



**Enhancing singing teacher agency through professional development:  
Investigating the impact of Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method on  
singing teachers**

Courtney Feldman

BCA

Submitted for the award of  
Bachelor of Creative Arts Honours



## **Abstract**

There is a dearth of information on the broader implications of attending professional development for singing teachers, and how learning experiences in these programs can be effectively evaluated. Recent studies in music education demonstrate that by adopting the perspective of the learner's experience, music can be seen to provide a rich and elaborate platform for musical and personal development; a perspective which can be a functional approach to evaluating the effectiveness of professional development for singing teachers. Situated within a practitioner inquiry and qualitative case study framework, this study investigated the impact of undertaking a particular professional development course, focusing on the experiences of a group of singing teachers who attended training in Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method, in January 2017 at the University of Southern Queensland, a regional Australian University. Data were gathered from participants' responses in a focus group and qualitative survey, with additional reflections drawn from the researcher's journal. Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens was used to guide a thematic analysis of the dataset, determining the ways in which Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method enriched the musical agency of participants. Key themes arising from the data, including experiential skills building, transformation in identity, empowerment in practice and collaborative exchange, provided a broader impression of the benefits that engagement with professional development brings to singing teachers. The findings of the study were used to construct a reflective tool which may be used by singing teachers to reflect upon and evaluate the effectiveness of their professional development learning experiences.



**Certification of Dissertation**

I certify that the work contained in this dissertation is original, and has not been previously submitted for any other award. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement and reference is made in the thesis to that work.




Signature of candidate

October 5, 2017

Date

**ENDORSEMENT**



Signature of supervisor

October 5, 2017

Date



## **Table of Contents**

Abstract.....	iii
Certification of Dissertation .....	v
Table of Contents .....	vii
List of Tables .....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Acknowledgments.....	xi
Prologue.....	xiv
Chapter 1 - Introduction .....	1
1.1 Rationale and Significance.....	2
1.2 Aim and Objectives .....	6
1.3 Research Questions.....	6
1.4 Scope and Limitations .....	7
1.5 Overview of Thesis.....	7
Chapter 2 - Literature Review .....	9
2.1 Professional Development in the Arts .....	9
2.2 Chapter Summary.....	19
Chapter 3 - Methodology and Research Design .....	21
3.1 Methodology .....	21
3.2 Participant Selection.....	23
3.3 Ethical Considerations and Clearance .....	24

3.4 Methods: Data Collection and Analysis .....	26
3.5 Chapter Summary .....	29
Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion .....	31
4.1 Results.....	34
4.2 Discussion .....	47
4.3 Concluding Remarks .....	52
References.....	53
Appendix A Ethics Approval.....	61
Appendix B: Focus Group Information Sheet.....	62
Appendix C: Focus Group Consent Form .....	65
Appendix D: Survey Information Sheet.....	66
Appendix E: Focus Group Questions.....	69
Appendix F: Survey Questions .....	72



**List of Tables**

**Table 1.** Effective professional development for teachers: A checklist (Hunzicker, 2011, p. 179).....15

**Table 2.** Characteristics of effective professional development cited by various sources (Guskey, 2003a, p. 10).....16

**Table 3.** Focus Group Participant Characteristics.....31

**Table 4.** Survey Participant Characteristics.....32

## **List of Figures**

<b>Figure 1.</b> A sociologically inspired understanding of musical agency as a lens (Karlsen, 2011, p. 118).....	17, 33
<b>Figure 2.</b> Reflective tool for professional development evaluation.....	51

## **Acknowledgments**

Thank you to my supervisor Dr Melissa Forbes for sharing your wisdom and guidance throughout this colourful journey. You have challenged and extended my thinking in a number of ways, and I'm sincerely grateful to have worked with you in this capacity.

Thank you to the singing teachers who so generously agreed to participate in my focus group and survey. Without your valuable and heartfelt contributions, this research would not have been possible.

Thank you to Dr Rebecca Scollen and Prof Rhoderick McNeill for supporting my research during the application process for human ethics approval. Thank you to Dr Jessica Gildersleeve for your guidance in the early stages of my study.

Thank you to my family and friends for your encouragement and unwavering belief in my capacity to achieve this goal. A special thanks to my aunt Alison for introducing me to the possibilities of this pathway; your example has inspired me from the earliest years.

My most heartfelt thanks are reserved for my mum Sandy for faithfully supporting me throughout this journey. Thank you for patiently listening to my many ideas as they took shape, and for the many selfless sacrifices you made behind the scenes. "Two are better than one for they can help each other succeed" (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

Above all, the greatest praise, glory and honour go to my heavenly father, for giving me the opportunity to undertake and complete this study. "Every good thing I have comes from you" (Psalm 16:2).

I dedicate this thesis to my dad Gary (1955-2010), a multi-talented, intelligent man who always challenged me to pursue the best version of myself.



What we communicate is our intention, conscious or unconscious, deliberate or by accident. We show the world who we are and what is behind what we do. We demonstrate where we want to go by our attitudes and behaviours. We communicate who we are. All this is part of the voice and speech and how we use our words, and all of it sits under our music.

Jeanie LoVetri

## **Prologue**

In January 2017, I attended professional development (PD) at the University of Southern Queensland, a regional Australian University (the study site), completing Levels 1, 2 and 3 of Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method (Somatic Voicework™). During the 8-day course, a small group of approximately 40 participants attended a number of lectures with Jeannette (Jeanie) LoVetri, and were involved in small group breakout sessions with supporting Somatic Voicework™ faculty teachers in attendance. Participants were invited to volunteer for masterclass sessions and concert performances, and were also able to partake in private sessions with Brenda Earle Stokes, New York based singer, pianist and Somatic Voicework™ faculty member. Two supporting lectures were conducted, the first by Dr Matthew Broadhurst, Brisbane-based Laryngologist, and the second by Brenda Earle Stokes. The course was structured in three progressive levels, 1, 2 and 3, with participants receiving a book of course materials for each level. Additional supportive resources were made available for participants including quick-reference Solution Sequence™ vocal diagnosis charts, distilled from the course materials.

My decision to engage with this program arose from my continuing commitment to learning in a professional capacity and a desire to keep up to date with current singing science and singing pedagogy. During my time in the course, I intuitively recognised a profound shift in my identity as an artist and teacher, moving from a state of uncertainty to self-confidence, an unexpected, yet welcome, outcome of my engagement with this PD. During the course, Jeanie established a community of trust, encouraging myself and the other participants to openly embrace the process of learning with understanding and professionalism. Jeanie taught me to think of my voice functionally, focussing not just on how my voice sounded, but diagnosing how

my voice was behaving. By focussing on the key ingredients of my vocal technique (head, chest and mix registers/pitches, bright and dark vowels, loud and soft volumes), I was able to use functional exercises as a means to access a broader spectrum of vocal colours and qualities, eliciting specific responses from my voice to ensure safe and authentic vocal production in a variety of styles. Jeanie’s gentle and supportive method gave me the courage and motivation to challenge my voice to make new sounds, and to then have patience as my vocal mechanism responded and adjusted, or as Jeanie calls it, “waiting for the bus”. Jeanie stripped back the notion of elaborately musical vocal exercises, to instead focus on functional, purposeful exercises, which provided the space to listen and truly hear how my voice was behaving. Equipped with these simple yet profound truths, I came to understand that if I had strength and flexibility in vocal technique, I could approach any style of Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) with confidence. I felt relieved to know that my (perceived) inabilities/weaknesses were not a sign of poor musicality, but rather areas of my vocal technique which could be functionally targeted and strengthened. I understood the physiology of the voice with fresh relevance to my daily practice as a performer and teacher. I was prepared to embrace the challenge of singing and teaching on a whole new level, but above all, I felt that I had something of genuine value to contribute, and that deserved my place within the broader community of singing teachers.

In the time following the course, it became apparent that my experiences of the course had launched a trajectory of continuous breakthroughs in my practice, which overflowed to positively impact my students in a similar fashion. To me, Somatic Voicework™ is so much more than a non-classical approach to vocal training—it is a profound and freeing gateway to self-understanding, self-expression and creative development, supported by logical pedagogy and cogent voice science.

As a passionately reflective practitioner, I now find myself in a place of curiosity—how did other participants experience the Somatic Voicework™ training, and could our experiences be said to have increased our musical agency as performers and teachers? Could our experiences reveal any broader themes that demonstrate the importance of attending PD? Is the process of reflecting upon PD learning experiences present in other literature? Could my own learning reflections of this PD, and my observations of others' reflections, be extrapolated to develop a practical reflective tool which singing teachers could use in assessing the effectiveness of their own PD experiences? The following study arose from this spirit of inquiry, and I trust that the results will be a resource to other singing teachers on the journey to deeper knowledge and understanding, self-improvement and self-discovery.



## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

As a keenly reflective practitioner I have consistently sought to understand the impact of continued musical learning upon my practice, as both a performer and teacher. This study resulted from my desire to reach a deeper understanding of the broader implications of continuing education through PD, and that of others. Working within both a qualitative case study and practitioner inquiry framework, I conducted a focus group and administered a qualitative survey to gather participants' experiences of attending a particular PD opportunity, Somatic Voicework™, in January 2017 at the study site. The participants in this study were singing teachers who completed the course, and myself as course participant and practitioner/researcher, with additional reflections drawn from my own journal. Using Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens, I examined the data to investigate the ways in which Somatic Voicework™ could be said to have increased the musical agency of the participants. I used the findings to make a commentary about the broader implications of attending PD for singing teachers, elaborating upon the possible benefits of PD to personal and professional growth, and the impact engagement with PD can bring to the profession of singing teaching. Key themes in the dataset were then used to construct a reflective tool which may be used by singing teachers as a framework to guide an evaluation of the effectiveness of their own PD experiences.

### **Somatic Voicework™ and Jeannette LoVetri**

Jeanie LoVetri is a singing specialist, teacher, pedagogue, researcher and expert in Contemporary Commercial Music (LoVetri, 2017a). LoVetri has worked with over 1200 students throughout USA, Canada, Europe, South America and Australia (LoVetri, 2016) including Grammy winners, Tony-nominated Broadway leads and a variety of international performers from children to adults (LoVetri, 2017a). LoVetri's method, Somatic Voicework™ is

a comprehensive yet streamlined “system of pedagogy based on voice science and health” (Latour 2014, paragraph 1), “grounded in more than forty years of teaching experience... with all levels of singers” (LoVetri, 2013, p. 86). LoVetri is a “classical lyric soprano who has professional experience in cabaret, music theater, and can also belt... She has published many articles on voice pedagogy and voice science” (LoVetri, 2013, p. 86). Somatic Voicework™ unselfconsciously draw[s] the mind of the singer into the physical process of making sound... working on all aspects of the voice so that the singer... may increase awareness of sound-making as a physical process... Somatic Voicework™ allows the voice and body to be partners with the mind... allow[ing] the instrument to handle a variety of tasks with greater ease and effort... based upon what the voice is doing, not just how the voice sounds (LoVetri, 2016, p. 5).

The functional aspects of Somatic Voicework™ work in harmony with physical bodywork, psychological and emotional aspects of learning, in a deliberate and specific manner, rejecting any form of direct manipulation of the vocal structures to allow free vocal production in all styles (LoVetri, 2016).

### **1.1 Rationale and Significance**

In a world of rapid change, greater expectations are being placed on music educators to achieve more significant work outcomes (Campbell, McNamara & Gilroy, 2004), with continued learning through PD now widely recognised as one of the most significant aspects of professional practice (Bowles, 2016; Conway, Hibbard, Albert & Hourigan, 2005; Eros, 2012). Registered Australian primary and secondary educators are required to engage with a minimum of twenty hours of continued PD (CPD) on an annual basis (Queensland College of Teachers, 2017). By “undertaking a balanced combination of CPD annually [which is] focused on

strengthening... professional practice and achieving... development goals” (Queensland College of Teachers, 2017, p. 1), teachers must reflect upon their practice to ensure they can successfully “model effective learning, identify their own learning needs and analyse, evaluate and expand their professional learning, both collegially and individually” (Queensland College of Teachers, 2017, p. 1). Additionally, in all career stages, from graduate to educational leader, all teachers are required meet the national standards for professional learning and engagement to “[i] identify and plan professional learning needs, [ii] engage in professional learning and improve practice, [iii] engage with colleagues and in practice, [and, iv] apply professional learning and improve student learning” (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited, 2017, p. 18). Similarly, within the higher education (HE) sector, continued learning through engagement with PD is a standard expectation at all levels of promotion (Australian university teaching and criteria and standards, 2017).

HE educators must engage in PD activities related to areas of both teaching and learning, also conducting self-evaluation to ensure they are meeting the professional standards of their promotion, and effectively supporting the learning needs of their students (Australian university teaching and criteria and standards, 2017).

In contrast, the sector of instrumental and singing teaching, specifically self-employed studio music teachers, remains to date, an unregulated field (Watson, 2010). Whilst some methods of teaching, such as the Suzuki Method, require their teachers to undergo continued training and assessment to “ensure their professional growth and maintain their accredited teacher status” (Suzuki Talent Education Association of Australia, 2017, para. 3) most teachers rely on their performance abilities to directly inform and shape their teaching practice (Paige, 2007), which consequently can result in much variability in the quality of a teachers’ work

(Watson, 2010). A number of music teacher associations exist in Australia whose primary aim is to “support the studio music teacher in improving the quality and status of the profession” (Watson, 2010, p. 198). These associations recognise the importance of high quality teaching, offering a number of PD events to support the continued learning of their members (Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing, 2017; Music Teachers’ Association of Queensland, 2017). However, despite this association-led encouragement, engagement with PD still remains to be a largely voluntary endeavour (Conway et al., 2005; Watson 2010). Engagement with PD may potentially impose financial pressures to studio teachers including costs associated with attendance, travel and accommodation (Conway et al., 2005; Watson 2010) and furthermore, may potentially cause disruption to regular teaching hours (Watson, 2010) and subsequent loss of income. Watson (2010) indicates that some Australian teacher registration boards have made attempts towards introducing separate legislation for instrumental and singing teachers, including suggestions towards their classification as a “para-professional” (Watson, 2010, p. 200), seeking to provide more open access to registered learning environments and PD opportunities alongside classroom educators. However, the highly complex issue remains to be resolved (Watson, 2010), and without some standardisation of continued learning through PD engagement, instrumental and singing teachers will continue to have negligible obligation and/or motivation to engage with PD. Furthermore, teachers who are motivated and able to engage with PD have little assurance that the endeavour will be of direct and positive benefit to their personal identity and/or professional skills, with little information available to guide them in an evaluative process to determine the effectiveness of their PD experiences.

Davidson (2004) outlines that music is a multi-faceted discipline which draws upon numerous independent cognitive, perceptual, motor and social functions, with Karlsen (2011)

elaborating upon the potential for music to provide a rich and elaborate platform for learning. As such, by failing to engage with PD, singing teachers are potentially excluding themselves from highly valuable learning experiences, and relinquishing opportunities to contribute to the quality improvement of their profession and the positive valuation of their practice (Westerlund, 2008) and PD experiences.

This study seeks to add the voices of a small group of singing teachers to that discussion. I have located extant research which theoretically supports the importance of engaging with PD, and used frameworks and tools to guide me through reflecting upon my own PD learning experiences. In particular, Karlsen's (2011) formulation of a sociologically inspired lens of musical agency sparked my academic curiosity. Informed by many different disciplines including education, sociology and psychology, Karlsen's multi-faceted lens provides new insight into learners' experiences. Karlsen argues that by focussing upon the experience of the learner, growth across music and non-music related skill areas can be identified, highlighting the potential for music to provide a rich and elaborate platform for learning across multiple domains. By engaging with deep reflection, and viewing my experiences through this lens, it became apparent that I could deeply evaluate the impact of my PD experiences, identifying key themes which will have continuing impact on my development as an artist and a singing teacher. My own experiences generated a further desire to investigate the experiences of my fellow participants in the Somatic Voicework™ training, held in January 2017 at the study site. I gathered data on a range of learner experiences by conducting a focus group and administering a qualitative survey to investigate the impact of this particular PD on other singing teachers. Additional reflections were drawn from my own journal entries which were composed

throughout the course. Due to the markedly positive nature of my own experience, the issue of researcher bias is both acknowledged and further addressed in Chapter 3.

## **1.2 Aim and Objectives**

This study aims to investigate the learning experiences of a group of singing teachers who completed Somatic Voicework™ in January 2017, at the study site, gaining a deeper understanding of the benefits that engagement with PD brings to singing teachers. To achieve this aim, I engaged in the following research activities:

1. I gathered singing teachers' experiences of participating in Somatic Voicework™, through two phases of research: (i) focus group, (ii) qualitative survey, drawing additional reflections from my own journal entries composed during the course;
2. I conducted a thematic analysis of the dataset using Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens as a theoretical framework;
3. I reflected upon the findings of 2 to draw conclusions regarding the benefits that engagement with PD brings to singing teachers;
4. I used the findings of items 2 and 3 to construct a reflective framework/tool which could assist singing teachers to reflect upon and evaluate the effectiveness of their PD learning experiences.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

In response to this aim, I pose the following questions (regarding the experiences of singing teachers who attended Somatic Voicework™ during January 2017 at the study site:

1. How does engagement with PD benefit singing teachers?
2. Did participation in Somatic Voicework™ build singing teachers' musical agency?

3. Can the findings of question 1 and 2 assist singing teachers to better reflect upon, and examine the effectiveness of, their PD learning experiences in the future?

#### **1.4 Scope and Limitations**

The participant pool was comprised of singing teachers who completed Somatic Voicework™ in January 2017 at the study site. Participants were recruited from a closed Facebook group, of which the researcher is also a member, and were invited to participate voluntarily. Of the forty-seven members of the closed Facebook group, twelve were deemed ineligible to take part in the research as: (i) USQ staff, (ii) faculty members of Somatic Voicework™ or (iii) those who did not physically attend the course. From the remaining group of thirty-five participants, a total of fifteen consented to take part in the research, providing a smaller, representative data sample of the cohort. In addition, with approximately seven months between the actual course and the window of research, the possibility of some data loss was recognised. To conduct research closer to the initial course was beyond the scope of this project, however, it was anticipated that the quality of participant responses would still be to a sufficient standard for the purposes of the study. Whilst the case study approach does limit the scope of this study to the particular case, reading the findings of the case, together with the literature enables some broader generalisations to be made about the efficacy of PD and ways to evaluate it.

#### **1.5 Overview of Thesis**

This introductory chapter elaborated upon the rationale and significance of the study as a practitioner led inquiry into a particular PD event, Somatic Voicework™. It is anticipated that the results of the collected data will offer a view of the broader implications of PD for singing teachers. I discussed the aims and objectives of the study and introduced three research questions, before finally, outlining the scope and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 positions the

rationale and aim for the study within the extant literature, discussing the broader implications of PD in the arts, and investigating three possible approaches for evaluating PD effectiveness.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and design of the research, as a study situated within a practitioner inquiry and qualitative case study framework. I elaborate on the participant selection and areas of consideration in the process of gaining ethical clearance. The data collection methods, a focus group, qualitative survey and researcher journal, are introduced, followed by an outline of the data collation through thematic analysis, using Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens as a theoretical framework. The findings of the research are presented in Chapter 4. The findings are then discussed, with elaboration upon the broader implications of the study in relation to PD for singing teachers. The study then concludes with the presentation of a reflective tool for singing teachers to use in examining the effectiveness of their PD experiences, in response to the third research question.



## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

In this chapter I seek to position the rationale and aim for the study, as outlined in Chapter 1, within the literature. I begin by describing the rise of contemporary styles of music throughout the last century, and the implications of these styles on vocal pedagogy. I then discuss Somatic Voicework™, placing the program within the context of evidence-based, functional training for singing teachers in the current music landscape. The focus then turns towards a broader view of PD in the arts, elaborating upon the contributions of PD and the need for practitioner-based research. I then discuss possible criteria and tools for examining the effectiveness of PD, concluding the chapter with elaboration on the application of Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens as a means of reflecting upon PD through the angle of learner experience.

### **2.1 Professional Development in the Arts**

**Setting the scene: Contemporary vocal pedagogy, functional training and Somatic Voicework™.** The field of vocal music has undergone much growth over the last century, most significantly marked by the emergence of new contemporary styles of music (NATS visits AATS, 2008). As a “music of the people” (LoVetri, 2008, p. 260), these new Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) styles are in direct contrast to the elitist, liturgical and court directed origins of classical music (LoVetri, 2008), encompassing “music theat[re], pop, rock, gospel, R & B, soul, hip hop, rap, country, folk, experimental music, and all other styles that are not considered classical” (LoVetri, 2008, p. 260). Research into vocal production has identified significant acoustic and physiological differences between CCM and classical styles (LoVetri, 2008), highlighting the need for new priorities and approaches in vocal education in the current music landscape (Titze, 2013). ‘One size fits all approaches’ cannot meet every vocal need, and

as such, CCM styles demand a distinctive pedagogy (Bartlett, 2010) to ensure strong, safe and beautiful vocal expression (Arboleda, 2013; NATS visits AATS, 2008; Ragan, 2010) across the diversity of styles encompassed within the genre (Green, Freeman, Edwards & Meyer, 2014; LoVetri, 2013). A number of new teaching methods have emerged over the past few decades including, but not limited to, “Speech Level Singing, Estill Training, Jeanie LoVetri’s Somatic Voicework™, Bel Canto Can Belto, Lisa Popeil’s Voiceworks™ [and] The Four Pillars of Singing” (Edwards, 2015, para. 2). Although each of these methods “present different combinations of indirect, tactical, and assertive approaches that [the creator of each has] found to be effective in the training of singers” (Edwards, 2015, para. 2), the independently growing following of each method is an indication of their effectiveness in training (Edwards, 2015). Furthermore, the rise in popularity of these methods is a key indicator of the desire of singers and singing teachers to have access to evidenced-based methods to guide their practice. By having ready access to pedagogy which is “based on reason and logic” (Petersen, 2013, para. 1) vocal instruction can move from the “subjective ‘aesthetic’ into the practical ‘functional’ arena” (Petersen, 2013, para. 1).

Petersen (2013) outlines Somatic Voicework™, founded by Jeannette LoVetri, to be one such evidence-based, functional method of vocal training. Somatic Voicework™ identifies that the human voice is “capable of making a wide variety of sounds, qualities, textures, pitches and levels of volume... in a wide variety of styles and vocal qualities” (LoVetri, 2017b, Core Principles) and seeks to train the voice to utilise all of its capacities for speech or song in a wide variety of material (LoVetri, 2013; 2017b). Latour (2014) notes that Somatic Voicework™ is a safe and solid system of training, which allows the vocalist to explore and negotiate CCM styles regardless of their stylistic background, with Walz (2013) noting that the integrative nature of the

method inherently allows the singer to achieve a freer voice across many different styles of music. Petersen (2013) acknowledges the viable pedagogic reasoning of Somatic Voicework™ as a method which focuses on “what the voice NEEDS based on what it is actually DOING” (Petersen, 2013, para. 8, capitalisation in original), and one which prepares singers from a range of stylistic orientations for success in CCM styles.

**The contributions of professional development.** The importance of engaging with PD is widely recognised, with continued education presenting as one of the most significant aspects of professional employment in the current music landscape (Bowles, 2016). At all career stages, PD instils practitioner growth by providing constructive feedback and support simultaneously with new ideas and fresh perspectives being articulated (Eros, 2012). Conway et al. (2005) argue that ongoing engagement with continued learning opportunities directly impacts the quality and contentment of an arts educator's practice, not only building discipline specific knowledge, but also impacting teacher confidence in a broader view (Davidson & Dwyer, 2014). Moving beyond an individual dimension, quality PD empowers collaboration and shared experience in professional learning environments (Willingham & Bartel, 2012), offering an invaluable opportunity for teachers to reflect and gain greater insight into the ideas and strategies of their practices (Bauer, 2016; Guskey, 2003b). Davidson and Dwyer (2014) also note that through networking, teachers can develop significant support systems, alleviating feelings of isolation in practice (Davidson & Dwyer, 2014).

For singing teachers in particular, PD presents an opportunity for engagement and collaboration with colleagues across different styles of music, including areas outside their own realm of expertise (Meyer & Edwards, 2004). Edwards (2015) argues that through this networking process, singing teachers can be presented with an opportunity to learn about, and

embrace the relevance of, all styles of vocal music, and the pedagogical approaches which they individually demand, potentially stimulating positive change in the music community at large. Willingham and Bartel's (2012) study outlined a number of additional areas in which PD can be of positive impact, including professional learning skills, leadership skills, knowledge exchange, reflective process, ideas development, personal empowerment and confidence. Similarly, research conducted by Wicks (2014, p. 182) concluded that "the new knowledge created by teachers during their PD experience exists in various domains, including: (i) knowledge of self; (ii) knowledge of community; (iii) knowledge of students; and (iv) knowledge of voice pedagogy". Ultimately, when practitioners engage with new techniques in their practice (Bauer, 2016), their professional curiosity can be awakened, as they seek to find effective ways to "teach music... singing skills... [and] meaningful vocal artistry" (Edwards, 2010, p. 52). As will be seen in Chapter 4, the experiences of the singing teachers in this study are reflective of the aforementioned literature, demonstrating that by completing Somatic Voicework™, a growth in musical agency across a number of musical and non-music related areas resulted (Karlsen, 2011).

**The need for practitioner-based professional development research.** The importance of research into PD is neither new nor restricted to the teaching area of music, with Conway et al. (2005) outlining a need for educators across all arts disciplines engage with such research. Conway et al. (2005) continue that arts educators themselves must be actively involved in new research ventures, rethinking what constitutes quality PD, and expanding upon their own experiences, to produce more meaningful and sustainable learning outcomes (Conway et al., 2005). Music education researchers should ultimately be seeking to determine what makes PD a rewarding, successful, and rich experience (Stanley, Snell & Edgar, 2013), conducting "well-designed" (p. 20) research to "develop broad[er] perspectives and [more] detailed

understandings” (Bauer, 2016, p. 20) of PD, to ensure that an ongoing diversity of quality experiences are available (McCoy, 2009), and that these experiences are reflective of learner needs in both content and offerings (Conway et al., 2005). Traditional models of PD have sought to build new skills and knowledge to change and improve the practice of teachers (Joseph & Keast, 2005), however, newer constructions of PD are now recognising the deficiency in this learning approach, suggesting that teachers themselves can be active knowledge producers (Keast, 2003; as cited in Joseph & Keast, 2005), with self-study becoming both a means and an end toward teacher education (Dinkelman, 2016). As such, teachers must strive towards an extended view of PD (Burton & Bartlett, 2005), viewing themselves as researchers (Willingham & Bartel, 2012), as they actively engage with developments in their field (Ragan, 2010) to place arts education within the latest trends in PD (Conway et al., 2005).

#### **Evaluating the effectiveness of professional development.**

Guskey (2003a) acknowledges that there is a lack of agreement from researchers as to the best criteria to examine the effectiveness of PD. Guskey (2003a) continues that as a consequence, criteria used to examine the effectiveness of PD can vary greatly, dependent upon the needs and character of the intended audience (2003a). Without establishing clear goals in attending PD, and authentic evidence to reflect attainment of those goals, practitioners are unlikely to feel that quality outcomes have been achieved (Guskey, 2003b). As such, future research that explores the qualities of positive, rewarding and successful PD experiences (Andrews, 2015; Stanley, Snell & Edgar, 2013), and that which considers the voices of educators themselves (Conway et al., 2005) is imperative. Hunt and Hunt (2005) suggest that practitioners should seek to evaluate the benefits of their varied learning experiences through reflective practice, a view which is shared by Willingham and Bartel (2012) who make reference to the

integral role of reflective practice, both during and beyond PD attendance and learning experiences. Hunzicker (2011) outlines that adult learners

approach learning with clear goals in mind, using their life experiences to make sense of new information. They are motivated by opportunities to address problems – and create solutions – that relate directly to their lives. They prefer open-ended learning activities and function best when they have a voice in the direction and pace of their learning.

Therefore, effective PD is anything that engages teachers in learning activities that are supportive, job-embedded, instructionally focused, collaborative, and ongoing (p. 177).

Hunzicker (2011) goes on to suggest that effective PD takes the personal and professional needs of each individual learner into consideration, understanding that “when PD is supportive, job-embedded, instructionally focused, collaborative and ongoing, teachers are more likely to consider it relevant and authentic, which is more likely to result in teacher learning and improved teaching practice” (p. 178). Hunzicker (2011) presents these views in a checklist for teachers to use in assessing their PD experiences (see Table 1). PD activities with a majority of “yes” and “partly” responses can be respectively viewed as “most” and “reasonably” effective, whereas activities with a large percentage of “no” responses demonstrate a need for supplemental activity to fill the gaps.

	Yes	Partly	No
<b>Supportive</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it combine the needs of individuals with school/district goals?</li> <li>• Does it engage teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators?</li> <li>• Does it address the learning needs of specific schools, classrooms, grade levels and/or teachers?</li> <li>• Does it accommodate varying teaching assignments, career stages and teacher responses to educational innovation?</li> <li>• Does it accommodate individual learning styles and preferences?</li> <li>• Does it integrate teacher input and allow teachers to make choices?</li> </ul>			
<b>Job-embedded</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it connect to teachers' daily responsibilities?</li> <li>• Does it include follow-up activities that require teachers to apply their learning?</li> <li>• Does it require teachers to reflect in writing?</li> </ul>			
<b>Instructional-focus</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it emphasize improving student learning outcomes?</li> <li>• Does it address subject area content <i>and</i> how to teach it?</li> <li>• Does it help teachers to anticipate student misconceptions?</li> <li>• Does it equip teachers with a wide range of instructional strategies?</li> </ul>			
<b>Collaborative</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it engage teachers physically, cognitively, and emotionally?</li> <li>• Does it engage teachers socially in working together toward common goals?</li> <li>• Does it require teachers to give and receive peer feedback?</li> </ul>			
<b>Ongoing</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it require a high number of contact hours over several months' time?</li> <li>• Does it provide teachers with many opportunities over time to interact with ideas and procedures or practice new skills?</li> <li>• Does it 'build' on or relate to other professional development experiences in which teachers are required to engage?</li> </ul>			

**Table 1.** Effective professional development for teachers: A checklist (Hunzicker, 2011, p. 179).

Earlier research conducted by Guskey (2003a) outlines 21 characteristics/principles of effective PD, distilled from a group of thirteen independent lists available to the researcher, as a broad, representative sample (see Table 2). The numbers listed within Guskey's (2003a) table correspond to the order in which each characteristic is presented within the original thirteen lists. Guskey (2003a) concludes that "the characteristics that influence the effectiveness of PD are clearly multiple and highly complex" (p. 16) and that although "such criteria are valuable, they

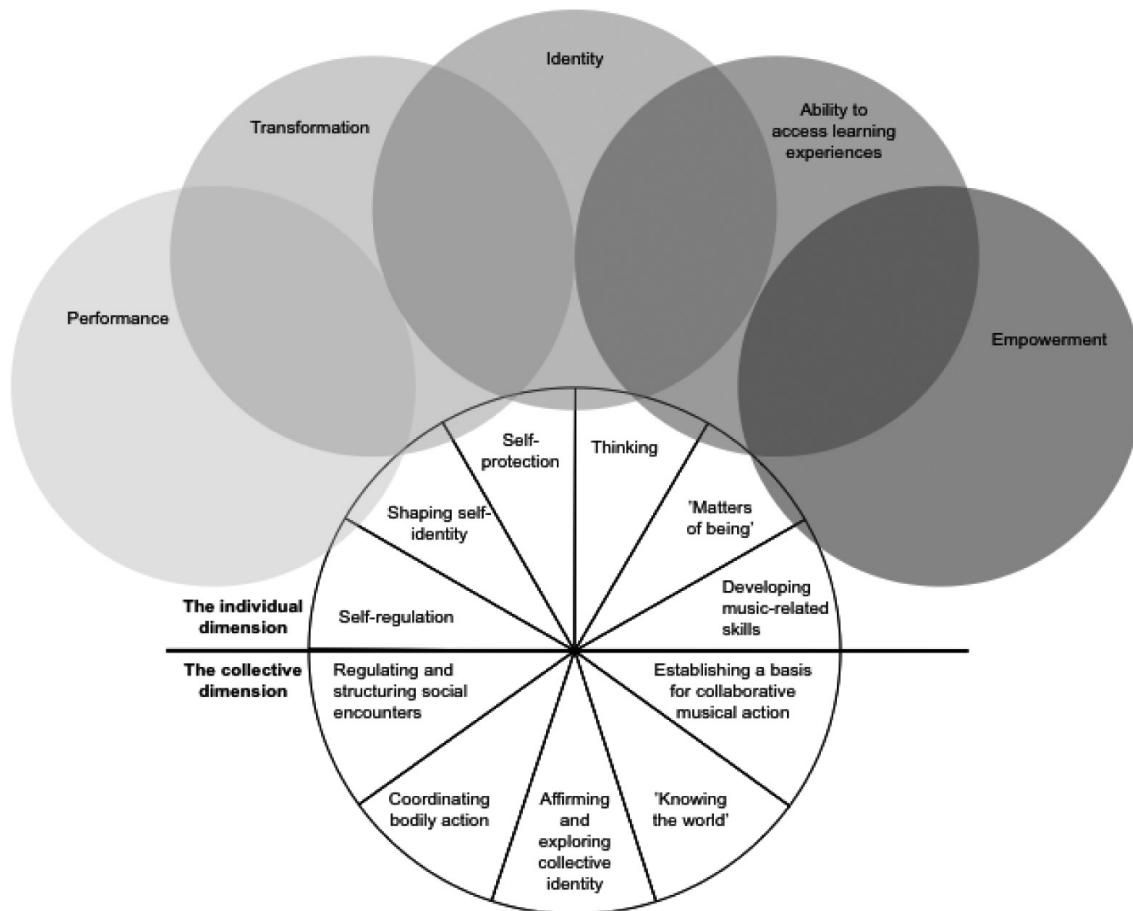
provide only a starting point in efforts to improve the quality of [PD] programs and activities" (p. 14).

Characteristic/principle	References												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Enhances teachers' content and pedagogic knowledge	3	1, 2		2	5	7, 15	1	4	5	1	7	2	11
2. Provides sufficient time and other resources	7	7			8	11	2, 3	2	3		4	1	3
3. Promotes collegiality and collaboration	5		4	4	7			3	7	5	8		9
4. Includes procedures for evaluation		5	6	7	10	16			10	7			5
5. Aligns with other reform initiatives			8	6	9	4, 9		6	2	9	5		1
6. Models high-quality instruction	4	6		3				5	8		2		7, 8
7. Is school or site based	1		3			14	5			4	6		
8. Builds leadership capacity				5	3	5			4				
9. Based on teachers' identified needs	6	8	2			13				3			2
10. Driven by analyses of student learning data			1			1, 16			1	2	1		4
11. Focuses on individual and organizational improvement	2	3			1, 2	3			9				
12. Includes follow up and support	7		5			12	4			6			
13. Is ongoing and job embedded	8				6	2					3		10
14. Helps accommodate diversity and promote equity						10							3
15. Based on best available research evidence		4			4	6							6
16. Takes a variety of forms		9						1					
17. Provides opportunities for theoretical understanding			7							8			
18. Driven by an image of effective teaching and learning				1									
19. Provides for different phases of change						8							
20. Promotes continuous inquiry and reflection									6				
21. Involves families and other stakeholders													12

**Table 2.** Characteristics of effective professional development cited by various sources (Guskey, 2003a, p. 10).



Drawing upon views of music education philosophy and research, in addition to psychology and sociology, Karlsen (2011) explores the implications of using musical agency as a tool for researching music education. Karlsen (2011) departs from traditional perspectives of music learning, those which are linked to the products of instrumental music making, to instead take a more "multifaceted account of musical agency" (p. 108), by examining music practice, music use, music experience and "music-related experiences of learning" (p. 117). Karlsen's (2011) findings are presented in a theoretical lens (see Figure 1) which outline both an individual and collective dimension of "transformational agency" (p. 109).



**Figure 1.** A sociologically inspired understanding of musical agency as a lens (Karlsen, 2011, p. 118).

For the individual, Karlsen (2011) presents six ways in which "music use" or "music action" (p. 111) can be viewed for "structuration and for negotiating one's position in the world" (p. 111) including: "using music for self-regulation; the shaping of self-identity; self-protection; thinking; matters of being; and developing music related skills" (p. 111). For the collective dimension, Karlsen (2011) shows five areas in which "collective musical use" or "collective musical action" (p. 115) can be understood, including: "using music for regulating and structuring social encounters; coordinating bodily action; affirming and exploring collective identity; knowing the world; and establishing a basis for collaborative musical action" (p. 115). Karlsen (2011) also makes note of the shades or layers found within the sub-divisions of the lens, which allow the researcher to emphasise "different discursive understandings of musical agency" (p. 117).

This proposed lens... holds the potential to capture the musical as well as non-musical outcomes of interactions with music and, perhaps even more importantly, it may help to bridge the worlds of formal and informal learning situations, in the sense that it allows the researcher to focus on a very wide range of a person's encounters with music, no matter in which contexts they take place. (Karlsen, 2011, p. 117)

Karlsen (2011) notes that "a changing world also changes the ways people do and learn music, and even the ways in which they find their engagement with music meaningful" (2011, p. 118), and as such, researchers must work towards "designing educational environments which take [learner] experiences into account" (p. 118). To this effect, Karlsen's (2011) lens offers a functional tool for researchers to use when examining the intricacies of learner experience, and in a broader sense, can be a useful framework for evaluating the effectiveness of PD experiences.

In summation, the tools presented by Hunzicker (2011) and Guskey (2003a), whilst providing a useful checklist for reflective PD evaluation, are designed for classroom educators, and education-based PD experiences, and as such, are not ideally suited towards the evaluation of PD experiences for professional musicians and studio teachers. Furthermore, the checklist-layout of both tools fails to provide cohesive links between each learning area, limiting deeper and more comprehensive evaluations of learning experiences. Karlsen (2011) makes a convincing case for the focus of evaluative practices to be placed on the experience of the learner, rather than on the more mechanical/content-based aspects of learning. The lens provides flexibility to explore a range of learning areas and outcomes, with PD presenting as merely one of the many investigative possibilities. In addition, with its focus on experience, the lens enables the researcher to uncover both the musical and personal dimensions of learning. In contrast to the checklist-design of Hunzicker (2011) and Guskey's (2003a) tools, the agentic shades of Karlsen's (2011) lens provide additional opportunity to draw connections between the different individual and collective dimensions of learning, opening a broader and multifaceted scope of investigation for the researcher. For the purposes of this study, Karlsen's (2011) lens is identified as the most comprehensive and versatile tool of the three explored, and as such, will be used to guide a thematic analysis of the dataset in Chapter 4.

## **2.2 Chapter Summary**

This chapter positioned the rationale and aim for the study, as outlined in Chapter 1, within the literature. I began by explaining the rise of contemporary styles of music throughout the last century, focussing on their implications upon vocal pedagogy. I then discussed Somatic Voicework™ as a new approach to vocal pedagogy and performance, placing the program within the context of functional stylistic training for singing teachers. The focus then turned to PD in the

arts, elaborating upon the need for practitioner-based research, the importance of engaging with PD and the contributions of PD. Finally, I explored three tools for examining the effectiveness of PD, concluding that Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens, could be used as a comprehensive framework for reflectively examining music learning experiences and PD.

The following chapter presents an overview of the method and design of the research conducted, with elaboration on the ethical considerations, data collection methods, collation and analysis used to discover participants' experiences of completing Somatic Voicework™.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology and Research Design**

In this chapter I provide an overview of the methodology and research design, discussing the ethical considerations and the data collection, collation and analysis methods used to discover participants' experiences of completing Somatic Voicework™.

### **3.1 Methodology**

**Qualitative case study.** Case study can be defined as an “investigation into a specific instance or phenomenon in its real-life context” (Cohan, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 170), allowing the researcher to act as the “primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 45) “search[ing] for meaning and understanding” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 45) to form a richly descriptive end product (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Case study is “research-based, inclusive of different methods and... evidence-led” (Simons, 2009, p. 11) exploring “multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system... to generate in-depth understanding [and] knowledge [which may] inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action” (Simons, 2009, p. 11). When applied to qualitative research, case study method seeks to capture the uniqueness of a case, collecting and qualitatively analysing unstructured data as a means to draw conclusions about a phenomenon or population (Hammersley, Gomm & Foster 2011), with due consideration and documentation of “participants and stakeholder perspectives” (Simons, 2009, p. 11). Qualitative case study is characterised by a bounded system, in which a single, particular phenomenon is used as the unit of analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) drawing data from various sources and techniques including, but not limited to, participant observation, focus groups, open-ended interviews and surveys (Yin, 2009). Creswell (2013, p. 97, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 47) summarise case study research to be “a qualitative approach in

which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*)... through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information*... and reports a case *description* and case-based themes” (emphasis in original). For the purposes of this research, case study provides a focussed methodological framework, in which the case—Somatic Voicework™ training at the study site—can be investigated through the unit—the experiences of course participants—identifying and describing themes arising from the data, and drawing conclusions of the impact of PD on singing teachers.

**Practitioner research in music education.** “[T]eachers of singing have much to gain from reflecting on their own practice” (Cowley, 2010, p. 124, as cited in Wicks, 2014, p. 189). The greater breadth of knowledge a practitioner can possess regarding the nature of their practice, and their skills in that practice (Williamson & Thompson, 2004), the more able they are to reflect upon the quality of their work (Heikkinen, de Jong & Vanderlinde 2015), both for the benefit of themselves and others (Dadds & Hart, 2001; Heikkinen et al., 2015). By examining their action, alongside the outcomes of their action, and the intuitive knowing implicit in their action (Schön, 1991), practitioners can assume the role of researcher, critically evaluating their teaching and learning practices (Burton & Bartlett, 2005) from an insider’s perspective (Heikkinen, et al., 2015). Practitioner research, or self-study “is a powerful tool that can be employed to serve any number of purposes... generating rich understandings that can be used to facilitate... change” (Dinkelman, 2016, p. 15-16) and “enable good (professional) work” (Heikkinen, et al., 2015, p. 15). Within the field of music education, Karlsen (2011, p. 118) suggests that “a critical analysis of humans’ abilities for acting in and through music as well as of what can be achieved through such actions... might aid [practitioners] in... exploring other possible routes for [musical led] educati[on]” (Karlsen, 2011, p. 118). “A changing world also

changes the ways people learn music, and even the ways in which they find their engagement with music meaningful” (Karlsen, 2011, p. 118), and as such, “continuous research into these conditions, including [the angle of learner experience] will accumulate the knowledge we need – both as researchers and practitioners” (p. 118-119), to revise and expand upon older paradigms to ensure that “music education [remains relevant] for people living in present and future forms of society” (p. 118).

### **3.2 Participant Selection**

The participant pool comprised of singing teachers who completed certification in Somatic Voicework™ at the study site in January 2017, also including the researcher. It was noted that participants of the course had varying places of residency, both within Australia and in New Zealand and South Korea, however, participants were not directly recruited based upon their residency, with the only criteria for selection in the study relating to their completion of the course. Participants were invited to take part in the research via a closed Facebook group which had been formed for the purposes of networking both pre- and post- the PD, of which I am also a member, with express written permission granted by the Facebook group administrator before proceeding with recruitment. For the first research phase, which comprised a focus group, interested participants were invited to submit their contact details to me. I then contacted the respondents via email, outlining their potential involvement in the research, should they wish to consent to participate. This email included an electronic copy of both the information sheet and consent form (see Appendix B, Appendix C). A total of five signed consent forms were returned, with four of the five participants attending the scheduled focus group.

For the second and final research phase, which comprised a qualitative survey, a participant information sheet was made available through the closed Facebook group (see

Appendix D), outlining the potential involvement for interested participants. An electronic modality of survey was selected, using SurveyMonkey, with submission of a survey response indicating implied consent. A link to the survey was provided to interested participants through the closed Facebook group. A total of twelve surveys were electronically submitted, with three of the twelve participants having already participated in the first phase of research. The provided documentation for both phases of research addressed the potential risks and benefits of participation with elaboration on issues relating to participant eligibility, research format, voluntary participation and withdrawal, emotional wellbeing, privacy and confidentiality, data management and ethical conduct for human research.

### **3.3 Ethical Considerations and Clearance**

Ethical clearance was granted for this study (see Appendix A). Several concerns were addressed in order to gain this approval.

**Risks to researcher.** At the point of peer review, the risk of potential researcher bias was raised in reflection to my direct involvement in the Somatic Voicework™ course and closeness to the project. In acknowledgement of this concern, I maintained a critical reflective process to ensure neutrality at all stages of the research. A further concern was raised at the point of peer review, noting that should a participant choose to publicly disclose personal concerns or grievances involved with the project, my reputation may have been impacted. To address this risk, I endeavoured to show equal opportunity to all participants throughout the project, welcoming open communication and all points of view, whether positive or negative. Clear avenues for direct feedback to the research team were made available, with referral to additional support services, including Lifeline and General Practitioner made explicit on the information sheets for both research phases.



**Risks to participants.** Minimal risks to participants of this project were expected, both in the short and long term. It was noted that the time spent reading information sheets, completing consent forms and participating in the actual study may cause some slight inconvenience. As a result of engaging with reflective process through participation in the focus group discussion, and in the writing of personal survey responses, it was possible that some participants may have felt strong emotional responses or distress. In the unlikely eventuation of this occurrence, participants were made aware of the researcher's availability for support, and of the option of referral to additional support services including Lifeline and GP consultation. Participants were assured that data collected throughout the research project were stored securely as per the USQ Research Data Management Policy, and that any data used in the reporting of results, including direct quotations and paraphrased excerpts, would be used in such a way as to ensure it was unidentifiable. Participants were made aware of the voluntary nature of their involvement, their freedom to withdraw the study at any time, and that non-participation would in no way impact on their current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

**Benefits to participants.** During this study, participants were asked to reflect upon their experience of completing Somatic Voicework™ in January 2017. The process of this reflection was expected to be of benefit to participants (Schön, 1991), with the discussion of shared experiences and ideas providing a platform for supported academic and personal networking, regardless of stylistic orientation or prior teaching experience. It was hoped that in light of the expected benefits, participation in the study would be viewed as a positive experience, far outweighing any insignificant time inconveniences. It was also hoped that the findings of this study could assist participants to make more fully informed decisions about their engagement with PD in the future.

**Data management.** In accordance with USQ's Data Management Policy and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, I accepted full responsibility for the management of all research data. A master copy of the dataset was stored on secure cloud storage, Cloudstor, with a secondary backup dataset stored on an external hard disk drive.

### **3.4 Methods: Data Collection and Analysis**

In seeking to build a comprehensive picture of human activity, several dimensions of data were collected (Gilliam, 2000), each collectively building a broader and more multifaceted picture of the data (Morgan, 1988; Ussher, 1999). For this qualitative case study, a combination of three research methods were used to gather data (Yin, 2009), a focus group, qualitative survey, with additional reflections drawn from the researcher's own diary.

**Focus group.** Focus groups are an ideal method of data collection when seeking to gather a rich impression of an individual's experiences and beliefs (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Morgan, 1998). As a form of semi-structured group interviewing, focus group method stimulates interactive participant discussion (Litosseliti, 2003), providing an opportunity to explore unanticipated pathways of discussion alongside responses to the researcher's preconceived questions (Morgan, 1988). The use of technology in the facilitation of focus groups has seen much growth in the recent decades, with virtual platforms providing a convenient and effective alternative for recruiting hard to reach or geographically dispersed participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Litosseliti, 2003; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The diversity of locations within the potential participant pool (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2) indicated that a face-to-face focus group would not be possible within the scope of the project, and as such, Zoom online video conferencing was utilised. By allowing participants to nominate a location of their own choosing, virtual focus groups can provide a greater level of comfort for less confident individuals,

potentially stimulating greater responses than could be gathered in face-to-face group settings (Litosseliti, 2003). While Morgan (1988, 1998) and Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) agree that focus groups of between six and twelve participants is the optimum, facilitating a comprehensive yet balanced discussion for all participants, Braun & Clarke (2013) suggest that smaller groups, of between three and eight participants, are preferable, easing the process of both moderation and data analysis for the researcher. However, regardless of the desired number of participants, over recruitment is of integral importance, demonstrating a preparedness for potential participant absence (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) recommend fewer than a dozen questions to be planned for a focus group guide, with Braun and Clarke (2013), similarly advocating for quality rather than quantity, suggesting that a smaller number of open-ended questions will illicit the greatest response.

**Qualitative survey.** Braun & Clarke (2013) note that qualitative surveys are an ideal research method for the quick collection of broad amounts of data whilst maintaining a wide range of views. Virtual survey methods can be of benefit in reaching geographically dispersed participants (Braun & Clarke, 2013), with platforms such as SurveyMonkey, providing additional benefits to the researcher, by offering a dedicated response collector to eliminate the need for additional data entry or collation. In structuring questions for qualitative surveys, Gillham (2000) suggests that a combination of multiple choice and open questions ensures sufficient depth and detail in responses, providing respondents with the freedom to answer in their own time and at their own pace.

**Researcher journal.** During the Somatic Voicework™ course, I kept a journal with reflections and observations of my learning experiences, personal challenges and breakthroughs, changes to my capacity as a performer and role as a teacher. This process of journaling was

continued for several weeks following the course as I revised my course material, course notes, and implemented new techniques into my own practice and with my students. This journaling process enabled me to more critically and transparently examine my learning journey, and to more clearly express the areas in which I noted a change or improvement in my practice. Since this time, the journal has served as a point of reference in recalling my learning experiences, allowing for continued reflection upon my growth and transformation on a broader scale.

**Data collection and collation.** In planning the order of research phases, I recognised the potential for unanticipated topics generated in the focus group discussion, to inform the pre-conceived questions of the qualitative survey. As such, the focus group was selected as the first phase of research. A guide was prepared for the moderation of the focus group, including introductory and concluding remarks, and eleven thematically organised main questions with supporting prompts (see Appendix E). During the recruitment process, a number of alternative time windows were provided to the potential participants, with five being the greatest number of mutual availability for a single session. Of the five participants, one absence was noted, resulting in a group of four participants present for the pre-determined session. After the conclusion of the focus group, Zoom recorded video footage was reviewed to prepare a complete transcript of the discussion. As Braun and Clarke (2013) predicted, the relatively small group number was able to generate a rich discussion, with the complete transcription totalling 13,000 words.

Following the focus group, the second phase of research was commenced, the qualitative survey. Seeking to keep the survey as succinct and streamlined as possible, a series of nine research questions were formed, with a tenth gathering demographic information for participant verification purposes. The nine main questions were initially developed from the eleven focus group questions, with changes then made in reflection of trends noted within the focus group

discussion, including the addition of two unanticipated topics (see Chapter 4, Section 4.1) and the consolidation of questions which elicited similar responses. A total of twelve surveys were submitted, including three participants who had also participated in the focus group. A summary of the responses was then collected from SurveyMonkey, listing each participants' individual responses, and a summation of all responses for each question. Blank responses were negligible, with the majority of questions answered in sufficient detail for the purposes of the study.

**Data analysis.** Thematic analysis, a form of analysis which seeks to identify key themes across multiple datasets, was used to analyse the data, following a series of seven stages in coding and analysis—transcription, familiarisation, identifying themes, reviewing themes and creation of thematic map, defining themes and finalising analysis, as recommended by Braun & Clarke (2013). After several readings of the fully transcribed data set, Karlsen's (2011) musical agency lens was used as a theoretical framework and guide for the analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the thematic analysis.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter described the methodology and design of the research, identifying the study to be a qualitative case study, within a practitioner inquiry framework. Detailed information was provided on the selection process of participants of the research. I then outlined the ethical considerations of the study, including the potential risks and benefits of involvement for researcher and participants alike, elaborating on the strategies in place to ensure secure data management and storage, as per the requirements of a USQ honours research project. The focus then turned to an elaboration of the two research phases, a focus group and qualitative survey, providing details on the collection and collation of the participant data, and the inclusion of researcher supplied reflections. Finally, the thematic analysis of the data set was introduced.

The following chapter presents the results of the thematic analysis of participant responses in the focus group and survey, outlining the ways in which Somatic Voicework™ enriched the individual musical agency of participants, and the broader implications of these findings for PD.

## Chapter 4 – Results and Discussion

In this chapter I present the results and analysis of the data collected from participants' responses in a focus group and qualitative survey to answer to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.

**Focus group: Participant selection and characteristics.** The method and design for this phase of study is outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.4. Participants in this phase of the study were four female singing teachers, from various locations throughout Australia, and from a range of teaching demographics (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Focus Group Participant Characteristics			
Participant Number	Gender	Location	Teaching Demographic
1	F	Urban, NSW	<b>Style:</b> CCM <b>Students:</b> private (all ages), SLP (laryngologist, speech pathologist) referrals
2	F	Urban, VIC	<b>Style:</b> Classical, CCM, <b>Students:</b> private (all ages), primary and secondary school
3	F	Regional, NSW	<b>Style:</b> CCM <b>Students:</b> private (all ages), tertiary institution
4	F	Regional, QLD	<b>Style:</b> CCM <b>Students:</b> private (all ages), SLP referrals, choir director

**Survey: Participant selection and characteristics.** The method and design for this phase of study is outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.4. Participants in this phase of the study were twelve female singing teachers, including three participants who had already taken part in the earlier focus group (responses identified with [b] throughout reporting of results). No demographic information was intentionally gathered during the survey, with participants only

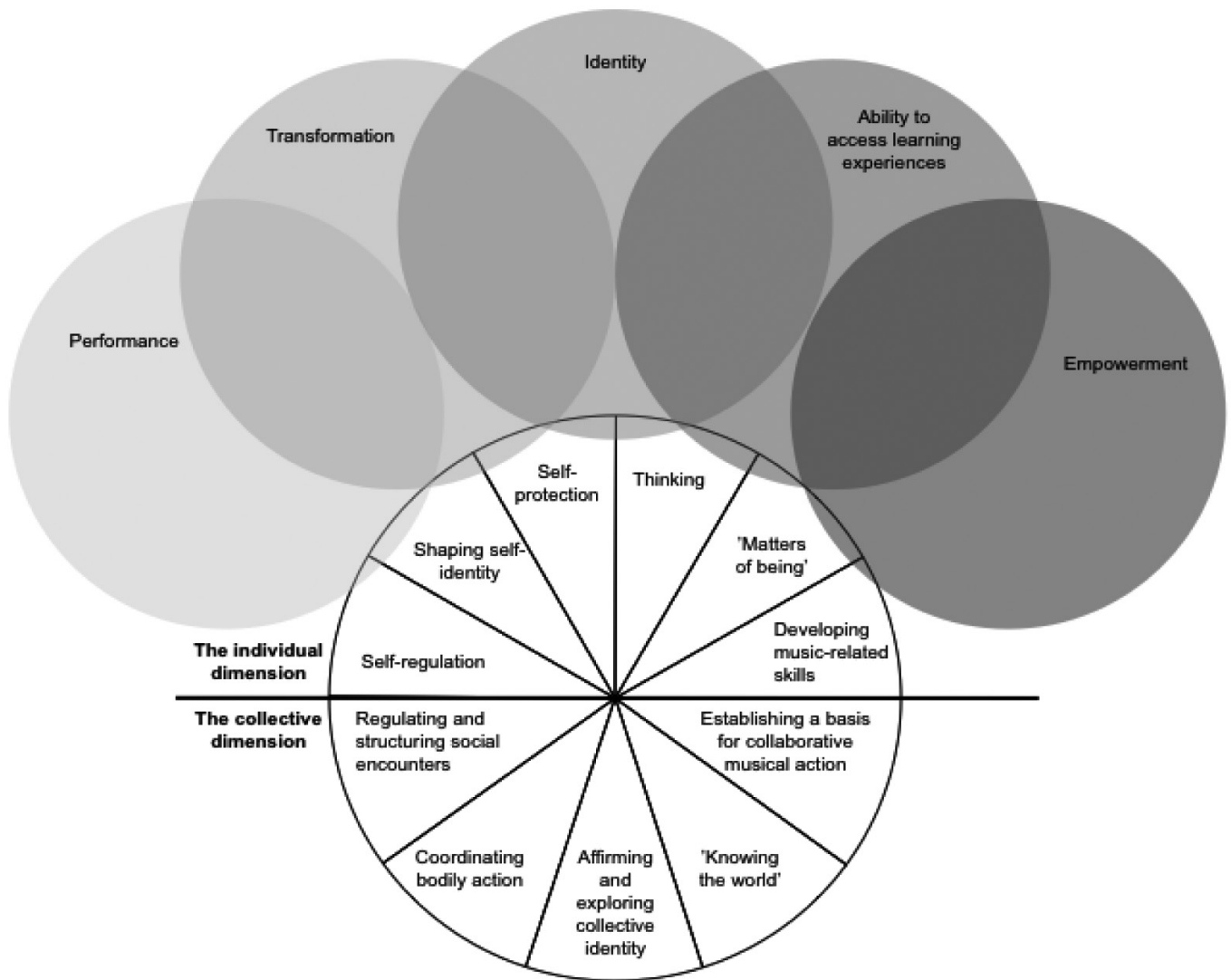
asked to provide their name and email address for verification purposes. See Table 4 for further elaboration.

<b>Table 4 – Survey Participant Characteristics</b>	
<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1b	F
2b	F
3	F
4b	F
5	F
6	F
7	F
8	F
9	F
10	F
11	F
12	F

**Introduction to reporting of results.** Following transcription and familiarization of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; see also Chapter 3, Section 3.4), Karlsen’s (2011) musical agency lens (see Figure 1,) was used to “look across the whole dataset to determine themes” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 227), with each dimension of the lens serving as a separate “code” for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 227). During the search for themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013), a number of dimensions of the lens emerged within the data, specifically, for the individual dimension: self-regulation, shaping of self-identity, thinking, developing music related skills, and for the collective dimension: regulating and structuring social encounters, affirming and exploring



collective identity, and knowing the world (Karlsen, 2011). These dimensions of the lens served as the first level of thematic analysis. A further review of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013) revealed several subthemes (Braun & Clarke, 2013), with all of the agentic shades of the lens emerging within the data: performance, transformation, identity, ability to access learning experiences and empowerment (Karlsen, 2011).



**Figure 1.** A sociologically inspired understanding of musical agency as a lens (Karlsen, 2011, p. 118).

Whilst a number of dimensions and shades of the lens were indeed emergent in the data of this study, not all were required in order to demonstrate an increased sense of musical agency through learning experiences. To this effect, Karlsen (2011) refers to the flexibility and broad application of the lens in exploring “the musical as well as non-musical outcomes of interactions with music... [allowing] the researcher to focus on a very wide range of a person’s encounters with music” (p. 117), putting a “special emphasis on” (p. 117) different “discursive understandings of musical agency” (p. 117) “no matter in which contexts they take place” (p. 117). Reflections from my own journal, as researcher and course participant, were included alongside the participant responses, to provide synergetic discussion of the dimensions and agentic shades of the lens in relation to the dataset. Additionally, throughout the discussion of results, references to Karlsen’s (2011) lens were marked in italics e.g. *thinking, coordinating bodily action*.

#### **4.1 Results**

**Individual dimension: Self-regulation.** Karlsen (2011) makes reference to the ability of music "as a tool for self-regulation; or, in other words, for regulating, adjusting, enhancing, and bringing together different aspects of the psychological and physical self" (p. 112). Throughout the research phases, it became apparent to the researcher that all participants had experienced a wide range of emotions during the course, and in the time since. In some instances, heightened emotional states enabled the participants to more clearly identify how they felt about a particular situation, or themselves, "constituting and arriving at a particular state of mind" (p. 112). In the midst of her *performance* during a breakout session, which was focussed upon chest register isolation, participant 3 recognised physical blocks which impacted her state of mind and created a heightened state of anxiety and frustration. Then, through the action of her musical

*performance*, a more synergetic connection between mind and body was achieved, allowing her to experience a realisation and acceptance about her *identity* as a teacher and performer:

**Participant 3.** “I’ve got a couple of physical things that could be significantly affecting my singing and vocal production... so I started to get this nervous feeling about singing... I was absolutely freaked out, and so much so that I couldn’t make the transitions like I could when I’m normally singing. And just the fact that it was recognised that I could have something that I’m working around immediately helped me... for me it was incredibly emotional and incredibly confronting... I think the course did help me, it’s that whole thing of feeling free as a teacher and performer, this is the sound I’m making today, this is what I’ve got, and it’s ok, and tomorrow will be different, and yesterday was different, and it’s ok.”

Similarly, during the first breakout session, in which I was required to sing isolation exercises in front of my peers, I entered a heightened state of emotion. However, through the very act of *performance*, I was able to work through my emotions, experiencing a *transformation* in my state of mind, and an *empowerment* to successfully approach similar situations in the future:

**Researcher.** “I could feel my nerves rising, the familiar pangs of performance anxiety started to encroach. Rationally, I knew that I only needed to perform one brief exercise, a couple of notes at best, and yet, faced with the prospect of singing to a room of experts, my self-doubts became louder. I feared that my voice wouldn’t be up to the standard of others, and that perceptions of my own incapacity would be realised. When my name was called, I stood up, adrenaline surging, and sang my exercise. Despite the tension which I know was present in my vocal mechanism, I actually sang well, I did exactly as I was asked, and was applauded by the group. As soon as I sat down, I had such clarity. There

was nothing functionally wrong with my voice, my instrument worked fine, it was only my perfectionism and fears of others' opinions that held me back. Knowing this gave me the nudge I needed to just accept my voice for what it was, and to embrace the journey of creative expression in whatever form it took. I felt utter relief, like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders, and I was actually energised for the next round of challenges I would face in the course, and in the greater journey of learning.”

Participant 10 experienced feelings of *empowerment* in realising that she was equipped with information which would enable her to pursue her singing career:

**Participant 9.** “I experienced more relief than doubt as I realised that I had more information now with which to pursue my singing career.”

Participant 2 discussed a personal moment, recalling the emotional experience of performing to less than her desired standard. Her initial post-performance thoughts were directed towards self-criticism, but the act of receiving positive affirmation allowed for a *transformation* in her thinking to view the experience in a broader context, and with a sense of *empowerment* from her achievement:

**Participant 2.** “One of the ladies bought her [daughter] that night, and she came up to me in the morning and said, ‘Oh I forgot to tell you last night that you were in my daughter's top three performers’. And I'm like, what?! I've just given, in my mind, the worst vocal performance, and then remembered that it's not just about the voice! Performance... is about other things as well.”

The course acted as a vehicle for challenging long-held beliefs and working through self-perceptions and emotional states, resulting in a *transformation of identity*:

**Participant 6.** “This course brought up a lot of long held negative perceptions I had of myself as singer, teacher and a person. Beliefs of not being good enough, not being capable of comprehending such a large amount of content and being able to apply it in my studio. It also prompted some deep questioning and reflection of my teaching practices and my own singing technique. Overall this was an incredibly cathartic experience... The [course] has made me a much more confident and relaxed teacher.”

**Individual dimension: Shaping of self-identity.** "Music plays an important role in individuals' efforts to shape and clarify their self-identity, either to themselves or others" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 112). Some participants shared feelings of positive *empowerment* as a result of attending the course, voicing that by accepting who they are, they had a *transformation of identity*, leaving the course feeling more confident and assured:

**Participant 3.** “...this is who I am, I shouldn't be making apologies, or being nervous about how people think, this is what I do, and I do it to the best of my ability... it's not getting caught up in what other people think.”

**Participant 2.** “It's made me feel more confident... [these are] my capabilities, this is what I can do, this is what I can't do.”

**Researcher.** “Today I found my VOICE! I found my sound and actually enjoyed how it felt! I *do* have a voice! I *can* sing! I *am* a singer! All I needed was to focus on functionality instead of musicality... simple but profound! Ditch the commentary, forget about how it sounds, and just focus on the task at hand!”

In other instances, participants were confronted by the new knowledge and skills they had encountered, resulting in negative reflections of their self-identity. And although these

reflections were neither positive or self-affirming, they were constructive, and integral to the participant's *transformation of identity*:

**Participant 4.** "Imposter syndrome was running high, and just that feeling of vulnerability... I think we all went through a feeling of 'I don't know anything anymore'! And everything I know is just rubbish."

**Participant 5.** "I developed a better understanding and acceptance of my vocal health issues and this has impacted my self-expectations."

It was noted that for some participants, the *transformation of identity* equipped them with an *ability to access learning experiences*:

**Participant 9.** "I felt rather vulnerable during the course as [my teaching and pedagogy experience was limited]. I was contemplating quitting teaching before I came to the course, as I really wanted to help my students but didn't feel like I knew how. This course was like seeing the light! I finally had a way to gain skills I had so desperately wanted to acquire. I did feel a bit overwhelmed as how far I have to go but I felt good that I had a method to get there."

**Individual dimension: Thinking.** Music presents a "medium for thinking, or, expressed in another way, for the cognition, perception and reflection of that which is musically specific" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 113). Many participants noted changes in their thinking processes as teachers:

**Participant 4b.** "My teaching has been revolutionised, there is a strength, grounding and clarification I have never had"

**Participant 5.** "I find I have a different mindset when I'm teaching, with more emphasis on whether I am giving the right stimulus to reach a result, rather than whether the student can do what I'm asking."

***Participant 6.*** “I'm in a much more receptive state of mind”

***Participant 11.*** “I can... trouble shoot now”

***Participant 12.*** “It challenged me to not always have to stick to my lesson plan but to work with my student and the voice they walk through the door with. To be able to interrupt myself and readjust as necessary.”

The confidence to improvise in lessons was also noted in this context, with some participants, myself included, elaborating on an ability to intuitively trust in the process rather than focusing around structured lesson content:

***Participant 1.*** “I keep [my Solution Sequence™ charts] on my piano and work them, and it's reassuring to look at them and think, ok I've done that, done that, I really can't do anymore with that, and I've covered that.”

***Participant 4.*** “I feel like I approach my lessons in a different way now, well let's just see where your voice is sitting today.”

***Researcher.*** “I'm now comfortable in uncertainty. When I'm unsure what's happening in an exercise, I know I can use the Solution Sequence™ to diagnose the truth behind a voice or a vocal situation, listening and diagnosing, researching and collecting data”.

**Individual dimension: Developing music related skills.** As the "most common area of musical action" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 114), the very act of music can contribute to "developing or executing music-related skills through playing an instrument or singing, either through rehearsing, performing, or improvising" (p. 114). Karlsen goes on to discuss that through this category, all other areas of the musical agency lens can be accomplished. "[D]eveloping music-related skills is... an act in itself, through which individuals negotiate and enhance their

opportunities for participating in the world as well as in further musical interaction" (p. 114).

Two distinct areas of musical growth were noted by the researcher including (a) building upon skills already possessed and (b) the building of completely new skills (see Appendix F). For the first growth area, building upon skills, participants shared how Somatic Voicework™ clarified and complemented aspects of their prior learning:

**Participant 4.** “I've got so many things in my notes... Its just really informed all of the stuff I knew already... [it has] clarified everything, and just put the icing on the cake on top of the other things [I have previously learnt]...”

**Participant 7.** “[The course] definitely strengthened [my] skills. I felt I had a greater understanding of mix and better application to my own voice.”

**Participant 10.** “I have learned many different approaches and methods over the years, and learning about Somatic Voicework™ was a great way for me to get a 'big picture' of singing and to assimilate all of the (sometimes contrary) information I was already using.”

**Researcher.** “Small changes in my posture and rib cage position can bring power to my sound, particularly in chest register. My voice is most effective in partnership with the body.”

For the second growth area, building new skills, many participants identified the concept of register isolation to be 'aha' moment (see Question 2, Appendix E; Question 2, Appendix F), providing a *transformation* in their skills:

**Participant 6.** “I had many 'aha' moments... The major breakthrough for me was the method of isolating registers to create balance in the voice.”



**Participant 4.** “I just got my voice to change!... my voice feels and sounds much more settled, and much stronger, and those were major 'aha' moments to go 'oh a real rock solid, bottom heavy chest voice, and a little birdie head voice that's not a 'belty', 'twangy', 'shouty' thing!'... So, it's been like a mantra, head-chest-mix, bright-dark, soft-loud, I just said it to myself over and over.”

**Participant 2.** Distinguishing chest voice and head voice was absolutely an 'aha' moment for me, because really, I've not done this before... how wonderful it is to know that I can really do a chest voice, and it's an ugly, great chest voice! And this [head voice] that just floats... oh I can do that to! And it's made such a difference in the way that I approach even my mix [voice], I can make it a little more head dominant, chest dominant, I've got the control! It demystified singing so much!

**Participant 1.** “When we had to sing in chest voice, I sang what I thought was chest, but that's not chest! It's a chest mix!”

**Participant 9.** “I learnt so much! The knowledge I gained on how to address different concerns, issues, support the development of different registers was just invaluable... It has totally(!) changed the way I work.”

Furthermore, by unlocking the door to these new skill areas, chest, head and mix, the participants had an *ability to access learning experiences, empowering* their vocal capabilities and *transforming* their performance and teaching:

**Participant 2.** “I learnt new skills, like the chest-head voice distinction, and in doing that, in trying to get more of my music theatre contemporary voice, it actually helped my operatic voice big time... It's given me better tools and more confidence to know that I can use head and chest voice.”

**Participant 5.** “It has given me more confidence to engage with music across genres.”

**Participant 10.** “Musically, I do now feel better equipped to explore other genres.”

**Collective dimension: Regulating and structuring social encounters.** As teachers, many of the participants noted increased levels of self-assurance in working with their students. In this sense, music was "employed in order to regulate and structure social encounters" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 115), allowing the participants, in their role as teachers, to feel "in charge" (p. 115) of their students, lessons and teaching methodology:

**Participant 3.** “... We’ve got to keep saying to students, ok just keep doing this, let’s just keep going. That in itself is a very calming way to teach, just keep making this sound, and you make little adjustments on how to tweak it, louder or softer... and as they keep doing it, it’s like their whole body relaxes into something and allows the function to work the way it’s meant to... Here's a person, with a personality, and the voice they've been using since they came into the world, and this is their natural voice print, and we're helping them to develop that thing which is essentially, uniquely theirs, to express music in the best way possible.”

**Participant 2.** “I don't think I've heard the word 'weird' said so often! That sounds weird? GREAT!”

**Participant 1.** “... these types of exercises are brilliant, because they're calming... I can [say to anxious students] it doesn't matter if you didn't hit that note, it’s not about that... I find that this has improved so many people... it’s changed their singing tremendously.”

**Participant 6.** “... It has given me a clear approach in helping my students reach their learning goals and overall has made me a much more confident... teacher.”

**Participant 1b:** "... I have not been afraid to push [my students] to strengthen their chest voices and subsequently upper registers."

**Participant 13.** "I feel confident as a teacher."

**Researcher.** "Students need to learn from an early stage how the voice works from a physiological standpoint, and to be able to understand and apply this knowledge to what they are doing. Jeanie debunked physiology for me, and it has changed so much for my own singing. I'm determined to bring the same revelations to my students, even at a basic level. Knowledge is power, and power is confidence."

**Collective dimension: Affirming and exploring collective identity.** It became apparent to the researcher that each of the participants came to highly value the relationships they had built during the course. "Just as music can be used to shape self-identity, it may also be used to affirm and explore identity on the collective level... this phenomenon... can be found wherever people choose to employ music in order to reinforce a sense of community" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 116). Throughout the discussion, all participants actively encouraged one another, affirming their *identity* as individuals from a collective group by discussing shared experiences. In all instances, a distinct sense of *empowerment* among the participants was perceived by the researcher. During the focus group, participants demonstrated a desire to show inclusivity and encouragement, seeking and providing empathy and affirmation in small, 'acknowledgment' phrases, with the following serving as a characteristic representation:

**Participant 4.** "... Quite a few of us were..."

**Participant 3.** "... I don't know about any of you others..."

**Participant 4.** "... Just like you were saying [Participant 2]..."

During both phases of research, participants made reference to the personal impact of witnessing the experiences, challenges, breakthroughs and emotions of others in the collective group, while others spoke of the joy that simply connecting brought, reducing feelings of isolation and fostering a sense of supported community. In this way, the power of networking and relationship brought a sense of *empowerment*:

**Participant 1.** “I was there when [Participant 4] found her head voice, I spoke to other teachers who were having problems with their voices and felt isolated and lonely, and I was there to see them come through these things! I saw [Participant 2] and thought she was beautiful [during the concert], but I knew she was upset the next day, and that has a personal [effect] on me too, because it was beautiful! And [Participant 4] when she sang and was so disappointed, all I could think of, and all anyone else could think of was, 'oh you've got such rhythm and heart'... the bigger picture is that everyone just appreciates everyone else, and to watch different people have their own little 'moments'... that was just beautiful for me, that was special.”

As a result of building such strong relationships with the other participants during the course, participants had an *ability to access learning experiences*, during the course, and continued in the time since:

**Researcher.** “To know that I’m a part of a community of likeminded individuals, with whom I can have educated conversations, makes such a profound difference. It’s nice to feel connected, distance doesn’t have to create seclusion.”

**Participant 4b.** “I loved the camaraderie... I made great contacts for future professional development experiences.”

**Participant 5.** “It was wonderful to share the course with positive supportive people. There were many conversations about our shared experience and course content, which helped to give insight and consolidate information. Many participants shared their own stories and experience, which enhanced learning for the rest of us... [the course has] definitely made me feel more connected and has given me the confidence to keep forging connections. It means that we are part of a community of learners/teachers rather than operating solo. We have access to information and advice from hugely knowledgeable people, which will also benefit our students.”

**Participant 3.** “Developing a network of passionate and generous singing teachers was one of the best aspects of the taking this course. I found the other participants in this course caring, supportive and giving with their knowledge, which made the journey so much more rewarding... I feel so much more connected to a wider network of teachers, which means that I have an ability to ask for an offer advice in order to improve quality of teaching for myself and others, as well as be part of a group that I can connect to in order to feel inspired or even understood.”

**Participant 1b.** “My relationships with my colleagues were, and are, a joy. The course was wonderful, and so were the other participants. I learned from many. The teachers and participants were non-judgmental and I felt very much at home... the course [made] me feel connected with a wider range of teachers... teachers are spread far and wide, and this network makes the world feel a little smaller and friendlier.”

**Participant 11.** “I met an amazing group of beautiful humans and teachers... Time spend chatting over coursework made it extremely interesting, clarifying and thought invoking. In other words, I learnt a lot and felt the relationships enhanced the learning

experience!... I have a network to connect to for advice or to be part of sharing with, all for the greater cause. To make the world a beautiful place with awesome singing!”

**Participant 12.** “[Networking was] Great! So many like-minded people... [I feel] so much more connected. I always have someone I can turn to for a question, advice or just to listen.”

**Collective dimension: Knowing the world.** "Just as music on the individual level can be used for taking care of the self, it can also be drawn on in order to engage in joint, social explorations, and to attend to and expand on what it means 'to be' on the collective level" (Karlsen, 2011, p. 116). Throughout the course, participants explored human relationships in many different ways, "interact[ing] socially in the world [as they engaged] in meaningful relationships" (p. 116):

**Participant 2.** “I’m extremely grateful for the experience we had... we had such an opportunity and I’m forever grateful for that. Not just for JL and the atmosphere she created for us, but meeting all of you!”

**Participant 3.** “... I’m a bit like [Participant 4], we’re all a bit isolated, like the [participants who live in cities] can get together whenever they want to, some of us are closer, but we can feel very separated from everybody.”

**Participant 2b.** “This was an amazing group of people. They were very supportive and encouraging. I’ve made some wonderful friends!... this has been the best group I have come across in a workshop. I think Jeanie’s course planning and energy contributed much to this. Also, the fact that there was only 40 of us.”

**Participant 8.** “I was so happy to meet other similar women with life experience and the desire to learn. Having said that, it was also great that lots of younger people took the

course. The support offered by everyone was fantastic, and by the end of the course you could 'feel the love'.”

**Participant 9.** “Oh, it was amazing!!! The other participants became like a family, we all supported each other and it was just wonderful! Everyone was awesome!... it felt like a safe space to grown, it was amazing!”

**Participant 10.** “I guess I just realised that there are other teachers out there with the same goals as me.”

**Researcher.** “It’s fascinating that despite our many differences, be it age, personality, musical preferences, teaching experience, we are all united by one key similarity... we are singing teachers! The community values each of its members, and each member values the community construct.”

## **4.2 Discussion**

**Implications: What happens when singing teachers engage with PD.** The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of undertaking a particular PD on a group of singing teachers. This was achieved through gathering participants’ experiences of Somatic Voicework™ in a focus group and qualitative survey. Additional reflections were drawn from the researcher’s own journal. The gathered data provided a rich source to explore this topic, with a thematic analysis of the dataset, through Karlsen’s (2011) musical agency lens, revealing four key impactful themes of participant learning: (i) experiential skills building, (ii) transformation in identity, (iii) empowerment in practice, and (iv) collaborative exchange.

**Experiential skills building.** The learning environment of Somatic Voicework™ not only facilitated an opportunity for participants to build new skills, but also to expand and develop the skills they had already possessed prior to the course. Through the experience of participating in

learning activities throughout the course, participants were able to build skills in their personal practice, specifically relating to their vocal registration, vocal performance, knowledge of vocal anatomy and health, aspects of mind-body awareness, and also in their practice as a teacher, specifically relating to knowledge of teaching approaches, teaching materials, lesson content and structure, and diagnosis of student voices.

***Transformation in identity.*** Participants experienced a range of identity transformations, with many elaborating upon cathartic revelations of long-held self-beliefs, allowing them to move from a state of doubt in their abilities, to a state of confidence, relaxation and self-acceptance in viewing themselves as competent singers and teachers.

***Empowerment in practice.*** Participants noted a number of ways in which they were empowered to act in their practice as both singers and teachers. Individually, many of the teachers outlined a growth in confidence about their voice, having renewed strength and grounding to act in their capacity as singers, with faster responses from their voices in the midst of performance scenarios. Similarly, since the course, many participants noted a growth in their teaching capacity, including feeling more equipped to vocally diagnose students, having the confidence to improvise with lesson content and a greater capacity to act on and apply their new knowledge in the midst of teaching.

***Collaborative exchange.*** Perhaps the most significant learning theme that emerged from the data was that of the role of collaborative exchange amongst participants. The small group setting of the course allowed for meaningful relationship building, in a supported community of shared experience and affirmation. Participants were able to self-regulate in front of the other participants. This provided the opportunity for participants to experience personal affirmation, and allowed empathetic learning support for the group through the various stages and challenges



of learning. During the focus group discussion, and in the survey responses, a number of participants voiced that the community of singing teachers which was established during Somatic Voicework™ had helped them to feel connected to a wider network of likeminded teachers, and to feel a part of something ‘bigger than themselves’. Furthermore, by building trusted, collegiate relationships, the participants were able to continue a process of skills development outside the constraints of the course, *accessing new learning experiences* through engagement with ongoing collegiate discussions regarding singing and teaching.

**Implications: How does PD impact singing teachers on a broader scale.** Upon reflection of the results of the study, it is the conclusion of the researcher that as a result of attending Somatic Voicework™, the participants increased their musical agency across a number of music and non-music related areas. When this conclusion is expanded to encompass a broader view of PD for singing teachers, the results of the study indicate that when practitioners engage with PD, they are placing themselves within a rich environment of learning, which can impact their personal identity and professional practice. PD provides rich and meaningful learning experiences (Conway et al., 2005; Stanley, 2013), in which teachers can learn new content, repertoire, strategies and techniques which can then be brought into their practices as singers and teachers. Furthermore, by attending PD experiences, teachers also have an opportunity to meet and network with likeminded colleagues, building relationships (Davidson & Dwyer, 2014) which can help them to “feel supported, trusted and valued” (Gabriel, Day & Allington, 2011, p. 40) through the “genuine sharing of ideas, questions and frustrations” (Gabriel et al., 2011, p. 41).

**Implications: How can practitioners ensure maximum benefit from their PD?** The research literature suggested that PD in music is both a comprehensive and complex endeavour,

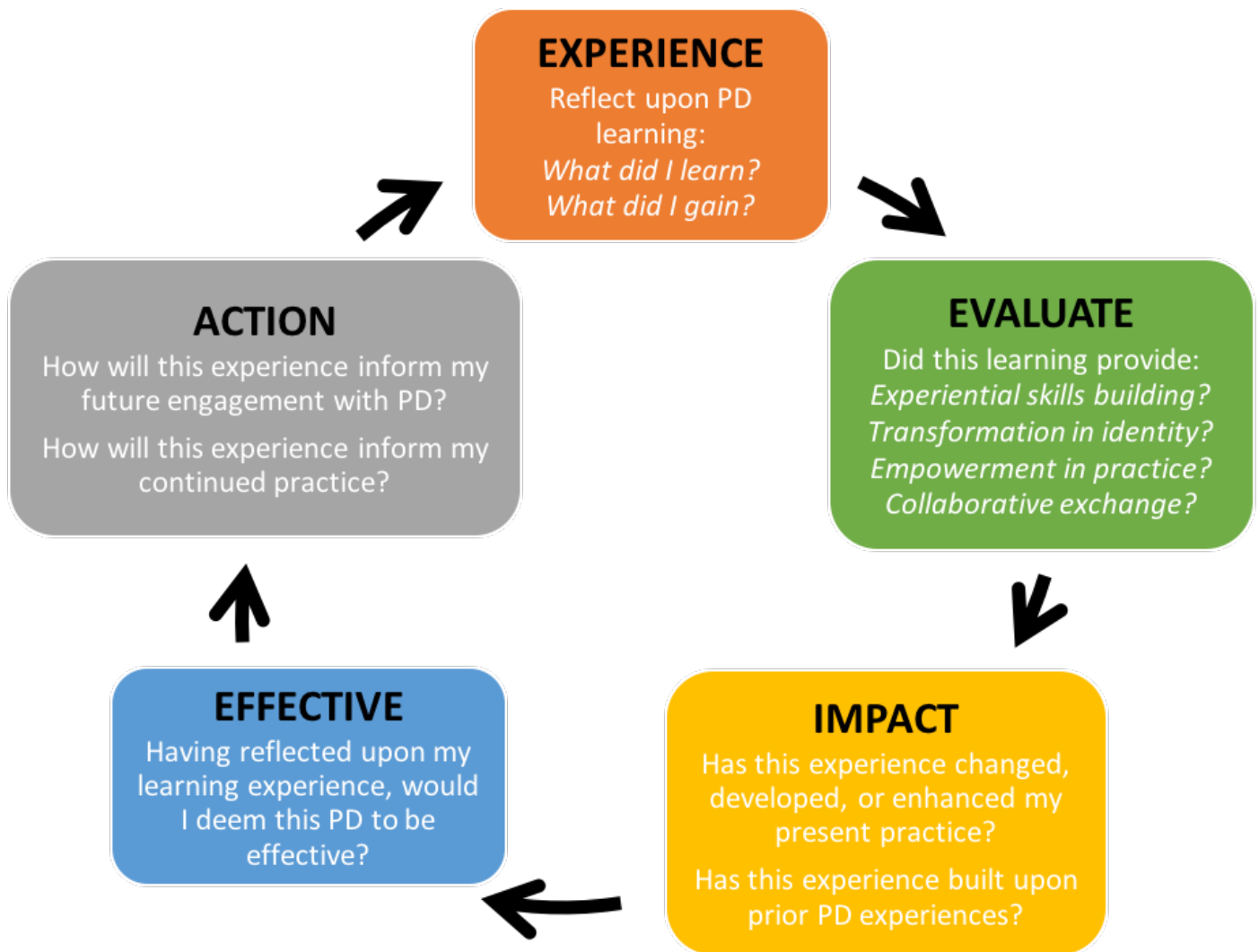
which has the potential to provide a wide range of benefits to teachers in a number of areas. In light of this, further research by practitioners themselves into PD will be of benefit (Conway et al., 2005). A similar call for research is noted by Karlsen (2011) and Westerlund (2008), who note the need for more studies which adopt the experience of the learner, in order to positively evaluate music practice in a broader sense. This study seeks to respond to the call for practitioner led research into PD, and learning experiences through PD, for music teachers.

The importance of engaging with reflective practice is identified as an integral component in evaluating the effectiveness of PD (Hunt & Hunt, 2005; Hunzicker, 2011; Willingham & Bartel, 2012) and also in ensuring the best learning outcomes within professional practice (Hunt & Hunt, 2005). When singing teachers reflect upon their learning experiences (Karlsen, 2011; Westerlund, 2008) they can gain greater insight into the ideas and strategies of their practices (Bauer, 2016; Guskey, 2003b), setting “meaningful goals and standards [against which to measure their] practice and habits... to ensure continued professional growth” (Hunt & Hunt, 2005, p. 104). Furthermore, Westerlund (2008) suggests that

richer analyses of the quality of the continuum of means and ends in the process of learning music may give a different understanding of the values than an analysis of the different purposes and ends of various musical practices outside of educational practices. Instead of authenticity of musics, one should be even more concerned about the authenticity of learning experiences and the learners’ ability to see the relevance of their own learning and to have a sense of ownership of it. (p. 92).

***Reflective tool.*** From the key learning themes I have distilled a reflective tool which may be used by singing teachers as a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of their ongoing learning experiences through PD (see Figure 4). The tool is designed to prompt singing teachers

to not only reflect upon their learning experiences in PD, but to also think more critically and deeply about their learning experiences in PD. The tool guides singing teachers to initiate a process of ongoing reflection, intentionally and strategically asking questions of themselves which they may not have otherwise considered. The tool outlines five reflective stages: (i) experience, (ii) evaluate, (iii) impact, (iv) effective, (v) action.



**Figure 2.** Reflective tool for professional development evaluation.

### **4.3 Concluding Remarks**

Despite the small number of participants in this study, the findings reveal that the very experience and process of music learning, and learning through music PD experiences, has inherent, intrinsic value, providing a rich and elaborate platform for singing teachers to learn and develop a broad range of music and non-music related skill areas. During the course of this study, I came to understand the complex and multifaceted nature of PD in music, and the profound impact that attending Somatic Voicework™ had upon my identity, and practice as a singer and teacher.

By engaging with PD, the singing teachers of this study were enabled to act more skillfully and confidently in their roles as artists, educators and collaborative practitioners, reflecting the findings of Wicks (2014) and Edwards (2010). Although PD remains a largely voluntary endeavour for singing teachers, this study presents a possible case for the positive valuation of PD experiences. It is hoped that this study will motivate singing teachers to pursue PD opportunities of their own motivation. It is also hoped that this study will inspire teachers to reflect upon their continued musical learning experiences, as they seek to actively evaluate their capacity to act in their roles as singers and teachers. Because of the vast array of learning opportunities and outcomes available to singing teachers, and the even more widely-variable nature of learner experience, it is unlikely that a single criterion of what constitutes effective PD will emerge. However, the process of reflection in and on practice and learning presents an opportunity for practitioners to learn as they live, to grow as they practice, and to initiate change as they themselves are being transformed.

## References

- Andrews, B. W. (2015). Towards the future: Teachers' vision of professional development in the arts. *International Journal of Music Education*, 34(4), 391-402.  
doi:10.1177/0255761415590361
- Arboleda, B. W. (2013). Strength training and rock singing for the young. *Journal of Singing*, 69(4), 463-465. Retrieved from  
<http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=85987191&site=ehost-live>
- Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. (2017). *Australian university teaching and criteria and standards*. Retrieved September 29, 2017, from  
<http://uniteachingcriteria.edu.au>
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited. (2017). *Australian professional standards for teachers*. Retrieved September 29, 2017, from  
[https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/general/australian\\_professional\\_standard\\_for\\_teachers\\_final.pdf?sfvrsn=399ae83c\\_2](https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/general/australian_professional_standard_for_teachers_final.pdf?sfvrsn=399ae83c_2)
- Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing Ltd. (2017). *Professional development*. Retrieved September 29, 2017, from <https://www.anats.org.au>
- Bartlett, I. (2010). One size doesn't fit all: Tailored training for contemporary commercial singers. In S. Harrison (Ed.), *Perspectives on teaching singing: Australian vocal pedagogues sing their voices* (1st ed., pp. 227-243). Bowen Hills, Australia: Australian Academic Press.
- Bauer, W. I. (2016). Research on professional development for experienced music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 17(1), 12-21. doi:10.1177/10570837070170010105

Bowles, C. (2016). The self-expressed professional development needs of music educators.

*Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, 21(2), 35-41.

doi:10.1177/87551233020210020701

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*.

London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Burton, D., & Bartlett, S. (2005). *Practitioner research for teachers*. London: Paul Chapman

Publishing.

Campbell, A., McNamara, O., & Gilroy, P. (2004). *Practitioner research and professional*

*development in education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Cohan, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Retrieved from

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/lib/USQ/detail.action?docID=308686>

Conway, C., Hibbard, S., Albert, D., & Hourigan, R. (2005). Professional development for arts

teachers. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 107(1), 3-9. Retrieved from

<http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db>

[=ejh&AN=18487289&site=ehost-live](http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=18487289&site=ehost-live)

Dadds, M., & Hart, S. (Eds.). (2001). *Doing practitioner research differently*. London:

RoutledgeFalmer.

Davidson, J., & Dwyer, R. (2014). The role of professional learning in reducing isolation

experienced by classroom music teachers. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 1, 38-

51. Retrieved from

<http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=98826534573261>

[6;res=IELHSS](http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=988265345732616;res=IELHSS)

- Dinkelman, T. (2016). Self-study in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54(1), 6-18. doi:10.1177/0022487102238654
- Edwards, D. (2010). Giving voice to your professional curiosity: VISI, ISPS, and COSI. *Canadian Music Educator*, 52(2), 52-53. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=57765344&site=ehost-live>
- Edwards, M. (2015, September 12). Embracing new pedagogical approaches: Indirect, tactical, and assertive techniques [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://wp.me/p4FThP-2Q>
- Eros, J. (2012). Second-stage music teachers' perceptions of their professional development. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 22(2), 20-33. doi:10.1177/1057083712438771
- Gabriel, R., Day, J. P., & Allington, R. (2011). Exemplary teacher voices on their own development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(8), 37-41. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=60499483&site=ehost-live>
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Developing a questionnaire*. London: Continuum.
- Green, K., Freeman, W., Edwards, M., & Meyer, D. (2014). Trends in music theatre voice: An analysis of audition requirements for singers. *Journal of Voice*, 28(3), 324-327. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2013.10.007>
- Guskey, T. R. (2003). What makes professional development effective? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 84(10), 748-750. doi:10.1177/003172170308401007
- Guskey, T. R. (2003). Analyzing lists of the characteristics of effective professional development to promote visionary leadership. *NASSP Bulletin*, 87(637), 4-20. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/10.1177/019263650308763702>

- Hammersley, M., & Gomm, R., & Foster, P (Eds.). (2009). *Case study method*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/10.4135/9780857024367>
- Heikkinen, H. L. T., de Jong, F. P., & Vanderlinde, R. (2015). What is (good) practitioner research? *Vocations and Learning*, 9(1), 1-19. doi:10.1007/s12186-016-9153-8
- Hunt, T. J., & Hunt, B. (2005). New voices: A new teacher's guide to professional development. *The English Journal*, 95(2), 101-104. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/stable/30046553>
- Hunzicker, J. (2011). Effective professional development for teachers: A checklist. *Professional Development in Education*, 37(2), 177-179. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2010.523955>
- Joseph, D., & Keast, S. (2005). *Professional development: The singing ear sees and does*. Paper presented at the A Celebration of Voices: XV National Conference Proceedings, Parkville, Vic. Retrieved from <http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=803527659286121;res=IELHSS>
- Karlsen, S. (2011). Using musical agency as a lens: Researching music education from the angle of experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 33(2), 107-121. doi:10.1177/1321103X11422005
- Latour, M. (2014). *Jeanie LoVetri: Taking the heat*. Retrieved from <https://www.classicalsinger.com/magazine/article.php?id=2685>
- Litosseliti, L. (2003). *Using focus groups in research*. London: Continuum.
- LoVetri, J. (2008). Contemporary commercial music. *Journal of Voice*, 22(3), 260-262. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvoice.2006.11.002>



- LoVetri, J. (2013). The necessity of using functional training in the independent studio. *Journal of Singing*, 70(1), 79-86. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=89924920&site=ehost-live>
- LoVetri, J. (2016). *Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method: Level 1*. Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method course materials. The Voice Workshop. NYC.
- LoVetri, J. (2017). *Jeannette L. LoVetri biography 2017*. Retrieved September 27, 2017, from <http://www.thevoiceworkshop.com>
- LoVetri, J. (2017). *Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method*. Retrieved September 20, 2017, from <http://somaticvoicework.com>
- McCoy, S. J. (2009). National initiatives. *Journal of Singing*, 65(4), 397-399. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=36917492&site=ehost-live>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/lib/usq/reader.action?ppg=49&docID=4040452&tm=1506389162458>
- Meyer, D., & Edwards, M. (2004). Voice pedagogy. The future of collegiate voice pedagogy: Swot analysis of current practice and implications for the next generation. *Journal of Singing*, 70(4), 437-444. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=94741684&site=ehost-live>

*Enhancing singing teacher agency through professional development: C. Feldman*

Morgan, D. L. (1988). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Morgan, D. L. (1998). *The focus group guidebook*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Music Teachers' Association of Queensland. (2017). *Membership*. Retrieved September 29, 2017, from <http://www.mtaq.org.au>

NATS visits AATS. (2008). *Journal of Singing*, 65(1), 7-10. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=34193103&site=ehost-live>

Paige, P. (2007). *The relationship between instrumental and pedagogical training of string teachers and their self-perceptions of teaching effectiveness*. (Masters thesis), Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/14319>

Petersen, J. (2013, September 18). Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method and functional voice training [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://petersenvoicestudio.com/tag/somatic-voicework/>

Queensland College of Teachers. (2017). *Continuing professional development policy framework*. Retrieved September 29, 2017, from <http://www.qct.edu.au/pdf/CPDPolicyFramework.pdf>

Ragan, K. (2010). The private studio. The connected voice teacher. *Journal of Singing*, 67(1), 67-71. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=53440256&site=ehost-live>

Schön, D. A. (1991). *The reflective practitioner*. Surrey: Ashgate.

- Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/10.4135/9781446268322>
- Stanley, A. M., Snell, A., & Edgar, S. (2013). Collaboration as effective music professional development: Success stories from the field. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 24(1), 76-88. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/10.1177/1057083713502731>
- Stewart, D., & Shamdasani, P. (1990). *Focus groups: Theory and practice*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications.
- Suzuki Talent Education Association of Australia. (2017). *Professional development*. Retrieved 29 September, 2017, from <http://www.suzukimusic.org.au/pd.htm>
- Titze, I. R. (2013). Some reflections on speech-like singing and related contemporary approaches. *Journal of Singing*, 70(1), 57-58. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.usq.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ejh&AN=89924913&site=ehost-live>
- Ussher, J. M. (1999). Eclecticism and methodological pluralism. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 23(1), 41-46. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1999.tb00339.x
- Walz, I. (2013). *Training the 21st century voice teacher: An overview and curriculum survey of the undergraduate experience*. (Doctoral dissertation), The University of Cincinnati. Retrieved from [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send\\_file?accession=ucin1394725201&disposition=inline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=ucin1394725201&disposition=inline)
- Watson, A. (2010). Musicians as instrumental music teachers: Issues from an Australian perspective. *International Journal of Music Education*, 28(2), 193-203. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/10.1177/0255761410362939>

Westerlund, H. (2008). Justifying music education: A view from here-and-now value experience.

*Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 16(1), 79-95. Retrieved from  
<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/article/240343>

Wicks, D. (2014). *Voices of learning: Exploring music teacher knowledge, skills and development in secondary school singing*. (Doctoral dissertation), Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/11792>

Williamon, A., & Thompson, S. (2004). Psychology and the music practitioner. In J. W. Davidson (Ed.), *The music practitioner: Research for the music performer, teacher and listener*. Burlington: Ashgate.

Willingham, L., & Bartel, L. (2012). Engage to create! A funded professional development project. *Canadian Music Educator*, 53(4), 22-24. Retrieved from  
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/ehost/detail/detail?sid=f16dabb0-3fe3-4e71-a4e8-f49ee6a6f3f1%40sessionmgr102&vid=0&hid=101&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=78047338&db=ehh>

Yin, R. K. (2009). How to do better case studies. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/>

## Appendix A Ethics Approval

### OFFICE OF RESEARCH

Human Research Ethics Committee  
PHONE +61 7 4687 5703| FAX +61 7 4631 5555  
EMAIL [human.ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@usq.edu.au)



16 June 2017

Miss Courtney Feldman

Dear Courtney

The USQ Human Research Ethics Committee has recently reviewed your responses to the conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the project outlined below. Your proposal is now deemed to meet the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethical approval has been granted.

Approval No.	<b>H17REA140</b>
Project Title	Musical agency and learner experience: Investigating the impact of professional development for voice teachers
Approval date	16 June 2017
Expiry date	16 June 2018
HREC Decision	<b>Approved</b>

The standard conditions of this approval are:

- (a) Conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
- (b) Advise (email: [human.ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@usq.edu.au)) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
- (c) Make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
- (d) Provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
- (e) Provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
- (f) Advise in writing if the project has been discontinued, using a 'final report'

For (c) to (f) forms are available on the USQ ethics website:  
<http://www.usq.edu.au/research/support-development/research-services/research-integrity-ethics/human/forms>



**Samantha Davis**  
Ethics Officer

## Appendix B: Focus Group Information Sheet



University of Southern Queensland

### Information Sheet for USQ Research Project Focus Group

#### Project Details

Title of Project: Musical agency and learner experience: Investigating the impact of professional development for voice teachers

Human Research Ethics  
Approval Number: H17REA140

#### Research Team Contact Details

##### Principal Investigator Details

Miss Courtney Feldman  
Email: [hello@courtneyfeldman.com.au](mailto:hello@courtneyfeldman.com.au)  
Mobile: +61 422 362 035

##### Supervisor Details

Dr Melissa Forbes  
Email: [melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au](mailto:melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au)  
Telephone: (07) 4631 1153

#### Description

This study is being undertaken as part of an Honours Project, which aims to illuminate the benefits of professional development for voice teachers.

This project seeks to identify clear trends in the growth of music related skills, and the shaping of self-identity, that engagement with professional development brings to voice teachers. It is hoped that this information will demonstrate the potential for music to provide a rich and elaborate platform for the process of learning, also highlighting the benefits of Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method as a quality professional development for voice teachers.

The findings of this study will assist voice educators to better understand the impact of continued learning in a professional capacity, encouraging quality skill building, and positively impacting the field of vocal pedagogy at large.

The research team requests your assistance because you completed Levels 1, 2 and 3 of Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method, at the University of Southern Queensland, during January 2017.

#### Participation

Your participation will involve contributing your thoughts and ideas in a small-group discussion (focus group), soon after the commencement of this study. It is expected that this will take approximately 1 to 2 hours of your time.

The focus group will be conducted via a ZOOM session. A link to this ZOOM session will be sent in advance of the session via email. The Principal Investigator will be available for any questions that may arise prior to the session. Further information for set up and troubleshooting can be sourced directly from ZOOM (<https://www.zoom.us>).

Questions in the focus group discussion may reflect upon the following (this list is provided by way of example only and is not exhaustive nor prescriptive):

\*what did you hope to gain by attending Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method?

\*do you feel that your attendance at Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method positively impacted your confidence as a voice teacher?

\*did you experience any personal breakthroughs (i.e. "a-ha" moments, moments of insight) during the course?

\*did you encounter any personal challenges during the course?

\*have you noticed any changes in your teaching since completing the course?

The focus group will be video recorded.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You will be unable to withdraw data collected about yourself after you have participated in the focus group. If you wish to withdraw from the project, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

#### **Expected Benefits**

It is anticipated that this project will directly benefit you, as reflective practice has been shown to provide deeper insight into your own practice as voice teachers and creative practitioners. It is anticipated that a wide variety of skills gained through the process and experience of learning will be identified, assisting you to make more fully informed decisions about future engagement with professional development. Furthermore, the discussion of shared experiences and ideas may provide a platform for supported professional and personal networking, regardless of stylistic orientation or teaching experience.

#### **Risks**

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project.

Sometimes your personal reflection, and reflecting about the sorts of issues raised in the focus group can trigger some uncomfortable or distressing emotions and feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

#### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

The nature of this session necessitates recording of all participants. All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.

During the project, your data will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy, in an identifiable form. However, you will not be identified in any reporting of the results. Direct quotations or paraphrased excerpts from your contribution to the group discussion may be used in the reporting of results, but this will be done in such a way as to ensure that you cannot be identified. It is anticipated that results will form the basis for future publications including journal articles, educational materials and presentations.

You are welcome to contact one of the Research Team via email or phone at the completion of the project if you wish to receive a summary of the results.

The Research Team will have access to the data during the life of the research project. A non-identifiable data set will be stored for possible reuse by other researchers in the future. Future research will need to relate generally to the subject matter of the project in order for access to be given to the data set.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy. Data relating specifically to this project will be stored for 5 years and consent forms for 15 years. The non-identified data set for possible future reuse will be stored indefinitely.

**Consent to Participate**

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team.

**Questions or Further Information about the Project**

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

**Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project**

This project will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email [ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@usq.edu.au). The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

**Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project.  
Please keep this sheet for your information.**



## Appendix C: Focus Group Consent Form



University of Southern Queensland

### Consent Form for USQ Research Project Focus Group

#### Project Details

Title of Project: Musical agency and learner experience: Investigating the impact of professional development for voice teachers

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA140

#### Research Team Contact Details

##### Principal Investigator Details

Miss Courtney Feldman  
Email: [hello@courtneyfeldman.com.au](mailto:hello@courtneyfeldman.com.au)  
Mobile: 0422 362 035

##### Supervisor Details

Dr Melissa Forbes  
Email: [melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au](mailto:melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au)  
Telephone: (07) 4631 1153

#### Statement of Consent

**By signing below, you are indicating that you:**

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email [ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@usq.edu.au) if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.
- Are over 18 years of age and agree to participate in the project.
- Understand that you will not be identified in any publication arising out of this study.
- Understand that you are consenting specifically to the current study and to any future studies which are generally related to the current study (a non-identifiable data set will be stored for possible reuse by other researchers in the future).

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

**Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the focus group.**

## Appendix D: Survey Information Sheet



University of Southern  
Queensland

### Participant Information for USQ Research Project Survey

#### Project Details

Title of Project: Musical agency and learner experience: Investigating the impact of professional development for voice teachers

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA140

#### Research Team Contact Details

##### Principal Investigator Details

Miss Courtney Feldman  
Email: [hello@courtneyfeldman.com.au](mailto:hello@courtneyfeldman.com.au)  
Mobile: 0422 362 035

##### Supervisor Details

Dr Melissa Forbes  
Email: [melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au](mailto:melissa.forbes@usq.edu.au)  
Telephone: (07) 4631 1153

#### Description

This study is being undertaken as part of an Honours Project, which aims to illuminate the benefits of professional development for voice teachers.

This project seeks to identify clear trends in the growth of music related skills, and the shaping of self-identity, that engagement with professional development brings to voice teachers. It is hoped that this information will demonstrate the potential for music to provide a rich and elaborate platform for the process of learning, also highlighting the benefits of Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method as a quality professional development for voice teachers.

The findings of this study will assist voice educators to better understand the impact of continued learning in a professional capacity, encouraging quality skill building, and positively impacting the field of vocal pedagogy at large.

The research team requests your assistance because you completed Levels 1, 2 and 3 of Somatic Voicework™ the LoVetri Method, at the University of Southern Queensland, during January 2017.

#### Participation

Your participation will involve responding to a series of 10 open-ended qualitative survey questions. It is expected that this will take no more than 30 minutes of your time.

The survey will be conducted online, through SurveyMonkey. A link to this survey will be posted in the *Jeannie in Australia* (closed) Facebook Group. The Principal Investigator will be available for any questions that may arise.

Questions in the survey may reflect upon the following (this list is provided by way of example only and is not exhaustive nor prescriptive):

\*do you feel that your attendance at Somatic Voicework™ The LoVetri Method positively impacted your confidence as a voice teacher?

\*did you experience any personal breakthroughs (i.e. "a-ha" moments, moments of insight) during the course?

\*did you encounter any personal challenges during the course?

\*have you noticed any changes in your teaching since completing the course?

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Please note, that if you wish to withdraw from the project after you have submitted your responses, the Research Team are unable to remove your data from the project (unless identifiable information has been collected). If you do wish to withdraw from this project, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

#### **Expected Benefits**

It is anticipated that this project will directly benefit you, as reflective practice has been shown to provide deeper insight into your own practice as voice teachers and creative practitioners. It is anticipated that a wide variety of skills gained through the process and experience of learning will be identified, assisting you to make more fully informed decisions about future engagement with professional development.

#### **Risks**

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project.

Sometimes your personal reflection, and reflecting about the sorts of issues raised in the survey, can trigger some uncomfortable or distressing emotions and feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

#### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law.

During the project, your data will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy, in an identifiable form. However, you will not be identified in any reporting of the results. Direct quotations or paraphrased excerpts from your survey responses may be used in the reporting of results, but this will be done in such a way as to ensure that you cannot be identified. It is anticipated that results will form the basis for future publications including journal articles, educational materials and presentations.

You are welcome to contact one of the Research Team via email or phone at the completion of the project if you wish to receive a summary of the results.

The Research Team will have access to the data during the life of the research project. A non-identifiable data set will be stored for possible reuse by other researchers in the future. Future research will need to relate generally to the subject matter of the project in order for access to be given to the data set.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy. Data relating specifically to this project will be stored

for 5 years and consent forms for 15 years. The non-identified data set for possible future reuse will be stored indefinitely.

**Consent to Participate**

Clicking submit at the conclusion of the survey is an indication of your consent to participate in the survey.

**Questions or Further Information about the Project**

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

**Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project**

This project will be conducted in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email [ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@usq.edu.au). The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

**Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project.  
Please keep this sheet for your information.**

## **Appendix E: Focus Group Questions**

**Question 1.** What did you hope to gain from attending the Somatic Voicework™ course?

**Question 2.** Did you experience any breakthroughs or “aha” moments during the course, and if so, what were they?

**Prompts:**

1. Teaching
2. Your own voice

**Question 3.** Did you experience any deeply personal moments during the course?

**Prompts:**

1. Emotions
2. Fulfil spiritual needs
3. Function over musicality – feel safe to let go and explore the new or unexpected

**Question 4.** Were there any aspects of the course that you found particularly challenging?

**Prompts**

1. Philosophy
2. Content
3. Practical

**Question 5.** Did your participation in the course enable you to develop new music skills, or strengthen and enhance the skills you already possess, or both?

**Prompts**

1. Specific skills as singer
2. Specific skills as teacher (i.e. structuring lessons)

**Question 6.** What impact did your participation have in your teaching studio?

**Prompts**

1. Encouragement rather than negative criticism (supporting what's right rather than fixing what's wrong)
2. Student learning
3. Confidence to recognise limitations and refer to other professionals beyond your own expertise (i.e. laryngologist, speech pathologist, specialists in other music styles)

**Question 7.** Has your participation in the course made you feel more or less connected to a wider network of teachers, and what does this mean for you?

**Question 8.** Did the course help you to feel more confident in who you are?

**Prompts:**

1. Intuition
2. Self-awareness
3. Mind-body partnership
4. Taking care of yourself

**Question 9.** Did your participation cause you think about singing and teaching in new ways?

**Prompts:**

1. Functional training with flexibility across styles (rather than stylistic specialist)
2. “Waiting for the bus”

**Question 10.** Did your participation change or influence the way you view your role as a singer and/or singing teacher?

**Question 11.** As a result of participating in the course, have you been more open to engaging with other music interactions?

## **Appendix F: Survey Questions**

**Question 1.** Full name and email address (for verification purposes)

**Question 2.** Did you experience any breakthroughs or “aha” moments during the course, and if so, what were they?

**Question 3.** Did you experience any deeply personal or vulnerable moments during the course, and if so, what were they?

**Question 4.** Did the course challenge you to confront your own self-expectations, and if so, how did this impact you personally?

**Question 5.** Were there any aspects of the course that you found particularly challenging, and if so, what were they?

**Question 6.** Did your participation in the course enable you to develop new music skills, or strengthen and enhance the skills you already possess, or both? Please elaborate.

**Question 7.** What impact did your participation have in your teaching studio?

**Question 8.** How did the relationships you established with other participants impact your journey through the course?



**Question 9.** Has your participation in the course made you feel more or less connected to a wider network of teachers, and what does this mean for you?

**Question 10.** As a result of participating in the course, have you been more open to engaging with other music interactions? Please elaborate.