

EUROPEAN VOCAL PEDAGOGY – DIGITAL RESOURCES TECHNOLOGY

sponsored by the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme

GETTING STARTED: VOICE VISUALIZATION IN THE TEACHING STUDIO

Ideas on what to think about when starting to use voice visualization in my teaching

The pace of a normal singing lesson means that you need to work efficiently, since there are many things to work at each lesson. You don't want to lose the interest of the student, or waste his/her time and/or money. When introducing something new, the results should be quickly and clearly accessible. In the case of visualization software, this is especially applicable because of the temptation to spend time with adjustments, saving documents, and so forth.

You have no lesson time to lose. How to do it:

- **Experiment with the programme yourself**, so you can model an ideal image for the parameter you wish to refer to in the lesson.
- **Set up the equipment** and open the programme in advance of the lesson so you just need to "wake it up" with a swipe of the mouse and/or a click. Or you might just let it run the entire time.
- **Use only one parameter/image at first.** Until you are proficient in using the programme and switching between the image types, don't try to do too much by switching around during the lesson. It will only waste time and confuse both you and the student.
- **Choose simple and obvious things to work on:** consonant energy, glottal onset, or steady breath emission are good places to start.
- **Extend your possibilities as you go:** As you become more proficient both in handling the computer, in interpreting the images, and in knowing why you want to use it, you can extend your possibilities. Move from consonants or onset, for example to crescendo-decrescendo, vibrato, and other questions before you begin defining the more complex aspects of formants and analysing tone quality.
- **Be willing to experiment.** Be prepared for surprises.
- **Be prepared to make mistakes**, or not to know how to continue. Don't waste lesson time looking for answers you can't find quickly. If you run into a problem, just go on with the lesson as you normally would and look for the answer later.
- **Don't force it:** If a student is not interested, don't force it. But it could be a good idea to switch it on and let it run anyway for your benefit as a teacher. It could help you get a clearer idea of the student's voice.

Easy first pedagogical steps:

- **Awaken curiosity:** "This is a picture of your voice." Perhaps you will be surprised how quickly you will both be able to interpret basic parameters.
- **Get an initial change:** Students intuitively react with better concentration, for example. The resulting awareness in itself can be a first learning experience. Take advantage of his/her wish to do it "better". Then you can move on to other things.
- **Use the old fashioned parrot (demonstrate – imitate) method.** It will help you identify what is happening via the image of your own voice and at the same time, give the student an example.

Our first job is still to teach, not to use technology. Technology, physiology and imaging should be the servants of our teaching.

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