

Book Reviews / Évaluation des ouvrages écrits

Discover Your Voice: How to Develop Healthy Voice Habits (1996)

Author: Oren L. Brown
Publisher: Singular Publishing Group,
www.singpub.com
Available from: Login Brothers,
www.lb.com, 1-800-621-4249
Cost: \$65.50
Reviewer: Margaret L. Stoicheff,
University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

The 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 for power and resonance; 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 the appendix and on an accompanying compact disk. Chapter 8 discusses the variety of skills, hard work, and discipline that are required for professional success. Chapter 14 presents the key ingredients for successful choral singing.

Chapters 15 through 18 provide the reader with basic information on the anatomy and physiology of voice production and the physics of sound. The last three chapters deal with singers' hang-ups, voice problems and therapy, and hints for teachers of singers.

In his introduction the author states that he has written this book to help others avoid the delays and setbacks which he experienced in his early singing career. 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 a matter of making sounds as it is a matter of learning how to let sounds happen. Through experimentation, you become aware of what is taking place. By a proc-

ess 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 indeed, 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 delved 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 has 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 (1994)

Authors: Vivienne Ratner and Laura Harris
Publisher: Thinking Publications,
www.thinkingpublications.com,
1-800-225-4769
Available from: BRIJAN Resources
LTD, 822 Burton Loop, Edmonton,
Alberta, T6R 2J2

Cost: \$74.00

Reviewer: Sharon Fotheringham,
Carleton Board of Education, Nepean,
Ontario

This book provides a comprehensive overview of language development and disorders as related to specific disabilities. The text is well organised and provides a quick reference to descriptions of language disorders specific to children with, for example, autism, cognitive disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, fetal exposure to chemical substances, 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 relation of language delay to the difficulties exhibited by some of the children in their classrooms.

Therapy techniques are not discussed but 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 (2nd Ed., 1996)

Authors: Raymond Colton and Janina K. Casper
Publisher: Williams & Wilkins,
www.wilkins.com, 1-800-638-0672
Cost: \$46.95 US
Reviewer: Sonia 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 themes of differential diagnosis and the use of a physiological approach to voice disorders are 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 section 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 the 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, physiology, and neuroanatomy of the vocal mechanism. The authors state that inclusion of these topics at the end of 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, a general textbook, albeit a very good one, may no longer respond to their needs.

With the voice, everything is how "you feel" about it. You can not see your vocal chords to realize you have a good or bad habit...The secret is then how to LEARN to recognize if what you feel is right about the way you sing or not. It shouldn't be so hard; you either -for example- feel exhausted after singing an aria or whatever, or feel you can keep on singing for the rest of the day without fatigue. That should indicate something! But the problem is to be able to reproduce great singing sensations in an everyday basis. That can certainly be a lifetime challenge. This book hel How to keep your voice in shape.Â 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 peopleâ€"including singersâ€"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 You know how the depth of your voice is partly caused by the size of your vocal chords? Well, dehydration literally shrinks your vocal chords. The loss of water equates to a loss of mass, leaving you with thinner, squeakier vocal chords.Â That being said, I consider my vocal depth to be a more important thing to develop than just my average speaking pitch. When I started (again, averaging the week), my average Voice Depth was 100hz. It is now 95hz.