



Mo(i)rLight Center for Sound Music Education

Body-Mind Integration PAVA 2017 How-to Vocology Workshop

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Today we are looking at taking advantage of our wholeness or inherent integrated system for music/voice education. We will explore lingering misconceptions from the body-mind-split perspective and propose alternative points of view and strategies from an integrated-system perspective.

Postulates of Sound Music Education

- 1) When you scaffold an approach to music making that is aligned with how the human system works, and how the universe works, everything is easier, more skillful and enjoyable.
- 2) When humans are supported to thrive and have their own agency, curiosity serves as a foundational, sustainable approach to learning, and bedrock for confidence.

However beautiful the strategy you might want to occasionally look at the result. - unknown

If you don't like the result, you might want to look at the point of view that underlies the strategy. - Lightner

Comparing Perspectives: Point of View (P) → Strategy(S) → Result(R)

Your point of view is your belief. It is the meaning your system has made of your experiences up to this moment in your life.

Your Strategy is what you DO. It is revealed in the words you use to instruct others or yourself.

Result is what happens. It is what you see and hear.

Application: As an educator you are helping carve your students' belief/ point of view, for better or worse. Your actions, words, responses come from your current point of view. In Sound Music Education, making your point of view explicit to yourself and your student is an essential element for healthy interaction.

How-to Sound Music Education:

1. Gravity

Body-Mind-Split Point of View: A Dis-integrated System (DIS)

P: Gravity is a downward force.

S: You need to lift yourself up, struggle against gravity.

R: Weighted, stiff movement, pain and unnecessary effort, a sense of fighting our body.

Body, Mind Integrated Point of View, An Integrated System or IS

P: Gravity is multi-directional, our system is designed with gravity.

S: We are sprung in a gravitational universe and learn basic principles of balance and motion to cooperate with this design.

R: A sense of ease, light, powerful liveliness. Not fighting with ourselves and world.



2. Structure

DIS Perspective

P: Postural, alignment or “good position” idea of our structural design.

S: A set of external instructions on how to achieve this good position from the teacher. Implied in this is the idea that a person should keep the position; learn the posture and hold it.

R: Overall lack of availability of the system. Limitations in movement and freedom to express. Students often report the frustration in “never getting it right”. There is a shift of power and authority about the student’s experience to the teacher.

IS Perspective

P: Adaptive, Coordinating Pre-sprung Elastic Suspension System (Gorman)

S: Ask the student questions to have them self-assess their structural organization. Use comparative experiences to learn to more accurately interpret sensations and determine efficiency from one’s own system. Am I in even distribution of contact or not? Can I move easily in any direction? (Sound Music Education has developed a pedagogy and self-assessment method for this perspective)

R: Availability of the entire system increases. Evidence of freedom to move and efficient function. The student is the authority of their experience (of singing).

3. Coordination of Action - 2 parts: Scaffolding Learning and Problem Solving

DIS Perspective for scaffolding learning

P: We are designed to manipulate parts.

S: Instructions to “do” something different with the body are given.

R: Partial coordination unfolds. It is often challenging to incorporate the fundamental purpose of singing/conducting/talking like: telling the story or being expressive. This approach often leaves people feeling inadequate, “If I could just do this better I could be successful.” Students question themselves, not the method.

IS Perspective for scaffolding learning

P: “We are always in the perfect coordination of what we are up to with our attention and intention.” - David Gorman

S: Set-up clear intentions that activate the coordination we want. “Point to the light.” “What are you saying in this piece? Why is that a long phrase or why is this moment building to a crescendo? How does the dynamic information serve the telling of the story? With that clarity, sing again and tell us the story. Let’s see what happens!”

R: Skilled, empowered, artists

DIS Perspective, Problem Solving

P: A problem in the instrument/body is addressed by doing something different in the body. ‘Don’t lean forward’, ‘Take a good breath’. This language is rooted in seeing the body and mind as separate. Teachers attribute the problem in the body or voice to an action taken by the student. Teachers may say, “You leaned forward.”

S: We attempt to fix the problem (the lean), by consciously adjusting/manipulating the body. “Don’t lean”.

R: Problems reoccur when the student is not consciously giving themselves the instruction. Students are unable to be their fully expressive selves. Possibly create symptoms like tension, not feeling free or enjoying making music.

IS Perspective for problem solving

P: “We are always in the perfect coordination of what we are up to with our attention and intention.” – David Gorman

S: Teacher asks the student what their attention/intention was at the moment of the problem, affirming that it is the



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student who has this information, and is the authority of their experience. Teachers set up explorations to explain how the system coordinates action. We clear up common misconceptions that tend to coordinate effort and interferences in body and voice. (We have developed a pedagogical approach based on this IS perspective.)

R: Skilled, empowered, artists

The following examples are a category of common misconceptions that interfere with music making. When these misconceptions are cleared up many of the technical problems you thought were happening in you or the student, fall away. Many educational approaches teach these misconceptions inadvertently. With clarity, we can increase the likelihood of more joy, beauty and well-being in the making of music and the teaching of human beings.

4. Outcomes

DIS Perspective

P: You can ensure an outcome.

S: Language: *"Make sure you inhale before you start"* *"Try to get a good breath"*

R: Tension, feeling inadequate, unwilling to take risks, perfectionism

IS Perspective

P: Aligning our understanding with how the universe works: You can't *ensure* an outcome but you can set up the conditions for a more or less likely chance for the outcome to occur.

S: Language: *"Give it another go."* Or *"Are you clear what and why you are saying this?"* *"Why would the phrase be long and have that high pitch? How does that serve the telling of the story?"*

R: Skilled, empowered, expressive, curious learners who are willing to take risks. Embracing the theory that you have to miss a target to ever hit it!

"Brains learn by taking target practice" Leon Thurman

5. Response System

DIS Perspective

P: Response system isn't in this perspective.

S: Misattribution of our response to people and objects around us. *"You have a good voice."*

Telling ourselves and others what to feel and think. Teachers may try to change feeling directly: *"Relax your jaw."* *"Be present."*

R: Disconnect from or invalidate feeling, people looking outside themselves for valuation. Lack of autonomy for the student. A shifting of power of authority to the teacher.

IS Perspective

P: Humans have a response system. We are inherently responsive creatures. Responses are our inner-compass. They tell us how we see the world.

S: We attribute our feelings to the meaning and interpretation our system has made. Teachers support students to more accurately utilize this inner-compass. Teachers support students to develop their own criteria for choice.

R: Empowered, emotionally skilled artists. Autonomy for students.

More on this complex subject and performance anxiety see:

http://www.lightnermethod.com/uploads/8/5/6/1/85610178/patterns_of_joy%E2%80%A2your_inner_compass.pdf



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Setting the stage for Wholeness:

There are 3 aspects to this sequence:

M - A gestural movement, W- words and F-focus for your attention.

1. M. Lightly stamp right foot while doing gesture of putting down a staff and say first phrase.

Repeat movement with left saying second phrase.

W. **"Here I am, as I am."**

F. Feel your presence on the ground in the moment with each movement and the words.

2. M. Open horizontal circle with 1st right then left arm saying 1st phrase with right and 2nd with left.

W. **"In the world, as it is"**

F. See/ feel/hear the world around you.

3. M. Hands together in prayer like position.

W. **"Supported by the planet."**

F. Sense the same pressure between your hands as you do the pressure between you and the earth under your feet.

4. M. Prayer hands move up over your head.

W. **"Floating in the multiverse".**

F. See yourself from the perspective of the moon, standing on the earth, under the earth.

5. M. Prayer hands to level of forehead.

W. **"Awake"**

F. Sense an alert glow between your eyes.

6. M. Prayer hands to heart level.

W. **"to my state of being."**

F. Feel your current state of being, sensations of your being.

7. MWF - **woosh** exhale any movement feels good.

The video of the following is here: <http://www.lightnermethod.com/well-being.html>