Discover Your Voice: How to Develop Healthy Voice Habits

Author: Oren Brown
Publisher: Singular Publishing Group
Available from: www.singpub.com
Cost: $65.50
Reviewer: Margaret Stoitsch, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

This opening chapter of this book begins with how one can discover one's primal voice, free from all inhibitions and from acquired habits. Chapters two through seven deal with the development of the singing voice through: release of both physical and mental tensions; posture and breathing; eliciting pitches by working with airflow; extending the range of the voice and blending registers; enhancing vocal agility; training good habits of phonation and articulation; establishing a daily routine of vocalising; and conditioning the voice to respond to mental concepts. Exercises are discussed in each chapter and illustrated by a score in each chapter and illustrated by a score in compact disk. Chapter 8 discusses the variety of skills, hard work, and discipline that are required for professional success.

It is his philosophy that "learning to Sing is a process of discovering what your voice can do for you. It isn't so much which notes you can sing; it is the range of selection, you reinforce what is easy through repetition" (p. xiii). This book is readable, coherent, and an excellent addition to the library of speech-language pathologists working with singers. In fact, much of what is provided is applicable to the speaking voice. As the author states on page 216, "I learned early on what is healthy for the speaking voice is also healthy for singing."

The author brings a wide range of experience to the writing of this book. Oren Brown has an international reputation and a long and illustrious career as a teacher of singing. He had been teaching singing for twenty years when he was approached by an otolaryngologist in 1952 to work with functional voice disorders that were not responding to conventional treatments. Since the literature available on voice was sparse, he had to rely on his singing background and on experimentation/Intuition to develop methods. He found that his approaches were effective and that these experiences sharpened his observations of singing practices. The author derived into medical and scientific literature as it became available and understood more of what he was doing and how to explain his practices and methods in ways that other professionals would understand and accept.

He has written a book which links sound factual information together with a wealth of knowledge about the singing voice and its development. This book does much to demystify the teaching of singing and to put it on a sound pedagogical basis.

Understanding Language Disorders: The Impact on Learning

Authors: Vivienne Ratner and Laura Harris
Publisher: Thinking Publications
Available from: BRIJAN Resources
Cost: $46.95 US
Reviewer: Sonia Sawchuk, MSc, Ottawa General Hospital, Ottawa, Ontario

This book provides a comprehensive overview of language development and disorders as related to specific disabilities. The text is well organised and provides quick reference to descriptions of language disorders specific to children with, for example, autism, cognitive disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, and learning disabilities. The author intended this book to be used for educators who are frustrated with learning difficulties in their students and require a broad reference to understand the relationship of language delay to the difficulties exhibited by some of the children in their classrooms.

Therapy techniques are not discussed; all approaches to classroom intervention are overviewed. The writers have researched the literature thoroughly and present their material in a clear and easily understandable format. There are excellent descriptions, a glossary of terms, tables for easy reference, and an exhaustive list of references for further study. This book would be a valuable resource for elementary schools and special service departments. It would also be an excellent reference for speech-language pathologists when preparing presentations for school personnel.

Understanding Voice Problems: A Physiological Perspective for Diagnosis and Treatment

Authors: Raymond Cotton and Janina K Casper
Publisher: William & Wilkins
Available from: BRIJAN Resources
Cost: $46.95 US
Reviewer: Ibona Sawchuk, MSc, Ottawa General Hospital, Ottawa, Ontario
This textbook is the second edition of a work of similar title and organisation published by Colton and Casper in 1990. The first edition was intended for use by students and practitioners involved in the management of voice. This second edition, according to the authors, is intended to be used as a reference text by other medical specialists, such as paediatricians, family practitioners, and internists who might be the first to come into contact with the patient with a voice disorder.

There are thirteen chapters covering the usual topics found in a general textbook on voice. Throughout the book, the theme of differential diagnosis and the use of a physiological approach to voice disorders is stressed.

To aid in differential diagnosis (Chapter 2), terminology to describe nine primary voice symptoms (complaints) is explained and major perceptual, acoustic, and physiological signs are discussed. The nine voice symptoms are demonstrated by case history and questions are posed to the reader in order to guide in the differential diagnosis process. This teaching strategy is effective.

Laryngeal histopathology, normal and pathologic (Chapter 3), is covered in greater detail than is usually found in a general textbook on voice. Excellent photographic and schematic illustrations of normal structures and pathologic conditions are provided. In keeping with a physiological approach to voice disorders, each pathological condition is rated on seven parameters known to affect sound generation and vibratory behaviour, thus providing an organised and concise methodology for separating out pathological conditions.

Chapter 4, Vocal Misuse and Abuse: Effects on Laryngeal Physiology, is a presentation of the usual material on this topic, but also contains a valuable exposition on the damaging effects of drugs on the voice. Vocal pathologies secondary to vocal abuse and misuse are each reviewed according to signs and symptoms. Identical categories are used for each pathology, again illustrating the process of differential diagnosis.

The same model of viewing various pathologies under common categories of signs and symptoms is continued in the discussion of voice problems associated with nervous system involvement (Chapter 5) and voice problems associated with organic disease, trauma, and geriatric voice (Chapter 6).

Surgical and medical management of voice (Chapter 8) provides greater detail than most general textbooks on voice. Again, the approach of schematic illustration followed by simple explanation of the surgical/medical procedure greatly facilitates the reader's understanding.

Vocal Rehabilitation (Chapter 9) presents many of the techniques used in voice therapy. Of additional interest, however, is the presentation of a rationale for use of these particular techniques based on a knowledge of anatomy and phonatory physiology. A short section is also included discussing unresolved issues and myths in voice therapy.

The remaining chapters (10, 11, and 12) deal with anatomy, phonatory, physiological, and neuroanatomy of the vocal mechanism. The authors state that inclusion of these topics at the end of the book is intentional, as they are to be used for reference.

The final chapter (Chapter 13) provides some normative data on voice and the appendix provides some examples of clinical forms used by the authors.

This textbook is a valuable addition to the number of general textbooks available on voice. Its strength lies not only in its comprehensiveness, but even more so in its success in maintaining cohesion throughout, by its faithful adherence to the ever-present themes of differential diagnosis and the physiological approach. The reader cannot help but be impressed by its well organised and meaningful approach to voice disorders.

The authors state that this text was intended as a reference text for "other" front-line medical specialists. However, it would be very useful as well to speech-language pathologists beginning in voice. To the more experienced voice clinicians, an general textbook, albeit a very good one, may no longer respond to their needs.
Brown taught voice at the Juilliard School and was a pioneer in voice therapy. He has expanded the 19-page syllabus for his students into a comprehensive text for self-study, study with a private teacher, or classroom instruction. He speaks of concepts, perceptions, exercises, acoustics, and physio.

Product Identifiers. Publisher. Cengage Learning, Singular Publishing Group Inc. ISBN-10. How to keep your voice in shape. Even performers who have good singing habits can cause damage when they speak. Many skilled singers don't continue their healthy habits when they speak; indeed, says Herseth, "many people—including singers—should have much more breath flow when they speak." 7. Don't clear your throat too often. When you clear your throat, it's like slamming your vocal cords together. Doing it too much can injure them and make you hoarse. Try a sip of water or swallow to quench the urge to clear. If you feel like you have to clear your throat a lot, get checked by a doctor for such thin His book, Discover Your Voice: How to Develop Healthy Voice Habits, is an important source book for anyone who sings, teaches singing, or who has an interest in the singing voice. Brown's education and professional training was in the field of singing, but he is one of the pioneers in the field of voice therapy. Thanks to his 50 years of work with all types of voice disorders, his text offers a unique perspective on the of healthy, vibrant singing. This article seeks to distill into a few pages the foundational principles of Brown's personal approach to vocal development.