

Using the principles of Body Mapping, it is possible to teach the movements of singing without actually singing. A body mapping curriculum will help students recognize, acknowledge, correct and improve these essential movements.

Body Mapping is based on the neuroscience of self-representation, that is, the maps of the body in the brain that govern our movement. Through the use of visual aids, images, videos, observations, and self-evaluation, students will learn to access, correct and refine their body maps, particularly as related to singing. They will learn to recognize accurate maps and good movement in themselves and others. They will have the tools to correct or refine their body maps, thereby making their singing more free and easy. Teachers will be able to model these movements for their students and will be able to observe the movement of their classes and guide their students along their mapping journey.

## Introductory Lesson:

An introduction to the concept of Body Mapping: what it is and how it works. This includes an explanation of the kinesthetic sense and its importance in understanding and improving the movement of singing.

*Objective:* Students will be able to explain the concept of both Body Mapping and the kinesthetic sense. They will begin to recognize and demonstrate the movements of singing.

- Acknowledging and observing the movements of singing
- What is a body map?
- Exploring the senses and how they inform our music making
- Kinesthetic sense and awareness

# UNIT ONE

The Core of the Body and the Places of Balance

## Lesson 1-1 The spine

The spine is the central support for the body. An understanding of the spine is the foundation for good movement throughout the body. Therefore, it is foundational for support in singing.

**Objective:** Students will be able to show an understanding of the size, structure and function of the spine by drawing, describing, tracing its curves, and exploring its movement.

- Mapping the spine
- Introducing the six places of balance
- Balance in the center of our bodies

## **Lesson 1-2 The A-O Joint**

The Atlanto Occipital Joint (A-O Joint) is where the head balances on top of the spine. It is the first place of balance in the curriculum. Balance here provides a dramatic improvement in tone and resonance.

**Objective:** Students will be able to find their A-O joint by pointing to it or finding it on a model. They will be able to demonstrate singing and speaking while both on and off balance there. They will also be able to discern a difference in tone quality from examples of singing on and off balance.

- Locating the A-O Joint
- Balance of the head on top of the spine
- The impact on the mechanics of singing

## **Lesson 1-3 Balance of the head and thorax on the lumbar vertebrae**

The hip joint is the center of our body from top to bottom. Understanding the movement of the torso and the legs at this joint is necessary for understanding balance of the body while sitting.

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of the location of the hip joint by showing its location and movement of the legs and torso from this joint in sitting and standing.

- Locating the lumbar vertebrae
- Finding balance

## **Lesson 1-4 Balance at the hip joint**

Understanding balance over the front of the lumbar spine, and coordinating this balance with movement at the hip joint and balance at the A-O joint is key to buoyancy in moving, sitting and standing.

**Objective:** Students will be able to locate the lumbar vertebrae in images and on themselves. They will demonstrate an understanding of its importance in the balance of the body by walking, sitting, standing and carrying something heavy, such as a backpack.

- Location of the hip joint
- Mapping the pelvis
- Movement of the legs at this joint
- Movement of the torso at this joint
- Balance in sitting and standing

## **Lesson 1-5 Balance at the Knee**

The knee joint plays an important role in keeping us upright. This unit maps the knee joint and explains that locked knees are caused by being off balance in the torso.

**Objective:** Students will be able to describe the knee joint, including the function of the kneecap. They will also be able to demonstrate how going off balance in the torso will cause the knees to lock.

- Mapping the knee joint
- The function of the knee cap
- The difference between Locked, Balanced and Bent Knees
- Buoyancy at the joint and help for unlocking

## **Lesson 1-6 Balance at the ankle and arch of the foot**

Standing with weight-delivery down the front of the leg, through the ankle joint and arches of the foot is key to a buoyant balance of the entire body. Balancing this way will facilitate standing with ease and comfort, as well as allowing easy movement in any direction.

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the two bones of the lower leg and the ankle joint. They will have an understanding of the arches of the feet, will be able to trace them on an image or model, and explain the role they play in the balance of the body.

- Mapping the ankle joint
- Movement at the ankle joint
- Mapping the arches of the foot
- Balanced weight delivery through the arches to the floor

## **Lesson 1-7 Balance of the arm structure and review**

An understanding of the balance of the arm structure is critical for a well-balanced whole body and for free breathing.

*Objective:* Students will be able to identify the joints of the upper arm and demonstrate movements at these joints. They will be able to explain the importance of freedom of the arm structure as it relates to both movement and breathing.

- Balance of the arm structure in the center
- Review of the six places of balance

# **UNIT TWO**

The structures and movement of Breathing

## **Lesson 2-1 Mapping air passages**

A kinesthetic awareness of the air passages, with proper mapping of nose and mouth, will help students monitor the amount and the speed of the air on inhalation.

*Objective:* Students will be able to describe the nasal passages, pharyngeal space, and mouth and describe the kinesthetic sensations of monitoring inhalation. Students will be able to explain why this is important. The difference between throat (internal) and neck (external) will be introduced as groundwork for unit 2-3.

- Nasal passages and trachea
- The pharyngeal space
- Monitoring the air
- The mouth as a space not a thing
- Throat vs. Neck

## **Lesson 2-2 The Tongue and Jaw**

Freedom of the jaw and tongue will make breathing and singing easier. This unit will also discuss diction as movement, in particular, movement of the tongue.

**Objective:** Students will be able to point to their temporomandibular joint (TMJ) and demonstrate movement there. They will also be able to describe the tongue, including its size, structure and function, and demonstrate its importance to diction.

- Mapping the jaw
- TMJ
- Mapping the tongue
- Exploring its movement

## **Lesson 2-3 Facial Muscles and the Trachea**

Mapping facial muscles and their movement, in particular the muscles surrounding the lips, will contribute to better facial expression and diction. Distinguishing the roles of pharyngeal muscles in breathing and swallowing will help to free breathing and eliminate noisy breaths.

**Objective:** Students will be able to palpate the muscles of the lips and explain the importance of facial muscles in expression and diction. They will be able to properly identify trachea and esophagus on an image. They will be able to distinguish the role of neck muscles in swallowing vs. breathing.

- Mapping the facial muscles
- Exploring facial muscles and their movement
- Trachea vs. Esophagus
- Exploring pharyngeal muscles

## **Lesson 2-4 Mapping the Lungs and the Diaphragm**

An accurate map of where the air flows and how the diaphragm functions in the breathing process will help students to find effortless breathing.

**Objective:** Students will be able accurately describe the size and location of the lungs and diaphragm. They will be able to demonstrate the movement of the diaphragm on inhalation and exhalation by imitating it with their hands.

- Location and size of the lungs
- Location and size of the diaphragm
- The coordinated movement of the lungs and diaphragm

## **Lesson 2-5 Rib Movement**

Mapping rib joints and movement is essential to controlling the release of air.

*Objective:* Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of rib structure and movement by showing visible and measurable improvement in their control of air on exhalation.

- Mapping the rib joints
- Movement of the ribs in breathing

## **Lesson 2-6 The Abdominal Wall**

Free breathing depends on free and coordinated movement of the abdominal wall, front, sides and back.

*Objective:* Students will be able to describe the abdominal wall and explain and/or demonstrate its movement during breathing.

- Mapping the abdominal wall
- Mapping its movement during breathing

## **Lesson 2-7 The Pelvic Floor**

The muscles of the pelvic floor must be springy and responsive to the movements of breathing.

*Objective:* Students will be to explain where the muscles of the pelvic floor are and why their movement is important for free breathing.

- Mapping the muscles of the pelvic floor
- Mapping their movement during breathing

## Lesson 2-8 The Movement of Breathing

The movement of breathing can be practiced in fun and engaging ways.

*Objective:* Students will further understand the movements of breathing, ribs, diaphragm, abdomen and pelvic floor, by participating in these hands-on activities to be done in class or at home, individually or in a group.

- This lesson is a review. No new material is introduced.

## Lesson 2-9 Balance and Breathing

Balance of the Body is critical for free breathing.

*Objective:* Students will review the places of balance from Unit 1. They will understand and be able to demonstrate the way balance and breathing are connected.

- Review of the places of balance
- The impact of balance on breathing
- Finding buoyancy in the body to enhance the breath

BONUS LESSONS and EXPLORATION VIDEOS will be added as they become available.

Each of these sections can be a daily or weekly topic. There are many suggested explorations. Teachers are encouraged to supplement with their own ideas and creativity.

Suggestions for evaluation:

Specific suggestions (5 to 6 questions) are included in each lesson manual.

Students should be encouraged to journal as they implement the ideas and reflect on their own movement and improvement. Completion of journal assignments can be graded. Evaluation of journal assignments is a valuable tool for guiding the class to further exploration in specific areas.

Students can take before and after videos of their performance, or take videos of their movement explorations and share them with the class for all to observe and discuss. This would take the place of what would normally be a more masterclass-type evaluation.

Normal attendance and participation grades could be given as well.