't think you'll be ready for next year.

And the way COLLEGE works is that you can defer under extenuating circumstances, but you can't do it two years in a row. So I ended up having to withdraw my place. ^[CF9] And that was a lot to deal with, a big, big thing. But it definitely gave room to a lot for a lot of thinking and reflecting. And I realized that actually pursuing this as a career was completely killing my passion. ^[CF10]

And I realized that my... my lived experience of mental health and being neurodivergent was what I wanted to pursue. So I'm now a lived experience member. I do, like, talks about autism and my struggles and everything. And I'm gearing up to do peer support, working, and hopefully in the near future should start full time employment or part time.^[CF11] We're not sure yet. But the whole of it had to change for me to regrow my love of theatre^[CF12].

So I did play recently and I stepped on stage and I was like, okay, finally I feel like I can, like, have fun again with it. ^[CF13]

And I'm still finding that with singing again ^[CF14] because for so long you get berated on these things and like, a lot of the time you see it as constructive criticism, but it's actually not. ^[CF15] And you seek it out and you have to learn to control that rejection sensitivity because it's not allowed. ^[CF16] So you, you go home and you're like, it's fine, it's fine, it's fine. When it's actually. It's just not a conducive environment for neurodivergent people. ^[CF17]

And I wasn't diagnosed until my last year in college. And that shifted a lot of my perception^[CF18]. Like, a lot to do with that

mental health crisis was the sheer amount of workload that I had in my last year change everything.[\[CF19\]](#) Wo And I'd struggled with my mental health for many years. [\[CF20\]](#)

So, you know, I've been gearing up for a while, but then finding out that I had autism and adhd, I suddenly had to start processing everything I'd been through and like, suddenly having this completely new perspective on how I go about the world, how I function, and then trying to unmask and so many things going on at once. [\[CF21\]](#)

And that's. Yeah. So I guess that's kind of a bit about me. I've got autism and adhd, a few mental health conditions, and I'm also epileptic. [\[CF22\]](#)

So that's another reason that I was like, I don't think the musical theater industry is the best place to go right now because we're still working on trying. [\[CF23\]](#)

I am part of the 5% that is photosensitive. That's a big misconception, is actually that, you know, epilepsy is just flashing lights.

It's actually only 5% of the entire epileptic population that are.

And it's actually the most common neurological disorder and a lot of people think it's quite rare, but it's.

There's. I don't know the exact number, but there's a lot of people in the UK that are epileptic and it's not just the like tonic clonic seizures and stuff. [\[CF24\]](#)

And it's so common in autism and adhd. I don't know whether, you know about the RCC X gene and all of those things. [\[CF25\]](#)

So I also struggle with hypermobility, which I was realizing that might also not be a good, good idea to, you know, keep pursuing natural flexibility. But then trying to improve it was actually causing hell of a lot of chronic pain. So, yeah, I think that's kind of. [\[CF26\]](#)

CF	06:43	Did the hypermobility have any effect when you were singing, do you think?
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S6	06:48	Yeah, so I actually I see REDACTED, she's my singing teacher and she pioneered the REDACTED COURSE.
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Yes. Yeah. So she has a good awareness on hypermobility and EDS, so she kind of is.

I happened to just end up with her because I was finding a new singing teacher.

Now I realize because the singing teacher I had before was actually triggering a lot of that rejection sensitivity for me. [\[CF27\]](#)

So I ended up like asking some people in my Saturday school, like, help me out here, I don't know who.

And my. One of my teachers had trained with her at REDACTED actually.

And so I ended up striking gold there. And I still see her five years on, maybe six, and she's incredible and having that as an awareness.

And she's grown with me, as I've told her more and more.

And she's followed the journey of everything going on. [\[CF28\]](#)

She's been very aware of everything. And I didn't realize just how much it actually did affect me, you know, posture wise and I mean even vocally, like, because it's all connective tissue really. Even eds, diagnosis or not, widespread hypermobility is still a connective tissue issue. [\[CF29\]](#)

I always laugh at saying that, but it is. It does it? Yeah. Like I. I can't sustain like long periods as much because it's not as the connective tissue in my, in my larynx, I guess, is...is not as strong. It's a lot more prone to, you know, injury and, and fatigue. [\[CF30\]](#)

So you have to adapt, I suppose, on, on that vocal massage isn't really something that you can explore much so.

Sorry. Need some water?

- | | | |
|----|-------|---|
| CF | 09:06 | <p>No, it's fine. It's fine. And I suppose really we're sort of hitting question two already, really.</p> <p>So what are the parts of neurodiversity that you need accommodations for?</p> <p>It sounds like that this is the areas. These are the areas where you do need them. So are there any other accommodations that you need or what accommodations have you had put into place?</p> <p>Sort of. Could you go into that for me?</p> |
| S6 | 09:36 | <p>Yeah. So I've had quite a few accommodations, obviously with the strobe lighting and stuff. [CF31]</p> <p>It was a bit of a battle at college and I went to a college that had actually quite a high population of neurodivergent people because it is very common in the musical theater industry [CF32].</p> |

It's like, you know, we're chasing to be other people and kind of process. Well, that is what, you know, I always say that it's storytelling, historytelling. And I link a lot of all of this to, like, Brechtian Theatre is exploring issues and social issues and just people's lives, is processing your own life through someone else^[CF33].

And so it's so common. And I don't think people often realise that they might actually be neurodivergent in the community and that that is what they're doing. ^[CF34]

So it was tricky. I think a college where, you know, the standard of the industry is. That is kind of very. You adapt to. I wouldn't call it abuse, but definitely complete submission to what people expect of you. ^[CF35]

So it was tricky. But the. I'm really, really. I. I struggle with sensory sensitivity big time^[CF36], but I also seek movement^[CF37].

So the. I'm very sensitive to noise, to light. Like, very, very prone to burnout if I don't take those rest breaks and stuff.

So, you know, I do need quieter music. ^[CF38] I do need, like, more time to process what is being asked of me. ^[CF39]

So I'm given a correction and I need some time to kind of, like, think through, ask the question^[CF40].

I. I can't have all of these questions asked. Asked him one big bit. I often need those summaries so that I can go away and actually have a document of what I've learned^[CF41]. ^[CF42]

And I think a big accommodation that Lydia has actually made for me is that she doesn't care if you move around the room, she doesn't care what you do, as long as she has three rules. ^[CF43]

She says you're allowed to have a vocal crack, you're allowed to make mistakes, you're there to make mistakes. ^[CF44]

Basically, no one is perfect at all. So she operates very much on a don't apologize for your mistakes basis. ^[CF45]

She says, take everything on, but, you know, be willing to, you know, engage in the lesson and don't leave without having misunderstood anything. ^[CF46]

Ask the questions. So I think accommodations wise, I would say, because I have adhd, I need to move all the time.

That is something that I'm just allowed to do. And if the piano is too loud, it gets turned down and lights off very much all the time and breaks.

Things like that are really important for me.

CF	13:01	Yeah, yeah, yeah. For me, it's one of. I don't know if you can tell in this light, but these are darker than you would expect. So I'm there in near shades in December.
S6	13:12	Yeah, I. I do. I'm. I wear a lot of sunglasses because of. Especially actually in the summer. For me, natural Strobe is a big, big issue. You know, you drive past trees on a bus and suddenly you have the same effect. So I have. There's a lot of research put into these lenses that actually they help 75 of photosensitive people with those flashing lights. So I have some call them my special glasses, but I walk around in those quite a lot, and because I always have them on me, the lights are too bright. You know, the big light thing that we all talk about, you know, don't. Don't turn on the big light, only little lights. So. And often, you know, you go into, like, clinic rooms, doctors, therapists, wherever you are, and those lights are so harsh. So often, I mean, the people that see me know me, so lights off. But sometimes that's not always possible. So I rock about with my bright blue glasses on all the time. [CF47]
CF	14:30	Yeah, that's I mean, that's it's interesting. Happen to think about it, though. Like when we went through the whole Covid thing, um, you know, how did how was your how was the parts of your Neurodiversity affected in the online learning environments during the pandemic. If that was the case.
S6	15:00	Yeah, I. So I didn't know then at all. I had no clue. I don't think I'd ever even entertained the fact bar. Like, I think I had one conversation with one of my friends in high school because she had just been diagnosed with adhd. And she said, "REDACTED, have you ever, like, thought about it?" And I was like, [well, I don't. I'm. Surely I would have been diagnosed now". And she was like, "no, like, it's. It's. You know, girls. Girls carry it well", I think was her exact wording. [CF48] But she was like, "you know, you've mentioned being called a lazy learner a lot and daydream all the time, and you're actually very similar to my friend who's got autism and adhd". [CF49]

And I was like, "yeah, maybe". And then I'm, I mentioned it to another friend in our group, and she was like, "oh, but you would know by now".

So I kind of just shut down the idea. And then COVID happened, I think, like a year or two later.

So I had no idea that, you know, just how much the change affected me.

And I. At the time, I was living with someone who, you know, wasn't the best person to socially isolate with. [\[CF50\]](#)

So the sheer amount of change left me feeling so out of control. [\[CF51\]](#)

And, you know, I. I really struggled with my eating at the time because you can't control anything else, really, during A pandemic, you know, you have nothing left to do. [\[CF52\]](#)

I shut off socially because I was dealing with so much, because there was so little going on and so much like, unknown. [\[CF53\]](#)

I always say, say to people, like, "it's not that I want to be in control, but more that I'm terrified of what I don't know". [\[CF54\]](#)

So Covid really was like, "oh, my God". So the change of going online with singing lessons was big because I really hate singing at home [\[CF55\]](#) because my family are very critical of it to the point that I actually developed a psychological block a couple of years ago with my singing. [\[CF56\]](#) So part of the reason that I wanted to engage in this study is to see, like, if the exercises that you put on this online platform might be able to help break me out of that. [\[CF57\]](#)

Because the. I think, you know, as. As a population, we do tend to be more prone to being very anxious people because we live in a world that isn't conducive to us. [\[CF58\]](#)

So, you know, I. I thought maybe if it's geared towards us, perhaps that can help reduce some of that anxiety around it. [\[CF59\]](#)

And. And there's. There's a huge, huge, huge link between singing and psychology.

So, you know, the vagus nerve, it runs from here to here, so it's gonna, like, your nervous system is gonna affect the way you sing and your confidence, you know, your willingness to try.

So when we went online, I held back so much. I was, you know, terrified to make big sound. So a lot of those, you know, songs that are typical in contemporary musical theater, I said to Lydia, I was like, can't, you know, I can't sing these at home. [\[CF60\]](#)

So it actually did improve my legit training a lot. I was able to really harness that side of my voice, so that was beneficial. But it

took a massive toll on me as a person because it was change. [CF61]

And also just on my training from a contemporary musical theatre side, I think something that I really struggled with online was the delay on Zoom, because, you know, it's not too bad when you're speaking. [CF62]

Get in there with a piano and singing, and then when someone has bad Wi-Fi, you start to hear yourself come back through the mic, so I had to kind of adapt to that a little bit. And suddenly, like, it was the piano wasn't playing with me anymore. We had to play the piano beforehand so that, you know, the sound didn't come back through. So we were warming up, and it was like, I'm going to play this. [CF63]

And if you didn't quite understand the exercise, if you, if you didn't quite, you know, have that auditory processing to, you know, get, get it in your brain. I felt like I wasn't doing the exercises as well as I could and I'm quite perfectionistic [CF64]. So then, you know, it takes another toll on your confidence. So that was, that was tricky. [CF65]

But then when we went back in person, the knowledge of what as a cohort she said we actually struggled with was one specific note that seemingly all her female students just seem to really struggle with. So it did have benefits. [CF66]

But it, the sheer change of it, I wasn't as motivated to keep up with it and it did slip a little bit because I was so backed up in my own head because it was, it was so intense. [CF67]

You burn out from the sheer amount that is going on in the world. [CF68]

So you can't really focus on this. That the thing you, you love, the thing you're gearing up towards, the thing you've been doing and training for since you were basically a toddler, suddenly becomes the last thing you want to think about because you don't know the, you know, the state of the world. [CF69]

You don't know where it's going. And, and I think that's still something that I struggle with today is, is the, the unknown of what the political social climate is at the moment is, makes it very hard to actually attend singing lessons because they're in Leicester Square. [CF70]

And you know, I think I'm almost willing to go online now because of that fear of the unknown. [CF71]

Like what, what will happen when I go to Central London kind of thing is, is big and I think it is a good accommodation for anxious people to go online. [CF72]

It's just making it adapted to us so it doesn't feel different, if that makes sense. [\[CF73\]](#)

Like slowly kind of having those conversations and making those accommodations with us, I think is really important [\[CF74\]](#).

- S6 22:16 So when you were doing your online training during COVID sort of, what sort of lengths of time were you spending online?
- Was, was this like a general musical theatre training at that point or was this just your singing lessons?
- CF 22:32 So when I finished my GCSEs, I had kind of planned to go to, you know, a full-time vocational musical theatre course.
- Ended up that I couldn't afford it. So I was, you know, I was meant to go to COLLEGE, couldn't afford it. [\[CF75\]](#)
- So I was like, fine, I'll just do A levels and think about drama school in two years kind of thing.
- I hated A levels though. Like I, I was quite a high academic achiever. It was just not what I wanted to do. So I ended up taking the year out and redoing year 12 and then going to a free vocational course instead, which ended up being the best decision for me. [\[CF76\]](#)
- I had an absolute blast there, especially in my first two years.
- I got to play my dream role in the second year. So that. That. That was great. [\[CF77\]](#) But the. The online singing lessons were shorter, and I think that was good because it. [\[CF78\]](#)
- The. The change of it, like, I keep talking about change because that is the main thing that I think was just so overwhelming [\[CF79\]](#) that I think the longer and longer you spend doing this online singing lesson, it kind of becomes almost so surreal. You start to think about it more like, what is going on right now? Like, why. Why am I not in the same room as my teacher? And as much as you try to distract yourself, it's, it's tricky, for sure. [\[CF80\]](#) And then I did do. So the second lockdown we had, I did do college lessons online, and we actually did our choreography project online, which didn't really include any singing.
- I don't think we did a single singing lesson because it was just not the focus because it made the choreography project so much harder. And, you know, our teachers said, like, we had so much more work to do than any other time they've done this choreography project because there's so much more. You can

mark people down in person that they couldn't have marked us down in online. [CF81]

So we had to then make up things that we. We had to talk about in our coursework. So I just remember, like, emailing my teachers, like, every single day saying, this is too much. I can't. I can't focus. [CF82] Like, the. The sheer workload of being online and trying to, you know, actually be a student and the. The like. Training in musical theatre is just not easy to do.

Online self-tapes as well. Like, oh, I wish that they. I so, so hope that we move away from self tapes eventually [CF83]. Like, at least like, on a. On a, like, overall basis. I do understand the. The usefulness of them from a creative perspective, from the director's perspective, but I'm not sure.

Perfectionist. It's a nightmare. Like, you. You can't live in the moment. You can't have that. Like, you know what we like. We like to. [CF84] I think from an ADHD perspective, I've realized so much that the chaos of being on stage, almost, that's the fear of the unknown that I like, because it's something [CF85]. It has stakes, but also it's a skill like improvisation. You never know what the other person's gonna do. Ad libs. They're just those exciting moments of the unknown. Because it's almost like they're not real. Like it's escape.

I just lost you a few seconds ago. Can you go back a little bit for me?

What was the last thing you heard me say? Oh, I think you're frozen. You've completely frozen it.

CONNECTION LOST

CF	00:00	So when I finished my gcse, I had kind of planned to go to, you know, a full time vocational musical theater course. Ended up that I couldn't afford it. So I was, you know, I was meant to go to arts ed, couldn't afford it. So I was like, fine, I'll just do A levels and think about drama school in two years kind of thing. I hated A levels though. Like I, I was quite a high academic achiever. It was just not what I wanted to do. So I ended up taking the year out and redoing year 12 and then going to a free vocational course instead, which ended up being the best decision for me.
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It has stakes, but also it's a skill like improvisation.

You never know what the other person's gonna do. Ad libs. They're just those exciting moments of the unknown.

Because it's almost like they're not real. Like it's escape.

S6 01:42 It's actually terrifying. But it's. In some ways I just think, well, what. What would I have needed at this stage? Because there was nothing at my. When I was at music college. Nothing at all. Wasn't a thing. In fact, neuro diversity was only introduced as a term in the year I left music college.

Wow.

Although autism obviously was around much more, much earlier than that.

CF 02:12 Although autism obviously was around much more, much earlier than that.

Oh, it's only in 2013 that they got rid of the term Asperger's because it, like, I don't know whether you know much about the history behind that.

Oh, yes.

But it's hugely problematic. But I think it's almost like catch 22 situation where a lot autistic people don't like change.

So a lot of people that received that diagnosis still use it because they're like, well, no, that's what I was diagnosed with.

Yeah.

And I've had debates with people on this a couple of times.

But the privilege to be diagnosed with something that isn't problematic, I think is.

Is a great privilege as someone who doesn't like change.

So I think if I had been diagnosed earlier, I would have been in that camp for sure.

But, you know, language around these things is something that's always evolving.

Like the work I do with a mental health trust, you know, they're very, very strong on not calling.

I'm I'm also a service user. So they don't say patients, they, they say service users because it makes it, you know, very.

The pathologization of it is like, you know, you're not, you're not a person anymore, you're a patient.

So language and stuff, you have to be open to kind of evolving and just.

I'm not a fan of person first language. Like I am an autistic person because it governs my brain.

My, my brain is autistic. I'm still Lissa. But Lyssa is autistic. Like Lyssa has adhd. It's when it comes down to neurotype, that is something that I, I don't like person first language for.

Absolutely. With mental health conditions. I, I think that person first language on that front is more like welcoming of recovery.

That makes sense because you're trying to move away from that, whereas with your neurotype you're trying to lean into it, if that makes sense.

But that was a complete little tangent there.

- S6 04:39 But yeah, no, it's, it's fine. I like, I also like the term neuro, neurominority, which is never really taken.
- It's never really taken off. But I think it's a. There's a book that is called. Oh, bear with me for a second. I'll tell you what, I'll give you, I'll give you the title of it at the end.
- I'm sure you can lean into it, but it's basically exploring the intersection between sort of neurodiversity and queer theory.
- So it's sort of neuroqueer and there's tons of good stuff in there.
- I'm really interested. It's a really interesting book, but I'll give you the, the title of it at the end.
- So in terms of like design, because obviously we're all different.
- What's. What makes you look away from a website like that?
- Like, I would be trying to create what, what kind of design features would you need on that to make it bearable?
- CF 05:47 Short form content, I think bursts of things, things that you don't kind of have to commit huge amounts of time to or like bits and bobs.
- I think like hyper focus is great in some situations, but it's exhausting.
- So almost like, it's hard to say because from a like demand avoidance side of it, you don't want to be told you cannot access this resource until tomorrow.

But also it's kind of encouraging when it's like you have to do this step by step because otherwise you're going to burn out.

And a lot of the time when I was training I'd find myself just singing for hours and I'd be so tired at the end because I'd end up in like a hyper focus where I was trying to perfect everything and it wasn't healthy for my voice, for my brain.

So I don't, I almost don't want to say gatekeeping it but like finding the balance between almost making sure that people go slow and are aware of how to keep their voice healthy, but also not triggering that kind of like well, don't tell me what to do kind of thing.

I think it's very important for people to be aware.

But short form content for sure is something like I steer away from anything that's too long because it feels like too much of an investment.

Too many notifications, like one or two a day maybe just to remind you.

But when it comes down to like gosh, like I have to type this into Google to access it.

Like almost like an option to kind of create, create it as a shortcut.

I, I'm not sure, too sure how to do that. But like are you doing like a website or an app or.

S6 08:11 It'll be, it'll be a website at first and then it might be able to, to become an app later on.

But I think at the moment I'm just going to start with something that's pretty straightforward because the whole app development thing is, is going to take a resources as well.

So I need to make sure, make sure I know exactly what I'm aiming for.

So when you say short form, so if I gave you the idea of there was a short explainer video with other videos that

came after it that was sequential and built up skill built up to the final thing.

Say for example if I was doing some work on, I don't know, I'm an Estelle practitioner.

So if I was deciding to do some work with a soft palate feeling and I built that up so that by the end of this you'd got like mechanical control of that thing.

CF 09:11 Yeah.

S6 09:12 But just starting off with a really simple explanation that's sort of no more than three minutes.

CF 09:19 Yeah.

S6 09:20 But just starting off with a really simple explanation that's sort of no more than three minutes. Have I missed anything?

S6 09:35 No, I think that's a, like starting with the information and providing links for people to deep dive themselves.

But the actual like resource that you're providing is just being a summary of Something, but with, like, a clear, clear explanation.

Like. Like you said, diagrams. Like, I like to see exactly what's happening in my body that is creating the sound.

So I have synesthesia. So the way when I sing, I see it. I see, like, a visual representation of the sound I'm making.

So when I do my work with my singing teacher, she asked me, what are you seeing right now?

And. And I say, like, for example, if. If it's not feeling right in my body, if it's not sounding right, I'll say, like, oh, the line is dull.

It's not sparkling kind of thing. See, like, sound as a line almost. And. And I feel a lot in my body. Like, I. I saw something that. That said that as an autistic person, sometimes the jargon sounds a bit too confusing.

But when someone says, feel what's in your body, does it feel right?

Do you feel like you're creating that? Right? Placement is helpful exercises to, you know, get your soft palate in the right place kind of thing.

But I, like, I'm. I'm a fan of a still as well, but I think exploring, like, those different practitioners, different techniques.

So I know that Lydia said there's a lot of backing to a still, but they focus a lot on grounding and, like, tension kills vibration a lot.

So she's like, pay attention to the, like, the anatomy side of it and the kind of theory behind it, but make sure that you're not taking it too literally so that you don't end up, like, fully, like, oh, you know.

- S6 11:45 That's the thing with anchoring. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, That's a really good point, actually breathing as well.
- Like, people forget how important breath is in everything.
- So my last lesson with her, I came to her and I was like, I've been so.
- I can't breathe at the moment, just in general. And I think there's a lot of things going in my life that's probably causing that and the singing psychology, all of that.
- So she showed me diagrams of. Of what it actually looks like in my body, what's going on?
- She said, do you know how diaphragm works? Like, you're not singing from your diaphragm. You're not doing that. You're creating the vacuum in your lungs to fill you with the air that you need to sing.
- Yeah, but it's how quickly you do it. Depending on the song, how much do you release? How much do you actually pull in? And she.
- She says, how much do you need?

How much do you need? Essentially, like, and she says that anchoring, like rather than doing it you.

The way I do it and the way I see it is like says breathe into the bottom of your bra strap.

And it took me forever. Like I took it so literally and I, I was, I was like, I don't get it.

Like why am I breathing in the wrong place? And she, she explained to me it's not up here. You know, it's not the top of your bra strap, it's the bottom of it.

I don't know how she explains it to boys. She must just use the actual thing. But I said do you mean your spare ribs? So like actually using the, the body terminology, I think so it's gender inclusive as well, is quite good.

And, and she says, she said to me, okay, from now on I won't talk about your bra strap.

I'll talk about what's actually happening in your body.

Because that is so important for a literal minder.

Like I want to know the anatomy of singing as a. For me at least I think some people just are like, I just don't want to think about it, I just want to sing.

But I value like singing healthily. So I think anatomy, psychology, all of those things.

But when it comes to the actual content, the, the shortest, most direct explanation you can come to and then providing the links to deep Dive for the people that want to yes are important.

But I like, I like that kind of structure of the information video, the starter exercise, the warm up the.

And then the progression into how you sing a specific song.

For example that like you know, whatever typical song it might be and like key modulate like because obviously it's, it's so specific to like your vocal type.

Tombra, like all of it. It's such a huge range that you're trying to target.

It isn't target but like cover almost like you're right.

It's. It's so hard to create something that's going to work for everyone because people with audhd.

I don't know that term kind of makes me cringe a little bit.

But for a shorter term their brains operate almost separately from both individuals.

That's why I'm, I'm constantly banging on. I'm like DSM 6 just introduce a different diagnosis that is both because it is just its own category of like that you almost can't fit in with both.

Like, because when I was going through my ADHD diagnosis because I had that second, I was like well yeah, I do value routine, but I can't seem to do it.

Yes.

I was like, so do I actually have autism? And the questioning and all of that. Like you're targeting such a huge like diverse range, but it's almost like keep it simple and then let people go as far as they want to go with it.

Essentially I think is, is what I'd be looking for.

That's me. Someone else might say, oh my gosh, give me a 10 minute video of everything you can tell me.

CF 16:36 So yeah, in terms of like I.

Was thinking about the sort of feedback loop and it's, and how to, how to give you some, give the user some sort of feedback.

What do you, how, what do you see that as looking like?

What would benefit you in terms of getting feedback on how you're doing?

Because obviously you're doing these things and you want to know you're doing it right.

So what would that look like?

CF 17:06 Gosh, that's hard with a, with a like resource like that.

I guess because you're not, you're not seeing an actual person.

But. And it also kind. I think this idea depends on whether or not you have access to a person.

But I think being able to take the resource to your singing teacher and being like this is, this is what I'm practicing on right now.

Can you tell me whether it's sounding as it should sound?

And that's so hard to do one without the access to a singing teacher to just simply on the online platform.

But yeah, maybe perhaps like an example of like someone who like a vocal example of what it's meant to sound like but also a like diagram of what it's meant to feel like.

I guess. Yeah, like I'm such a, I feel it in my body person.

CF 18:18 Yeah.

CF 18:19 Some people just naturally take to things like it's like exercise almost and dance.

Some people just need to build muscle memory harder.

And that is just, just a fact. I, I do. I need to spend time getting it to feel right. Suppose like emphasizing repetition of the like the actual technical side of things.

Like there's this tendency for rushing through things to try and get to the finished product.

But that isn't what like the word training is. You know, doing the basics so that you have the built foundations.

You can't just like chuck a few sticks in and hope to get a house out of it.

Like you need the, the building blocks and you need to kind of like properly keep going.

CF	19:11	We just go back a couple of sentences because my phone just threw me off.
S6	19:17	Um, what what was the.
CF	19:21	So we were just we just started talking about the sort of the feedback loop and how difficult it would be. Yeah. Um, and you talk about taking it to your singing teacher, but then if you haven't got a singing teacher and that's sort of where we got to.
S6	19:37	Yeah. Um, yeah. Back to I went on a complete tangent and again.
CF	19:42	Don't worry, I do it all the time.
S6	19:47	Perhaps like is it possible to have like a few kind of like to recommend that practice these techniques to kind of contact almost as like a one off thing.
CF	20:05	Yeah, I think so.
S6	20:06	You if you have the resources available to go and check in with someone, but not as like, uh, continually, I am seeing this person also thinking to each other kind of thing, just in case
CF	20:19	Case. Or like a 'frequently asked questions'-type thing, or a button where you can just ask the question or even a discussion. Yeah. Like interface.
CF	20:34	Yeah. Perhaps like a, almost like Reddit style conversation between the people that are actually using the platform. I suppose like so we can talk to each other and perhaps there are professionals that are in that. So that they can recommend stuff like if they see someone go I'm really struggling with this. I can't just seem to get it right. There might be someone that may be able to explain it in a way that isn't just in the, in the resource itself because people, people get things from, from different ways of teaching. Like the. I always yap on about the national curriculum being so like just not inclusive to anyone.

There are some people that you know, it works for that's great.

Don't work for a lot of people because we, we all learn in different ways.

Like so if there's professionals in that chat to almost moderate it and, and check in and see like oh, this person's an auditory learner.

How can I explain this in a better way? Or this person's a visual learner. Could I send them a photo of something kind of thing?

I think that might be an idea like a Reddit style kind of situation.

S6 22:00 I think I'd have to be on it to moderate and be there.

S6 22:03 I think there's, I think there's benefits in that.

CF 22:29 I have to say this has been an absolute pleasure. It's. You're obviously very, very passionate about, about the whole thing.

END OF INTERVIEW

T1

CF's Zoom Meeting
Mon, Sep 8, 2025

1:28 - CF

So first of all, thank you so much for participating in this. It's much appreciated. It's a subject that means a lot to me. And so just from the outset, I'll just give you a bit of background. I'm an autistic practitioner and I have two autistic children. And it's given me a perspective on the experience of autistic learners and neurodivergent learners in general. Work with quite a lot of neurodivergent students, both here and at college. And so my aim is to make their lot and my lot better. Thinking about the experiences that I had when I didn't know I was autistic, and when the conversation wasn't about it. So what I'm looking to do is I'm looking to um the effectiveness of online learning platforms for teaching singing with neurodivergent students and the best ways to do that and the thing is that it seems to me that I am taking views of autistic but not just autistic I'm sorry that's a personal bias though that I must have neurodivergent learners

because they're not it's not the same as autistics um what I'm looking to do is, sorry, I've just completely gone off on an autistic tangent.

3:00 – T1

No, no, I did the same thing. I'm with you. It's okay. Yeah.

3:07 - CF

Um, where, where did it get to until I, until I started correcting myself? Uh, oh yeah. Um, the effectiveness of online learning.

3:16 - CF

Yes. For neurodivergent students and what form that might take. And so, um, interviewing, neurodivergent learners. I'm interviewing singing teachers who've worked with neurodivergent learners, and I am then going to use what comes from this to develop an online platform for myself that might be useful for neurodivergent learners to key into. So that's where we're going.

3:46 – T1

Great.

4:04 - T1

3:47 - CF

Could you tell me a little bit about your practice, T1, of what you do?

Yeah. Well, I'm musical theatre trained. I've been working as an actor for, oh God, nearly 20 years. And I've been teaching since I was at drama school about 15 years ago.

Commented [CF466]: Musical theatre background

Commented [CF467]: Teaching for 15 years

4:12 - CF

Yes.

4:13 - T1

Yeah, teaching singing mostly privately. So yeah, independently, but also now a little bit at drama schools doing group singing for actors. So a little bit of that as well. Yeah, since the pandemic, most of my teaching has been online. Most of my one-to-one teaching has been online. The group stuff is in person, but I kind of, yeah, the group, group situation is a lot different for me. So yeah, I'm late diagnosed autistic. So I sort of self-realized in 2020 during lockdown, because I think a lot of people had the same experience and then got a formal [diagnosis].

Commented [CF468]: Mostly teaches privately

Commented [CF469]: Teaches group singing in drama schools

Commented [CF470]: Mostly teaches online

Commented [CF471]: Group singing is in-person

Commented [CF472]: Late diagnosis of autism

Commented [CF473]: Lockdown was catalyst for diagnosis

CF

Funny that crisis brings things to the surface.

T1

Yeah, and then got my formal diagnosis about three years ago. So went back to uni to get my master's in actor training from INSTITUTION REDACTED where I was specifically looking at training autistic actors. That was my focus.

Commented [CF474]: Diagnosed 3 years ago

Commented [CF475]: Focused on training autistic actors

5:34 - T1

So my thesis was on autistic acting, like autistic masking, an acting practice and how that intersects and how masking is, is it acting, is it part of the practice? How can we understand how masking works in a sort of performance context? So yeah, that was, finished that this time, we've just finished that this time last year, so it's all- Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Commented [CF476]: Thesis focused on intersection between autism and masking

Commented [CF477]: Questioned how masking works in a performance context

6:08 - CF

It's a lot. I'm doing this on a very expedited timetable as well because I've had a number of issues with parents being ill and stuff.

T1

Yeah. Oh gosh.

6:20 - CF

So it's quite a fraught and busy time. Yeah. So I understand that you've been there.

6:30 - T1

Yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah. Yeah, it took a lot of work. Because I did it as a, it was a video as well, rather than in an essay rather than written, primarily because that was, I wanted to be visible and demonstrate the extent of how I come across as an autistic person and what extent maybe masking comes into that, because I don't know when I'm doing it sometimes, who knows? Because I was undiagnosed for such a long time didn't realise that it was a thing.

Commented [CF478]: Assessed on video production, rather than by written assignment

Commented [CF479]: Visibility

Commented [CF480]: Tried to assess the extent of presentation of autism and masking

Commented [CF481]: Unaware of own masking for a long time

7:04 - CF

So it was, yeah, a lot of work. Yeah. How do you think, I mean, this is sort of just as a tangent from the questions I was going to ask, how do you feel that sort of knowing about your autism has sort of affected your practice? Has it changed anything?

7:25 - T1

Yeah, it's sort of, I'm more obviously more aware. I am trying now to practice more sort of radical visibility, being openly autistic to my students and just going "hey, this is how I am. This is what I need to function. This is how I like to work". And that hopefully gives them an invitation to open up about what they need as well. And I find that kind of works. And I've had a few students, you know, come to me and go "hey, you know, I think I'm autistic. What do I do?", which has been really lovely.

Commented [CF482]: Generally more aware of autism post-diagnosis

Commented [CF483]: Practices radical disability

Commented [CF484]: Openly autistic to students

Commented [CF485]: Expresses her needs to create a conducive working environment

Commented [CF486]: Own visibility encourages others to express needs

Commented [CF487]: Pleased that own example has encouraged others to seek next steps to diagnosis

Commented [CF488]: Hopes the NT students consider different ways of working too

Commented [CF489]: Supports making changes for all learners

Commented [CF490]: Continual development in the absence of evidence

8:02 - T1

And hopefully just like even the sort of non-autistic and sort of neurotypical students like going, oh, there's different ways of working. It's not all one sort of prescribed system. You can adjust and it's fine. It's not going to hurt anybody. It's going to help everybody. So yeah, making sort of little adjustments. Always learning, because we have no idea. There's so little research about what works and what doesn't, as you probably know.

8:37 - CF

Yeah. It's funny from the group side of things, because there's a lot more out there in terms of choral during COVID and all of that, than there is on individual singing during that period. And, you know, in terms of autistic singing lessons, there's not a great lot there at all.

9:00 - T1

There's not. There's not. And I think I am interested as well. It's something that I haven't really been able to explore very much in vocal masking and what effect that has on a singer's voice. Because I teach a lot of like spoken voice as well on what someone sounds like, because, you know, trying to imitate a particular sound can put, like, this is all, you know, conjecture, like, put, you know, extra strain or use your voice in ways that it's not built to do and, you know, mimicking and things like that. Doing what, trying to do something that your voice is not shaped or built to do and put extra strain. So that's sort of something that I'm kind of gently thinking about.

Commented [CF491]: Interested in vocal masking in singing

Commented [CF492]: Teaches spoken voice

Commented [CF493]: Currently considering how masking may strain the voice

9:49 - CF

as well yeah there's so many things yeah i've been i've been looking at my own ways of sort of addressing those needs but those people that you know you can even say to somebody oh can you can you imagine you're having a cry and then all of a sudden but if they're not in that if they're not able to connect to that what do you do in their place oh i've got um you know I've got my whole thoughts about that but that's not today isn't about me I think that's it that'd be an interesting conversation for another day yeah it would be um so anyway I'm just gonna the thing is I have got such an awful memory um that I have to make sure I've got my questions in front of me even though I wrote them no no I get you I do that as well which is amazing so can we if we take it a little towards your experiences with neurodivergent singers. Can you tell me, can we just focus in on that, tell me a bit about those experiences?

10:52 - T1

Yeah, so there's, as far as I know, there have been very few that have disclosed to me, mostly in group situations where, you know, they've come up to me afterwards and just been like, "I don't get it because I'm autistic, ADHD, whatever". And I sort of find that adjusting the way that I'm explaining things for them helps everybody, gives everybody a better understanding. Because there might be someone else struggling and just going, "oh, I don't get it, but haven't been able to articulate it". In terms of online students, I've had a few who sometimes like in, especially in, again, in group situations where the sensory overwhelm means that they had their camera off, which in a group situation for me, like is fine. If it was, it's not ever happened one-to-one. I think that's probably a different situation, but yeah, Obviously one-to-one, that would be a little bit more tricky. A little bit hard. But I think, yeah, in terms of one-to-one singing lessons with neurodivergent students, I'm not sure that I've had anyone who's disclosed to me. I've had my suspicions, but I'm not sure that anyone has actually disclosed any kind of neurodivergence. It's been mostly in the sort of group situations, both online and in person.

Commented [CF494]: Students mostly disclose in group, rather than in 1:1s

Commented [CF495]: Difficulty in achieving a task causes disclosure

Commented [CF496]: Benefit for all by adjustments for one

Commented [CF497]: All students don't understand things sometimes

Commented [CF498]: Advantage of online learning for SO- camera off

Commented [CF499]: Never had camera off in 1:1 yet

Commented [CF500]: Is aware of students who may potentially be neurodivergent

12:46 - CF

So what do you do then if you've got the person who you think is somewhere, in my family I call it on the bus because we're like the Autistic Society of North Staffordshire, what would you, how would, what do you do in that circumstances where you're not quite diagnosed?

13:07 - T1

Yeah, I mean, honestly, I teach as if everybody is because I think like that is that's what makes most sense to me as an autistic practitioner, and I'm really reflexive with the

Commented [CF501]: Teaches as though everybody is ND.

Commented [CF502]: Reflexivity

students so the what they need always checking in "hey, do you understand that? If you don't, it's my fault and not yours. You're not responsible for your understanding. That's my job. If you haven't, if it hasn't landed for you, then let me know. Or if I can explain it a different way, let me know". Sometimes I need to use different cues. So sometimes, sometimes there'll be verbal cues, sometimes there'll be visual cues. So I'll show them what I mean. Sometimes I'll need them to do some sort of self-tactile cues so they can feel what's going on and it just sort of depends on the student. It's really, really individualized. Some people don't like touching themselves and that's fine.

Commented [CF503]: Develops no blame culture to ensure student gets what they need

Commented [CF504]: Provides variety of cues for students

Commented [CF505]: Verbal cues

Commented [CF506]: Visual cues

Commented [CF507]: Self-tactile cues

Commented [CF508]: Choice of cues are student-led

Commented [CF509]: Acknowledges that students may have issues with self-touch

14:15 – CF WRONG ATTRIBUTION?

Some people understand better when they see what's going on or when they see themselves.

14:20 - T1

Sometimes I get them, especially online, I get them to make their little thumbnail bigger in the camera so that they can see themselves. If I was in person, I'd use a mirror, but the online gives you that there already. And I can see exactly what they're doing, but they can see themselves bigger, which is quite handy. And so sort of figuring out what each student responds to best.

Commented [CF510]: Uses webcam as a mirror

14:49 - CF

And it depends on the student.

14:52 - T1

Yeah.

14:52 - CF

And I suppose one of the things you've just been talking about is like, just, you know, that whole tactile, aesthetic-y type thing. Do you find that... I'm trying to make this more open-ended. Have you noticed that there are any trends with neurodivergent in terms of how they experience their own voices?

15:26 - T1

So I think specifically for autistic people, from my own experience and from some students, like interoception is tricky. Knowing what is happening in your own body can be difficult. And so I've had students who tell me, I don't know where my tongue is. Example, how do I know where my tongue is in my mouth? You know? And I'm like, cool. How do we know? And so I try and get really specific about it. But yeah, there's like students who, who literally can't, like their interoception doesn't function in a way that the sort of, you know, established pedagogy expects. And so, we have to find different ways of experiencing, which is sometimes fun to explore.

Commented [CF511]: Experience suggests that interoception can be difficult for autistic people

Commented [CF512]: Tongue position given as an example of interoceptive difficulty

Commented [CF513]: Provides specificity, but sometime student just can't.

Commented [CF514]: Exploration to find different ways of experiencing

So I'm always trying to figure out different ways of like getting students to experience something that they'll understand..

16:31 - CF

And it's, I think it's just, it's just such a broad spectrum of things as well, because obviously there are so many conditions that are the umbrella of neurodivergence. It's trying to cater for every particular one. It's not possible.

16:52 - Unidentified Speaker

It's just not possible.

16:54 - T1

Especially in a group situation, there's going to be conflicting needs. And yeah, which is why my research focus is specifically on autistic learners, because even among autistic learners is such a broad spectrum of experience. And so I don't think I can't accommodate or account for different things amongst all of the other neurodivergences that happen, especially when there's lots of intersections. I mean, I'm pretty sure I've got ADHD as well. I've got lots of students who have dyslexia and dyspraxia. Yeah, that occur together and affect each other. And it's just a bit messy, but we'll figure it out.

17:46 - CF

And of course, within that, the levels of support need can be very different. You know, in one group, I can imagine, well, I can't imagine, I experience it, you know, it can be, it can be challenging.

17:59 - T1

Yeah.

18:00 - CF

So is there any difference in the way that you approach it on when you're neurodivergent singers online?

18:08 - T1

Um, not really. Not really, because I tend to like, because I know a lot of singing teachers, you'd like to use touch to demonstrate things. I kind of avoid that because I know people have boundaries around that. And I tend to avoid that in person as well as, um, on what obviously online because you can't do it. Um, No, I don't think there's much difference, to be quite honest. For me as a teacher, I find like, honestly, I prefer to teach online one-to-one because there's like a sort of focus there. And if I've got my earbuds in, then I can hear quite, you know, if the settings are correct, then I can hear really clearly without like distractions. And that's super helpful for me.

19:02 - T1

And I always encourage students to have like the proper settings and decent sound on their end as well. Yeah, the only things that are sort of tricky is sort of the logistical things. And obviously things take a little bit longer because we're working asynchronously and I'm, you know, we're playing exercises and stuff and it's sort of a call and response-type situation, which for me is fine. I don't worry about it too much. I'm not the world's best pianist, so I'm not going to be accompanying anybody anyway. So, it works a lot better for me to have, if we're working on rep, then they have their backing on their end. And it also frees me up to be able to listen to them more closely, because I'm not worrying about playing or anything like that. Um and that allows me to sort of focus on them a little bit more

CF

yeah yeah I it's not about me but I will drop in I i've got a 50 inch screen i've put in my teaching room and so when they when they appear they're larger than life

T1

Commented [CF515]: Avoids touch as a sensory/boundary issue

Commented [CF516]: Online teaching precludes the use of touch anyway

Commented [CF517]: Doesn't find a difference between online and in person

Commented [CF518]: Autistic teacher focuses better in 1:1 online

Commented [CF519]: Use of earbuds and correct audio settings are useful and avoids distractions

Commented [CF520]: Checking that students can access correct audio settings

Commented [CF521]: Logistics of online learning can be challenging

Commented [CF522]: Element of asynchronicity due to lag

Commented [CF523]: Utilising tracks allows greater teacher focus and attentiveness

Oh, wow, cool!

CF

and so you can really see everything yeah so and uh when they come in I get them to i've got I can cast their phones to the telephone so they can see themselves singing from areas where they wouldn't normally.

20:31 - T1

Oh, that's great. Oh, that's very clever. Cool.

20:34 - CF

Yeah. But that's perhaps a conversation for a different time. Yeah. I think the whole, you know, the whole online thing is so interesting. Can I ask what you use when you're online? What program do you use?

20:49 - T1

I use Zoom.

Commented [CF524]: Uses Zoom

20:50 - CF

Yeah. Yeah. Well, yeah, since the pandemic, their audio settings have got a lot better. And they keep updating them, which is kind of annoying because you have to keep figuring it out. But it's worked quite well for me.

Commented [CF525]: Audio settings have improved since the pandemic

Commented [CF526]: Updates cause frustration due to needed to relearn audio settings

21:06 - Unidentified Speaker

Yeah.

Commented [CF527]: Zoom has been relatively successful

21:06 - CF

As long as there's a stable connection, then it's great. Yeah. When you connect, do you use a cable connection or do you use Wi-Fi?

21:16 - T1

In my old house, I used cable because the internet wasn't super reliable. I've got delicious fibre broadband where I am now, so I'm using Wi-Fi. Yeah.

Commented [CF528]: Used to use cable connection

Commented [CF529]: Fibre broadband works well with wifi

21:29 - CF

Oh, lucky you.

T1

I know.

21:32 - CF

My office is a dead zone.

21:35 - T1

Oh, no.

21:36 - CF

So I've got, fortunately, the person that lived here before me put wired network through the house, so I've extended it to there. So, yeah, it's made an enormous difference. Yeah. And so in terms of you don't have that same connectivity problems that you

might if you're working Wi-Fi, good, good, good. Let's jump forward. Sorry, I know you understand this, but if I'm looking away from the camera, it's not that I'm not interested. It's just the way I think.

22:12 – T1

Yeah, I'm with you.

22:17 – CF. CHECK

And I didn't realize diagnosis when I was seven.

22:23 - T1

So, yeah.

22:24 - CF

So, you know, thinking back now, I've got my own thoughts about this. I studied in the 90s. It wasn't part of the conversation. I'm not sure if any of my teachers even knew what autism was. And so, you know, the whole neurodiversity movement 1998 onwards. So it's not like it was, you know, it just wasn't even a thing. Yeah. With this sort of conversation.

Going to your experiences in an ideal world, what kind of support would you need with working with neurodivergent singers? And I suppose at the time, that's what I've just said, what do you wish you would, what do you wish you'd have had?

23:17 - T1

So what do I wish I would have had as a student?

23:24 - Unidentified Speaker

Yeah.

23:24 - T1

I wish there wasn't such an emphasis on the proper way to sing, because there isn't one. And I think there were many teachers who were going for a particular aesthetic that didn't work with my voice.

Commented [CF530]: There are many ways to sing, but teachers emphasise their own

23:43 - CF

Yeah.

Commented [CF531]: Clash between teacher and student aesthetic about what is good singing

23:43 - T1

And I sort of didn't understand that at the time, but looking back, I'm like, ah, I get you.

CF

Is this musical theater training?

T1

Musical theater, yeah. Saying that though, a lot of the singing teachers I had were classically based.

Commented [CF532]: Was being taught MT by classical singers

23:59 - CF

Yes.

24:00 - T1

So they were coming from that sort of world and they tried to get rid of my twang. I know, I know. I trained in Australia. Where twang is a natural part of the accent. So I, again, like coming back to vocal masking, like especially, yeah, more with my spoken voice teachers, like making me speak with a very sort of round, like, but which gave me tongue tension, which I now still struggle with. And just embracing the twang more would have been really helpful. I mean, I guess that's sort of more down to like better understanding of vocal science these days, but when I expressed that that was uncomfortable for me, like physically uncomfortable, I was made to do it anyway. So there was less sort of, I guess, less trust in the student's experience. In my experience, and I'm sort of feeding back, like, this is how I'm experiencing it. And they're like, oh, cool, that, yeah, yeah, no, you're doing it wrong. Do it this way, it'll be better. Okay. Which, yeah, confused me a lot. Because, yeah, there was always like, a sort of feeling that I was doing it wrong if I wasn't getting it.

Commented [CF533]: Inappropriate strategies caused tongue tension

Commented [CF534]: The singer's experience of vocal comfort was ignored when ideal sound was achieved

Commented [CF535]: Teachers don't always trust the student's perception of their experience

Commented [CF536]: Fed back sensations from thing, but was told it was wrong.

Commented [CF537]: Blamed for not getting the learning

25:23 - CF

How did you get around that?

25:35 - Unidentified Speaker

I didn't. Many years of therapy that I'm still dealing with. So yeah, I basically didn't.

Commented [CF538]: Underwent/undergoing therapy for blame.

25:47 - CF

Then I came from the classical world and there was imagery, and I'll never forget what my singing teacher saying to me. Imagine the sound is starting in front of your forehead and draw it okay I left in 1998 I still have no idea how that would work

T1

T1

Yeah, yeah, like with imagery and stuff like I always make sure that the student is like cool with imagery and metaphor sometimes they're absolutely not and so like I'll give them you know the actual physical process yes um sometimes metaphor works great sometimes they're just like what are you talking about um but again it's like what works for whichever student some students I love it it works really well for me yeah um but other students need actual physical processes and I'm like great we can do that as well, no problem.

Commented [CF539]: Many sizes fit all. Apply different strategies for different people

Commented [CF540]: Student-centred approach

26:52 - CF

So, if you know, if it was now you in that situation, what would you want from an online platform? Bear in mind, it might be asynchronous, with an element of synchronicity, it might be completely asynchronous, it might be completely synchronous. What would you want?

27:18 - T1

I would prefer it to be not completely asynchronous because then that removes the ability for the teacher to be reflexive in the moment and respond to the student's needs that day, because it changes so often. Because I'm sure you know your state of mind influences how your voice works. So having an understanding, and sometimes I'll turn up and I've got a whole thing planned and we've got to work on this and then they'll turn up and they're like, in a bit of a state and can't breathe. So we spend most of the time on the floor and it's fine. Yeah. We have to adjust. And so I think having as synchronous as possible is helpful for that. Yeah. And some sort of way. Yeah. Some sort of way of communicating. Yeah. I've seen models that work like that.

Commented [CF541]: Preference for blended learning to allow reflexivity

Commented [CF542]: Mental state affects voice production

Commented [CF543]: Pre-planned lessons can change dependent on student's state that day

28:22 - Unidentified Speaker
Yeah.

28:23 - T1

So you might have an element of synchronicity, then there's also a sort of dialog-y type thing for people to sort of post. It might also be helpful just sort of thinking about things that we have with Zoom already, but like closed captioning, for example, and recording. So I always encourage my students to record because sometimes they don't process instantly. I don't. And so looking at looking back on it is helpful yeah or even just having that safety net of having it recorded so they're not frantically trying to understand it completely in the moment and they're just doing it and that's enough yeah so that they can look back on it if they want to but they don't they're not thinking about oh I have to remember this, which sort of takes them out of the process

Commented [CF544]: Zoom provides good examples of accessibility

Commented [CF545]: Closed captioning

Commented [CF546]: Recording for processing speed issues

Commented [CF547]: Recording as a 'safety net' for processing and memory helps engagement

29:25 - CF

yeah in terms of like navigating around websites and this is again time worth what you'd want. What are your preferences when you're going on to a site in terms of what works for you? Is there anything that, what makes you click away straight away? I call it the TLDR. You know, what makes you navigate straight away from something?

29:55 - T1

Depends what it's for. Yeah. Depends what I am looking for. I don't like to have to click through multiple pages to get what I want.

Commented [CF548]: Quick access to material is desirable

30:02 - CF
Yeah.

30:02 - T1

Yeah, user interface is really important to me and clarity. Yeah. No, like jargon pisses me off. I hate it. I just want to, like, cool. I want to, like, for example, if, you know, if we're talking about like a teacher platform. I want to start a session, bam, button, go.

Commented [CF549]: User interface is important

Commented [CF550]: Hatred of jargon

Commented [CF551]: Immediacy and ease of starting a session

30:26 - CF
Yeah.

30:26 - T1

I want to change my settings, button, love it.

Commented [CF552]: Wants a button for accessibility features

30:31 - Unidentified Speaker
Yeah.

30:32 – T1
Clarity, clarity and specificity are like my two favourite things in life.

30:38 - T1
Yeah. Basically. Absolutely. Clarity and specificity. And also like in terms of aesthetics, making it easy to read. So like black text on white is like, no, too much for me. And white on black, similarly, it's really difficult for me to read. So anything other than that is much better for me.

Commented [CF553]: Easily readable

Commented [CF554]: Preference for white text on black background

31:04 - CF
So there are some providers that will give you a choice of being able to choose the color.

31:11 - T1
Yes, which is great. Which I love, yes, which version.

Commented [CF555]: Loves the idea of colour choice

31:16 - Unidentified Speaker
Yeah, sorry, I didn't mean to prompt you that, but just is there anything similar to that, on a similar principle? Any other customizations that you might find beneficial?

31:30 - T1
I'm just thinking it might be useful to have, so like an assisted language function for when people can't express things in words. Um, similar to like the emojis that you get in, in zoom. I like, like sometimes I can't communicate in words and I need a picture. Um, and having maybe like a set of like, you know, the, the ones that you get for the assisted language devices. Yes. Um, but then maybe some custom ones as well, like the ability to upload your own ones. That would be super cool. And if it might, you know, students maybe upload them as well and just go, this is how I'm feeling today. And it might be like a picture of something.

Commented [CF556]: Assisted language when ND can't verbalise their thoughts

Commented [CF557]: Zoom emojis are helpful

Commented [CF558]: The ability to upload own emojis for personal expression

32:19 - CF
Yeah.

32:19 - T1
So you get the understanding and you can't, if you can't articulate that in words, you go "oh, cool, I know where you're at today".

32:25 - CF
Great. Is that something that you do in your private practice, like whether you want to on stuff?

32:33 - Unidentified Speaker
I haven't, I haven't yet, but I'm just thinking that that would be super useful as a way to use the technology.

32:40 - Unidentified Speaker
Yeah.

32:41 - T1

Cause we had like in my group classes, we have, we do like hand signals to go, yes, I'm okay. Or if I'm, if you're leaving the room or I'm a bit, if you come and check on me sort of thing. And then I've sort of had that language with my students to sort of go, do you need me at the moment? You know?

Commented [CF559]: The use of hand signals in class

Commented [CF560]: Permission to excuse oneself

33:04 - CF

So that might be a way of, being able to communicate when the student doesn't have words for it. Unfortunately, I've never struggled with not having words, if anything way too many...

T1

Yeah, me too. Like, yeah, I was hyperlexic, so words, I have all of the words but that also means sometimes I have too many words and I can't choose the particular word that I need because there are too many options.

CF. CHECK RECORDING

Do you know, when I was, when I was, I was sort of hit the end of this really, I think now, but thank you so much for this.

T1

You're welcome.

CF

I'm going to turn the recording off.

END OF INTERVIEW

T2

CF

What will happen... oh, there we go. What it'll do is I'll get. It'll give me a transcription of the, of the meeting and I'll just, I'll send it over to you.

Just. If you could just check it over to make sure it's. It's accurate to what we've been talking about. It shouldn't take you long. Well, thank you ever so much for volunteering to do that, first of all.

So just to explain what it's about in basically, I know at college sometimes we get students who are neurodivergent in whatever form it is, whether that be adhd, autism, dyspraxia, whatever it is, but it can affect the way that they interact with the learning. And sometimes we see students, or I see students not be able to participate in their learning because of, of that whole thing or whatever the condition is.

T2

Right.

CF

So, my thought was, because we just had Covid. Can we use online learning and an online learning platform to help them access learning? Seeing good quality vocal tuition whilst they're not able to necessarily be in a building with people where, where they can control their own environment and, and still get something that they take from it. It doesn't necessarily mean conservatoire-level singers. It can be for anybody who's wanting to improve their singing, who is neurodivergent. And so that's where I'm testing. I'm testing the efficacy of that whole thing.

CF

Right.

CF

I'm going to design.

T2

I think it's brilliant. Very, very exciting and very relevant. Especially today, now that we're kind of talking about it all a bit more, I think that's very exciting.

CF

Yeah. So I know that we all come to it with different experiences and different levels of experience. I've been dealing with neurodivergence now for 24 years with Ellen. And although we didn't realize except for the first 11 years till they told us at school, so. But we've always had to deal with that. And Alex was much more noticeable as a small child. So we've been dealing with this for a long time, but not everybody's like that.

So really I want to find out about your experience.

Going on to the first question, can you tell me about your experiences of working with neurodivergent singers?

Actually, before we go there, could you just give us a little bit of background about your professional practice?

Practice, sort of the things that you do.

T2

Sure. So I guess I could divide my professional practice into two halves or rather kind of 2/3, 1/3 maybe.

So I work as A singer, opera singer, or kind of mostly operetta, comic operetta performer and a singing teacher.

Commented [CF561]: Performs as an opera/operetta singer, and teaches

Almost exclusively working in musical theatre, conservatoire level and in the industry working with actors and singers and dancers.

Commented [CF562]: Trains MT singers at conservatoire level and in the industry

I don't know how much detail you want, but I work at the moment in two, two institutions.

So one is REDACTED where I work with **big MBA** undergraduates and masters/postgraduate.

I'm mostly, but not exclusively working on working as a singing teacher. So technical work but also coaching as well. And I know you know the difference between the two, so I would say I do both. Maybe more technical stuff in the institution and maybe more coaching with professionals.

Commented [CF563]: Teaches more technique in colleges, more coaching with professionals

I. And then my work as a singer is mostly now kind of chorus work.

Commented [CF564]: Professional singing is now mostly chorus

I have worked as a soloist, but it doesn't really suit me and my kind of personality and how I work because of my own perhaps challenges, should we say spectrum challenges.

Commented [CF565]: Has 'spectrum challenges'. Feels that these don't suit her working as a soloist

And so mostly working in courses. The teaching work is mostly one-to-ones, but not always. Sometimes it's in groups, sometimes it's group discussion work, sometimes it's acting through song and sometimes, but not, not often. It might be some vocal tech stuff. So pretty much what you do actually. Yeah. Do you want me to go into any more detail or is that enough?

Commented [CF566]: PP involves 1:1, groups, ATS, and occasional vocal tech

CF

No, that's fine. I mean, I will anonymize the institutions that you work for and you'll be anonymized as well in this. So it means you can say what you want.

T2

Sorry, I just want to add in that I'd forgotten about this, but I post or during COVID and post-Covid, I slightly reinvented myself as a piano teacher working with beginners. So children, probably from the age of about seven or eight and the one or two, **but not** many amateur singers coming through the door perhaps to work on specific things. So I am still working with some children. Yeah.

Commented [CF567]: Began working with children as a piano teacher during COVID, as well amateur singers

CF

Yeah, Brilliant. Thank you. Thank you. So just thinking ahead, there was one thing that you said and I obviously I only disclose this if you feel comfortable with it, but you mentioned that your own spectrum challenges in there. Asking a little bit about that, but only if you're comfortable disclosing.

T2

I am comfortable because I know you're anonymizing this and we work together and I know you're, you know, you come from a sympathetic place.

Commented [CF568]: Comfortable to disclose ND

So I have always had experiences of feeling a bit, little bit different, mostly within my family, but also at school and there were some subjects I really excelled at, like music and had perfect pitch and all that kind of thing and kind of, I'm not going to say precociously talented? Not actually, but I showed signs of precocious talent, but it wasn't really sort of developed, but. But just that feeling of being a bit...a little bit different. Very, very sensitive to certain things. I have a few phobias, a few quirks, shall we say, which I mostly manage.

Commented [CF569]: Had a feeling of difference across a range of settings

Commented [CF570]: Showed signs of undeveloped precocious talent

But about two and a half years ago, I had a little sort of...I'm not going to call it breakdown, but I'm gonna say I. Some. Some mental health problems, which made me seek some help from a therapist. And I've been working with this extraordinary therapist for about two and a half years.

Commented [CF571]: Experienced some MH challenges for which she received therapy

And recently she's been using the word 'neurodivergent' when she's talking about me and my quirks or my little challenges. And we've not actually really talked about this that much because I don't have a diagnosis, but it's looking. I am on the pathway to, as many women are of my age group, it's looking highly likely that I will get a diagnosis for ADHD, not autism.

Commented [CF572]: Therapist is using 'neurodivergent' in relation to client

Commented [CF573]: Undergoing diagnostic process for ADHD

Commented [CF574]: Is reading about ADHD

So. And I've read up a lot about it. I also have members of my family and my husband's family. Some have diagnoses of slow processing skills, some ADHD and some autism. So that's on both sides of the family. So I'm sort of not a stranger to behavior that might be perceived as being not neurotypical. You know, I'm not a stranger to it. Very, very comfortable with it. So that's kind of my own experience. But also I have some very strong sensitivity, sensorial sensitivities, particularly noise, smell, some fabrics and some situational things.

Commented [CF575]: Strong familial incidences mean that ND behaviours are familiar

Commented [CF576]: Very comfortable with ND

Commented [CF577]: Has sensory issues in the areas of noise, smell, touch, and balance

So I can't get on a boat because of movement of the boat.

And my therapist is now thinking that that's less of a phobia, more to do with the. My sensitivities to certain things. Yeah, I had a diagnosis. She. She has said before that I can't remember phrase, but it's like very sensitive person or ultra-sensitive person or something like that. The sort of phrase that therapists use. So. So that's me, basically.

And through therapy, it's become more normalized, so I kind of am less hiding. I'm more open about it now because I'm beginning to realize that...that I'm not weird. I'm just like a lot of other people, actually. Yeah, quite so. I. I function very well and I'm excellent at masking, which has caused some problems, as I'm sure you've experienced.

Commented [CF578]: Therapy has helped to find acceptance

Commented [CF579]: Uses masking, which has caused problems

Maybe your family or. Or with people that you've taught so sorry, you might have to anonymize that bit, maybe.

CF

No, that's fine.

T2

Sorry. Sorry to refer to...

CF

No, no, it's all fine. Just for the sake of the transcript, I will say that...that we do know each other professionally. You know. You know, members of my family who are both of my children, actually.

T2

Yes.

CF

So fine. But that's really interesting. Thank you for sharing that with me. I have to say that your story doesn't sound hugely dissimilar to my own.

T2

No, but I mean, it's. Yeah, I mean, it's. It's always very reassuring when people kind of say, oh, yeah, that's kind of You know, T2, that is my experience too.

I also have a problem with instruction, with geographical instruction. And for many years, I've been laughed at by friends because I literally, I can get lost very, very easily. And. And I have to. I'm very upfront with people now, as I used to just think, I'll be fine with a map. And I would get very. I just get lost all the time. So I am very open about it, and I just say, I can't follow instructions. I get lost very easily, so you might need to come and find me. And it's not mean. It's. That's not about not accepting responsibility, because I try very, very hard.

Commented [CF580]: Has trouble with geographical instructions.

Commented [CF581]: Is open about geo instructions being a problem in work situations

Commented [CF582]: 'That's not about accepting responsibility, because I try very, very hard'

But this became apparent when I was in a show a few years ago, maybe eight years ago, and the entire cast just thought I was utterly hilarious. T2 couldn't find her way from the wig room down to the stage, so somebody had to come get me every day. And it became a joke, which was, is fine. I don't mind people laughing at it. But, the. It actually became so awful, this kind of getting lost that I remember in a show where I had one of the main roles, actually *La Fille de Regiment* and *Donizetti*, fantastic piece.

And I. The director one day said to me in front of. Everybody just shouted at me, "T2, could you just be in the same place at the same time in the same scene? Everybody's relying on you." And I thought, "oh, Jesus. Okay, I really need to do something about this". So I had a word with the assistant director, and I said, listen, I have a problem with instruction. Do you mind? Can I stay behind for 15 minutes after every rehearsal? Map it out in my book and walk it through, because I can't.

Commented [CF583]: Difficulties led to finding strategies to cope, which took extra work to achieve the intended outcome

I mean, I know this is very common, but I can't follow the instruction when it's told to me. But if I walk it through and I map out you know, I can see things that I need to recognize. Then. Then I can. I can do it. So I'm really, really sensitive to..students who have the same difficulties. Will find strategies to. I really, really do try hard to find strategies to cope with it.

Commented [CF584]: Own experiences have made her very sensitive to students who experience the same

All the, all the difficulties that are presented to us in lessons, it is sort of.

We've sort of ended up naturally to sort of the bit about.

CF

Tell me about your experiences of working with neurodivergent singers.

So what kind of things. What kind of things do you do to. What are your experiences and what with them? And what do you do?

T2

Well, I mean, it's obviously. Well, I won't say obviously. It's completely unique to each person because as we know, everybody's challenges are different.

I mean, the whole kind of spectrum, it's so varied.

So it really, really depends on what the difficulty is.

So I'll give you some examples. So a few years ago, I had a girl given. Given to me third year who was having some issues working with previous teachers.

And so I was. She was sort of allotted to me and I. She was quite unusual. So she had a diagnosis of ADHD, but she also had a lot of anxiety.

And I quickly worked out that she could work on her singing voices.

She was doing something else at the same time to quieten down all the busyness in her head.

There was a lot going on. So we did a lot of moving around. She moved around the room as I was teaching her. We also did origami in her lessons. I would bring some origami paper in and we would make like a little frog and I'd be talking to her at the same time we're doing.

The singing exercise actually became a little bit difficult while I.

If I was doing a fold and having to play the piano at the same time.

But we would, we would do origami and her lessons to begin with, which calmed her down because she would often come in a heightened sense, heightened anxiety.

Yeah, I teach somebody, teacher, somebody now who's in the third year who stims quite a lot.

So I don't stop him from doing that. So he stims as much as he likes in the lessons. But I also ask. We do a lot of reflecting at the end of lessons is like, have you.

What have you understood from this lesson? Or, you know, what are you taking away from this? Is there anything you'd like me to repeat? Occasionally I do ask him to be still if he. If he can. And I. I say it's not because I need you. To be still. It's just, let's practice being still. Because you might be asked to do this in other lessons.

And you know, I always ask him, you know, how was that?

And you know, is there anything that you're in your imagination that helps keeping the stimming to sort of, you know, to calm it a little bit, to calm the movements.

So we try and do things that I try and give him something to think about, you know, particularly character work and you know, work with the imagination.

That sometimes works for him. Or sometimes he wants something more. Well, less. How can I explain this? It needs to be more specific. Like the instructions sometimes needs to be okay.

In this exercise. If it's difficult thinking about what it would be like as a soldier or something like that, we might talk about, well, how does it feel to be angry?

Or how does it. Is there anything that you recognize? Do you ever feel angry? How does it. Do you feel it in your body? Do you. Does it. What does it feel like? Do you need to move or, you know, or sometimes we will get.

Commented [CF585]: Used origami and movement to help a singer with ADHD to find focus

Commented [CF586]: Uses reflection to ensure that a student with strong stimming tendencies has understood and accessed the work

Commented [CF587]: Works with student to find stillness, but with reflection points to gain awareness

Commented [CF588]: Uses character work in a way that uses own feelings to try and identify with the character's situation

I'll give him something very specific that's technical.

Take him out of working with the imagination and more with.

Okay, does it feel like it's on the body or, you know, let's do a plie as you're trying to get to that high note.

Commented [CF589]: "Does it feel like it's on the body?" - interesting wording

Commented [CF590]: Will use specific strategies for range issues, such as plie

So I hope I'm answering your question. But anyway, get back to saying how with each student.

Do you know what? It's so individual. It's so individual. I have a very, very intelligent lad. He's told me he's autistic and dyspraxic. I mean, outstanding performer in every way. And actually he is able to. He reflects a lot in his lessons like that. I find that instruction hard, but that really worked for me. So, it's often student-led, actually, which is fantastic as a teacher because you just learn so much from your students.

Commented [CF591]: Reflective, student-led opportunities in lessons allows teacher to develop their learning too

So some students, some lessons are student-led. Not most of them, but some. This particular lad is. I kind of respond to. He's able to tell me what his needs are, which is great.

CF

Yeah, sounds like quite a reflective student as well. Self-aware.

T2

Yes. I mean, I have. I don't know if this is relevant to the question, but I hope it is.

So it may lead on to another question, actually. But there was one lad I had some years ago and this was before the days of being told that and if anybody had any sort of special kind of educational needs. But when it was all a big secret, I was really struggling with teaching this lad and all the other teachers had complained about him. And I thought, I'm really not going to complain about him.

Commented [CF592]: Knowledge of ND not being shared leads to staff complaining and misunderstanding the student

I was trying to work out what was going on and quite, quite a good. Quite technically gorge. He liked all the technical stuff and found it almost impossible work in the imagination, you know. And I would often say, well, how would this character feel? You know, saying, you know, if I'd known that he'd had a diagnosis, I would have taught him a different way.

Commented [CF593]: Some ND can handle technical demands, but struggle with imagination/empathy

Commented [CF594]: "If I'd known that he'd had a diagnosis, I would have taught him in a different way"

CF

Yeah.

So I remember one lesson talking about, you know, your face needs to catch up with the characters like the face is doing nothing and, you know, talking about expression.

I spent a whole lesson focusing on expression and emotion.

And he sort of blew up when I sort of said, you know, there seems to be a difficulty with, you know, with expressing how you feel. This character expressing how they feel. And he...he sort of exploded and. And said something along the lines of, "oh, God, not another teacher that thinks I need therapy".

And. And I said, "I'm really not saying that, but do you want to kind of...do you want to explain? Do you want, do you want to dive on the things or anything I need to know?"

And he said, I mean, was a bit swearsy, but it's fine.

He was angry and he. He said, why does everybody think I need therapy?

I've got Asperger's. I'm Asperger's. And I. And I said, I wish I'd known that because that would have helped me.

I could have taught. I would have responded differently. I would have responded with a greater understanding.

I would have been more just. I just would have talked in different ways. So that's one example was difficult working with him because he had such a difficulty with expression and emotion and working the imagination.

Yeah.

I'm not sure how much success I had with that side of singing, but technically he was, you know, he'd been taught well before.

I might have carried on with more technical descriptions.

I might have been more descript, certainly would have been more literal.

And. And I certainly would have asked him what's easier.

What. How would you like me to explain this? What do you know what I mean? I would have been so. Such a much better teacher.

CF

Yeah. You know, funnily enough, though, it's. That's in the literature to this day that students can be reticent to share the information with the support teams and so filter through to us as teachers.

And so, you know, even now that's a thing.

Yes, yes. Well, enough.

Commented [CF595]: Not sharing a diagnosis, both at institutional and student level, can lead to conflict when an issue related to ND can't be addressed

Commented [CF596]: Teacher would have modified practice to suit, if had known of needs

Commented [CF597]: Would have addressed literalism in language and meaning, would have asked for preferences for learning

I. I have to say that I remember it was like I, I remember getting similar feedback and, and I'm thinking, but I feel this very deeply. I feel it very deeply. It's how it outputs to the rest of the world that is different.

T2

Right, right. And I, and that's one thing that I think we are in desperate need of better instruction for teachers to cope with the variety of students that walk through the door and particularly students that need to be taught slightly differently or have a different understanding of things or a different experience of the world.

Commented [CF598]: "A desperate need" for training for ND

CF

Well, funnily enough, I'm going to skip ahead to one of the other questions because we were sort of hitting this, you know, could you tell me about any training that you've had to work with neurodivergent singers, if any, and how you've implemented it into your teaching?

T2

Sure. So I'm not going to include my kind of personal experience or my family because that we can't, I mean life training at University of Life, but more specifically I'll start with the best, I'll start with the best training I ever had.

Commented [CF599]: University of Life training

And it, it was so short, but it was something that I know I'm not, I won't mention the institution, but a two hour talk that was given a few years ago. I attended this talk given by an autistic woman to teachers. She was communicating to teachers about how best to respond, communicate and teach autistic students, but from her specific experience and it t was the best kind of talk or training, or was it training? It wasn't really training but it kind. I felt that it was because I was so utterly fascinated by her. She was so articulate, obviously very, very bright. But she also, as she was moving through the lecture on autism and giving us an overview of, you know, terminology and all that kind of thing. She, she was going into detail about her own particular experience at that exact time.

So she was saying, feeling a bit anxious. This is why I've got a necklace here that I'm fiddling with and I've got here, I've got this on my wrist. And you know, this is why I use this. And, and she's talking in a lot of detail about her thinking and her kind of responses to talking to people and her anxieties and so on. And I was so, so fascinated by this. It actually prompted me to do quite a bit of reading up about what we believe the spectrum is and, and you know, all the terminology she used. And I learned a lot, I have to say. So that, that I would say was the most Inspiring and most useful.

Commented [CF600]: Questions whether talk was real training, but it acted as a catalyst to explore the topic

Many years ago when I started off teaching, I did this course. I don't know if you're familiar with it, it's run by the ABRSM. It's a certificate, can't say it. Certificate of teaching CT ABRSM.

CF

Oh yes.

T2

And I did that about 25 years ago, hadn't been going that long and I did it part time over a year. You can do it, I think you can now do it intensely in three months. But I did it over a year and my teaching had to be. What's the word? Observed, and I had to do some writing and I had to learn about teaching styles, and learning styles and back then there was less information on, on... On. You know, I don't know what the terminology now is, but any, any type of neurodivergence, we weren't really using that terminology in those days.

It wasn't very much information 25 years ago. But I do remember and it stuck with me all the time that all this time is that your teaching style has to respond to the particular students learning style and that has stayed with me all this time is that you just have to respond to the individual. You can't teach everyone in the same way. And I, I really hope I don't teach in the same way. So that was very useful.

And then when I did my masters at Sheffield, it's a masters in, well, I call it music psychology but actually it's masters in psychology for musicians. And I, as I'm sure you're doing, tailored one of the modules to singing and working with students that had various disorders. I hate using that word. Actually any kind of, any kind of, sort of neurodivergent. But again we weren't using that term then. That is for me that's new term. But anyway, I think my own studies on responding to, responding to students' ways of thinking and reacting and behaving and communicating was I was able to, to do a little bit of study on that. Having said that, I don't regard that as being training as a teacher. It's kind of my own academic kind of inquiry. But there's not much out there, Craig.

CF

No, there isn't. No, there isn't like specific. This is, you know, this training for singing teachers on students who are neurodivergent. But finally the, the other thing that I just wanted to...

T2

Sorry, I'm. Is that I've recently finished a course in gender affirming work because I kind of wanted to be on the front foot if I had was allocated a trans student at college.

Commented [CF601]: One course required knowledge of learning styles, reflecting period in which it was undertaken

Commented [CF602]: 'Neurodivergence' wasn't in use 25 years ago

Commented [CF603]: Responding to the needs of the student was the takeaway of this training

Commented [CF604]: Teacher hates the word 'disorder' in relation to students

Commented [CF605]: Neurodivergence is a new term

Commented [CF606]: Teacher engaged in academic inquiry in the absence of training

And it was a really interesting course. The most interesting thing about the course was quite a few of the people brought in to speak. The, the, the trans sort of volunteers who came in to talk to us about their experiences as, you know, trans singer or trans whatever, trans anything, anybody is that several of them were autistic. And I then found out that there's a big, I don't know, correlation associations and what we're allowed to call it. But a large percentage of trans people are on the spectrum.

Commented [CF607]: Undertook an interesting course on gender affirming work to support students

CF

Yeah.

T2

And when I talked about this with my niece who's trans, she's also on the spectrum and she said, oh yeah, it's definitely a thing. It's because we all feel different. It's because we feel so different. We're so busy, people making us think there's something wrong with us. We start thinking, oh, what's wrong? You know, and then they go down this sort of journey and so on.

Commented [CF608]: Discovered an intersectionality between trans and autism

But that was eye opening and very helpful.

Commented [CF609]: Teacher explores issues with members of that community to gain insight

CF

Yeah.

T2

But as regards courses, I would love to do one.

Yeah, yeah. It's. There is very little that's focused towards it. Towards singing.

CF

Yeah. So. And, and in fact, actually I went through the ISM magazine for my last module, and I just looked how many times there was something on working with neurodivergent singers and at that point there was literally no articles on it whatsoever.

T2

Wow. Wow.

CF

Which, you know, when you think, you know, how big a topic it is in education.

T2

That's it, you know, and how many people you come across, it's like it's not a rarity at all.

In fact, pretty common now that we're all kind of coming out of the woodwork and saying, I'm just.

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

This is me sort of thing. But yeah, that's horrifying that there's nothing.

CF

Yeah, very little. So perhaps that's the way I might go for the rest of my career.

I don't know. I don't know. Be an interesting. It's an interest. It does interest me a lot. So, so just nipping back, do you. Have you ever worked with any neurodivergent singers online or if you're thinking about neurodivergent singers online, how might you approach working with them?

T2

Good question. Have I worked online? I mean, I must have done. But when we were. Do you know, I wonder whether this is coincidental. When we. During COVID When we started working online, this is 2020, it coincided with, it certainly wasn't happening that much before then. It coincided with us in certainly in one institution with us being allowed to know what any health issues or psychological issues or whatever, whatever students were declaring was then started being passed on to the teachers. Prior to that, I don't think we were allowed to know anything personal about the students unless they wanted us to know.

So how long have I been doing online teaching? I think pretty much coincided with COVID because I think I probably avoided it before then because actually I don't like teaching online very much. From a singing point of view, I can't quite hear exactly what's going on. So it turns out, turns out one, I certainly do more coaching online than technical work.

But I think to answer your question, to be very vague, I must have done, but a lot of it wasn't declared.

So I'm going to say yes, but I don't think my levels of awareness are what they are now.

And to the second part of your question, what, what was.

Commented [CF610]: Was difficult to know if students were ND online, particularly as institutions and students wouldn't share such information

Commented [CF611]: Teaching online started with COVID, as dislikes it

Commented [CF612]: Struggles to hear properly online, so focuses more on coaching

Commented [CF613]: Now has a raised level of awareness, as compared to 5 years ago

What was that? What, how is it useful? Or what would I do?

CF

What would you do with the sort of level of knowledge you've got now in that circumstance of working with somebody?

T2

Well, I actually think it probably works very well for some students that don't like to be too close to somebody else, certainly, or eye contact or, you know, I just, I think it might be...It might be quite a relief for some people to work online than others.

Commented [CF614]: T believes online may benefit those with communication differences

I think given that I find it quite difficult really hearing the absolute detail online, so I prefer coaching, which actually might not be as useful for somebody that was neurodivergent as doing something that's super technical.

Commented [CF615]: Personal need for coaching online may not be as effective for technical learning

What would work? I think I would say. I think I would probably be quite prescriptive maybe. I think I would certainly ask the student how they wanted the lesson to go, what's going to be useful? And I would probably be open and say it's quite difficult to hear the absolute minutiae of how voice works online. Again, it depends on the individual. I really hope I would tailor make the lesson. I would probably now ask many more questions about what style of teaching works for you.

Commented [CF616]: Exploring students' perceptions of needs

Commented [CF617]: Honestly with the student about what can be achieved in online singing lesson due to sound

How do you know? How do you learn the best, that kind of thing. I think it would suit quite a few people, although there was one girl I was working with during COVID who had quite a big sway, so she moved quite a lot and I used to feel just a little seasick and that was quite. That was quite distracting actually. But I know that it's not great to ask somebody to stop swaying, but I think probably what I would say is let's talk about the needs to do this and, you know, let's experiment with maybe other movements. What works for you? And can you. Do you want to walk around the room or do you want to do some. Some plies or something? You want to do something with your hands? You know, what other. What other movements can you do? But that maybe. I've only noticed that two or three times online and I definitely think it's probably some people's preferred way of learning.

Commented [CF618]: An awareness of needs, but with exploration to replace stims with other movements

CF

Yeah, yeah. And that. That has come out of the research over Covid as well with that. Some people just found that really useful. Yeah, they don't have. They're in control of their own environment.

T2

Yes, absolutely. And actually, particularly I've just remembered this.

I have got one. One of my young piano students is. Has autism with adhd and I sit a little bit further away from the piano than I do with other students because she doesn't...she doesn't like me very near. And I mean. And she told me so that's really nice. You're just kind of. I go, or shall I just sit a little bit further away? I can still see the piano. And she really loved lessons online and I really get. Particularly for piano students because you have to sit quite near, don't you?

So I can see that working online would really work.

CF

Actually, there's one video I saw of somebody having a piano lesson. It was one of these pianos where it would literally depress the key on the piano. It was one of those pianos that did that. And one, the teacher was in one country, the student was in another. The message was going over MIDI over the Internet to this piano and the piano was literally playing what this other student was doing on the same piano where they were, which is amazing.

T2

Oh, that's mind blowing. Oh, my God, that's amazing.

Superb stuff.

That is amazing.

Thank you for that one. Just moving to the last question. In an ideal world, what kind of support would you need when working with neurodivergent singers?

T2

What kind of support would I need? I think, I mean, again, knowing. I mean, in my opinion, knowing that the lesson needs to be unique to that student. I think it's really understanding. It's really understanding someone's diagnosis, for example, and really understanding what is. What their preferred way of doing things is, which is really time consuming and obviously has a financial implications. But I think the support, I think it's fully understanding as a teacher an individual's challenges and difficulties, which means that you might spend at least one lesson just listening.

I think that maybe having. I think for me is Having the. The input, my knowledge needs to be greater. So perhaps the support would be in the form of, you know, considerable amounts of training.

I would say perhaps having a lesson observed by somebody that is extremely experienced or. I don't know. I think it's all about. It's understanding. It's. It's really

- Commented [CF619]: Understanding conditions in more depth
- Commented [CF620]: Raises point that catering for diversity is time consuming, and may come with a financial cost
- Commented [CF621]: A time just to converse with the student about their needs would be beneficial
- Commented [CF622]: Teacher wants considerably more training
- Commented [CF623]: Peer mentoring with more experienced teachers

understanding the individual. Yes. So I think I can. I think I'm experienced enough to respond to somebody's learning style.

I could change my teaching style, but sometimes that kind of takes a little bit of. Of time. So I think it's really from the outset is knowing what you're dealing with. So I don't know what we call that, really. It's just having a very, very detailed introduction to the person and their needs.

Commented [CF624]: Knowing what the challenges are from the outset to allow planning

Yeah. Do you think there's any sort of transferability of the work that you've been doing in terms of the work you've been doing with trans people and work, you know, working with neurodivergent people?

Is there any crossover?

There probably is. Because the question that I would ask any new client that was trans is, what do you want?

What do you want to achieve? Or how can I help you? Why are you here? Not. I mean, that sounds rude. Why are you here? But I think understanding the individual's needs.

Yeah. And what they need. There's usually one very, very important need that drives a trans person to come into a studio.

And it's most often I want to pass as in, you know, if you're a trans male, you just want to.

Someone to call you sir. It's so simple. So then you can understand. Okay. What we need to do is work on resonance and all that kind of thing and working on pitch and understanding what the hormone does to the voice and all of that in the body.

So I think, is there crossover? There is if you've got somebody that is okay about talking about maybe their needs.

So I suppose it's listening. Yeah, it's. It's listening to the individual and knowing what they need and tailoring the lesson to fit the person and their needs and what they want to achieve.

Commented [CF625]: Finds out the motivation and challenges when working with trans is what was being requested for ND

Yeah. That's brill. Thank you.

You're welcome.

I'm going to stop the recording right there. That's great. And then after stopping, you'll receive an email notification.

END OF INTERVIEW

T3

CF

But thank you for taking part in this.

T3

No worries.

Just explain why I'm doing this. I've been working with neurodivergence now, I realized for 51 years, nearly 52 years. But I've known about. But I've had two kids that have come through the system. I've had one of which I know you know and well, both of which I know you know.

T3

And one of which you taught. But one thing that's become apparent to me is that neurodivergent people sometimes really struggle with because of their divergence to engage fully in their learning at times. And so what I thought was, is there a way that we can still give them quality vocal tuition at those points where they can't face the world? And so COVID's just happened. The evidence suggests in some of the studies that some autistic people coped really well and actually thrived with online learning during COVID So I wondered if there was a way that I could devise a platform that would address the needs that were varied into those students. And so this is what this report's about, of all this projects about. And so what I'm doing is I'm interviewing my singers that have participated, that are participating.

I'm getting views from singing teachers about their view of working with neurodivergence. And together, what that's going to do is basically be the evidence is going to give me an idea of how to make this platform. And then once the platform's the final part of the project, and they're going to informally just give me feedback afterwards. And I'm going to use those to sort of build it into something that's tangible and workable or as part of my business and to help them. So that's what I'm doing. And so after written these questions, now you know me well enough now, T3, to know I have no memory.

So I've got my questions here he says not now. Not able to find the questions that he sent out, which is a really good start and I'm glad this is all being recorded.

Let me just double check that it is otherwise.

Yes, it is.

I could find my emails now. I'd set this up and I've lost it. Amazing.

I've got them here if you want me to ask myself the questions.

Yeah, ask yourself question number one.

So the question is, can you tell me about your experiences of working with neurodivergent singers?

And. Yes, so I have many experiences of working with neurodivergent singers in many different contexts.

I think the difficulty with the question and rather the difficulty with the answer is, at what point is someone neurodivergent? Is it once they have got a diagnosis or is it once you start to see that perhaps they don't necessarily process or think in the same way that other people do, even though I am not an expert in that particular field. So I think in terms of working with the experiences of both those types of people is actually often very different in my experience, because of the way that perhaps to do with the way that I engage with classes and people. But if someone has a diagnosis and they are autistic or they have some other kind of neurodivergency, then I can make a very clear plan with them, which I think tends to be the best way for me to work.

Commented [CF626]: The question of when somebody is neurodivergent is pertinent; at point of diagnosis, or when you notice differences?

Commented [CF627]: Acknowledgement that the singing teacher isn't an expert on ND

Commented [CF628]: Adopts different approach between confirmed and suspected ND

Commented [CF629]: Makes clear plans when diagnosis is confirmed

So, like, when you can. When you can have the conversation with them about, okay, what is your, what are your needs? And I tell all my students the same thing. I'm not interested in teaching the technique. I'm not interested in teaching what's in somebody's book. I'm interested in teaching the singer. So to me, technique is whatever you want it to be for you and your voice. So, my job as a singing teacher and the way that I see my own job is to learn their language, whatever language that may be, and create technique for them based on that language set. So whether that's a more physical kinesthetic language, whether that is just a particular set of words that we use based on their experiences, whether that's me looking at kind of like theory of multiple intelligences and kind of going, well, that person's more musical or that person's born into personal, and how does that person want me to communicate with them, then that tends to be the very core of how I approach any kind of training with anybody.

Commented [CF630]: Ascertaining needs through a conversation

Commented [CF631]: Priority is making the student aware that the singer, not the method, is at the core of his teaching

Commented [CF632]: "Technique is whatever you want it to be for you and your voice"

Commented [CF633]: Developing language that works for the student means knowing the language that they use

But I think that conversation can be a little bit more explicit when someone has some kind of diagnosis or some kind of awareness of what their needs are. It fast tracks the process, basically, right? Because they live kind of thought in those terms of kind of. Whether it's a case of kind of going, you know, I am an autistic person, for example, and so therefore, I know that I need particular strategies, coping strategies. I know that I'm going to have particular days that. Where my brain works in a different way or whatever it is, that they'll know what the very specifics are to them. And they'll have worked often with specialists in that field to kind of like, give them a language around it as well, around all of that stuff. And I like to connect that language to the

Commented [CF634]: Looking at theoretical aspects (multiple intelligence theory) alongside student's communication preferences is key

Commented [CF635]: Knowledge of a diagnosis 'fast tracks' discussions about singer's needs

Commented [CF636]: ND diagnosis greater awareness of own needs and strategies

Commented [CF637]: Diagnosed ND will have worked with specialists and have a language surrounding their ND

singing part of what it is that they're learning. So, it's part of the. Part of the way they think for everything rather than just singing.

Commented [CF638]: Language for ND and life should be the basis of language for vocal ped

I don't think that singing should be something that is taught or that has a language that's any different than any other language that they're using over the course of their day or any other learning journey that they're on. So a couple of examples would be, I have one of a male student that I've seen for many years now who was diagnosed very young and has come through the whole system being autistic, through the education system, and has some kind of trauma wrapped up in that as well, and who has a real passion for what we do, but is kind of sometimes unable to contextualize what needs to be done at any one moment in time. And so can kind of go, I really want to do this, but, like, beyond that, I literally have no structure around it. Even though you might have given me a structure 20 million times, I don't know how to hold on to that structure of how to kind of get better at this. And his mental health fluctuates wildly because of. Because of the way that he sometimes struggles to see the world around about him. And he can sometimes really struggle to understand people's social cues. And so. So kind of like the way. The way that. The way where his mind goes to is that he's always in the wrong. He must be always in the wrong because he's not understood something. And actually, a lot of the training that I learned to do with him in a formal setting when he was doing his postgrad with me was very much about acceptance of the fact that actually you're doing the right thing. And to actually realise that that has to be part of his singing technique work.

Commented [CF639]: Issues with social cues can cause wellbeing to suffer

Commented [CF640]: Assumption that you're wrong in one setting can transfer to singing

Commented [CF641]: Knowing and accepting that the work is correct has to be part of singing technique

So if we're thinking about, like. Like kind of deliberate practice or I'm Going to be talking with the first years about this. I don't know if you. If you know about the. About Kay Anders Ericsson's deliberate practice methodology, but they. That he kind of like talks about kind of the need to have a feedback loop within your practice in order for you to become an expert. And that I often find neurodivergent people are good at the focusing bit of it often, sometimes. But the ones that are are significantly better than neurotypical people. They're very good at identifying the kind of like, the priorities. They're very good at working to their maximum level of effort.

Commented [CF642]: Effective practice needs a feedback loop (Kay Anders Ericsson)

Commented [CF643]: ND singers can focus, but the ability to identify priorities can allow them to work to their full potential

There's loads of parts of his deliberate practice strategy which actually neurodivergent people excel at massively. The two parts of I find in my experiences that neurodivergent people struggle with are the part where he talks about how you have to mentally visualize what you want the result to be. Sometimes some people struggle, I found, if they're not neurotypical, they often struggle with that because especially what we do is kind of wrapped up in creating social cues and thinking emotionally about something and kind of like potentially like, having empathy with the character and the kind of complex kind of like social structure that we've created and the way that we kind of deal with each other emotionally is something that we have to work on as performers and actors and singers. And I think that that complexity sometimes we struggle with and so kind of like seeing the mental

Commented [CF644]: ND students often struggle with mentally visualising the end result

Commented [CF645]: Societal cues and examining things from an emotional perspective, and empathy can be challenging for ND

representation of what they want that the outcome to be, I think is sometimes hard for them.

And then the feedback thing, I think is the most difficult thing. And so for me, my experience of working with that particular singer is something where I've had to kind of go, right, whenever we are doing any kind of practice, the process I'm going to give you is how you feedback to yourself about what you're doing. And that that feedback has to be structured in a positive but critical manner. And that we learn that as a system. Right? So rather than me kind of having an expectation that he'll necessarily just kind of tacitly understand it, that I don't. I don't accept that he's going to just tacitly understand it, that he's actually going to. He's going to have to be taught like, this is. This is the next step in the exercise is what you say to yourself is this. And then I found that once I engaged with him in that way, he started improving massively because he was. Because even if he wasn't completely aware of the full complexity of the outcomes because he wasn't able to look at himself in that way, because he was being more positive with himself. He was naturally reinforcing the good parts of the exercises that he was doing. And therefore I could catch the bits that were perhaps not as good and just adapt them the next week like they weren't as big an issue. So that was really useful.

Commented [CF646]: Surmounts challenge of giving feedback by giving a process

Commented [CF647]: Uses a systematic approach to promote positive but critical feedback

Commented [CF648]: Noting that tacit understanding may be challenging allows the practitioner to teach the thing

And then I can think of two examples of students who are, who are almost certainly to some degree neurodivergent in my experience. I would suggest that they are the kind of people that, who may eventually find out later on in their lives have some kind of neurodivergent trait or way of thinking. And I've had to deal with them in a very different way because, because I'm aware that these two particular students, and I know this isn't necessarily true for every neurodivergent person, but these two particular students are often quite literal in their interpretation of things that I say. And so if I was to have a conversation with them where I was to kind of go, okay, so explicitly speaking, you know, is there like, you know, can, can we talk about your potential neurodivergency, then that, that would become. That would, to me, that wouldn't be appropriate because it's clear to me that those people haven't had that conversation and the kind of context with professionals that they need to have. And I am not prepared to kind of give that any kind of diagnosis because I'm not an expert. So. But I have to address the difficulties that they come in. Into contact with throughout the training with, with me.

Commented [CF649]: Beginning a conversation about potential ND is problematic where literalism is present; awareness of boundaries

Commented [CF650]: Singing teacher has to address the challenges, not the diagnosis

So I have one particular student that's been coming to me for years and years and years and years and years. And this person classes themselves as a disabled actor for many reasons, but a lot of them are very physical reasons as well. So this person has a lot of challenges, lots of, lots of really big challenges. And they have run up against every wall you can possibly imagine. And they left their degree because they basically just couldn't handle being in a university environment. They weren't doing performing arts, they were doing something at public politics and French or

something like that, but they just couldn't handle being in a university environment. They didn't, they weren't being given the support by that university environment either because they, they weren't diagnosed with anything and they weren't bringing anything up with the, the, the school there to suggest that they wanted to get tested or they wanted support in that area. They just. Because to them, they, they live their normal and so my job then was to spend time not teaching my normal, but teaching their normal, if that makes sense. So the way that I had to adjust for that particular student was by realizing that the pace that that person processes at and that that person goes at is completely different from even like a beginner, neurotypical student. And this singer is vocally very advanced. Like, they're actually really brilliant singer and really lovely performer, but it takes them, like, several months longer to get a concept than a regular student would. And so slow repetition, positive reinforcement, and being very literal with them so that we're working in a very focused way allows them to kind of actually just enjoy the moment that they're in. And so with all the challenges that this person faces, I'll tell you a very quick anecdote that might put it in a bit more context.

So this student is mid to late 20s now, and maybe about four or five years ago. So when they were kind of early to mid 20s, they had tried to go back to university because they really. They really want to do an MA in musical theatre. It's like their absolute dream to do that. But they were like, I need to finish my degree. So they went back, and then they put themselves in a very kind of mentally difficult place because they had to. They were convinced they were going to finish the degree, and they did. It took every single cell in their being to fix that and to get through it, and was actually probably not worth the damage that they came out with, to be honest. But they came into a lesson with me, and they were in a very, kind of.

Not a very good place, mentally, emotionally, for that particular day. And I did what I always do with that particular student, which is focus on the work. Because that. Focusing on the work of the thing that they utterly love more than anything else in the world allowed them to kind of like. To kind of like, leave all that. The stuff that was kind of going on, and actually just. It kind of. You. You see, by the end of the lesson, it normally completely refreshes them. And about two or three exercises in, I was. I was not seeing this. I was seeing that they were still a bit kind of like, stuck. And so I. I said, you know, you know, is everything okay? What's. What's going on in your brain? And they said, I'm really, really sorry. I'm really sorry. I've been lying to you. And I said, why have you been lying to me? I've never told you. But basically, like, I. I've had cancer twice in my life. So they're a leukemia survivor. And they had it when they were a young kid and then they had it when they were an old teen. And so dealing with everything that was clearly going on as a potentially neurodivergent individual and having to go through that all at the same time and then getting pushed off to university, you know, it must have just been. And I was like, you weren't lying to me. You just didn't tell me that, but that's okay. Like, no, but I don't want you to. I

didn't want you to think less of me. You know, there was, it was, it was this something that had been weighing on their mind for a very long time. And, And I said, what you, what you. What you've come through makes you a **** hero. Like, it makes you, like, you, like that's. You're a superhero. That's **** incredible that, you know, you've, you've, you're, you're so brave and it's so wonderful that you, you know.

So I had that whole conversation with them and they said like, they were. They kind of released a little bit then and we could, we could do more singing. At the end of lesson, they said, I feel really bad because I've not. And there was, there was. Basically, I knew her agent, so I knew her agent really well because it was me that got her into the agency. And she also went to another training place that I was kind of involved with. And they said, I've not, I've not told those two people if not told agent and the person that runs that school either. And I'm really worried that they're going to be upset with me. And I said, they are going to be equally as proud of you as I am. And I was like, you know, do you want me to speak to them and tell them that you've got something that you want to tell them? I said, I'm not going to tell them what you. What it is, but I. You want. Oh, yeah, would you? I said, general problem. So I messaged them both and I said, look, this individual is going to tell you something, you know, and, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And they were like, yeah, of course. And they kind of read into what I was saying and they were like, yeah, no problem. And it really wasn't a problem, but to this individual it was. And I think in that moment I realized that I had to be more mindful of when perhaps that person was holding on to something that they weren't able to put into words or they didn't feel they could open up about because it could be something as simple as something to do with technique or them saying that they got an exercise that they didn't. Because they didn't have the. And they don't have the. The. The freedom within themselves to, to kind of like regulate that and kind of go, actually, I can just tell T3 it'll be fine.

And, and so kind of, I've made that part of my practice with that individual to, to kind of be aware of that and make sure that whenever we're engaging in something, if I'm. If I'm sen. Side of the normal situation, that we address it because that person's not going to be able to let go of it. And I know that with a neurotypical person, and you as a neurotypical person, it's much easier that if I'm kind of feeling a bit **** on a particular day or if I'm, you know, if I've just had an argument with. With the person that's teaching me or whatever the MD or whatever it is, that I can kind of push that aside and go on with the work. And I think with this particular neurodivergent person, with others I've taught, they don't have the capacity necessarily to kind of engage with that quite as freely as I do. And so that has to become part of my pedagogy. It has to become part of my kind of engagement with those people in order to allow them as full an experience and that lesson, as somebody that isn't dealing with that way of thinking.

Transferred that sort of approaches that sort of given paid dividends in those neurotypical students. If you apply the same approach.

Yeah, I mean, the thing is, is that I. I probably have in that, like, I.

But I think. I think with neurotypical people, I'm quite good at reading.

I'm very good at reading body language, I think. And I can often be quite, like, scarily precise with certain things.

Like, I think I'm just. Some people would call it observant, some people would call it being an Aussie bastard.

But like, for example, more than once somebody's walked into my room and neurotypical individuals walked into my room and went.

And I've got. And if they haven't even opened their mouths and I've gone, okay, so your ghetto friend's broken up with you.

You're right. Oh, my God. How do you know? It literally just happened. Did they tell you first? And I'm like, no, I can read it all over your face, right?

And, like, I have. Like, when I worked at Lambda, there was an individual there who was incredibly horrible to me, and it was absolutely workplace bullying.

And he is not necessarily an individual that I'd want to be associated with, but as a practitioner, I was in awe at his skill of the way that he understand human beings in terms of their movement.

And I was so obsessed that I kind of have spent a long time really trying to kind of position myself with the same kind of awareness and knowledge of others.

And so, like, for example, if someone comes into an audition, I can normally tell if they've done a sport, and I can normally tell what kind of sport it is simply by the way they walk.

So, for example, there was a young lad, skinny young lad came in and auditioned for.

I think it was west nmt, I think it was. He came in and he turned up. I was in the room. He walked in, and I was on this panel with other people, and there was an agent stuff there as well.

The skinny young lad kind of came in, sang his song, and I went, can I just ask you a question?

And he said, yeah. I said, how many boxing championships have you won?

And he went, oh, like, four or five. Like, I've just won the national championships for my weight class.

And I was like, yeah, I thought so, okay, right. Anyway, he walked out and everybody's jaw was on the floor, and they're like, what?

How did you know that Skinny Lad was a boxer? And I'm like, because it's not about how skinny he is.

That the way that he walked was so indicative of boxing training.

Like, it was just. It just was, right? And I could just tell by the way that he held himself, the way that he moved his arms like that, that is clearly what he does.

The way that he. How. How well placed his balance was and the way that he moved from one foot to the other, I'm like, yeah, it was.

And I could tell that he wasn't just, like, he hadn't just gone to a few boxing lessons.

Like, this guy, like, has been doing this for years and years and years.

You can. You can. You can read it in his body. And I think that, like, I. That's one of the. I guess partly that awareness and that kind of knowledge of people's bodies is.

Is. Is kind of something I should probably do some actual empirical research on at some point.

But. But, like, just that kind of inherent knowledge that I have, that.

That kind of. That I can't really quantify other than just the fact that I've just learned it and tried to really focus in on it.

And it's not a perfect science, but it gives me, I think, a better awareness of the divergencies perhaps that we all have.

Right. Because what is typical? So kind of like if I approach everybody as being normal, then you have to really realize very quickly that there's no such thing as normal.

And so therefore the concept of neurotypical probably doesn't even really exist.

And actually you could potentially say that my ability to hyper focus on things and the kind of the way that I perceive other human beings and a kind of slightly different way than other people, you could potentially say it all the same traits that you would see in somebody that's been diagnosed neurodiverse.

But I know that my brain doesn't work in the same way as your brain.

So it's. But yes, so I, for me, I think that, yeah, so those are, those my experiences are varied.

But. And I think that for me it does, it does matter on whether that person is a diagnosis or whether it's just obvious that that person's learning style is just vastly different than an average neurotypical person or more closely aligned with that of somebody that's more neurodiverse.

How might or do you approach the teaching of neurodivergent singers online?

T3

Okay, so since I moved. So basically, so I've actually been teaching online way before the, the lockdown.

Commented [CF651]: Taught online prior to lockdown

So I used to do some online lessons like back in the Skype days.

Commented [CF652]: Used Skype for early online teaching

So like when I remember when I first moved down to London, I would do like the odd voice chat singing lesson with people in Scotland and they would need to, they would need to like, because it was in my local area, it was kids in my local area and they would need to go and borrow a microphone that you could plug into the back of a computer. so it wasn't even like a USB mic. It was like they had to get a mic that had like a big jack and then they had to convert it to a mini jack and plug it into the back of the computer. And I couldn't see them because we didn't have the connection for that.

Commented [CF653]: Early Skype didn't have video calling

In 2004, it was literally just over voice call on MSN messenger sometimes because it made me some extra money while I was a student and I taught them when I was in Scotland when I was younger. So I've been kind of like in and around the online teaching thing for quite a long time.

Commented [CF654]: Using online teaching allowed for teaching former students in different area whilst still studying

I use Far Play. I think that the immediacy of a lesson is quite important. So I think that even when you're giving feedback, there's a, like, there's like a social, social perception thing that if you wait a couple of seconds before you go, that was really good. That has a completely different connotation than the, the second that somebody's finished something going, well done, that was really good. I think going, that was really good can actually say something completely different socially.

Commented [CF655]: Currently uses FarPlay

And so high latency online teaching can often run into certain things that is not even necessarily like just for neurodivergent singers, but it's actually something that I'm very conscious of when I'm teaching any singer because we're all at the mercy of those learned social cues and those learned social norms. And so kind of the

Commented [CF656]: Latency can change the perception of social cues, e.g. the placement of a pause

lower the latency and the more immediacy I can kind of give when it comes to things like feedback I think are really important.

Commented [CF657]: There's an equanimity of misunderstanding social cues for NT and ND students with latency

I also think the higher the quality of audio I think is really important to me when I teach lessons number one, obviously, because the more clarity we can hear their voices with, the better. But also from the point of view of me giving it back to them, is that a lot of my new note divergent singers are brilliant mimics. So they're really good at hearing something and repeating it. So if we have got nice low latency audio and I'm able to kind of give a fairly high quality model of the sound that I'm looking for, then that pays a lot of dividends in the end. I think that kind of, that can move things on much, much quicker, a much more natural pace. That would be if it was an in person lesson. I think that. So from that perspective, you know, as, as you know, I'm a bit of a bit of an audiophile anyway, so I make a point of having good equipment.

Commented [CF658]: Audio quality, so clarity of voices, is essential

Commented [CF659]: ND singers are brilliant at mimicking

Commented [CF660]: Low latency allows for a more natural pace of lesson to occur

So whenever I'm doing online lessons, my piano is plugged into a different channel than my microphone so that they can get a nice clean piano sound. But then also like, if, if possible, I'll use my MKH86 day so that it's literally the highest possible audio that they can kind of get. Because I'm aware that we can't get away from the fact that signals have to be compressed and uncompressed and all of that stuff at the moment. Until quantum computing finally takes over lives.

Commented [CF661]: Use separate channels for piano and voice

Commented [CF662]: Quality of teacher's equipment allows for high quality sound

I think that being in a space that they feel very comfortable with is something that I'll have a direct conversation with every student about. But the reason why I have that conversation with every student is because it really is more important for neurodivergent students that they even often within their own houses, will have spaces where they feel it's associated with a particular thing. And so they can't kind of really engage with a different particular thing in that space. So, for example, I had a student who, like, had said, okay, you need to plug your. Your computer into the router, if you can. The router's in the kitchen. And they were really distracted throughout their entire lesson. I said, oh, what's wrong? I can't sing in my kitchen. And I said, why? Is it the echo? No, because this is what I eat. And they just could. They just couldn't get. They were just like, I just can't. Like, I just. And I'm like. And I was like, oh, yeah, well, yeah, you're right.

Commented [CF663]: Discusses comfortable spaces, as ND students may be unable to perform in places with strong connotation with other activities

Yeah. Like, you know, I. You know, I don't. I don't, you know, I don't go to the toilet in the living room.

So. Yeah, so why would you sing in the kitchen? Yeah, like, makes. It makes sense to me. So. So I think that, like, yes, I think kind of having that kind of conversation and kind of going, right, what is.

What's the space in your. That you feel comfortable in, that you feel like you can sing your best in is normally the way that I'd phrase it.

Where do you sing your best work apart from the shower?

I don't do lessons. Reading in the shower. You know, I'll make that joke every time. But, like, it's that thing of, like, you know, and then it just gets them thinking about what that might feel like.

So they can start to kind of associate whatever it is they're going to be engaging with the work so that they feel really comfortable in that space.

I often will have Guam practical level.

Does far play for them have to be in the router or does it have to be WI fi?

No, no, it can be on WI fi. And I think, like, it depends how far away they are.

But it's that weird thing, right? Because they're either so far away that it doesn't matter or they're kind of close enough and locality that, like, we either have a good Internet connection or they don't have a good Internet connection.

So. So I think. I think, like, it's. It's just more stable if it's on. I think that's the thing. You. You just have. You have a better ping overall if it's. If it's on a router, if it's hardwired and I need to do less adjusting on my end.

If it's kind of a convenience thing for me as well.

If they're, if they're on the router skin I can focus on because my piano is slightly away from my keyboard.

So I like to kind of like. I don't like to look like him in front of my computer.

I like to look like him in front of a piano because I think that really it just helps with.

Again, with every single. But especially neurodivergent singers, if they look at me and they can see that it's not just like this, like I'm in a room with them that they see I'm in a space with a piano and I'm ready to work, you know, it just kind of off those signals better.

CF

Well, I, I move this round and so I've got a 50-inch screen in front.

That's what I'm looking at you now. Yeah, Here at the moment. And so I say, well, they can see because they are **angry to**. So they can see the piano as well. I agree. Yeah, it's really interesting. One vital space. Actually, I'm just thinking about. We've

Commented [CF664]: FarPlay works best on router, but works with wifi

Commented [CF665]: Wifi v wired

Commented [CF666]: T likes to set expectation of workspace by visibility of piano

got somebody who can't use the music room that's upstairs to make music in because it's **desperate**.

T3

I think it's probably too close to the bedroom.

CF

That's really interesting.

T3

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It could be. Could well be. There's an idea. Yeah, no worries. And then in terms of looking at practicality is the lesson.

Like I said, it doesn't change from what I've said about in person.

Commented [CF667]: T doesn't change approach for online

And I think that because most of the people that I teach they're...they're not, they're not fully online singers. You know, they're kind of like. It's. They're online when I'm not able to see them or they're...they're kind of like away from home or whatever. But 99% of singers I teach have met me in person or work with me as regularly in person as they can. So they're more of kind of a hybrid online learner. And so from that perspective, I tend to find that like, the more that you just keep consistency between online and in person, the better that person understands what's coming and kind of knows how to engage with the work.

Commented [CF668]: Majority of singers combine online and f2f

Commented [CF669]: Consistent approach between online and f2f removes element of surprise and promotes engagement

So I try my best to kind of keep it as normal as possible.

I think that that's why a lot of that prep work of like making sure they're in a comfortable space and making, making sure there's low latency and all of that.

I really, I make a point of trying to kind of sort that out right at the beginning so that the rest of it feels like a normal lesson because I think that that tends to yield the best results for me.

Commented [CF670]: Sorted out practicalities of online learning at beginning of training gives best results

Yeah, tell me about. How about. Sorry, have you got any other questions about that?

Please tell me about any training that you've received to work with neurodivergent students and how you've implemented it into your teaching.

Officially, none. Officially, none. All the training we get is different kinds of EDI, but it's not neurodivergent students. All the safeguarding training I've done, nothing is about how to adapt pedagogy or approach for neurodivergent students.

Commented [CF671]: No formal training in ND

Commented [CF672]: EDI and safeguarding training hasn't included pedagogy or approach for ND students

I think I'm at a slight benefit to the average teacher because my parents were foster carers, so we had a lot of training on how to deal with different kids. And quite often neurodivergency was just one part of a much more complex series of puzzles that we had to solve when we had kids in care. So. Yeah, and so there's. There's also. I mean, again, I'm not an expert at any of this, but I think that there's. I think there's. There's probably some kind of nurture link with regards to certain kinds of neurodivergent behavior. And that's not to say that that's an explicit thing, but that you would find, I think you would find if you look at kids in care, you would find an incredibly high percentage of them would pass some kind of tests for certain neurodivergent behaviors. And I think it's potentially to do with trauma response as well. So I don't think that. Obviously don't think that all neurodivergence is that, but I think that.

Commented [CF673]: Family history of being foster carers has informed knowledge of ND

Commented [CF674]: T suggests that many children in care demonstrate features of ND behaviours

I think, I think that certainly you would. And I don't know if there's been any study into this, but in my experience, my parents looked after nearly 100 children over the years and way above the national average of them were definitely showing traits at young age of different neurodivergencies. And I'm not necessarily talking of autistic traits, but I'm talking more about ADHD, ADD, that kind of...that kind of thing.

CF

I mean, the thing is, as well, the whole thing with neurodivergence is that the original term is such an umbrella term. It includes anything that changes. So, you know, you can have a brain **altering sort of. And that would.** In that model, it's one of inclusion rather than exclusion. And if you think in the context of perhaps Children that have been taken into care. Things like fetal alcohol syndrome.

T3

Yep

CF

It would be. That would be a neurodivergence in itself.

T3

Yeah.

CF

Yeah, I could see how that would be a thing

T3.

Yeah. And so, you know, I think dealing with scores of young people who have these particular. These, These kind of challenges in life, I think has been...has been my

training, but I've certainly never did any formal training and even...even working at like a secondary school, you know, even like, like, you know, never ever received any kind of training. And I've questioned it several times like that. It's never included because it's never in the papers. People aren't going on Twitter complaining about it. So it's kind of. It's kind of one of the unseen groups, I guess, of like, you know.

Commented [CF675]: No training in secondary setting

Commented [CF676]: Suggests that ND is a more unseen group due to lack of coverage in papers and on SM

CF

You know, looking back at my own. I know this is. This session isn't about me, but I can think of one session that was given by. As internal inset. And it was by the parents of. By the mother of a pupil at school who talked about her experiences of him. And that was so useful because we sort of got an idea of the lived experience of the boy and his family.

T3

Yeah.

CF

Then the other thing was that my own daughter ended up giving a briefing in staff briefing about what it was like for her. But those, those experiences are literally it. And it's sort of. In some ways it reminds me of, well, what is. What is training anyway? What is it, you know. It doesn't necessarily...doesn't necessarily have to have a certificate to be valid, but I've done both, you know, I've had the experience.

Yeah.

Courses and this stuff as well.

Yeah.

CF

What does it make me an expert? Well, no more than it does, you know, I'm only expert with one student at one time, hopefully.

T3

Yeah, exactly. And that's all you can do. Right. And. And that's one of the problems with this as well, I suppose, and that. That I kind of. Hesitant's not the right word. I wouldn't be hesitant to receive training and. But like, I would be. I'd be concerned that it wasn't holistic enough, you know, because like. Like I've been discussing. I think you've got to treat somebody as an individual and it's only when you do that that you can, you can really help them. And there's no amount of training that can really set you up for that, especially in what we do as singing teachers. I don't think like. Like I. I

Commented [CF677]: Would welcome training, but is confirmed that it wouldn't be holistic

Commented [CF678]: T suggests that courses can't replace learning about the individual, which is essential in helping them

am the amalgamation of all of my life experiences. Experience doing what I do. And so like, you can't boil that down into a course like you can. That. That's not one day of like sharing experience. That's like, how do I bottle up like 20 plus years of doing what I do at like an HE level? Like, it's, it's, it's kind of like it's insurmountable, I suppose. And so, yeah, it's a puzzle that I have no idea of how to solve it.

Commented [CF679]: Trying to distill life experience into a 1-day course is an insurmountable puzzle

But, but yeah, that's, that's basically. Sorry for question three is the answer is none.

CF

I'm not surprised by that because I'm one step ahead of you and that was only because of necessity.

SH

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

That's on a personal thing, not a professional level.

Yeah, you know, and to kind of like, to maybe to kind of give even more context to the point. My partner is a PMLD teacher and he is a qualified psychologist. He has two master's degrees in psychology and he himself is neurodivergent. And he is having to basically because. Basically got the job because he's got two master's degrees in psychology and he's dealt with, with, with people with profound and multiple disabilities like through his whole career in many different ways. But he currently doesn't have QTS. He's working in further education. So he doesn't necessarily need QTS, but he needs to get PGCert as part of his contract with his job.

Yes, but the PGCert is just a PGCert. It's not. He's. He's kind of like. So we've been talking about. Because, because, because he's like, I don't know if I want you to do this, like, you know, forever. He was like, but I do want to work in this area somehow. And where we're talking about the ways that he could contribute because he, he's like, just, I need to, I need to be somebody that contributes to something in some way. And he was complaining about the PGCert. It was actually even this weekend we're talking about it. And he's like, you write degrees, don't you? And I was like, yeah. He's like, what do I need to do to write a, write a degree? And I was like, nothing. You just need to like, have the agreement of the institution and know what the format is to write the degree and go through the process of validating it. And he said, and he said, because I would love to write a specific PGCert that is in teaching people with SEND or PMLD considerations. He said, because I've had a Look, there isn't one in the world. There's none.

Commented [CF680]: Partner needs a PGCert, but a specific SEND one doesn't exist

And actually what he's proposing basically is kind of like something that if somebody was teaching lots of new things, neurodivergent students or wanted to specialize in that, that is the PG certn they would have. They would, they should go and do.

Because that would be the one that would kind of go. Let's look at our teaching through the lens of how people are perceiving, what it is that we need to give them based on their different, the different ways that they, that they perceive the world and they learn. And. Yeah, and so he's, so he's kind of like exploring how to go about that.

Commented [CF681]: T suggests that there is a need for SEND-focused PGCert

He's like, because I'm doing this PGCert, but it's, it's so nonsense for what I'm actually teaching. Like, and here's how you deal with curriculum. And he's like, I'm trying to deal with people that are still trying to learn how to communicate and say hello in the morning. Like, like some of my students, like, have to have like their helper put their hand over their hand to write their name. Like, I don't care about, about how to structure maths curriculum, like, because that's not what these individuals need. Obviously. The support needs. The level of support needs is, you know, so wide. Yeah, yeah. Divergence is sort of that way in terms of number of conditions.

Commented [CF682]: Chosen PGCert doesn't reflect practice with SEND students with higher support needs

It's also that way. And that's built into the diagnostic. Yeah, as well.

Yeah. You know, and it's like, and, and, and it's just because obviously you, you'd send these questions.

And um. And I actually mentioned this one. I was like, I was like, yeah, I said, yeah, this is weird, isn't it?

Because I'm going to be speaking to Craig. I said. And yeah, there's like for, for neurodivergent people.

I said, there's, there's actually, there's nothing built into teacher training, even just like regular teacher training, other than potentially capacity comment or, you know, kind of like be flexible enough to engage with that person. And it's like, is that the best we can do? I don't, I don't know. Like, so anyway, that's the. I thought that gives good context to.

CF

The question that's so needed. I'd love to have a talk at some point.

T3

Say again?

CF

I want to talk to him at some point.

Oh, yeah, well, I'll tell you one of the other things that he's considering because he really wants to do a PhD at some point. And what he wants to do is start to use AI models to basically be able to essentially kind of like self train on individuals and his

class, for example, that are non verbal so that the AI can start to learn what it is that that person is communicating non verbally to them. So basically that like being enabled to kind of create an AI model that essentially gives a voice to people that are non-verbal so that they can communicate with their teachers. How good would that be? Right.

Commented [CF683]: T suggests AI may be a future intervention for non-verbal people

CF

Amazing.

But he said it has even like kind of wider things where if we for instance have like a camera in the classroom, he said, and he said I know that there's loads of problems with that. He said, but whereas for instance, there could be a camera in the classroom which basically the AI model is like just observing these kids and can alert the teacher to problems that the teacher wouldn't necessarily pick up with that student. So if that student's sitting there, naturally they're going through some kind of trauma or there that they have got some problem outside of the classroom that they're feeling nervous about and they don't want to kind of like come out and tell the teacher. But it's a safeguarding situation that he said. There's, there's, there's ways that we could, that we could use AI really positively and in a closed system so that it's not, you know, a public AI model. He said, but that it's in a closed system so that teachers could actually pick up on that in ways that they would never be able to in person.

Commented [CF684]: Potential for AI to identify ND students masking distress?

CF

Yeah.

T3

How good would that be? Right. Anyway, so that's one of the things that, that, that would really help neurodivergent singers. Can you imagine?

CF

Yeah, absolutely.

T3

Yeah. And it's like. Because the thing is, because the way that I, the way that I was thinking about it is like, you know, so for instance, if I use like you with your kids. Right. So like, you know, when, when either one of your kids is about to have a bit of a breakdown way before anyone else does because you know them. Right. So like how useful would that have been to NAME's teachers at school had they had a particular

like kind of piece of technology that would have alerted them that NAME needs a little bit of support in that moment. It would have been life changing that, you know.

CF

But it also strikes me that on the other side of that there's got to be that teacher. There's got to be that teacher engagement with it in the first place.

SH

Yes.

I mean, because that's Looked and sometimes to get involved or to make those sorts of adaptations because there are still people that do that, act like that.

Oh yeah, yeah, that. So there's that aspect of it as well. But that sounds so good.

Yeah, yeah. And that would be my first answer. **Those things would be my first answer to question four.**

You know, in an ideal world, what kind of support, right? And it's that like, how do we utilize technology in order to make people's lives better? You know, like, how do we, you know, how do we, how do we empower teachers to have these conversations with, with students? How do we. And it's very different in the realm that we have. Right. Because we're not necessarily not dealing with parents, we're dealing with the student themselves. And they might be quite reluctant to kind of open up about certain things. And I know that for instance, like Americans will not tell you if anything's wrong. It's just part of cultural. In America there, no, everything's fine. I have nothing wrong with me because if I have something wrong with me, that's going to cost my parents hundreds of thousands of dollars. So there's just this, there's this thing where they just do not speak about the problems. That's quite a common thing. And so in an ideal world, like a kind of some kind of more a way to move forward as an industry where students actually kind of like feel like they can be very open and receive the same level of training.

Right. And I think that's, I think that sometimes feels to me like a potential reluctance that, oh, but if I say that I'm different, then I'm going to be treated less than. And so how do we as. And how do we make it kind of part of our pedagogy moving forward to kind of like suggest to people, no, we're not going to see you as less than. We're going to treat you as you and you're going to learn every bit that everybody else learns.

I think in an ideal world I would also have part time degrees that people would potentially be able to be moved on to so that they could facilitate a better way of kind

Commented [CF685]: Questions how to use tech to improve people's lives

Commented [CF686]: Questions how to have discussions about ND

Commented [CF687]: Cultural differences in disclosure, such as Americans with the health system there

Commented [CF688]: Industry needs to progress to ensure that the students receive equanimity in terms of training

Commented [CF689]: Feels that some fear to disclose for fear of being seen as 'less than', but T sets expectation that they will learn fully

of like making sure that they were maybe closer to their support network or just had time to process things in a different way.

Commented [CF690]: Suggests part-time degrees that utilise online and allow closer connection to support networks

I think that the. So because we were talking about this, I think that.

So we were. Because we're having a meeting yesterday about blue skies, thinking about what a foundation course would look like.

And NAME said, okay, we're each going to go around, we're not going to interrupt each other and you're going to Tell me all your thoughts on all these questions that she'd written on the board about a foundation course.

And she got to me and I said, well, I'm going to be really controversial.

And she was like, oh, what a surprise. And I said, I actually ethically disagree with foundation courses.

I just think that they don't look out for the best interests of the student, generally speaking.

You'll find that they probably have a disproportionate amount of neurodivergent students on them.

I didn't say this in the meeting, but really, if we want to look at it anecdotally speaking, I think that's probably true.

And so therefore, if they're just coming in and doing singing, dancing and acting, just like the first years are doing, then why are they not on the first year?

Right. Why are they then being treated less than, oh, it's because you weren't going to let them in in the first place.

Right. Okay, so what you've got is you've got a bunch of students that need more support but actually getting less because they're not on the degree course.

So. So I just ethically disagree with them and all the colleges, I think they're just absolute rackets.

And she said, right, so how would you change it? I said, right, well, I'd make it a course where we teach them how to cook meals out and we show them how to write an email, that we show them kind of like how to do their washing, like, that we actually show them how to be independent human beings.

Commented [CF691]: Novel concept of helping the learner in a holistic sense to prepare them to be able to cope with study

That we, that we kind of like make that a core part of the curriculum.

That we teach them just about culture in general, that we, that we teach them about the importance of them as human beings and as artists.

And then we give them some singing lessons and some dance classes and some acting classes.

Said it shouldn't be than just. Just **** skills. I said, what's the point in that? Because clearly we're identifying, okay, that are fairly decent at something, but they're not ready for first year.

Well, 99% of those people are just not ready to live life as an independent human being yet.

So why are we making the course? Not about that?

Yeah.

So for me, like a kind of foundation course should be about that.

And actually, in an ideal world, there should be.

If money was limitless, right, we would have these things available for students where they could, you know what?

Actually, do you really need to go to that spoken voice class on for the next three Tuesdays when all you're doing is kind of like Eating garbage food because you need some extra help to kind of like, you know, boil an egg and, you know, learn how to make pasta.

Like, you know, and I think that. And I think. And I do think that neurodivergent people tend to find all of that stuff just harder than neurotypical people do.

Commented [CF692]: ND people find organisation of life more difficult, so are disproportionately affected.

And so it affects them disproportionately. And they tend to be the ones that come in with in mental health crisis is saying they're anxious and all the rest of it, and 90% of it's not.

They're not anxious about the **fact they can't **** sink of ceremony.**

They're anxious because they don't know how to work the washing machine or they, they, they've, they've lost track with their bills and they do.

You know what I mean? It's like, it's the stuff that they're just finding hard to be an adult because they're, they're, they're. They just have to. Their processing time to take on life is just a slightly different pace than some other people's is.

Yeah, I mean, some gets bandied around a lot, but it's almost like you say that it's like a totally holistic thing, but I suppose if you're thinking about musical theatre training, which obviously you've been involved in in a long time, you know, when we're dealing with musical theatre, we're generally dealing with human beings and their experiences.

So. Yeah, got those kind. That kind of reference then. **Yeah, that makes sense to me. I mean, don't get me, Gary I mean, I can teach him to make a good cup of tea. Fine.**

Yeah.

Yeah, that's really, really interesting.

So anyway, that, that was, that was my rant yesterday in the meeting, you know, and I was just like, that's.

To me, that's what it is.

I just want to see the minutes for that section.

Yeah. Oh, God, yeah.

So what question are we up to now? Because I still haven't.

That was. Well, that was the last question that you sent me.

Yes, great. That's been so useful. That has been so useful because there's so many topics there.

END OF INTERVIEW

T4

T4

Transcript

Speaker 1

Oh.

Speaker 2

So, S4, thank you for taking part in my little study.

Speaker 3

Right.

Speaker 2

It's basically, first of all, a couple of housekeeping things that once.

Once we've done this, I'll send you through a transcription.

If you could just have a proof, just to make sure it's a fair reflection of the conversation.

It should be pretty much verbatim and just send it back to say it's okay, then I can.

What will happen then is I'll start to look at it for themes and things, but I'll tell you a bit about the project.

Speaker 1

Yeah, cool.

Speaker 2

So been working with neurodivergence now for 15, nearly 52 years, although I didn't know about it until I was 47, and then had got Helen, who came along in 2001, and we found out eventually when she was at secondary school, and then Alex was more obvious.

So I had a long time of working, particularly with the autistic side of neurodivergence.

But it's a really broad church. And one thing I've noticed at college and sort of schools before is that when you've got somebody with neurodivergence, that sometimes things like attendance might be a.

Speaker 3

Problem.

Speaker 2

Participation might be a problem. And my thought was, well, what can I do for these kinds of students?

What would I have wanted? And so what can I. Can I put in an intervention that might help them?

And so that can be. And the evidence suggests that. I've been reading that, like, some people really had massive problems with online learning, but for some.

For some autistic people in particular, and neurodivergence more generally, they.

So some people, a lot of people thrive.

Speaker 4

Okay, great.

Speaker 2

So my thought was, can that be turned into something that they can access when they're not able to be in college or, you know, they want to study privately, but they can't get into the teachers, there's something I can give them that my students, that would give them a way of accessing singing training and they can't manage and they need to be in their own environment.

And so that's what this is about.

Speaker 1

Okay.

Speaker 2

So I. I hope I've sort of. I hope I've sort of made sense with that one.

Speaker 1

It makes total sense.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Yeah, absolutely.

Speaker 2

So can you, first of all, can you tell me a little bit about your professional practice?

Just a little couple of minutes, saying the kind of things you've been doing.

Speaker 1

What places I've worked and things like that.

Speaker 2

First, you don't have to mention, not by name particularly, but sort of an outline.

Speaker 1

So I started teaching, oh, probably 25 years ago.

I would have said. Just started, like, as a private practice to support my.

I used to do a lot of performing as an opera singer, but I'd often have people ask me to help them.

So I wasn't sort of class classing myself as a teacher.

But it slowly got more. And it was when I decided, you know, to have a family that I wanted to look at ways that, you know, I didn't have to go away with opera and that I could be at home.

And I made the decision that when I started teaching, I wanted to start at the beginning, which a lot of people found a surprise.

They thought I'd just go straight in and teach, you know, A levels or.

Or higher level. But I actually started. I started doing like after school groups, first theater schools on a Saturday.

I did like stage coach things. Oh, sorry, names. Then I went on to teach in primary. So I got literally thrown in at the deep end to teaching primary in groups of 90 with one support teacher in a school.

That led to then teaching in secondary. It was a very, very tough school. Panic buttons on the walls, things like that. Very, very tough. Then after that I decided to. To go to a local college that was specialising in sixth form.

So I'd gone primary, secondary, then sixth form.

After sixth form, I went to a local college that did a Level 6 diploma, worked there, then went into degree.

And now I teach a mixture of degree and masters. And in 2020, I want to say I ran a department at a drama school, a vocal department.

So I've done. Done quite a lot, but I've enjoyed it because I've learned a lot through every step and working with different ages and seeing.

I love working with young people, I love their energy and I love the fact that every lesson is what.

What I always say is fabulously unique.

Speaker 2

Yeah, absolutely.

Speaker 1

You never have the same lesson twice. It's such a wonderful job for that because you don't know what sort you're going to get, whether it's a good day for the student, a bad day, a stressed day, a day where they just need somebody to be there.

And you. You kind of just. It's almost like you reinvent yourself every half an hour.

Speaker 2

Yeah, how true.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Somebody once asked me, a classroom teacher, do you ever.

Do you ever get bored with your job? And I was like, well, no, the only time you get. I get bored is when people, when students don't show up.

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, no, I love what I do.

Speaker 3

Yeah, brilliant. Yeah.

Speaker 2

And it is, it's my 25th year. I'm just going to my 25th year of teaching now.

Speaker 4

Wow.

Speaker 1

Okay.

Speaker 2

I feel like I should have a. Do a cake or something for it. So can. So just looking at. Looking at the questions, can you tell me about your experiences of working with neurodivergent singers?

Speaker 1

Yeah, I mean, a few years ago now, I. It was before we knew a lot about neurodiversity.

So I remember sort of starting off when I was quite young in theatre school, and you used to think that maybe children were just naughty or had an attitude or weren't engaging.

And it was, you know, there just wasn't the understanding there then or the care.

So you noticed that, you know, all children are different.

And I used to think, oh, I'm not. I'm just. That child's not enjoying it or I'm not getting through.

But then as the sort of years went on, these children would look like they weren't enjoying lessons or not engaging, but the end would always come up and say thank you.

And the parents would say, oh, they're loving it.

And it was then when we started hearing a little bit more about neurodiversity.

It's like the light bulb moment. It was like, as a teacher, I was like, okay, what can I do?

And that's when I sort of looked at all the different years that I'd been teaching.

And, you know, I can pick out certain students and think actually, you know, maybe in comparison with other students, the progression wasn't the same.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But actually that child, what that child achieved was far more.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And what I achieved and what I learned was what I feel is some of the most rewarding teaching I've ever done.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

So I've had then when you. You are aware I worked a lot with a young man at a local private school that had not done singing really at all and had a lot of learning difficulties.

And the school that I was working at had a specialist autistic unit.

I don't know if that's the right terminology, but that's what they called it.

So it. This student was in mainstream high school but just wanted to sing but couldn't.

Sort of the learning levels weren't the same. And he was a fascinating student because we started and like, with a few students I've had, the pitching just wasn't there at all.

So in a way, a lot of the lesson was also finding out hobbies that he did.

He was really into, like comic. Is it Comic Con where they dress up and started doing all that.

So then suddenly we'd start having figures on the piano and we kind of made it into his space.

And then he started to relax and he kept apologizing going, I can't do it.

I'm not getting it, I'm not getting it, I'm not getting it.

And I'm like, it's okay. And we started doing it to sort of comic book characters.

We started doing the scales to, like, Spider Man.

Spider man or whatever it was. And quite interestingly, and I'm no expert, the tuning came.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And he was like, I just had to find the comic figures.

I was like, absolutely. We just found it. And we used to find lots of little tongue twisters.

And he used to love making up rhymes involving it.

And then I would put tunes to it and slowly his intonation, we got him to an octave and he was so chuffed.

And every week at the end of the lesson is like, I just love it.

I just love it. And then he auditioned for the play and he got a small part in the school play because he wanted to go on stage.

And I remember all he wanted to be was Fagin in Oliver.

And he just said, S4, it just doesn't make sense when I stand still.

And I was like, great, let's not stand still. So I just said, just go for it. Let's just do it. And he's like, will you be my Oliver? I'm like, absolutely. So I was Oliver, he was Fagin, and we were doing a Pick a Pocket or two, I'll never forget it.

And we were trying to pitch it beforehand on the piano.

It just wasn't working. As soon as he started getting into the acting and the arms were going and everything was going.

The tuning was spot on.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And for me, what that student got out of that, I've still kept in touch with his mum.

I see him now. He's doing so well and left school now. But he always still talks about his Comic Con lessons.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

So that was one. Lessons like that, they stand out. Because I think when I've worked with people who are Neurodiverse, they have to take the lead almost and talk about what they want to do.

So I've had some. I've actually got a student at the moment. That's the other end of the scale. That is a difficult teaching environment for me because this student disagrees with absolutely everything I do.

Absolutely everything. I'll say, where would you like to go from? And the response is, I have got absolutely no opinion on anything you have to say.

So It's a whole hour. And she's always saying that she's very, very busy and has a busy life.

Never has any time to relax. And there is no diagnosis or any. This is at a university. But there's no sort of information. We know she knows there's something. And for her recital she wants to base it on neurodiversity.

And she's always talking about it. But we have, you know, we have no information. But we've discovered that if life gets tough and it gets very, very busy, she likes to bring all her animals in, her teddies in and stamp them.

And we, we have this little white bear now that we use as like a learning tool.

And it, it makes her calm. Yeah, she's like. And now she'll sort of see, say something she'll thought, she'll realize with me that, you know, it is a safe space.

And we had a few things because she said she wanted conflict from me in the lesson.

She thrived on conflict and argument. And I had to explain that in a one to one room. That's not my way of learning. However, we can debate things healthily but not go into that area.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

But I always say before I give her any feedback, this is in the debate way, this is what I think.

And she'll be like, absolutely cool. And if, if it's a bad day, she knows now when she comes in, she holds the bear and we know then that it's a day where she's in charge.

We take it as at the pace that she needs to. If we don't do much singing, she hates warming up.

She absolutely hates warming up. She'll always say she's warmed up, right. And I'll be like. But I can see how distressed warm ups make her. So we kind of pick excerpts of the song and we say it's technical work on the song and actually we're warming up.

We just hold long notes of the song and do breath work and things like that.

But she's, she's making really good progress.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But at first as a teacher, because I've never experienced a student with these needs, I used to come.

The lesson was very, very challenging for me because it felt like it was an almost an attack at me, like nothing was right.

Now that I know that, I know that we take, we take things in place, we put all things in place to help and support.

So that's one another student, that's the other end of the scale.

But she's starting now to talk a lot more about neurodiversity.

And selecting songs that are like, reflecting childhood and things like that, which I think is what she needs.

So again, it's one of those situations where I'm letting the student lead it.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And I support their way of learning and I'm really hoping that that's what that student needs from me and that I'm doing my job as I should be doing it.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But we are progressing. But it can be a little bit, two steps forward, one step back, depending on what comments she makes.

And obviously I have to try and not respond or get upset or anything like that.

Speaker 2

Does the student know that that's how she's coming across?

Speaker 4

No.

Speaker 1

No. And it's very, very difficult because if we knew why and we had some, some knowledge that we could sort of seek advice on or get support from other departments or things like that, it would make life a lot easier and I'd feel like I could help her more.

But I think that's one of the sort of hurdles in a way that if a student is demonstrating things like bringing Teddy's in and talking a lot about neurodiversity but we don't know if it's something that we can even talk about or it doesn't feel right to ask the question because again, it's a one on one situation.

As a one to one teacher, you don't want to cross the line because you've also got to look after yourself.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Talking about online, she absolutely flat refuses to do online.

Speaker 2

That's really.

Speaker 1

She says she can't cope with it and I wonder if she needs that person to bounce off almost in the room.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

It's like I say, there's research that say that some students absolutely thrived on it, but it's a spectrum condition.

You know, if you think she's autistic, it's a spectrum condition.

So equally there'll be those people for whom that takes so much of their resources.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

So, yeah.

Speaker 1

But it's, it's challenging as a teacher. But I mean I've, I asked if we could do some online because she, she sort of was like, I'm away, I'm not doing any lessons.

So I said, can we at least do an online check in? She's going, absolutely not, absolutely not. I was like, okay. But yeah, she just can't cope with talking to a screen.

She finds it very, very difficult.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And that's tricky as well because you can't make them, you can't make them engage like that.

And it has to come from her.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

That's really interesting. Is there any. Is there anything else that springs to mind?

Speaker 1

Oh, I have a few. How long we got? Another one that springs to mind is actually. I think I've actually mentioned this to you. I should give you a little update about a student that I teach at home.

We haven't done online. Is it okay to talk about in the room as well as online, Craig?

Speaker 2

Yeah, no, absolutely.

Speaker 1

Great. I think I mentioned to you before, I asked your advice on a student who couldn't pitch at all, who was one of my students at home, and we discussed sort of vibrations and things.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I've discovered that she's got a condition, Aphantasia as Fantasia.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And she's doing really, really well. It's not my area of expertise. And again, she comes in and if you ask her to do, you know, an SOVT or.

She can't. She just can't. She's like, why am I doing that? No, I don't like it. So I'm like, okay, let's do a new. Great.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Because a lot of my practice, again, it makes you learn that it's not a one size fits all practice.

Because I was go, how's that? Is that okay? How does that feel? But she's like, S4, I don't know. I don't know how it feels. I was like, okay. So we've kept doing it, and she said, just keep doing the exercise and I'm gonna try.

And the first, she was just singing in a completely different key.

And we've had a few lessons where I'm just like, let's keep going.

This is good. Let's keep trying. Just doing, like, just a tone. And then we had an absolute breakthrough because one day I just put my hand above and I was like, you know, it just goes.

And she just literally watched my hand. And she sang in tune for about three notes. And I went, oh, my goodness, you've got it. You've got it. And I said, oh, I thought you didn't like my hand. She says, it's making sense because I. You just had one finger sticking out. So I just followed it. So it wasn't an image, it was just a finger. So I was like, brilliant. So now. But it has to be above my head. It doesn't work if I do it there. It has to be above.

Speaker 3

Oh, okay.

Speaker 1

Okay. What's really interesting, the speech level. She thought she was a very low singer and said her family laughed.

And she said, I can't sing. She's got a brother who's got an amazing voice, so I think she feels like younger sibling thing going on.

But she said, oh, they just laugh at me at home. They say I can't sing. I just talk the songs. So I was like, okay. And when she was in that lower register, the pitching wasn't there, but when we got to about an F, my hand was up here and it automatically flipped early into the upper register and she kind of went, oh.

But I went, hang on a minute. The tuning was spot on. So when we went into the upper register and I just kept sort of doing little circles up, we actually got to the F above and F5.

Banging tune yeah, it's tiny. It's a tiny, tiny sound. But from doing that, the next week, we did the lower register and she was like, I think I'm a bit off.

I was like, tell me more. She's like, I'm a bit off. It's not quite the same. I said, this is brilliant. You can hear, hear the difference. And it's so slow, the work that we're doing

and now we're doing it where she had to always sing along with me and pitch off my voice.

But she got pretty good at singing with me. So I said, right, we're just gonna do it now with the piano and the pride on her face because she was like, oh, my gosh, I did it.

She said, I don't know how I did it. And she said, you know, her mum was like. Because her mum's a psychologist at a university, has written many papers on psychology.

And she's like, it's really interesting for them as a family because she said, I thought she had no sense of imagery or following anything, but it seems that by doing the singing, something has just opened up.

Speaker 2

Yes.

Speaker 1

So I do quite a bit of left hand playing and a lot of singing along with her.

But she's doing. She's like, I want to sing a song. So we did. She wants to do I'm not that girl from Wicked, which obviously is very, very jumpy.

But as long as she's in the upper register, which is lower than, you know, we'd normally use in that register, she's banging tune so my instinct is to keep her there.

And we just keep dipping down a semitone. And do you know what? She's doing really, really well. And she's like. She always likes to know how many semitones we've done.

And last week I like, we've done 18. And she kind of goes, huh? Oh. And she goes, downstairs to her brother and said, I've done 18 semitones.

You thought I just taught song? S4 says I doesn't. And her mum said she'll probably never sing or do anything.

She said, but she's had a lot of trouble, she's had a lot of bullying at school and she just said she just looks forward to that one on one time where it's okay and it's just about her.

Yeah, you can see an improvement. So, yeah, I'd love to know how, if you could tell me, Craig, how this works or how I could find out how this works so I could help her more.

I would love to, but I can't find much information on it.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I'll have to have a look into myself and, and yes, you know, researching, because actually that is something.

How would I meet the needs of that platform? That would be. Yeah, it's.

Speaker 1

And a lot, a lot of the work I do, I think it's that thing that you learn, learn as many, many years as a teacher and as a performer.

It's that instinct. And I think a lot of the way that I've worked with lessons with neurodiverse people is to make it like we're allowed to play.

It's. We take the stress out of it. We, we just have a good time and if it doesn't work we just go, oh well.

And it's always student led. I'll be like, do you want to try it again? And they'll be like, can we move on? Sure. And then 10 minutes later it might be, actually, can we go back to it?

Yeah, but yeah, great.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

I mean it sounds like you're working. It's. To me it sounds like you've found your way through it and yeah, I.

Speaker 1

Wish there was more training for one to one teachers.

Well, why don't we, why don't we.

Speaker 2

Jump to question four? Because, because that's about telling me about any training that you've received to work with neurodivergence.

Speaker 1

I haven't had any, none. And it's interesting as well because I should probably mention that just for your records, my daughter, my daughter has got its sensory processing.

So as a child her hands sort of flapped quite a lot and they thought it could be autism, but then it's, it's just gone to a finger one.

It's just like one finger now. But we contacted cams and things and they said it's like her brain is working too fast.

She's very clever. She's always been really, you know, great at reciting times tables.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Things.

Speaker 1

She's got perfect pitch as well, which is. I know she. She loves telling me I'm flat. That's great. I sing a song, she'll be like, actually, it's this key.

But he started singing. She's got a lovely voice. But it was difficult. It's challenging teaching your own child anyway, I think, is that.

But you're probably having children. It's hard, isn't it? Because you're like, don't do that. But first. When we first started teaching, she could not stand still at all.

And I. I know from. So I suppose I. I've got an awareness as a mum who's talked to cams quite a bit and what have you that the worst thing I could say to Mia is keep still because she can't.

But it's so interesting. As she's getting older, it is deteriorating a bit.

But. Oh, she stood up in front of school. She didn't even tell me she was singing a song for movie two in front 300 people.

I didn't even know she was singing at this point. So I went to watch her. It was wonderful. But I. I watched her hand and it didn't move. So there's some sort of connection with music and sort of ticks.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And she's just like, I love it because she said, I'm actually still.

And it's really, really interesting.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

I mean, you see actually with. When you look at other sorts of tick type disorders that when it sings it doesn't manifest itself.

And that's like when you're working with. When you're working with people who've got Tourette's, that sometimes can disappear when singing.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And, you know, she stood up and sang Another Suitcase, Another hall, not an easy song for your first time out.

And it was absolutely great. She had a microphone just on a stand and she just had to stand in school uniform and she was still as anything.

And she.

Speaker 4

She goes.

Speaker 1

She watched the video back, she goes, I'm not moving.

Speaker 4

No.

Speaker 1

And she. She's very. She's friends with her tick. We've always called it busy fingers in our houses.

She'll say, my fingers are busy. And I said to her, you know, does it bother you? She said, no. I said, if people. She says, if people ask me, she said, it's just what makes me me.

And I think a lot of it that's helped her is the acceptance of it.

And I think society today and young people today particularly, there isn't that sort of stigma around it anymore.

Everybody, everybody's got a little quirk or a talent or whatever it is.

And me, it's just like it's my superpower.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Interesting is that when, when she found the stillness, she came, she came to the stillness from a bit in her own time for that space.

Speaker 1

Yeah. A lot of people mistook it as anxiety and things like that and thought she was a timid child.

And we used to say it's it the. It only happens when she's so happy. So like when we say we're going to theater or when she's going to watch a show or whatever it is, she's sitting in the audience like this.

As soon as the show starts, she's there.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

But we, people say, oh, she's moving her hands. I'm like, yeah, she's happy, she's not anxious, she's not worried or, you know, it's, it's kind of a way for us.

We just know. Yeah, she's great, she's just happy and it. So I've sort of grown up with that with Mia. So I think maybe as a mum again with the sensory processing that we've got.

We don't know that much about it. We just. They just say as she gets older it'll probably get less.

But I just feel there is a need, especially in the educational environment that no matter what you teach, there should be some sort like we do safeguarding training.

There should be something that's compulsory that we do so that we gain a better understanding.

Speaker 2

Yeah, absolutely. I totally agree with you there. Yeah, that's great. It's. Yeah, I've heard very much similar all the way through with that.

Speaker 1

Have you?

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Good.

Speaker 2

So if, I don't know if you've done this, you might have done it and not realized it.

But how might you. Or how do you approach if you've got a somebody that's neurodivergent online, how.

What approaches do you take? Do you do anything different?

Speaker 1

Some of the, a lot of the students that I've had online have preferred to have a warm up recorded to do before I start.

They find it easier just to be instructed on the song.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I don't know if that's a common thread, but it's the, it's the online exercise because it's that call and response thing.

There may be super technology I don't know about where you can play at the same time and it works.

But I haven't got that technology at home. So it'll be like I play and sing. And then as soon as the Zoom does a blip or something, then we almost have to start again because it's, it's just we've lost the continuity.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

So a lot of them would say, will say, can you just send me a pre recorded warm up, just some basics and then we can tech through the song.

So that's a.

Speaker 2

Have they expressed why that that's the case?

Speaker 1

No, they just say. They just say they're not comfortable.

Speaker 2

That's interesting.

Speaker 1

And I think me as a teacher, I never know again because of sort of.

That not being trained and it being a one to one environment, you know, which can be vulnerable for both teacher and student.

You don't want to sort of delve and go, well, why do you find it?

You know, I'll sort of say, is there anything I can do to help in the room?

And they're like, no, please can we just record it?

I have had students who were quite happy to do it. I've had a few students that don't actually like to look at the screen.

They like to look somewhere else. They find that, that face staring at you, I think, you know, quite close.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I think it feels that maybe a little bit more invasive than being in a room where you've got a piano behind you and space and you've got a music stand that's, you know, it's just a different setting and sometimes you're propped up on a window sill or a laundry basket or whatever.

So it's, it's that. Maybe it's that different environment where it's not the learning space, it's the home space.

But I'm doing a work thing. I don't, I'm just presuming, I don't actually know.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

And. And then the students, I'll say record it. And some of them really don't like recording or listening back.

Speaker 2

Have they, have you explored any other avenues for them to have some record of what you've been doing?

If the recording side of things?

Speaker 1

Yeah, I will very often at the end of the lesson, if they're students that are my own students, I will record a voice note.

And I will say following today, a lot of students, like you were saying as well, I've had a few students, especially on Zoom actually attendance can.

And remembering to log on. I feel as a teacher this has happened actually in places I've worked where, you know, often as staff members were told, you know, students have to be responsible for their own calendars and there's students that I have to specifically send a message to every week to say, just to remind you, lessons at 2:30, they can't read a timetable, especially if it's dyslexia or something as well.

And the times change every week or there's a last minute change.

Those are little extra things. Like I will send a reminder, I'll sometimes say, you know, often we plan in advance what we're going to do, whereas a lot of the work will be, you know, in the lesson.

What have you got today then?

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

The students like to know exactly how we're going to do it.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And how long we're going to spend on each section.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

So then you've got that sort of task as a teacher where you're like, I've got to really get this within this 20 minutes and then I know we have to move on.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

That's why I send the questions out to everybody in advance.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Whether the singer participants or the teacher ones.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Because, hey, I can't make any assumptions. And B, it doesn't do any harm for everybody to have that different approach.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But again, I think, I think it's the same with every lesson, whether you're neurodiverse or not, that maybe it's because it's the onetoone.

I feel, you know, most of the time a lot of the initial work is student led and then we add the layers to it.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Great, thank you. I'll tell you what, we're zipping through this.

Speaker 4

Am I talking enough?

Speaker 2

No, you, it's fine. The thing is that I, I know that people are going to provide me with different levels of, of stuff.

I'd got one person who was very hypervocal and that one went on for quite a long time.

So, you know, it's, it's going to be varied in length and.

But no, it's absolutely fine.

Speaker 1

I think it'd be different now if we're fast forwarding, just sort of turning it around again to 20, 25.

If we suddenly had another pandemic, do you think we'd have a lot more people now speaking up how they felt and sort of it being a sort of more open space rather than going, oh, we're on Zoom.

I find this really difficult because I felt like in lockdown, there were a lot of lessons that were awkward and a lot of.

I had a lot of students that didn't like Zoom. And, you know, you then find out later on the neurodiverse and sometimes when you, you know, when we were starting a new academic year we didn't always get the information and we didn't have the contact that we usually have between departments to discuss.

Do you think students will be more sort of able to give information now than maybe five years ago?

Speaker 2

I like to think so.

Speaker 1

I would like to think so.

Speaker 2

But I think also the whole landscape has changed since, you know, I remember that we'd got the.

Monday was when Boris Johnson made the announcements.

And in the following Monday, we'd moved completely online to online teaching.

And at first we didn't even have video stuff. They wouldn't let us do that.

Speaker 1

At first I didn't even have zoom. I didn't have a clue.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And then Zoom came along and, you know, it had got its limitations with sound.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

It's, you know, it has changed a lot. So I wonder whether the students experience would be different.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

You know, it's. Again, it might still be, you know, everybody.

Speaker 1

Hopefully we'll never know that we have to do soul online learning again.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Well, quite quiet.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Not enforced online learning anyway.

Speaker 3

But.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I did do not. I did do some lessons with a student where I had to do the lesson in the dark as well.

They could only sing when it was in the dark.

Speaker 3

Okay.

Speaker 1

And that was like zoom as well.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Because they said that they couldn't sing whilst there was a lot of light around, which again, is quite challenging if you are going into a performing career.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

So, yeah.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

I don't know how you sort of. How you sort of address that because.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

It's something that you can't get past.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

And another student where I had to give instructions in colors, which was.

It was a breakthrough. It was a breakthrough to learn. But again, I, I. You sort of leave that lesson thinking as a teacher.

God, I wish I knew more.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Just knew the next steps.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

That synesthesia, that is.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And you reset when you have one sense, but it expresses as another.

So you tell like, I'm the focus.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Because if I said you'd. Can you make this a little bit stronger? Or let's get a little bit more resonance on that or a little bit more body connection.

In the end, I'd sort of say, what color are you feeling now?

If we really get energized, what color does it turn to?

And then I'd have a list of colors and I knew what they meant.

So let's be a little bit more, you know, and there were colors like cinnamon, you know, it wasn't primary colors and things.

We had lots of different colors. And I Would just be like, is it more an autumnal? Like. Yeah, yeah. Really autumnal. Let's try that. And then this glorious sound comes out.

Speaker 3

Great.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

You're like, okay.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Was there any thinking about that? Was there any correlation like between students between how they perceived colors and energy?

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Lives.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I, I haven't had many with that. Just that one student in particular who like, we were really like hitting a wall because they, they don't like making a sound.

They, they are very sensitive to noise, hypersensitive to noise.

And also light lessons where in the beginning of the lesson they asked me not to look at them.

Speaker 4

They.

Speaker 1

Which was also a challenge because then you're sort of playing with your head down and you're having to just go on your ear.

Eventually we sort of got a mirror so she couldn't see that I was looking at her in the mirror.

So I had a mirror as like a. At least a side on visual so I could just check alignment and things like that.

But it was great as we discovered the colors and all of that.

Then she kind of said, would it be okay now if we tried.

If you looked at me, can you just look at me and see what you think to this shape?

And I was like, and now, you know, we still do a lot of lessons side on.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But I can actually do warm ups and I can watch and she's very aware that I'm watching.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But again, then we'd talk about when I look at you, what color is that?

So we'd know that there were colors that weren't comfortable colors as well.

Speaker 3

Yeah, that's really interesting.

Speaker 1

It is, isn't it?

Speaker 2

It's, yeah, it's endless fascination.

Speaker 1

I hope I still have this student this year, then I can explore it more.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I love that.

Speaker 4

Yeah, it's.

Speaker 1

It's fascinating.

Speaker 2

Oh, sorry, I've just burned my phone. And as I was getting to question four.

Speaker 1

Okay.

Speaker 2

Question to you. In an ideal world, what kind of support would you need when working with neurodivergent singers?

Speaker 1

I think one of the. It's interesting in, you know, an institution, you know, uni, conservatoire.

I feel like sometimes we're just given like neurodiverse or this.

I think sometimes it'd just be lovely to have that time just to have a chat with the student.

But also have, you know, we say things like, oh, adhd, sensory processing, dyslexia and all of that.

And some of it dyslexia. You know, it took me a while to realize all the colored overlays that we have and things like that and the two just to that awareness, I think from you know, departments, if we have the information to just tell us a little bit more or you know, to have some courses.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

That are specifically, you know, maybe for any one to one learner.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

Because that can often be where I think the student can feel quite vulnerable.

Hopefully it gets to like their happy place where it's that sort of precious one on one time.

It's great. But you know, it'd be interesting to have a little bit more background information on the student so that we're not constantly trying to second guess and, and try things and you know, make choices in the lesson.

That is absolutely the wrong call. But it's because we haven't got an awareness of what the student needs.

But I suppose that also depends on how much information the student's willing to give.

That's the hard bit. Yeah, but I mean the, the initial singing lessons now I'm always like a bit of a chat and saying, what do you like?

What type of learning do you like? How can I support you? But I, I just wish there was a little bit more training or a book or something that would say this is how it can impact on the voice.

And these are possible things, you know, that if a student isn't diagnosed or you think there's something you can kind of something that's easier than trailing through the Internet trying to find stuff and you don't know if it's accurate or you know, something going, oh, you can look up like you know, colors for example, or you know, can't process an image, can't understand imagery, you know, in a singer or tuning, something like that.

And you're like, if it's this way, if it's that way, it could be this or there's probably lots of stuff out there that I haven't found.

But like there's so many courses out there on like vocal health and breathing and all of that.

And I just, I just think there's not very much there that's kind of not a really advanced training but just something that gives us an overview and something that's, you know, easy, easy to understand, accessible to everybody.

Yeah, maybe not lots of big words all the time, but something that's just in a language where it's memorable and that we can process, you know, process.

I sometimes the way my brain works, sometimes a lot of big words and things, I can be a little bit overwhelmed with that.

But just something that's really, really accessible and makes us want to know more.

Speaker 2

Yeah, it's sort of like. I suppose I'm just thinking what that would look like.

So sort of like in some ways, like a crib sheet.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Accessible.

Speaker 1

I mean, we had a training day, I think. I won't mention the institution, but we had a training day.

And I don't. It wasn't last year. I don't think it was a year before where there was a guest speaker who was autistic, I think.

And it was the morning session. And it was the best training I've ever done because it was like.

But we only maybe get that once a year for an hour as like a staff thing.

Or maybe it's just something that. A departmental thing. Like we're doing what we're doing now. I can't tell you how much this is helping me because we're talking.

We don't have the chance to, like, do a lot of shared practice and, you know, we might grab members of staff in a staff room for two minutes and go, I've got this.

But you just maybe get a one quick answer go, I'll try that, Try that.

But, you know, maybe in the staff room there could be some sort of document or folder or something that just has all the things there that we could access and just recap quickly and go, oh, yeah, that's.

That's the full breakdown of. You know, I know it's very complicated and. But there must be something where if someone says, oh, adhd, there's probably many different variants and what have you.

But do you think it would be plausible to have something that was just like something that was quite, you know, a couple of pages to read.

Yeah, yeah. And just like how you may be able to help, you know, key tips, you know, again, student led ask the.

These kind of questions are. Okay, because you often when someone says neurodiverse, sometimes there still is that bit as a teacher where you're like, what?

What do I say now? What? Oh, can I be direct? Can I ask that student? Is that. Okay, what's this policy here? Am I overstepping the mark because I'm in a room on my own with them?

You know what I mean?

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I don't know how logical this request is and if it.

If it makes sense, but for me, I just think some.

Speaker 2

Just something that's a fun place that I. One of my former employment, there was a board in the staff room where there was literally just one sheet thing that was about that.

Thing about that particular aspects of neurodivergence.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

That you could just look at.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And it was there and it was on the wall. It was just present and so you didn't have to really make any effort to try and find.

Speaker 1

We have lots of things up about, you know, mental health and well being and numbers to call and all of that.

But it would be really good if this information could somehow be a little bit more accessible.

Speaker 3

Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2

Cool. Is there anything else that would support you in your practice?

Speaker 4

Pardon?

Speaker 2

Is there anything else that you feel that would support you in practice with them or else.

Is there anything else you think you'd need? Because I mean, I think that's pretty comprehensive though.

Speaker 4

Yeah, I think.

Speaker 1

I mean, you know, the room I teach in now for various reasons has got different levels of lighting and I think, I think making sure in an ideal world, you know, we could have switches to make the lighting less.

We can change the ambiance of the room. Like, you know, students. I don't know what we could do about sound really, but you know, if you had a piano and you had a keyboard that had a volume button for people who are noise sensitive.

Because sometimes the pianos can be so full on and if you've got that, it's like a sensory overload.

I think maybe, I don't know, I mean, I know like my daughter and some of the students have had like fidgets or, or just something accessible that if somebody needs to grab one, it's totally okay.

If you want to grab a fidget toy or a bear, you know, anything and that it's a safe space to do that.

Yeah. Oh, we've got loads of them. Apart from those tubes that you pull and they make a noise, they go through me.

I often want to sort of just put some out. But then you kind of think, is that okay? I don't know. But I think, you know, we look at this now and in our education we've got so many neurodiverse students.

I think each room we should have like a little thing, some overlays just to hand so the student doesn't have to go, actually I can't read this white paper that the photos give me.

And there's no yellow or green left in the staff room that we can just go, okay, go to the box or the cupboard or whatever we've got in the room.

It could just be a cupboard where the student could come in.

It could be their place to just get what they need.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I keep set here.

Speaker 1

Yeah, Chairs different, you know, I mean, we. I'm talking luxuries now, but some, some People are just like, can I sit down a little bit?

And they just need a minute. But I think it's. I think it's the lighting and the piano that I. I think I. I have had quite a lot of students that find some of the rooms I teach in very bright and very loud, myself included.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 1

But I think little tiny adjustments, like a dimmer switch and just, like, things that are accessible if the student needs them, that would be.

Because, you know, sometimes students, if they are running late and they're stressed because they've got the time wrong, you know, it might just be.

Actually, we just need. I just need a minute. I just need to grab something. I just need to just breathe, and then I'll feel okay.

If it. I think if it's there, that would be good. Do you think that. Would that make sense?

Speaker 2

Yeah, I think it. Yeah, absolutely. It's, you know, if it makes sense for the students and it's.

And sometimes it can be like you. You were saying with yourself and then the students.

Sometimes you can have competing priorities because what your sensory thing might be might be different than the students.

So, you know, managing both of those, I don't think there's a perfect solution to that one.

Speaker 1

Or it's where there's something that, you know, as teachers.

But then you think if one teacher does it and other teachers don't do it, then it's not.

I think it's got to be like a, you know, institution decision of what.

What we use. Because you can't have one that's looking more open to different things for neurodiversity than another teacher.

Because then, you know, students might be like, well, that teacher knows more than this teacher.

And you don't want that. You want it to be a whole team thing.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

But definitely being able to adapt to the environment, I think would be very beneficial.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

S4, thank you. That's.

Speaker 3

That's.

Speaker 2

I think we've sort of hit the end, though, so. Anything else you want to.

Speaker 1

No, no, that's great.

Speaker 2

I think we just hit that natural pause in there.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

I'm gonna say. I'm gonna finish the recording. Thank you so much. It's so appreciated.

Speaker 1

Oh, anytime.

Speaker 2

Happy to help as well.

Speaker 1

No worries.

Speaker 2

Yeah. I tried to think what I shall look like at work in the morning.

Speaker 1

Oh, you'll be fine.

Speaker 2

I'll stop the recording. There we go. Got it through.

Appendix G

Questionnaire Responses

Participant	Pre-pandemic	Pandemic	Post-pandemic
A1		Mainly positive because it gave them a sense of normality with a familiar face and activity	
A2		Most were keen to have online lessons and seemed to enjoy the sessions. The pace of the lessons was a little slower than in person though, as the students needed to play tracks from their side of the call.	I have some students that prefer online lessons, due to distance/difficulty with travel etc. The remainder of my lessons are in person - unless the student is ill, then they seem happy and engaged with an online lesson instead.
A3		They were motivated but the technology made it hard to finesse pieces, so generally the focus was on accuracy with melodic lines and keeping repertoire maintained.	
A4		Younger students were less engaged, but overall engagement was quite good.	Generally very good.
A5		Students were a little uncomfortable to begin with for the first few sessions but soon settled into the arrangement. They would always say that in person was preferable, though.	

A6		Varied, overall positive, with folks wanting to continue their progress	They are thrilled or they would seek other options
A7	They were engaged enough to want to have lessons from another part of this country or from another country. They felt the experience was worthwhile	Some were v engaged and loved it. Not all.	It entirely depends on the student. The ones who have persisted with online do it because they value they can't have in person lessons. When I've worked with these people in person it's been much better
A8		this is very client dependent. Some were extremely engaged. Others were not.	Again, this is very client specific. All students have a unique level of engagement and experience. I would say overall my whole studio is incredibly engaged and enjoy their experience, but this question feels too general to answer accurately.
A9	It was very good. I started doing private lessons in person in 1995. Online lessons got added as an option in 2010 when Skype became stable & reliable enough for this purpose (so a fun decade before the Pandemic in 2020)	It was excellent, just as before the Pandemic. No change in client experience & engagement for me, just higher numbers of clients being online. Pre-pandemic there were more in-persons, but obviously during the pandemic everything moved online.	Excellent (otherwise they wouldn't continue to book lessons)! Due to having a worldwide clientele, my coaching is almost exclusively online these days.
A10		Very mixed, some students worked well and were very disciplined, others found it hard and do not wish to repeat the experience of learning online for singing.	
A11	Enjoyed working online assuming they knew what the intention of the lesson was before it started	Their lessons were sometimes the only time they spoke to someone one to one over the course of that	They engage well because I can accompany live most of the time.

		week, they really enjoyed their lessons, but their patience was not great as it wasn't their choice to work online	
A12		There were varying degrees of engagement and success over all, but I don't think the main issue was the platform, but rather its necessity. I was able to do good work and get results and students responded for the most part.	I think some students show lower commitment levels to online learning now that it is not required. I have had a number of students stop studying since I haven't gone back to in person work (at home). I only teach in person at my university.
A13	Pre pandemic my online lessons were mainly with pro/touring students. These clients were generally engaged and positive about connecting online.	Mixed. At the start many had general problems learning the new medium. This became much easier as time went on.	Engagement is good. Most students are competent with all kinds of video platforms and are comfortable in learning.
A14	Adequate but no substitute for in person	Committed	Committed
A15		It was superb! Those were tough times where human connection was crucial. Many people were engaged for various reasons 1) it took their mind off worries about whether or not we'd all make it past the lockdowns 2) it was fun, refreshing and new 3) we organised online recitals 4) tools were easily accessible at home 5) people became less reliant on the teacher (eg operating their own	Still mostly the same, we are able to produce results and people still show up. We do however meet up in studio for microphone training pre recital or performances. Not every student is willing to invest in tech and music equipment. However I've also noticed people wanting to sit down more, postural concerns also surface eg poor positioning of device

		backing tracks), and with no piano accompaniment - many developed sharper hearing since they couldn't rely on piano correction (and had to focus well on their digital tools)	
A16	The sound was often poor and as I had worked with them in person, I had an understanding of where their voices were at and could fill in the gaps as it were, along with some best guesses. I had students email voice recordings on apps that would compress their voices less and allow me a better experience of what they were doing. Advanced students were easier to work with as their general vocal set up was good and I could work on performance and interpretation more which are both subjective. Languages were ok to work on too as we could speak them and check higher register lines by singing them an octave lower to check on pronunciation: not ideal but generally worked.	The students liked having the continuity and a feeling of making progress. Some were struggling when they had online school screen time and then additional screen time for lessons, although being 1-1 helped. The experience improved with technical changes on platforms and with better understanding of the options available on them. Some students invested in additional mic's and interfaces that helped the sound quality. Connectivity sometimes was such an issue that we had to call it a day and end the lesson early. Generally it was a great tool to have considering the circumstances.	Mostly positive. It allows for students in remote areas, without transport etc to engage with singing lessons.
A17		They struggled to have their equipment set up, eg if they were using their mic they couldn't play backing tracks from the same device, so they needed a laptop, a phone or iPod and a speaker. Also I'd send tracks and sheet music	

		by email and there'd be a delay in them receiving. So there was a lot of stalling. So it was just very frustrating for them	
A18		Better than expected for most - novelty factor and connection to someone outside of house big factors	Better for the fewer students I teach online as it's their choice due to distance etc

Appendix H

Participant	Which mode (of teaching) do you prefer, and why?
A1	
A2	I personally prefer in person. But that also depends on the student - their age and pitching ability. Because of the delay in sync with online lessons, if the student struggles with pitching then in person works better. The same applies if they are younger. But from high school age to adult, online works well.
A3	
A4	I prefer online for 1-1 as I am autistic and find it easier to focus and engage myself. For group classes in-person is much easier due to logistics.
A5	
A6	In person, though I like online groups
A7	In person. I can see more than a postage stamp sized version of the person. I can hear them clearly. The communication is better because we can make eye contact. I have to make eye contact with the student by looking directly at the camera. I get no feedback from the camera!
A8	Online. It allows me to teach anyone from anywhere. It gives my clients the flexibility to find a specialist like myself without the restriction of physical location. I have a much better relationship with my clients because with an online only setup, I reach a much more specific target audience and have clearer boundaries and structure to my studio. If I ever move my students don't have to look for a new teacher. Since I don't rent studio space, I have a much easier time scheduling and rescheduling - flexibility that highly benefits my students.
A9	In person but it's just not practical for a worldwide clientele. Online is a GREAT "Plan B"!
A10	
A11	In person works best for me because I don't need to hold any student reservations about technology use. I also teach online from home which is not always the most suitable when demonstrating techniques at the unusual hours I sometimes work (I teach students who are up to 8 hours ahead and 8 hours behind my timezone)
A12	In person has definite advantages on a person to person/energy exchange level, as well as in hearing sound in an acoustic environment. Online lessons are nice for an occasional check in with my in person students in that they allow a very close view of their apparatus.
A13	This wholly depends on the needs of the client. For touring students the online lessons are a lifesaver and for others being in

	person is essential for their work. It really depends and I'm happy working either way.
A14	In person, generally, though I love being able to work with people in other parts of the UK and even in other countries.
A15	Depends on the clients needs! I prefer online for convenience (no waste of travelling time, can have more back to backs, easy access to tools eg 3D models, straws, books). and scheduling. However some clients who feel safer to make louder sounds away from family (home) benefit from being in the studio space. Some also require mirrors.
A16	In person. The sound is just that much better. Online platforms don't give me a sense of the size of the voice and was one of the big surprises for me when we started to be in-person. I also can do pitch correction in real time, we can duet, improvise and feel sound much better. I'm never sure what the sound is like for the student when we're working online as I don't know the quality of their equipment. For all that, I am surprised by how much progress online learners are able to make and although it's not my preferred method, I am confident that I am adding value.
A17	
A18	In person, easier to accompany, more personal.