



Stones in Water
Movement Education and Learning Methods

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Anatomy of Wholeness for Singers • An Exploratory Approach

REVIEW • Your Coordinating System & Functional Anatomy:

What do you need to know about your structure and function to sing and teach others to sing with dynamic power, expressive ease and optimal vocal health? How are you built to sing? What interferes with your wonderfully made system and how can you make real change?

How we work: The Anatomy of Wholeness - A new structural model

- The pre-sprung elastic suspension system model of human structure and function articulated by author, anatomist and master teacher, David Gorman
- The model is a new way of understanding what is already present in us. While human structure and function remains the same, our understanding of that structure is constantly being updated as science advances our ability to accurately see how things work.
- Gorman's model shows how it is our active, aware opening to the world around us and to the support of the earth that elicits interplay between gravity and our structure.
- This interplay activates us into an entire web of tensional support, which springs us into our dynamic, responsive, mobile uprightness.
- This understanding of our system is based on up-to-date scientific facts of our musculoskeletal structure combined with its molecular neuromuscular activation and coordination.
- Gorman has added a profound new level of insight by looking at it all from the point of view of the whole, thinking, choosing, responding person.
- This Coordinating Suspension system paradigm challenges postural models of uprightness and directive pedagogical approaches. For an overview of the implications of this model see: www.learningmethods.com click articles and then "Beyond the Body" by Babette Lightner.

Structural perspectives:

- Humans are inherently instable creatures. Most of our mass is way up over our feet. We are built with a latticework of freely mobile joints. Our musculature functions and flows as one whole elastic web of connected and responsive tissue.
- Holding a position (stand straight), directing a body part (shoulders back) and relaxing/collapsing our body (relax my shoulders) are common ways we directly interfere with our Coordinating Suspension System.
- Our systems give us signals/feedback about what we are doing in the form of sensation, feeling and thought. These signals can guide us into ease and powerful efficiency if we receive, understand and respond to them.

Movement Principles:

- **Support/balance**-even distribution of contact with supporting surface
- **Mobility**-allowing the natural responses, compensations and coordinations to occur as we change shape/balance.
- **Voluminous Torso** - allowing the inherent elastic rhythmic nature and volume of the torso, free of postural holding, fixing or collapsing.
- **Attention/Intention** - noticing the way your attention and intention is expressed in your structure.

When you are in support with mobility and opening freely to the world around you, you will be functioning in such a way that forces are distributed thru the whole of you. Strain is your first signal that you are off your support, held in some fashion, narrowing your attention or working against yourself.

Exploratory Pedagogy

When we take into consideration the Coordinating System paradigm pedagogical questions arise. How can we teach in such a way that allows students to optimize their naturally free, supported and

coordinating system? How can we help them understand their systems and to learn to learn from their own experiences?

1) Directed Exploration:

- The teacher has the information and sets up a discovery process.
- Teachers guide this process in order to present a principle.
- Purpose is for students to experientially discover/understand the principle.
- Through this exploratory process students gain personal experience out of which they can develop their own criteria for making choices. They learn what does and doesn't work for them.
- Students learn tool to learn independently.
- Misconceptions of imposed ideas are much less likely to occur in this approach than in a directed right/wrong approach.

Tools:

1. Briefly state the purpose of the exploration.
2. Set up an activity that shows a comparison or contrast situation.
3. Ask students what they observed or discovered through the experience.
4. Set up any clarifying activities if the principle isn't being understood from the activity.
5. Repeat the questioning process.
6. Summarize the significance of the activity. This can be a clear statement of the principle demonstrated by the activity. It can be useful to reference the students' observations.
7. Assign students independent explorations so they can continue to see if the principle is accurate to their experience.

2) Investigative Explorations

- The teacher guides an investigation of the symptom or interference occurring in the student.
- The student has the key information about the symptom/interference in her/his own experience.
- Purpose of the investigation is to find the source of the symptom so that the student can make permanent change.

Tools:

1. The teacher has familiarity with the mechanics of common misconceptions that lead to performance/vocal symptoms/interferences, such as: *misconceiving evaluation/judgement • perfectionism • fear of making a mistake (misconceiving learning) • setting impossible goals/standards • lack of preparation • imposing positions or coordination*
2. Start the questioning at the moment of the symptom.
3. Watch for hindsight ideas and generalizations.
4. Stick to what the student has actually experienced.
5. First make sense of the symptom and only then look for what can be changed or for what will create change if seen clearly.
6. Give appropriate information to clarify any misconceptions about the way "things" work.
7. Search for comparisons i.e. times when the student has sung without this symptom and times when the symptom occurs.

Questioning tools:

- Maybe/probably/possibly = Do you or don't you know? If not what would you need to do or know to find out? Who has that information?
- Should/need to/wish/ want = is that should/need etc. occurring? Notice how the idea when attached to a need/should becomes stronger than actual reality. Accepted the facts of the situation as a starting point.
- Unfinished Sentences:
 - "I am afraid." = Afraid of what? - These are **dangling emotions**. When you tie them to something specific a huge amount of information comes to light.
 - "I want to sing well." = Well for whom? - These are **dangling evaluations**. When you tie them to actual people a powerful territory of misconceptions is revealed. See www.learningmethods.com for a terrific article on common misconceptions around evaluation. The article is title "Good for whom?" by Elizabeth Garren.
 - There are many more tools some of which can be gleaned from the LearningMethods website sited above.

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