

Developing a Successful PVI Program

Why do we need an *on-going* PVI program?

- Ongoing individual improvement in unit vocal production
- Individual stays engaged in group improvement
- Positive strokes for individual effort and achievement
- Musical leadership better knows areas to work/build on
- Leaders get to know members/Members get to know leaders

How can we get a program started?

- Plan for the future
- Build on whoever will come and let them “testify”
- Make it fun!
- Be consistent

Ideas to Begin the Program

- Voice lessons with a local teacher/chorus pays for 1st visit (or half)
- PVI weekend
- PVI/PSI chorus nights with “play” time included
- Ongoing PVI’s one hour before chorus
- New member PVI’s
- Be creative!!

Instructions for Instructors

- Be prepared with pitch pipe/piano, music, pens, smiles
- Help her relax
- Encourage her to record the PVI
- Sing a few phrases of something – warm-ups; current songs, etc.
Follow up with a positive comment
- Give feedback on 1 or 2 things only
- Instructor demonstrates and/or offers instruction
- Work with her until understanding is achieved
- PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE!!!
- Give her an assignment to work on until the next PVI
- Complete a PVI sheet with instructor comments to keep on file

Areas to Listen and Look for in PVI's

1. Body Alignment – weight balanced; body flexible; feet apart; spine elongated; shoulders relaxed; chin level, etc.
2. Breathing – teach the method of breathing that you most understand and can explain with ease
3. Breath Management – effectively using her air/breath for full phrase length and vocal energy? Providing enough air behind each note?
4. Tone Production – freely produced and resonant? Tension in jaw, tongue (very common)
5. Head/Chest mix – singing too high in chest? Too low in head? Negotiating register change successfully?
6. Interval Accuracy – tension; listening skills
7. Clarity and Focus – clear? Breathy? Nasal? Hooty? Swallowed?
8. Vibrato – natural, wobble or tremolo? Can she take it out?
9. Dynamics – freely produced, air-supported, energized

NOTES:

TOOLBOX FOR GIVING PVI'S

Body Alignment –

1. Stand like a champion!
2. Roll Shoulders and “put your shoulder blades in your back pocket”/Monkey, Human, Singer, Champion
3. Weight balanced evenly with feet shoulder width apart
4. Knees “soft” (flexible) with hips/pelvis slightly tucked and movable
5. Chest high and wide
6. Chin level with the ground
7. Feel an imaginary silken string lifting the top of head
8. Put thumb at sternum (bra line) and reach pinkie finger down toward belly button – extend the space inbetween
9. Keep head level and easily movable resting on spine (no stiff neck)
10. Tall, relaxed body that reflects command and ease

Breathing/Breath Support

1. Expel air by a hiss until it feels like the “belly button will touch the spine”
2. Release and feel the expansion of ribs and abdominal area
3. Place hands around rib cage (with one focused in the back bra line area), inhale through a “straw” opening and feel the rib expansion
4. Hiss out to a count of 12, 16, 20 and try to resist collapse of rib cage/lung area until the last 4 counts
5. Breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth
6. Sing a single note for a count of 8 while pulling a strong rubber band; then use this method with a vocalize (listen for smoothness of vocal line instead of “bumping” from note to note)
7. Demonstrate on your own body standing in front of her. Have her mimic what she sees you doing. Ask if you can put your hands on her ribs, then put her hands on her ribs to feel.

Resonance –

1. Relaxed tongue and jaw – Bubble a 5 note scale (if there is tension in jaw, tongue or lips, bubbling is difficult to impossible) Once bubbling is established, move from bubbling to an open vowel (ah, oh, uh) with relaxation.
2. Find relaxed jaw position by “falling asleep in the recliner” – see where the jaw relaxes to find the basic outer space to be utilized.
3. Tongue lays in the lower mouth with the tip on the lower gum ridge area – sing an “ah” on a 5 note scale leaving the tongue in place
4. To employ soft palate lift – breathe in gently through the nose only and feel the internal lift. Take a “surprise breath”. Yawn.
5. Keep the body fluid and movable – tension in the body will create tension in the sound.
6. Think “lift the upper teeth and molars” rather than dropping the jaw.
7. When producing louder dynamics, think “taller” inside rather than louder

Register Change Areas (Passagio) –

1. Passagio is many times where the “two white notes meet”
2. Approach these areas from the top down (rather than pushing the lower volume/approach up) in vocalizes
3. In passagio areas, apply even more air to the sound
4. Move the air to the front of the mask area in these areas – try “walking it” from the back to the front to get the feel (some describe this as “sing in your speaking voice”).
5. It takes time to negotiate these areas well – be patient and allow it to build the register change areas gradually for health and longevity.

Vibrato –

1. To discern if this is a natural vibrato or uncontrollable “wobble” – ask her to sing a brief passage or 5 note vocalize stretching a thick rubber band or slowly curling an imaginary ribbon. If the breathing mechanism and abdominal muscles engage to smooth out the sound, it is within her ability to develop and maintain a straight tone.

Sometimes those with disabilities or health issues that prevents any real use of the full breathing mechanism (exercise or exertion) find it extremely challenging to maintain a straight tone (if not impossible). However, trying to develop it is healthy for them!

2. Maintaining a vibrant, health straight tone (absent of vibrato) will take knowledge of correct breath support/management as well as a focused mental attention to singing without vibrato.
3. Hiss or bubble a full line of a song to engage breathing mechanism.
4. Sing a full line of a song on “ng”.

Other Areas of Challenge –



Paula Davis 2014

With thanks to Betty Clipman, Darlene Rogers, Darin Drown
and many others who have taught us so well.

Personal PVI Information

Name_____

Section/Part_____ Date_____

1. How many years in Sweet Adelines?_____
2. Are you or have you had private voice lessons?_____
3. Are you in a quartet?_____
4. Any physical disabilities?_____
5. Any recent illnesses?_____
6. Any recent surgeries?_____
7. Are you taking any medications, prescribed or over the counter?_____
8. In what areas would you like to improve?_____

Notes/Areas Worked on:

Date:_____

Areas

Covered:_____

Assignments

Made:_____
