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The Seven Point Circle and the Twelve Principles: An evidence-based approach to Italian Lyric Diction Instruction

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Abstract

Despite the ubiquitousness of Lyric Diction Instructors (LDIrs) in both the academic and professional opera world, there remains a dearth of research examining the approaches and methods used for Lyric Diction Instruction (LDIn) as well the nonexistence of university programmes through which LDIrs gain profession-specific qualifications and/or certifications. Owing to this paucity of LDIn educational background accreditation and accountability, LDIrs in both educational institutions and opera houses are typically comprised of opera coaches, present or former opera singers, or "native speakers" of the target language. Using the qualitative framework of action research, the study empirically tested my five session, Italian Lyric Diction Course for Opera Singers by examining the validity and efficaciousness of its design, materials, course content, and pedagogical approach of explicit articulatory instruction. Rather than focusing on the empirical testing itself, this article focuses on the underlying pedagogical framework, i.e., The Seven Point Circle (7PC) and the ethical code of conduct, i.e., The Twelve Point Circle (12PC) derived from my M.A. thesis study. Data collection instruments included: semi-structured participant interviews, audio recording, transcribing of the classes, and an invited panel of eight observer-feedback experts from the fields of foreign language pedagogy, pronunciation instruction, and Italian language instruction.

1 Introduction

Performing on the operatic stage requires many years of intensive training and necessitates a specific fusion of expertise from the fields of music, drama, and language. The standard operatic languages are Italian, German, French, and English (with Czech and Russian now also entering the mainstream). However, opera singers (OSs) are not typical language learners. Opera texts are all pre-scripted and heavily rehearsed. Therefore, rather than requiring fluency in four plus languages, conservatory or university faculties of music

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typically require OSs to take courses in "opera lyric diction," i.e., language pronunciation for the operatic stage. Also, large opera companies usually have Lyric Diction Instructors (LDIr) on staff. The goal of a LDIr is the training of OSs to sing with audience perceived near-nativelike intelligibility in the target language, integrating stage pronunciation (see Siebs 1969) with vocal technique. Despite the ubiquitousness of LDIrs in both the academic and professional opera world, there remains a dearth of research examining the approaches and methods used for Lyric Diction Instruction (LDIn) as well the nonexistence of university programmes through which LDIrs gain profession-specific qualifications and/or certifications. Owing to this paucity of LDIn educational background accreditation and accountability, LDIrs in both educational institutions and opera houses are comprised of opera coaches, present or former OSs, or "native speakers" of the target language.

In the early stages of my LDIr career, I was hired to teach and design a conservatory's undergraduate Italian Diction course and found it troubling that, not only did I lack profession-specific qualifications but that I was engaged to teach in an academic field for which no university accreditation existed. Instead, I had to design a course based on related, but not profession-specific qualifications, i.e., a performance diploma, a Bachelor of Arts degree specialising in languages and linguistics, and instincts informed by backgrounds in piano, professional opera singing, and extensive language facility.

> Though no one would question the value of intuition based on practical experience, complete reliance on anecdotal evidence and personal impressions in language pedagogy has serious drawbacks...these sources cannot resolve many of the critical questions that face classroom instructors nor do they always lead to valid, productive classroom activities. Therefore, the need for empirical, replicable studies to inform pronunciation instruction is clear. (Derwing & Munro 2005: 380)

Not content to be less credentialed than school, university, or college instructors, I resolved that I would have to design my own LDIr educational qualifications through a university's faculty of education. Within that year, I applied and was accepted as one of three MA students into the Languages and Literacies Education Program of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). In addition to courses covering general, and language education, empirical research methods, my course load included courses such as: The Second Language Acquisition of Romance Languages, Language Awareness for Language Educators, Planning and Organising the Second Language Curriculum, and Second Language Teaching Methodologies. These courses prepared me for my MA thesis study, for which I won a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant. The study's Research Questions were:

1. What is the underlying pedagogical framework driving my one-on-one LDIn?

2. What is the overriding ethical teacher-to-student accountability framework governing within my one-on-one LDIn sessions?

2 Literature Review

The absence of LDIr academic accreditation has likewise meant a dearth of research exploring and defining evidence-based Lyric Diction classroom instructional practice, data-driven textbooks, and learner assessment criteria and protocols. It has additionally created an absence of organizational bodies establishing and regulating professional standards through the adaptation of extant research. This has led to issues of instructor accountability and a paucity of data-driven studies informing standards, course content, and pedagogical practice within LDIn. As a novice investigator pioneering research in this field, this challenged my ability to gather a body of empirical studies and/or data-driven literature for review. After conducting a comprehensive search for literature seeking previous empirical studies examining the structure, form, and approach to teaching an Italian (or any language's) lyric diction course, I concluded that, to the best of my knowledge, there were no such empirical studies on these aspects of lyric diction pedagogy. I then expanded my literature search outwards, looking for Italian diction textbooks and Italian diction reference books currently in use by English language universities or conservatories in North America. My literature review took the form of a contrast and comparison between (a) the contents of academic, data-driven general phonetics and phonology texts (Rogers 2000; International Phonetic Association 2005); (b) blind, peer-reviewed articles dealing with Italian phonetics and phonology (Migliorini et al. 1981; Zingarelli 1991; Rogers & DArcangeli 2004; Lepschy 1977, 1991; Clivio & Danesi 2000; Migliorini 1984) and; (c) the Italian lyric diction books written by Italian native speakers and opera coaches (Colorni 1970; Puccini & Castel 1993; Adams 2008; Wall et al. 1990). The literature review became an exercise in editing the Italian lyric diction books for errors and comparing them with actual Italian phonetics and phonology books authored by Italian linguistics scholars based on empirical data. (For the full and lengthy discussion of the inconsistencies between the lyric diction texts and the data-driven texts and articles, see Leigh 2016: 14-24). My building of the field of LDIn then expanded outwards to include the fields of: explicit instruction (Monsen & Shaughnessy 1978); language perception and production (Tench 2003; Marton & Puppel 1991); language experience and ethnic identity (Trofimovich 2011); passible pronunciation (Jenkins 2002); the concept of "passing" for a native speaker (Piller 2002); base of articulation (Esling & Wong 1983); back vowel production (Esling 2005) and; defining intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness (Derwing & Munro 2005).

3 Method

I chose action research (Borg 2010; Crookes 1993; Crookes & Chandler 2001; Kemmis & McTaggart 1988; Levin 2012; Mertler 2012; Mills 2011; Norton 2009; Piccardo 2007) as my research method because it allowed to examine myself as course instructor, my approach to teaching the course, as well as

the course content which I designed. Action research also allowed me to triangulate my data by including feedback from the three OS-participants as well as through inviting, and including feedback from, eight experts in various fields who came and observed data collection classes. The three OS participants were two sopranos, 26 and 24 years old, and one 29 year old mezzo-soprano. Part of the criteria for participation in this study was that they would be proficient in their singing technique, actively engaged in their operatic careers, sufficiently advanced vocally that they were getting hired professionally, and highly self-motivated in their career advancement and therefore take the study's work seriously. The eight observer feedback-providers (OFPs) who each provided written feedback on the day(s) they attended comprised: researchers, university professors, instructors, and one opera administrator, and represented expertise in the fields of: pronunciation pedagogy, second language learning and teaching, linguistics, phonetics, and Italian language instruction.

Data collection began with the pre-study, one-on-one, audio-recorded, semi-structured interview. I chose semi-structured interviews because, in order to measure the effects of the course, I needed to ascertain the starting point of each participant. I was interested in discovering the participants' productive phonetic ability, meaning the sounds that each participant could make (i.e. phonetic inventory or "sound repertoire") as opposed to measuring their proficiency in the language. Additionally, at these meetings I explained this study and its purpose; clarified that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without consequence or repercussion; was upfront about the fact that, while all data would be collected and reported under a pseudonym, the opera community of Toronto is small and therefore the other participants (and/or observers) may already know them and; discussed any concerns that they had.

The study took place over five consecutive days. On each of the five days, I taught one, 2-hour Italian Lyric Diction class. This five day course was an intensive, accelerated adaptation of my twelve-week conservatory Italian lyric diction course. The daily classes, which were audio-recorded, were divided into two parts. For the first half hour, I gave a theoretical lecture covering the topics of: "The Worlds Fastest History of the Italian Language," Italian vowels, Italian single consonants, Italian double consonants, and a review of everything covered during the week using the template of my typical Italian Diction course's final exam. For the remaining 90 minutes of each day's class, I worked one-on-one with each OS for 30 minutes each on either of the two pieces they had chosen for the week in a "master class" type setting, i.e., in front of the other participants and the OFPs.

4 Data analysis

Post-study, the audio-recordings were partially transcribed and together with the OFPs' feedback, the data analysis focused on uncovering the pedagogical framework which drove my seemingly "spontaneous" work with the OSs as well as trying to understand the nature of the delicate teacher-student relationship.

Guided by Research Questions 1 and 2, I was able to uncover and delineate the Lyric Diction pedagogical approach and process I followed whilst working with an OS. This was significant because, at first glance, the LDIn process seems "spontaneous" insofar as when an OS comes for a one-on-one session, often the LDIr does not know ahead of time which piece the OS will be working on. As a research-instructor, I wanted a better understanding of the underlying pedagogical framework driving the lyric diction instructional process, i.e., what was (if any) the pedagogical system driving the structure of a one-on-one session? The data analysis showed seven continuous points of reference guiding the LDIn work which I have called, The Seven-Point Circle (7PC). In the next section, I provide a summary of this LDIn-specific, pedagogical framework with a short discussion of each of the seven points.

5 The Seven-Point Circle 7PC Phase I and Phase II

The 7PC is divided into Phases I and II. Phase I (Points 1-3) is evaluative, reflective and, consequently, teacher-centred. Informed by Phase I, Phase II (Points 4-7) is the consequential learner-centred plan of action. Below is a detailed discussion of each of the seven points of the 7PC within their respective Phases.

5.1 Phase I

Point 1 Listening/observing

The LDIr-OS stage pronunciation goals are achieved through a specialised opera singing context-specific co-ordination of the vocal cords, the oral cavity and, the place of resonance. To achieve this goal, the LDIr must work on three levels of pronunciation, phonemic (i.e., vowels and consonants), syllabic, and prosodic (see Major 2001: 28) and within the target language's Articulatory Setting (Honikman 1964). For example, in dealing with the production of vowels, e.g., [i], an OS's tongue might be in the correct position, i.e., +height, +tense, +front, -rounding (see Rogers, 2000 for a description of vowel attributes), but if the vocal cords are not creating the fundamental [i] sound, no amount of contouring by the tongue in the oral cavity will created a clear [i] vowel and the OS will, at best, render "an [i]-flavoured schwah." Additionally, depending on where the [i] vowel is to be sung within the OS's vocal range, the place of resonance may or may not also have to be addressed by the LDIr. A particular case in point is the vowel, [u], i.e., +height, +tense, -back, +rounding. When the fundamental [u] sound is not being created at the cords, typically the OS compensates through an exaggerated amount of rounding. Further examples of LDIr "Listening/observing" include assessing voiced oral occlusive production, i.e., [v, l, m, n, r]. Owing to the closure of the oral cavity for these particular consonants, OSs' cords may open thereby causing loss of their legato line. I have developed an approach for dealing with these challenges which I am currently testing empirically.

Point 2 Diagnosing

Whilst observing and listening to the OS, the LDIr is identifying any areas of concern. However before creating a corrective plan of action, the LDIr must ascertain the origin and cause of any pronunciation concerns. Sometimes two different OSs may make the same Target Language (L-Target) error but for two completely different reasons. This will necessarily affect how the instructor proceeds. The identification of the areas of concern and the plan for their resolution must happen in succession (and will be discussed in Phase II of the 7PC).

Point 3 Evaluating the degree of L-Personal transfer into the L-Target

In Point 3, Phase I's final evaluative Point, the LDIr's function as a "pronunciation conduit" is at its zenith. Point 3 necessitates the LDIr assuming a kind of third party role in the instructional process and necessitates a dual-knowledge of both the L-Target as well as the "L-Personal" OS with whom the LDIr is working. I refer to L-Personal, rather than "mother tongue" or "L-1" because OSs are pronunciation learners who typically rote-learn their sung texts and will continually, as they progresses through their career, enrich their phonemic, syllabic, prosodic or articulatory setting production knowledge and abilities. Therefore, to properly aid an OS, a LDIr must have theoretical knowledge as well as oral/aural facility in: (1) phonetic, phonemic, and phonotactic theory; (2) syllabic structure, i.e., isochrony, open versus closed syllables, and the effect of L-Target syllabic structure on operatic legato line production; (3) L-Target versus L-Personal prosodic intonation, pitch, and rhythm and their relationship with the operatic text's musical setting; (4) the capacity to aurally identify, and categorise, the OS's production of these elements proximity (or lack thereof) to the L-Targets parameters and; (5) the pedagogical, LDIn-specific, knowledge, i.e., LDIn-Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), required to guide the singer to achieve L-Target goals within the opera singing context.

Some examples of the theoretical underpinnings informing LDIn work are: Cross Linguistic Interference Theory (CLI) theory (see Colantoni et al. 2015: 9-12), Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (Lado 1957), Fleges (1995) Speech Learning Model (SLM), and Bests (1993, 1995) Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM). CLI and CAH relate to a pronunciation learner's process of recycling, adapting, or augmenting their L-Personal as they acquire new, or variants, of their L-Personal. In terms of LDIn-practicality, a LDIr may find an adaptation of Derwing and Munro's table (2015: 65) (below) to be helpful in describing four main error types which a LDIr should use to identify and classify OS specific errors:

- Positive transfer - identifying which L-Personal phonemes may be used "as is" for the L-Target
- Under-differentiation - needing to create two separate phonetic categories for, what is in the OS's L-Personal, an allophone - e.g., [e]/[] and [o]/[]
- New item - requiring the acquisition of a new phoneme - e.g., [§], [x]

- Split - creating two distinctive phonemes out of a single phoneme in the OS's L-Personal - e.g., [¾]/[r] (Adapted from Derwing & Munro 2015: 64)

Flege's Speech Learning Model posits that "the more similar a TL [i.e., Target Language] category is to an LI category, the more likely it will be equated to an L1 category and the less likely it will be for the learner to form a new, target-like L2 category (Flege 1995, 2003 as discussed in Colantoni et al. 2015: 38)." This is relevant to the LDIr's work because often the OS will require explicit articulatory instruction from the LDIr in order to pre-empt the assimilation of new phonemes into already existing L-Personal categories. The importance of LDIr's role as OS L-Personal to L-Target pronunciation conduit is further elucidated in Best's Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) (Best 1993; 1995) which

> ... posits that, when listening to an unfamiliar nonnative phone (phonetic segment), naive listeners are likely, due to their native language experience, to perceptually *assimilate* the nonnative phone to the most articulatorily-similar native phoneme. That is, it will be heard as a good or even a poor exemplar of a native phonological segment (*Categorized*), or as unlike any single native phoneme (*Uncategorized*) or, rarely, as a non-linguistic nonspeech sound (*Non-Assimilated*). (Best & Tyler 2007: 22-23)

As an example, the North American English speaker is often challenged in perceiving and producing Standard Italian's dental (as opposed to English's alveodental): [t], [d], and [l]. As mentioned above, these two dental versus alveodental variants are likely to be simply "*categorized* [by the OS] as a good or even a poor exemplar of [the same] phonological segment" (Best & Tyler 2007: 22-23). German's [§] and [x] would be examples of segmentals which are "unlike any single native [i.e., English, in the case of an Anglophone) phoneme, [and therefore,] *uncategorized*" (Best & Tyler 2007: 23).

5.2 Phase II

As a result of having evaluated the OS's LDIn requirements in Phase I of the 7PC, in Phase II, the LDIr now turns to the creation and implementation of a plan of action specifically designed for the OS with whom the LDIr is working.

Point 4 Spontaneously creating a personalised plan of action

Teacher education degrees are typically comprised of two components: coursework and the practicum, the practical application of the theories learnt in the coursework. LDIn is no different. In the Lyric Diction classroom or "studio" the LDIr is continuously challenged with spontaneously creating a personalised plan of action (based on the evaluations of Phase I) for the OS with whom they are working. The LDIr, while they may draw upon previous plans of action to inform the creation of subsequent plans, in Point 4, the LDIr will require having "a veritable armamentarium of alternative forms of representation, some of which derive from research whereas others originate in the wisdom of practice"

(Shulman 1986: 9). In Point 4, the LDIr and the OS continuously exchange the roles of learner-instructor as the LDIr teaches and the OS, through their response, informs the LDIr's approach and design. In other words, the OS teaches the LDIr how to teach them. In Point 4, knowledge of learning styles, e.g., oral, visual, kinaesthetic, etc. is crucial as is the LDIr's capacity to think, re-think, and, if necessary, re-invent ways of teaching. There are as many ways to the L-Target as there are OSs needing LDIrs to assume the responsibility of their roles as OS L-Personal to L-Target pronunciation conduits.

Point 5 Determining required background knowledge

OS preparation requires the collaborative work of many experts, e.g., coaches, voice teachers, acting coaches. LDIn work does not happen in isolation and must be situated to fit within the OS's support-team context. Therefore it is necessary for the LDIr to be familiar not only with the OS's linguistic background and learning style, but also where they are within their vocal progress journey. Also, any advice the OS may have received from coaches and conductors, or even a director's staging instructions should be discussed in order to expedite their LDIn progress. Knowing more about an OS's professional and educational background will aid to inform the plans of action created by the LDIr.

Point 6 Ease of attainability of the student

The opera singing profession is highly competitive and time-sensitive. OSs are constantly expanding their repertoire and often have less than the ideal amount of preparation time. A LDIr's work must therefore be expeditious which, by definition, means that OS ease of attainability must be factored in to the LDIr-created plans of action. New information and/or approaches to acquiring that new information must be presented in a sequential, deductive, domino-effect pattern. This approach, rather than the generic "one size fits all," prescriptive, teacher-centred approach provides the student with transparent scaffolding which aids towards their eventual self-reliance. Part of a LDIr's job is the creating of their own redundancy through educating the OS making them self-reliant, confident and able to work independently whilst away from the LDIr.

Point 7 Student's comfort zone

As a performing artist, OSs need a safe place within which to try out new things, "make mistakes," and make themselves vulnerable. A person's voice is their oral identity and an opera singer needs a secure, judgement-free, supportive environment within which to find their Italian, French, German, and English opera-singing identity. As a LDIr, I am always aware that my work takes place within the OS's personal workspace and that the work must be done in a respectful manner, acknowledging, and being mindful of, the personal workspace within which I have been granted access.

As a student within the arts, I have had many learning experiences, in many different contexts, with teachers of varying educational and professional backgrounds. Some of them have been great pedagogues with great knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject matter. These teachers, or mentors, have inspired me as a student and helped me to shape the principles by which I teach.

Sadly, I have also experienced teachers with egregiously nefarious approaches to the student-teacher relationship and Point 7 is in direct response to these bullies. I felt so strongly about the LDIr-OS learning environment and my commitment to it being a safe place for OSs, after having developed my LDIn pedagogical framework, i.e., the 7PC, I wrote out a list of principles governing the ethical context of the teacher-learner relationship by which I live, called The Twelve Principles (12P). In the next section, I will list these Twelve Principles and briefly discuss each one.

6 The Twelve Principles (12P)

Principle 1: I do not expect OSs to know material which we have not yet covered.

Each OS comes to a LDIn session at a particular point in their personal learning journey and I cannot presume what the OS should/should not already know. As I have already discussed, there are no university programs leading to LDIn certification. Therefore I cannot expect or assume what knowledge an OS, whether they be an early or advanced professional, "should" have.

Principle 2: If an OS does not understand something, it's not their fault or problem. It's mine!

My current PhD research examines the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (Shulman 1986; 1987) required for LDIn. PCK is the fusion of an instructor's knowledge of (1) the subject they are teaching (content knowledge), (2) pedagogical approaches and methods and, (3) how to combine those two knowledges into specifically teaching their specialisation. I have had numerous instructors who, because of their lack (or absence) of these knowledge elements, have redirected their pedagogical failings at me, personally. To that I respond that the onus of learner comprehension is on the instructor, not the student. The learner need only have a willingness, desire, and the motivation to learn. The responsibility of facilitating knowledge acquisition is the instructor's.

Principle 3: OSs are to be treated with dignity and respect. Instructors are not "doing the learners a favour" by teaching them.

The oppressive, prescriptive, ego-centred, "banking" approach has no place in my LDIn studio. As Freire explains:

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. (Freire 2000: 72)

Principle 4: Students deserve an answer to each of their questions. If I do not know the answer, I will research and find an answer for them.

Sometimes students ask a question that is either outside of my scope of knowledge. Whilst we all have access to information via the internet, responses should be evidence-based from scholarly sources. This may mean that the OS's response may require further research on my part. However, as an educator with access to networks of researchers and experts in their fields as well as academic materials, empirical articles, every effort will be made to find an answer expeditiously.

Principle 5: My opinions, while based on knowledge, education, and experience, are my "opinions" and must be differentiated from empirically proven facts.

A further unfortunate effect and consequence of this deficiency in academic accreditation and standardization are the plethora of lyric diction "opinions" posing as lyric diction facts. When teaching, it is critical to differentiate between the offering of an empirically proven fact versus an opinion. If offering an opinion, it should always be identified as such, and, should still be substantiated within an arguable context. The best approach for challenging the widespread lyric fiction "urban legends, is to provide learners with citations and or references from peer-reviewed and edited scholarly sources.

Principle 6: "Mistakes" and "errors" are not usually unfounded, especially in a diction class where there is a lot of Cross Language Transfer. L-Personal influence or "L-Personal wiring" is not a "fault" and, as per pronunciation acquisition theory, is often easily justified and/or explained.

Facilitating an OS's journey from L-Personal to L-Target pronunciation is the LDIr's job. When dealing with pronunciation, as mentioned above in the *Evaluating the degree of L1 transfer into the L2* section, it is the LDIr's job to identify the nature of those "mistakes" or "errors" e.g., Cross Linguistic Interference (CLI), explain the source and reason which in no way involved "fault" or "blame" and then quickly and efficiently assist the OS in achieving the L-Target.

Principle 7: It is not enough to tell a student that they have "done a good job," the LDIr needs to explain why and to what extent.

In order for successful moments in singing to be repeated, technical knowledge of the process is necessary. Constant instructional feedback is key to an OS's ability to recreate successful moments from the LDIn studio and to generalise and transfer the newly acquired skills into other repertoire.

Principle 8: There are no hierarchical instructor-learner "positions of power" in my LDIn classes.

As mentioned in Principle 3, because of the amount of linguistic risk-taking required on the part of the OS, LDIn can only properly take place in an egalitarian, non-oppressive pedagogical collaboration in which, because of the nature of the bilateral conversations between LDIr and OS, the roles of learner/instructor often exchange.

Principle 9: The LDIr serves as a type of LDIn singer's manual whose function involves connecting the OS to the information they need to ensure their best and most immediate improvement.

The LDIr is the "information transportation vehicle" connecting the OS's L-Personal (i.e., point of origin) with the appropriate, authentic, and scholarly information that they need in order for them to achieve their operatic performance L-Target goals (i.e., the destination).

Principle 10: It is my job to ensure that the OSs look, sound, and feel better about themselves.

Through my own professional experience, I am aware of an OS's vulnerability as they stand on stage in front of a conductor, a full orchestra, an audition panel, a director, critics, and/or a paying audience. OSs have to develop a particular inner strength to get on a stage, take risks, and expose this vulnerability in front of strangers, and colleagues. The best way for a LDIr to strengthen an OS's professional resilience is through meticulous theoretically grounded and evidence-based instruction.

Principle 11: If I identify an area of concern, I must then assist the OS in addressing that concern.

It is pedagogical recklessness for a LDIr to identify an area of weakness or error to an OS without providing a solution. However, it is also the LDIr's responsibility to acknowledge that within a particular OS's journey, the steps required for intervention may not be time-appropriate for intervening. Again, because of the personal nature of the voice and linguistic identity, a LDIr must respect where an OS is in their vocal journey and wait until other aspects of an OS's background and facility have developed before mediating.

Principle 12: I love my job. I would rather do this than anything else in the world.

Principle 12, whilst the most personal, is also the engine propelling my LDIn work, research, and pedagogical curiosity and drive. I am a LDIr by choice, by education, and by vocation.

7 Conclusion

As a pedagogical field offering no option for discipline-specific instructor accreditation, this study serves as a critical first step in addressing the need for LDIn-specific empirical research and curriculum development beginning with a pedagogical framework and instructor-learner ethical accountability. LDIn is a specialised inter-disciplinary field amalgamating, and therefore necessitating an educational background in, several disciplines including language learning; pronunciation perception, production, and pedagogy; music education and opera singing. Addressing the paucity of LDIn research, the purpose of this article was to present two evidence-based, data-driven pedagogical systems derived from my MA thesis study, namely: The Seven Point Circle (7PC) and The Twelve Principles (12P).

The 7PC, a LDIn-specific pedagogical framework, delineates a Seven Point, step-by-step pedagogical approach, divided into two phases. Phase I (Points 1-3) is the evaluative/diagnostic teacher-centred phase and is informed by several pronunciation perception and production theories, e.g., SLM, PAM, CLI,

etc. Phase II (Points 4-7) is the learner-centred "plan of action" phase in which the LDIr creates a learner-specific strategy and/or procedure through which to achieve the pronunciation targets. The Twelve Principles (12P), a LDIr-learner ethical code of conduct, outline two key aspects of my teaching philosophy. First, the 12P enumerate twelve principles which affirm my commitment to the ethical and moral treatment of the singers with/for whom I work. Second, the 12P institute a contract of instructor-singer accountability. Together, the 7PC and the 12P work to implement instructor transparency in both pedagogical procedure and conduct. The foundational work presented in this study now forms the basis for my current PhD dissertation study entitled: *Examining LDIn Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Shulman 1986, 1987) A search for instructor qualifications.*

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