

# Support or connection?

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Abstract.

Although breath support is considered by many teachers and singers as the basis of the vocal technique, uncertainty and misunderstanding on this issue continue to be present. In a 1989 survey organized by the NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing) to its members, they were asked to describe what they understood by "support". More than 90 technical solutions were obtained in which "not only did voice teachers disagree with each other, but many of their directives conflicted with actual physiological functions." (Spillane). Also, from the scientific point of view there are reasonable doubts about its function (Griffin *et al.* 1995). As a reference, at the Pevoc Conference in 2002, Dr. Schutte declared that support was one of the most confusing terms in singing and least understood.

Despite the wide range of views in the NATS result, it could be assumed that for most teachers and singers, respiratory support refers to the voluntary contraction of the expiratory muscles to control expiration. If this is so, how is it possible that something so evident and demonstrative is so difficult to teach and understand? Why is breath support mostly perceptible and understandable after a few years of study?

Certainly, even today there is still much to investigate about the respiratory processing in singing. In this respect, I should like to offer some of my thoughts and pedagogical procedures that I have been using for some time and have gathered in a method called "Conexive Method of Voice" ("Método Conexivo de la Voz")

The "Conexive Method of Voice" is a pedagogical system based on the cognitive paradigm that focuses on learning through the mental representation and the interpretation of the sensations. Interpreting correctly the sensations that our conscience perceives, it is fundamental to set the basis for a proper vocal technique. In this sense, the research made in the 80's and 90's by Zahn, David, Jürgens and other distinguish neuro scientific, specifying the localization in the mid-brain and the neural routes that intervene in voice production, has been crucial to understanding the neurological process which leads to differentiating voluntary mechanisms from those that are not. This is of paramount importance to the method: to distinguish and interprets the sensations handled by our consciousness of those that are automatic and involuntary.

Also, contrary to the idea of breath support or breath control, our concept emphasizes the relevance of visualizing a holistic model of voice production, a single system working synergistically, in which the exhalation phase is a reflexive function that regulates itself.