

W-084

Vocal Health Education for Pre- and In-Service Music Teachers

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Abstract

The daily requirements of teaching music can place great demands on one's voice. The nature of music teaching typically requires prolonged talking, speaking above the ambient noise in the classroom environment, communicating with students over instruments or singing voices, and consistently switching back and forth between singing and speaking. Using the voice in this manner creates physical stress that may lead to a variety of health problems, which can impact teachers' careers and overall life quality (Barunkan, 2017; Hackworth, 2009; Schmidt & Morrow, 2016). For decades, voice researchers have been concerned about these risks that teachers face (Gaskill, O'Brien & Tinter, 2012; Hunter & Banks, 2017; Lee, Kim & Lee, 2018; Titze, 1997). Yet, music teachers may not be aware of the steps they can take to protect their vocal mechanism. Although there is a growing body of research on vocal health, guidelines designed to be accessible and easily understood by music teachers are lacking.

This workshop aims to provide helpful strategies and procedures that pre- and in-service music teachers can use to protect not only their speaking voices, but also their singing voices. In this presentation, I will introduce an overview of vocal health education and several research-based practices derived from analysing and synthesizing research related to vocal health. Literature on anatomical structure, physiology of voice, voice functions, singing and speaking psychology, pathology, and strategies for protecting the voices of teachers and students alike were examined. While 20 years ago, hydration was recommended as the primary way to keep the voice healthy, recent studies have found additional strategies that music teachers can easily learn and use to benefit themselves and their students. These include Semi-Occluded Vocal Tract Posture (SOVT), Flow Phonation, Lessac Madsen Resonant Exercise (LMRVT), laryngeal massage, and base of tongue massage. Pre- and in-service music teachers need to understand how adhering to these practices can reduce the potential risk of damaging their own voices and the voices of their students in their music classroom.

Keywords: voice, vocal health, vocal hygiene, singing, speaking