

Anatomy 2-day course

This course is aimed at voice practitioners who already have a working knowledge of anatomy and function but who wish to gain a deeper understanding in order to further their practice. The content is not genre-specific, it does not follow any particular model and can be applied to any voice use. Past students have been Singing Teachers, Spoken Voice Teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, Osteopaths and Laryngeal Massage Therapists.

The two-day residential includes an exciting opportunity to engage in one-to-one mentoring work with Dr Williams whilst working towards the completion of an independent study relevant to your role. You can either attend the residential course as a standalone option or pursue certification.

Day one

The morning will give an overview of tissue types within the body in order to understand the structures and organs relating to vocal function. The afternoon will look at relationships between these; muscle movement and overall body use and alignment.

Bone and the skeleton - the scaffolding

- Interrelationship between bony structures
- The spine and its attachments

Connective tissues – cohesion and support

- Types of cartilage
- Ligaments and tendons
- Fascia

Joints – hinges and rotations

- Synovial joint structure
- The temporomandibular joint

Nerves and the Brain

- Organisation of the central nervous system
- Components of peripheral nerves (sensory and motor components)
- The nervous control of respiratory activity and the larynx
- Cortical sensory and motor areas and the control of movement
- Learning of skilled motor activity, myelin formation
- Autonomic Nervous System, the stress response

Lunch

Muscle – the movement

- Different muscle types and their functions
- How muscle fibres are organised
- Issues of stamina and fatigue

Alignment and balance

- The body's relationship with gravity
- Why specific misuse can affect the voice

Day 2

The day will investigate the anatomy and function of the respiratory system and how the voice user manages breath flow and pressure. The larynx and vocal tract will feature in the afternoon session.

Breath management

- The lungs – respiratory function and lung capacity
- Muscles of respiration – primary and accessory
- Conflict of function for these muscles
- Breathing for voice use

The Larynx – intrinsic and extrinsic structures

- Laryngeal suspensory musculature
- Muscles for swallowing
- Vocal fold structure: layering of tissue types
- Vocal fold vibration: the Bernoulli effect, myoelastic-aerodynamic theory
- Pitch: the muscles of pitch control
- Loudness: vocal fold closure quotient, vocal fold amplitude

Lunch

More on the intrinsic laryngeal musculature

- Vocal registers: the difference between register changes and resonance phenomena
- Vocal fold behaviour: Breathiness, harshness
- The contribution of the aryepiglottic area
- Semi-occluded vocal tract exercises
- Vibrato

The vocal tract

- The nature of sounds generated by the larynx and how this is modified by the vocal tract to form vowels and consonants.
- Pharynx: the constrictor muscles, the velum
- Larynx height: constrictor and strap muscles
- Tongue: connections between the tongue and the hyoid bone and the velum
- Jaw: the temporomandibular joint and the muscles of biting and chewing
- Lips and facial muscles