

# Rehear *SING!* from the podium

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The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a follow-up study of research designed to investigate the use of conductors' voices in vocal and instrumental ensemble settings. In the initial study (Buell & Rose, 1998), singing, speaking, and paralinguistics were analyzed in regard to the way they influence learning and performance outcomes. It was concluded that the use of singing as a teaching tool or means of communicating from the podium is important in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of conducted ensemble rehearsing. In this study, we looked specifically at conductor singing as a rehearsal tool with the intent of considering ways of integrating appropriate voice-use methods into undergraduate curricula designed to prepare future teacher/conductors. Through interaction and collaboration with selected teacher/conductor subjects, our overall goal was to examine more deeply the uses of singing in the ensemble setting. From data gathered, which included our subjects' own analysis, and their narratives and anecdotes, we identified useful understandings and voice and singing skills and techniques that stand to benefit the work of the teacher/conductors in ensemble settings.

## What we already know

Conductors routinely use observable behaviors as part of their rehearsing such as traditional patterned conducting (often combined with other arm and hand gesture), body movement, and facial expression. In addition, they use their voices. Studies by Barresi (1978), Buell (1990), Burton (1987), Grechesky (1985), and Rohwer (1995) have looked specifically at conductor voice behaviors which characterize rehearsing practice in both choral and instrumental settings. The uses are speaking, singing, and paralinguistic sound production, i.e., voice sounds that are not singing and that have no semantic meaning attached to them. In our previous study (1998), the subjects, on average, used their voices as follows:

Speaking	77%
Singing	14%
Paralinguistics	9%

Table 1. Teacher Voice Use (Buell & Rose, 1998)

The topics or musical issues to which voice use was directed were:

- Precision (including rhythm, notes, playing together)
- Balance and blend
- Articulation (including bowing styles)
- Expression and phrasing
- Sound (including tone, intonation, and diction)

Table 2. Musical Issues (Buell & Rose, 1998)

Further to this, we observed that our subjects' voice uses were in agreement with the distinct teaching strategies identified by Kennell (1989) in his initial research on Scaffolding Theory in applied music instruction, and discussed in a paper presented at the *Phenomenon of Singing International Symposium* in 1997. Scaffolding Theory is based on research by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) that identifies six teaching strategies that bring about learning. These are recruitment, reduction in degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control, and demonstration. In our 1998 study, we observed our subjects most often demonstrating, reducing degrees of freedom, and marking features. Kennell concluded that the demonstration strategy is used to advance a student's conceptual understanding of a problem. Manipulating task difficulty (previously 'reducing degrees of freedom') is used to advance a student's skill mastery required to solve a problem. Marking features of the task or performance may be used for either the advancement of conceptual understanding or the development of skills. It is employed to get additional information about a student's skills and understandings or to highlight a student's existing skills or understandings.

The figures in the following table are the averaged voice-use strategies of the subjects in our initial study.

Demonstration	22%
Manipulating the task	5%
Marking features of the task	73%

Table 3. Teaching Strategies (Buell & Rose, 1998)

These strategies were directed toward a variety of instructional goals that ranged from immediate to long-term issues, tasks, and problems. Some of the instruction focussed on fixing problems, and some was directed toward developing musical understandings, providing affective experiences, developing technical and thinking skills, and nurturing the musical growth of students. Some of the instruction we observed centered clearly on getting pieces ready for performance. In summary, the instructional goals in this study were identified as:

Conceptual Understanding  
 Technical Development  
 Reflective and Critical Thinking Skills  
 Ensemble Performance Skills  
 Musicianship Skills  
 Performance Readiness  
 Other

Table 4. Instructional Goals (Buell & Rose, 1998)

Our initial look at seven successful practitioners provided useful insight into the ways in which choral and instrumental conductors use their voices in rehearsal, and into the relationship of voice use to learning and performance outcomes. What became apparent was the need to look more closely at 'singing' because of its power in communicating conceptual ideas and information in ensemble settings. We concluded that:

- Successful teacher/conductors vary significantly in thinking and practice.
- Successful teacher/conductors do not necessarily plan their voice use in regard to strategies and goals.
  - Both general singing experience and formal voice education contribute to the formation of positive self-concept and effective voice use.
  - When personal and professional identities, general comfort levels, appropriate voice uses, strategies and goals are 'aligned', rehearsing is more efficient and effective.

We also felt that the following questions need to be considered.

- Should there be better understandings of the general goals of rehearsing (e.g., conceptual understanding, technical development, and reflective and critical thinking skills)?
  - Should what we know about the relationships between strategies and goals be more highly considered in our teacher preparation classes?
  - Are the techniques of vocal production considered adequately for contextual use from the podium within teacher preparation programs?
  - Do our students understand that appropriate voice use (singing, speaking, and paralinguistics) is powerful in *all* conducted ensemble settings?
  - Should internships, field experiences, and practica be of a longer duration?
  - Should we consider more the development of students' identities as part of the undergraduate experience? (e.g., as singers, non-singers)

## Methodology

As a means to focus on these issues, two teacher/conductor subjects were selected from the larger pool of subjects used in our original study (1998). The intent was to involve these subjects in a collaborative and more extensive exploration and analysis of specific videotaped incidences of their singing while they rehearsed. The primary purposes of this was to: 1) compare our previous analyses of singing use with the three conductors' intentions, perceptions and understandings; 2) determine the level of consciousness or planned use of singing as a rehearsal strategy; and 3) explore possibilities for further or potential uses of singing as a means toward teaching and learning in the ensemble setting.

The two participants, a choral conductor and an instrumental conductor, agreed to participate in separate and extended interviews. During this time, they were shown excerpts from the videotaped rehearsing recorded in our original study. They were asked questions about specific instances where they sang to their ensembles. This information was triangulated with our original data. After viewing their own practice, both subjects were asked questions of a broad nature regarding their feelings and understandings about singing as a rehearsal tool, and undergraduate preparation of teacher conductors.

This methodology allowed for the recognition of theoretically-based behaviors, an examination of the 'whys' and 'hows' underlying the practice we examined, and the development of data categories relating to the issues that were observed or generated. During the interviews, discussion focused on the subjects' background, philosophies, conscious methodologies, perceptions of instructional strategies, performance and educational goals, and specific suggestions for teacher/conductor preparation.

## Analysis of data

In our analysis of the interview data, we found five topics or issues resurfacing throughout the discussions. They were: the use of the voice, the quality of the voice, teacher knowledge and skill, levels of consciousness, and placing emphasis on the learner. In this section we highlight comments from each participant that relate to these specific points. The choral teacher/conductor is identified as [C] and the instrumental teacher/conductor as [I].

### The Use of the Voice

Both teacher/conductor subjects talked about the use of the singing voice generally as an efficient means to model/demonstrate:

I choose to sing it rather than say it probably because in my experience it comes quicker like that. I think with young children vocal modelling is really important, it's real to them. It's instantly perceived and comes in through so many channels to them. It is easier to teach musical line by demonstrating it rather than by talking about it. When you have older children, you can talk about the individual words - formulate whatever it is and see where the stresses lie, but with little children, it's really important to model it. [C]

I think I'd [often] have a hard time trying to verbalize it, and I think it would take way more time talking about as opposed to making the attempt to sing what I want it to sound like. Also, it's useful to play tapes of something you want them to hear but it takes a lot longer, granted it may only be seconds. But, in rehearsals you want all those seconds, and so the quicker you can get them to an understanding of what you're getting at, the better it is from your rehearsal time. You can lose a lot of momentum in your rehearsal. I think that's probably the biggest reason [I sing]. It's just so time effective to use the voice. [!]

When I have brought my horn to school I use it, and I have done that on a number of occasions. I think it would be better if the instrument was there and the person was able to demonstrate. But, I think it's just a more practical time issue. It probably just takes too much time. Singing is often quicker, more efficient. [!]

Both teacher/conductors talked about the use of their singing voices to mark critical features. For example, they sang to. . .

**demonstrate articulation/balance:**

I was after articulation. It was too accented and I wanted it more legato, a good strong sound but not accented at the beginning of each. So, I was after two things, that it be nice and strong but not accented, balance and articulation. [!]

**model line/phrasing:**

I was after a longer line, a longer phrase. They were letting the sound drop on the A or A flat, and so [I wanted them] to put a little crescendo on that note as they're holding it, before they get to the point where they break, grab a quick breath and continue. With a younger band, they don't have the experience that the high school kids do, so phrasing is not a natural thing. [!]

**model contrasting versions (e.g., incorrect vs. correct versions):**

I demonstrate what I didn't want it to sound like, with the accents on the notes. The second example was to sing it strongly but smoother with no accents at the beginning of the notes. Sometimes I think that if they hear the wrong way, I'm hoping that they'll remember that's the way we *don't* play it. [!]

**provide immediate feedback using singing voice:**

You don't have to tell them it wasn't very good, they know that. So, that was an example there I felt I didn't have to say anything. They knew they didn't play it very well, and so now we're going to have a little fun with it. So, I sang it to them. Hopefully the difference would have been like night and day. [!]

**model a stylistic issue:**

I was after more life, a more majestic, brighter style, a more fanfare type of sound, good strong articulation, rhythm, ensemble... [!]

**demonstrate timing and rhythm issues:**

I was demonstrating how to keep the subdivision of the beat while they were playing the faster rhythm, other than saying, "Don't rush those eighth notes." It would take me a long time to explain [verbally] to them not to rush the eighth note. I would be struggling trying to find the words to adequately help them understand. [!]

## **to combine textual understanding and language acquisition with musical phrasing:**

I very often will sing, trail off, and have them sing back independently as they are putting together Spanish, which they've never pronounced before, with a melody. So, I'm just giving a little bit of encouragement and I will eventually wean them from that. Overall, I was after them to fuse the Spanish with the melody, and getting a degree of confidence with it, and accuracy, obviously trying to keep it musical and enjoyable. [C]

The choral teacher/conductor noted the power of the voice as a tool for motivation, affirmation and encouragement:

I try to link the students to the experience of voice in life. It is a critical issue in terms of how much we use it and call on it all the time. In a child's world, affirmations for voice use is critical in helping them develop self esteem, in encouraging them as people, and in encouraging their self-expression. ... I encourage students to enter that kind of experience where they'd be happy to make animal noises or whatever they need to make with children that would encourage children singing voices, and encourage them to feel okay about singing in a group. [C]

Both of our subjects talked about the use of the voice in combination with speaking and gesture:

Hopefully if they [students] hear me singing the way I want them to play it, and they also see the way I gesture it to them. I think there's a big link between the visual and the oral and so the more connections you can give them in rehearsal, the more oral and visual reminders you give them, the better the performance will be and the longer they'll remember it. [I]

Both subjects discussed the use of the voice to combine various musical, conceptual and technical issues:

[With the voice] you can demonstrate articulation, volume, intonation, intensity, style timing, rhythms, all those things at the same time. So, it's extremely efficient. You can demonstrate a wide variety of issues with the voice, and we've talked about some of those, articulation, style, intonation, timing, rhythms. [I]

Very often when children have rhythm and melody intersecting, and particularly with harmony involved, you'll get the right rhythms, you'll get the right melody, and you're absolutely in tune. I guess that's what I use my singing for, more than anything, to demonstrate those kinds of things. [C]

## **The Quality of the Voice**

The following comments were made regarding the quality of voice and the impact of self-perception on rehearsal strategy and practice:

I'm only comfortable with my voice if I'm with children or young people and I'm an instrument of their learning because my voice is so awful as a singer. But I'm

completely unselfconscious when I'm with them because I'm not being a singer, I'm being an intermediary, I'm being a child with them, I'm being a music lover with them. And, my voice is childlike, that's one of the virtues of it. [C]

I suppose comfort with singing comes with experience. Sometimes I'll sing pretty weirdly to get them to hear what I think it sounds like, even though it doesn't sound like that. I'm just trying to make a point...and we'll have a bit of fun doing it. [I]

When asked about being self-conscious about their voice, one subject said:

I was self-conscious in the beginning of my teaching, 18 years ago, but I guess the experience of teaching and just demonstrating how I wanted it to sound, by making it more a part of the teaching process has helped. I don't even really think about it anymore. [I]

Clearly, there is a relationship between experience and willingness to use the voice:

With experience, you just get used to the sound of your own voice. It tears away some of the self-conscious thoughts and feelings you might have, and you just get more comfortable with it. [I]

This comment was made regarding the necessity of having to have a "highly trained" voice in order to demonstrate effectively:

The definition of singer in our culture is one who is good enough to get up and sing by themselves and not be embarrassed by it. [Teacher/conductors] need to feel comfortable with their voice, not as a recitalist, and they need to develop that comfort because it's not going to be there at the beginning in most cases. This is very important. And, when they have that comfort, they can see how to use their voice is a functional tool of pedagogy. [C]

Interestingly, the instrumental teacher/conductor feels he is not alone in considering himself to be a 'non-singer':

I would say most of us [instrumental teacher/conductors] consider ourselves to be non-singers. [I]

## Teacher knowledge and skill

In the category of teacher knowledge and skill, we refer to the *ways* that our subjects acquired rehearsal understandings and skills. We identified the following common pathways to knowledge and skill acquisition: experience/self-discovery; study/observation; and reflection/self-evaluation.

Regarding self-discovery, the choral teacher/conductor said:

How to use my voice in various ways while teaching is something that I discovered over time ... I discovered the ways to use my voice to suit the particular learning goal. I think every teacher should discover continually, because if you're

not discovering everything in every moment, you're not teaching. Regardless of all the foundational things that guide us as pedagogues, we need to be alive in every moment to discover, because teaching is learning from students what it is we have to do next to help them learn. It's always cyclical. [C]

The instrumental teacher/conductor spoke about how experience has informed his practice:

I have learned to sing to model or demonstrate from experience. When I began teaching, I would say that I didn't sing half as much as I do now. In fact, I probably sing more now than I ever did. I guess I have learned through the experience to demonstrate how I wanted it to sound. It is a part of the teaching process, I suppose. I don't even really think about it anymore. [I]

The importance of how continuous self-analysis and critique can inform teaching practice is demonstrated in this comment:

I have peeled all the layers off of how I understand music the way I have, and I think that's one of the secrets of why children learn well from me. I've undressed the learning process right down to its absolute bare minimum in relation to how I understand and conceive, how I've built those structures in my own head. [C]

Experience, in combination with observation, reflection and self-analysis played an important role in the development of this teacher/conductor's pedagogy:

I was taught very little in undergraduate classes. Everything I know about teaching, I've absorbed from excellent teachers and from being on my own and having to deliver the goods, just to do it, to find out what it was that I needed to do . . . and then I begin to observe and analyze what worked and what didn't, and there was *lots* that didn't work! [I]

Combined with experiential learning, our choral subject noted a critical component of knowledge and skill occurred through professional reading/study as well as contact with other professionals:

I've studied much about teaching. I think I've probably read everything that's been published in English on the child voice. It's like a magnet. Everything that you study, everything that you read, illuminates your practice and makes you think about things in different ways, and encourages you to approach situations in different ways. [C]

Collegial contact is very important. I've travelled to places where there are other practitioners and scholars. For example, I went to ISME 1990 in Leningrad just to see what people were thinking and saying, and how people were doing things in differently in other countries. I am fascinated with the beautiful work of great teacher/conductors. [C]

The teaching and influence of former teachers on their current practice was vivid in the minds of our subjects. The choral teacher/conductor said:

[He] was a 'biggie' in my life. He sang constantly, but not beautifully. He made me sing everything before I played it. He called it visualization. He wanted me to be able to do it internally, so that I could hear the pitches, so that I could hear the chords. I needed to be able to internalize it. I think that I use my voice a lot like that now. [C]

The instrumental teacher/conductor said:

[He] sang to us often in band. He would just sing as a natural part of his teaching. I remember him singing to us lots of times. Also, I remember [another teacher] would often take my horn, say try it like this, and play. I found to be extremely helpful ... you listen pretty closely! [I]

Of note is the expressed value of *varied* musical experiences on the ongoing development of teacher/conductor knowledge and skill. For example, the instrumental teacher/conductor notes the importance of the *choral* experience in his role of teaching from the podium:

I'm pretty sure that if I never sang in the Chamber Choir, I would have been much longer in coming to use my singing voice in my band rehearsals. I think it would have taken me a lot longer to get used to the idea that I'm going to sing this to the kids the way I want it to play. I guess what I'm saying is that this singing experience was a great help. [I]

## Levels of consciousness

When we use the expression 'level of consciousness', we refer to the varying degrees that our teacher/conductor subjects: a) pre-plan use of the voice, b) are aware of its suitability for specific goals (e.g., concepts vs. skills), and c) self-analyse of their voice use. In our discussions we were particularly interested to what extent the subjects were able to describe their *conscious* use of the voice as a rehearsal strategy.

When asked about her awareness of her teaching through singing, the choral teacher/conductor said:

I'm not consciously, in the moment, thinking that I will sing this, and I will do this. I think that what I am always aware of is the building of their [childrens'] independence, and that dictates how much I sing, or just how little I sing. [C]

Sometimes there is a pre-planning of voice use in the rehearsal. For example, the instrumental teacher/conductor noted:

Occasionally now I'll think of using my voice. If it's really not going the way I would like it to, I'll think that maybe tomorrow in rehearsal, I will sing it to them. If it's just at a point where it's not working and we've got so much further to go, I sometimes think if I sing it to them, or maybe get them to sing it back to me, then we get past that point and move on to where we have to go. I do remember thinking, probably in my second or third year of teaching that it's obvious that [singing] can be good. [I]

The choral teacher/conductor noted her use of gesture in combination with singing (dual tracing) as a planned and useful strategy:

Often as I sing, I gesture at the same time. I do plan it. I think I'm naturally like that, I talk with my hands. It's a double message. It is more important when they're seeing it at the same time as hearing it. [C]

The following comment speaks to the importance of understanding the nature and character of the music as a critical component of the preparation of rehearsal strategies:

[Music] presents attributes in itself that suggest ways of teaching it. It's the nature of the song, the power of initial learning, that is extraordinary, and it has to be successful, it has to be in increments that are successful and confident ... always stretching them a little. [C]

The choral teacher/conductor noted her conscious use of the voice, its tone and timbre, as a critical means to build relationships within the ensemble, as well as to impart feelings such as affirmation and confidence:

There is a quality of regard and affection for the children in the tone [of voice] that I use. I'm talking about building relationship. I ask them to do more and more, and there being nothing mushy about it. But, there's a *regard* in both my speaking tone and my singing tone, a tone of affirmation and affection toward those children. When you are teaching in school, that's one of the very important functions of a teacher's singing voice ... you sing to them as part of community building, part of that whole sense of where everybody fits in, and how you're regarded in all that. [C]

## Placing emphasis on the learner

We found that both teacher/conductor subjects placed a high degree of emphasis on the students and their individual and collective needs for learning. They often described their practices on the podium in relation to age and level-appropriate issues and teaching/learning strategies. Many of their comments are embedded in quotes previously presented. The following quotes speak directly to this issue:

I chose to sing rather than talk about how to do it because I'm dealing with a developmental range of 8 years old to 12 years old. There is a big range of understandings, and all sorts of pathways. Some of the kids will learn from watching, primarily some of them will learn from listening, they just have different learning pathways. [C]

I'm always working two ways with children - working at a conceptual level so they are always building small structures in their head of how the music is constructed. The singing part is the actual musicing, it's the actual making of the music, the creating of the music. But it's really, really important, even with an 8 year old, that they have a conceptual understanding as well as being able to do the thing [skill]. Some of the kids will learn from watching primarily and some of them will learn from listening, some might key into the

exercise from a kinesthetic perspective - they just have different learning pathways. [C]

I sing to model with these kids who are just finishing their second year, approximately 11 years of age. In their first year I probably don't use much in the way of terminology. Now I am trying to get them familiar with the terminology as well as getting them to remember what the different terms mean by how they sound. [I]

## Undergraduate teacher/conductor preparation

As a result of our research, we believe that the use of voice in rehearsals is worth considering when curriculum is designed for preparing undergraduate students for working from the podium. Investigation of both qualitative and quantitative types tell us that teacher/conductors use their voices in a variety of strategic ways as part of normal rehearsal technique. Accordingly, voice behaviors need to be studied in undergraduate programs and appropriate applications learned so that rehearsing is as dynamic and efficient as possible, and musical learning is maximized.

We suggest that experiences relating to various aspects of voice use be organized and delivered in ways that would allow for the application of acquired understandings to specific teaching and/or conducting contexts. Such experiences could be sequenced through a variety of undergraduate courses such as conducting, aural skills, secondary voice techniques and various music education methodology courses. It would be important to focus on two things: 1) the development of voice skills that are known to be effective rehearsal tools, and 2) the development of conceptual understandings about voice use and their applied relationships to teaching and learning.

## Developing appropriate voice skills

In addition to basic abilities such as matching pitch and singing in tune, there are a few special voice-use skills that facilitate the work of teacher/conductors. For example, often they need to sing at transposed intervals from the score, as well as from clefs that are not in their own voice range. Teacher/conductors also need to emulate the articulations of wind, string, and percussion instruments, as well as such special effects as vocal glissandi, and word-related skills having to do with pronunciation and diction.

Experienced teacher/conductors, including the ones in our study, often possess remarkable skills in quick decision-making. We feel it would be beneficial if those preparing to work from the podium were afforded ample opportunities to have hands-on experience in that special requisite via field experiences *before* they enter the professional world. The abilities to apply deductive reasoning and problem-solving skills are *learned processes* that belong in teacher/conductor preparation.

Whether in regard to understanding concepts or developing skills, both of our subjects spoke of the importance of discovery as part the process of acquiring effective rehearsal strategies. Interestingly, most all of this occurred *after* they had begun teaching. We feel that as many discovery opportunities as are possible should be afforded *during* the process of teacher preparation.

Additionally, we noticed that almost all the voice use observed was accompanied by different forms of gesture such as hand and arm movement, body movement, and facial expression. This combination of behaviors assists memory and transfer. One of the primary modes of remembering involves an imaginal system known as "mental imagery." Memory imagery pertains to **how** things looked, sounded, felt, or tasted. Conversely, the "verbal-symbolic" mode, which also contributes to remembering, is concerned with **what** things resembled, what they sounded like, looked like, or felt like (Bower, 1972). According to Hilgard and Bower (1975),

A word . . . that is imaged or a picture that is named has the advantage of having two redundant copies of the memory trace laid down. The redundancy prolongs memory in comparison to abstract items, since the second imaginal trace is likely to survive after the initial verbal trace has decayed. That is, not only are there two traces, but the one in the imaginal system seems more resistant to forgetting (p. 589).

This notion, known as the 'dual trace' hypothesis, should be understood and special skill *experienced* as part of professional preparation courses. In regard to developing comfort and ease in voice use, it is desirable also that undergraduate students participate in experiences/courses that allow for the acquisition of specific voice technique and skills (e.g., tone quality, range). Stemming from this research, we believe that a solid foundation in this area is a critical component in the development of appropriate and effective rehearsal strategies.

## Understanding Concepts

The subjects in our study talked to us about what are, or would be, important teacher/conductor understandings necessary for effective teaching and learning. They suggest that one of the most important is to know what voice use is best for what situation, i.e., when is it best to speak, sing, or provide other vocal analogs. Teacher/conductors need to understand that choral singers and ensemble instrumentalists will learn more efficiently, and transfer that learning more easily, if *conceptual* information about music is demonstrated rather than talked about. They also need to understand that *skill development* and many technical issues are most effectively addressed when talk is involved. This concept is fundamental to effective rehearsing and should be included in discussions of, and experiences in, voice use in rehearsing.

Secondly, we learned that some conductors are embarrassed about their singing voices and as a result, employ them reluctantly and sometimes with inappropriate discretion. This reduces rehearsal efficiency and ultimately learning outcomes. Prospective teacher/conductors need to learn how to be comfortable with their voices, and in turn, how to make their students comfortable singing. As one of our subjects stated:

I think the person him/herself to needs to feel comfortable with his/her voice, not as a recitalist, but to feel comfortable with their voice in general. They need to *develop* that comfort because it's not going to be there at the beginning in most

cases. And then, to stretch that further once they have that comfort so they can see how the use of their voice is a functional tool of pedagogy. [I]

Our choral subject spoke of 'vocal exploration' as a starting point for developing comfort with one's voice.

Vocal exploration is so important ... it is important to get comfortable with the voice, and to look at the voice in all sorts of ways of how it is used in life, in laughing, in the forms of singing, in wailing, which is a form of singing, and in all the things that are so integrally tied to who we are. We should do different sorts of exercises with them so that they feel confident, so that they feel comfortable being silly with each other. This is very important if you're going to be working with young children. In essence, almost to rediscover the child in them who was comfortable at some point with their voice. The majority of [university students] are extremely uncomfortable with their voice when they go into a primary school, or into a primary course at university level. In a child's world, affirmations of the voice is critical for their self-esteem. [C]

She went on to discuss a process for developing comfort with one's own voice.

I have to get them to enter that kind of experience where they'd be happy to make animal noises, or whatever they need to do with children that would encourage singing voices, and encourage them to feel okay to sing in a group. In the next phase, they would have to be able to model, in tune, simple little children's songs. Sometimes I begin with narrative about self ... not even talking, not even singing. Sometimes we talk about their earliest recollections of singing, both positive and negative. People go away and write about what they feel about singing. [C]

In addition to understanding the realities of voice ease and comfort, it is important to be aware the potential of the voice as an instructional tool. The singing voice can demonstrate effectively musical line, style, intensity, articulation, and effect; and the speaking voice can provide vivid analogies to serve the same purposes. Simply having this awareness enables teacher/conductors to invoke creatively their voices in ways perhaps not witnessed or even envisioned up to this point.

Also, we feel it is important for teacher/conductors to understand the nature of learners and their needs. Throughout the interviews, our subjects (both 'successful' teachers) talked a great deal about the students, and about how voice use was responsive to them. Voice use has to be age and level appropriate for the communication to be as facilitative as possible. Accordingly, adequate experiences, combined with understandings of the nature of learners, particularly in regard to learning styles and appropriate methodologies, are important to making connections with effective voice use.

Understandings lead to consciousness, and we feel that consciousness helps those engaged in professional preparation to make connections between what could appear to be disparate elements of an overall course of study. Our research suggests that if conductors can make connections between things such as sightsinging skills, score reading, voice techniques, conducting skills and rehearsal strategies, then their practice is generally more effective and efficient.

## Summary and Conclusions

Our primary interest in this paper was to explore further the use of singing as a rehearsal strategy by our selected teacher/conductors. Throughout our time with these individuals, what became apparent very quickly was our subjects' ability to self-evaluate and articulate various aspects of their practice generally, and their use of singing specifically. As we conversed and listened to them analyze videotaped examples of their singing in rehearsal, we were struck by their ability to convey to us quite clearly what it was they were trying to accomplish (e.g., both short and long-term goals) as well as the degree of success they thought they obtained. We heard also how they were influenced in their use of certain strategies by previous teachers and conductors, formal study, general observation and professional development experiences, and through the process of self-discovery. As well, we heard suggestions for the preparation of future teacher/conductors. As mentioned earlier in this paper, these suggestions ranged from the need to understand the nature of learners, to the development of skill and comfort level in singing/voice technique, to having access to the experiences that allow a synthesis of knowledge and skill through teaching and conducting.

It is important to note that some of what we heard in our follow-up sessions is what we had anticipated from our previous analyses of the rehearsal tapes (e.g., the specific nature of voice use as it relates to particular goals). However, some of the data that emerged from our interviews was not anticipated, e.g., the strong emphasis from both conductors on the learner (i.e., the value of knowledge of age and level appropriate skills and strategies).

The interview sessions with our subjects proved to be extremely beneficial to us as well as to our subjects. Both subjects clearly rose to the challenge of having to analyze, self-evaluate and communicate to us very detailed and specific aspects of their rehearsal practice. We, as researchers, were reminded of the power of this form of action research as a means to probing the minds of these very intriguing and successful teacher/conductors. Perhaps what has become most evident to us throughout our ongoing research about the use of the voice on the podium, is that we need to continue collaborative and exploratory models of research in order to increase further our individual and collective understandings of singing as a critical component of **rehearSING!** from the podium.

## Reference List

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