

BMPF7013F: Independent Study [Designing an Artefact]

**Practitioner synthesis of Acceptance and
Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Emotional
Freedom Techniques (EFT) for Music Performance
Anxiety (MPA) in singing students:**

An Integrative review and development of an artefact
under Practice as Research (PaR)

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Glossary of terms	4
Component 1: Portfolio	6
Introduction	6
1. Rationale	7
2. Aims, Objectives and Outcomes	8
Programme of Study	9
1. Context and key influences	9
2. Methodology	18
3. Timescales and review dates	21
4. Ethical considerations	23
Critical reflection	24
Conclusion	28
Component 2: Written Assessment	29
Introduction	29
Literature Review	30
Structure	30
Findings: ACT, EFT and their synthesis	32
Praxis:	41
A guide to AC-EFT	41
Impact	48
Conclusion	52
References	54
Appendices	60
Appendix 1: Hermeneutic Spiral	60
Appendix 2: Artefact Development	61
Appendix 3: Early Study design	62

Appendix 4: Timescales & Schedule	62
Appendix 5: Search records	62
Appendix 6: My Practice	62
Appendix 7: Mindfulness Action Plan resource	63
Appendix 8: What, Now What, So What	64
Appendix 9: Research Journal	65

Glossary of terms

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT): This is a form of third wave psychotherapy that helps individuals engage in actions towards their values in the presence of difficult emotions. Mindfulness exercises are used to separate individuals from their interpretation and evaluation of their experiences, orient them to their values, and help them to lead rich lives of their choosing (adapted from Eifert and Forsyth, 2005; Harris, 2019)

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): This is a form of second wave psychotherapy. It seeks to improve our situation by targeting cognitions and overt behaviours to help us recognise unhelpful patterns and reduce negative thoughts. (National Health Service, no date)

Cognitive Therapy (CT): This is a general approach to psychological disorders where beliefs and theories a person holds about the world are explored with a therapist, with the aim of disproving those theories that do not serve the individual. Cognitions (thoughts, feelings and response) are thought to effect emotions and behaviours, and are often treated as the root of the psychological issue in this approach. Adapted from Hofmann, 2013.

Evidence-Based Vocal Pedagogy (EBVP): EBVP, developed by Kari Ragan (Voice pedagogy and author), draws on Evidence-based approaches within healthcare. It has three core components: 1) Voice Research, 2) Voice Teacher Expertise and Experience, and 3) Student Goals and perspectives. (Ragan, 2018)

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT): This is a form of therapy that aims to reduce anxiety. Individuals are asked to recount difficult memories, or engage with difficult emotions as they tap on different acupuncture points around the chest and head. It is underpinned by Cognitive therapy and Exposure therapy. For more, see Church (2018).

Energy Psychology (EP): Energy Psychology (EP) is a branch of psychology where conventional psychotherapeutic methods are combined with stimulation of acupuncture points in the body, and EFT is considered to be a branch of EP (Vural et al, 2019)

Exposure Therapy (ET): This is a form of therapy where individuals are exposed to a stimulus that causes them fear or discomfort in a graduated, gradual manner. It is thought that this allows the part of our brain responsible for interpreting the level of threat posed by a situation to learn that a feared stimulus is non-threatening (National Health Service, 2022)

Mindful Action Plan (MAP): Created by Moran and Ming (2020), this is a statement that incorporates the six core therapeutic processes of ACT: "I am here now, accepting my feelings and noticing my thoughts while doing what I care about."

Music Performance Anxiety (MPA): MPA has been defined as "a distressing and persistent anxious apprehension related to musical performance" (Clark et al., 2020). Students and teachers may also use the terms "stage fright" or "nerves".

Practice as Research (PaR): This is a research methodology that provides a bridge between embodied practice and formal research. Researchers are asked to attend differently to their work to make tacit processes of the practice explicit, and to incorporate outside knowledge like empirical literature into their work. It's onto-epistemological model means it accommodates multiple kinds of knowing and ontological viewpoints to capture the intersection of insights from different practices. Adapted from Nelson, 2022.

Tapping: This is another term for EFT, derived from the manner in which we manually tap on acupressure points as part of the EFT process.

Component 1: Portfolio

Introduction

Over many years in different teaching contexts, I have worked with students facing significant barriers to progression because of Music Performance Anxiety (MPA). MPA has been defined as “a distressing and persistent anxious apprehension related to musical performance” (Clark et al., 2020). For singers, this anxiety can physically alter or render their instrument unusable (Papagerogi et al., 2008; Juncos, 2017). While some degree of MPA improves performance, when present to an acute degree it impacts heavily on a student's quality of performance, or stops them from performing, and becomes known as problematic MPA (Mahony et al., 2022; Wiedemann et al., 2021). Through reflecting on my own practice, I observed my use of a fusion of two therapeutic models to support students with MPA, namely Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT). ACT aims to support individuals in developing their ability to take action, in spite of discomfort, by committing to deeply valued ways of living and being (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). EFT is a somatic practice from the field of Energy psychology, where individuals tap on a specific set of acupuncture points around the body as they describe the problem they are experiencing (Church, 2018). It aims to reduce or eliminate distress triggered by difficult events and memories (Ortner, 2013). While I had encountered both models prior to this study, I am not formally trained in either.

The framework underpinning this study is Nelson's Practice as Research (PaR) (Nelson, 2022). PaR provides a theoretical basis for formalising knowledge and insights produced through embodied creative practice by asking the practitioner to *attend differently* to their work, making implicit practices explicit through reflection, and engaging in outside perspectives through research (Nelson, 2022). PaR gave rise to the reflective process that prompted my observation of using ACT and EFT in practice, and it facilitates research outcomes like the one proposed here - a teaching resource that brings elements of ACT and EFT together under the title of Acceptance and Commitment - Emotional Freedom Technique (AC-EFT). This artefact will take the form of a guide

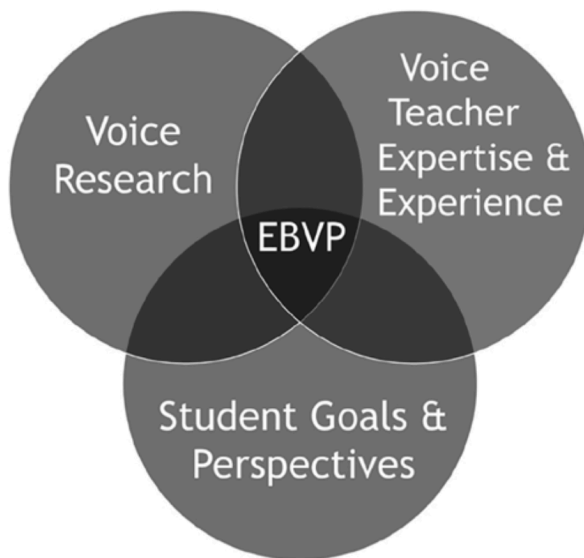
to delivering the model with singing students, with potential for wider dissemination if successful. This study intends to establish deeper understandings of ACT and EFT, to root the resource in a clear understanding of the empirical evidence, and best practice for each model. This resource may also form the basis of a future research project, where its efficacy could be examined in a formal manner.

1. Rationale

At the time of writing, I teach 9 singers, 7 of whom are women between ages of 16-26, studying music at secondary or tertiary level, or early in their careers. 4 students report MPA as a barrier to performance, 3 of whom are women, one of whom is a man. In a broader context, being female and under thirty years of age constitutes higher risk of experiencing debilitating MPA (Kenny et al., 2012 cited in Shaw et al., 2020). However, Papagerogi et al. (2008) advises that MPA can affect musicians of any age. While this higher risk to female students in education is evident in my practice, developing an effective strategy for MPA potentially benefits all of my students. My impression from practice is that students have little understanding about what MPA is or what to do when they experience it, and view it as a personal failing (McGinnis, 2005). My current approach to MPA is consistent with aspects of ACT - encouraging students to recognise how their anxiety functions, but orienting them to their values as a performer - for some this is a deep love of music, or using their voice to speak out on important issues. I use EFT to anchor them as they experience their thoughts and feelings about their MPA. Students have reported it as helpful, but a better researched combination of ACT and EFT could be more cohesive and effective. To this end both models will be examined more formally to better assess the viability of fusing them (AC-EFT), and the potential benefits and limitations to doing so.

One may ask why an academic study is an appropriate vehicle for building a teaching resource (Torraco, 2016). In the context of higher education, such studies are a vehicle for cultivating deep knowledge and critical thinking, while attracting funding and prestige for the university; certainly a factor here (Zamorski, 2010). However, frameworks like Evidence-Based Vocal Pedagogy (EBVP)

Figure 1: EVBP (Ragan, 2018, p.159)



suggest that academic study is supportive of building best practice. Within EBVP, many kinds of knowledge can be integrated into a singing teacher's work: practitioner-experience, the student's needs, goals and perspectives, and relevant scientific research (Ragan, 2018) (See Figure 1). This calls for a focused method of integrating and assessing different forms of knowledge - academic studies can supply the space for such critical appraisal and reflection (Torraco, 2016).

Given my position as a practitioner-researcher

within the performing arts, the over-arching methodology must bear the complexity of different kinds of knowledge (Greenhalgh, 2005). PaR, as a multi-epistemological methodology, facilitates the process of attending critically and reflexively to one's practice as a form of knowledge, integrating it with academic knowledge like empirical literature (Nelson, 2022). Within PaR, multiple modes of evidence are admissible, not just written reports - this can include a product (a film, a blog, a CD), a documented account of a process (photos, sketchbooks), or reporting that illuminates the processes, theories, and concepts underpinning the evidence (Nelson, 2022 p.40). This study aims to produce a teaching resource, alongside a written report, and a research journal.

2. Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

This study aims to:

- Deepen my understanding of ACT and EFT.
- Assess the viability of integrating ACT and EFT and the potential impact of on my practice of this integration.
- Create an artefact - a teaching resource to support students with MPA.
- Develop my understanding of my own practice as a source of knowledge and insight.

To achieve these aims, the study objectives are:

- Perform a literature review to establish an understanding of ACT and EFT as discrete models, and the current state of knowledge about them (Cronin and George, 2023; University of Toronto, 2023).
- Perform an analysis of the compatibility of ACT and EFT and their potential applications to practice.
- To create a teaching resource - this integrates my practice as per PaR, and the act of attempting to practically fuse the two models supports critical thinking and analysis, as it is necessarily to constantly compare ACT and EFT to determine how they fit together into a single process (Nelson, 2022; Cronin and George, 2023).

The expected outcomes of this study are:

- To have a clear understanding of how and why ACT and EFT are thought to be effective, and their limitations.
- A specific strategy to support students with MPA that integrates ACT and EFT, grounded in best practice and empirical studies, with a clear view of its potential impact on practice.
- To understand the viability of carrying out further research about this topic, possibly testing the resource I have created.

Programme of Study

1. Context and key influences

While MPA is the concern we are addressing, the potential fusion of ACT and EFT is the primary focus of this work (AC-EFT). An overview of the theoretical influences, and best practice for both will be outlined, in conjunction with my experience as a practitioner. Prior to this work, I had read a number of studies, books, and attended several online lectures about ACT, including its use as a model for MPA. This research never led to a formal study, but has informed my concept of MPA since. By contrast, I encountered EFT in the personal context of social media through a self-help

author called Gabrielle Bernstein. Currently I follow several accounts concerned with wellbeing that are proponents of EFT, and so my contact with the model is frequent, but informal.

Theoretical influences

MPA

MPA is a persistent type of performance anxiety that negatively impacts musicians anticipating musical performances, hindering the quality of their output and causing them to avoid performing (McGrath, 2012). The severity of MPA is thought to be related to one's ability to manage states of emotional arousal, rather than inadequate preparation - this correlates with findings that the presence of generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) has been found to be a strong predictor of MPA (McGrath, 2012; Wiedemann et al., 2021). While some anxiety (or arousal) can increase performance quality, when the level of arousal is too high, MPA can present as a multi-faceted clinical problem, including cognitive, physiological and behavioural symptoms (Juncos and de Paiva e Pona, 2017; Wiedemann et al., 2021). Rumination, distressful apprehension, shortness of breath, dry mouth, shaking, and a diminishing willingness to perform, among many other symptoms, can therefore combine to shorten, or prematurely end the careers of singers (McGrath, 2012; Juncos and de Paiva e Pona, 2017). Treatments for problematic MPA often fall into three categories - medication, psychotherapy-based interventions, and alternative treatments based on relaxation and physical health (Mahony et al., 2022). This study proposes a psychotherapy-based method, which would commonly be delivered by a trained psychotherapist. However, Shaw et al. (2020) and Mahony et al. (2022) note the utility of a transdisciplinary approach in terms of improved access, time, and the reduced stigma for student when working with a music teacher for support with MPA. Further, both studies note the similarity of the student-teacher relationship to the client-therapist alliance, which is a greater predictor of positive outcomes in therapy than the modality of therapy itself (Shaw et al., 2020). Mahony et al. (2022) and Shaw et al. (2020) investigated the efficacy of singing teachers in supporting students with MPA using ACT after some

training, and positive outcomes for the participants were achieved in half the time of a traditional ACT intervention.

ACT

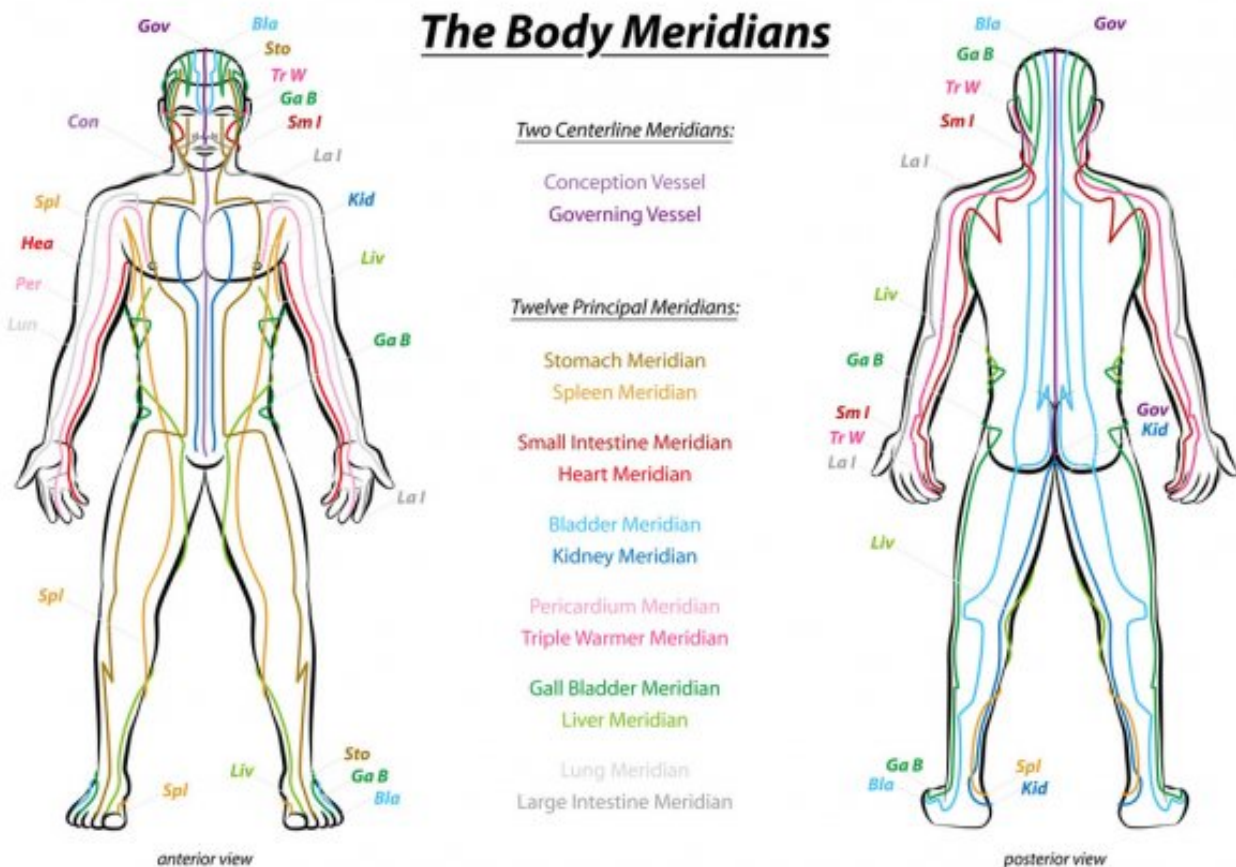
ACT is a form of cognitive, behavioural therapy (Guarna, no date). Within Cognitive Therapy (CT), cognitions (thoughts, patterns of thought or perceptions) strongly, and causally, impact our emotions and behaviours (Hofmann, 2013). Dysfunctional patterns of cognition (cognitive distortions) are thought to lead to emotional distress and harmful behaviours (Guarna, no date; Hofmann, 2013). The epistemological position of CT is critical rationalism, where knowledge is gained through testing a hypothesis; so therapists and clients work collaboratively to uncover perceptions the client holds (their hypotheses), and reappraise them (Hofmann, 2013). CT is a family of interventions that target cognitive processes in order to regulate emotion, of which Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a member (Hofmann, 2013, p. 206). CBT is the precursor of ACT, in that thoughts are treated as behaviours and are integral to understanding and addressing anxiety (Hooper and Larsson, 2015). ACT is also informed by Relational Frame Theory (RFT), which views language as the primary mediator of cognition and relationships between stimuli, making language itself a primary aspect of how a pathology sustains itself (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). Within ACT, anxiety reduction is not the primary goal of treatment; it targets inappropriate cognitive fusion (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). This is when the experience of a stimulus and our personal evaluation of it become fused, dominating our cognitions and influencing our behaviour (Harris, 2019). This leads to experiential avoidance - where an individual rigidly avoids a stimulus - either in thought (covert) or in action (overt) - this natural process becomes problematic when it leads to a restricted, reduced quality of life (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005; Harris, 2019). For a singing student, this could manifest as a negative self-evaluation of a performance becoming fused with the idea of performing itself, leading to distressful apprehension of upcoming performances and outright avoidance of performing where possible. ACT uses Mindfulness based practices to help individuals develop psychological flexibility: the ability to defuse from their cognitions, and direct their own attention to taking action in line with their own deeply held values (Harris, 2019).

Experiential avoidance is decreased and the individual experiences more meaning in their lives (Hooper and Larsson, 2015). ACT has been tested in outcome studies for use with singers experiencing MPA, with promising results (Juncos et al., 2017; Clarke et al., 2020; Shaw et al., 2020). This will be discussed in more detail in component 2.

EFT

EFT belongs to a family of practices known as Energy Psychology, where psychotherapeutic techniques combined with physical practices to balance the body's energy systems, thereby promoting wellbeing (Feinstein, 2022). EFT combines strategies from CT, Exposure Therapy (ET) and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) by manually tapping on acupuncture points (acupoints) in the body while focusing on the problem the individual is experiencing (Nelms and Castel, 2013). As outlined above, CT conceptualises thoughts as a form of behaviour, meaning that within EFT, thoughts are also targeted as part of the intervention. ET is classed as a form of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) that aims to reduce clinical anxiety, particularly where a patient is experiencing fear in the absence of a real threat, or a disproportionate response to a threat (Abromowitz et al, 2019; National Health Service, 2022). In ET, therapists focus on psychological factors that perpetuate or exacerbate the problem (maintenance), rather than on the origin or initial development of the problem (etiology); the focus is on clearing the active psychological structures that hamper the natural process of learning about a stimulus, and overcoming the fear of it (Abromowitz et al., 2019). TCM uses therapies like acupuncture, herbal remedies, and massage to release blockages or disharmonies in the body's 14 main meridians - these are energetic strings connecting acupuncture points in the body through which energy must flow correctly for good health - See Figure 2 below. (Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine & Acupuncture UK, 2015; Maurer et al, 2019). While no studies have been carried out using EFT for MPA to my knowledge, it has been shown to be an effective treatment for anxiety (Church et al., 2022; Stapleton et al, 2023). This model will be explored more deeply in component 2.

Figure 2: Energy Meridians (Danai Wellness, 2020)



Best practice influences

In this study, knowledge of empirical evidence about each model has been used to locate, or assess the utility of ACT and EFT in practice in order to determine how best to interweave them. This process itself is guided by Ragan's concept of the importance of honouring practitioner experience and empirical findings for the benefit of the student as we find it in EBVP.

"Clinical EFT" or "The Basic Recipe" can be found in *The EFT Manual*; this is the form of EFT used validated by the research base, and therefore an ideal candidate for best practice - See Figure 3 below (Church, 2018). It comprises focusing on the problem, while the individual taps on the acupoints defined (Church, 2018). It can take place in between 15-50 minutes (Church et al., 2022; Feinstein, 2022). *The EFT Manual* is intended as a self help resource, but also as a starting point

for people wishing to train in the method. *The Tapping Solution* by Nick Ortner has also been selected (2013). Also intended as a self-help resource, it supplies scripts for practice that are supported by the techniques described in *The EFT Manual* (Church, 2018). Ortner demonstrates a conversational application of language, which may be an important aspect of incorporating the philosophies of ACT into the practice.

Figure 3: The Basic recipe (from Church et al., 2018)

EFT on a Page

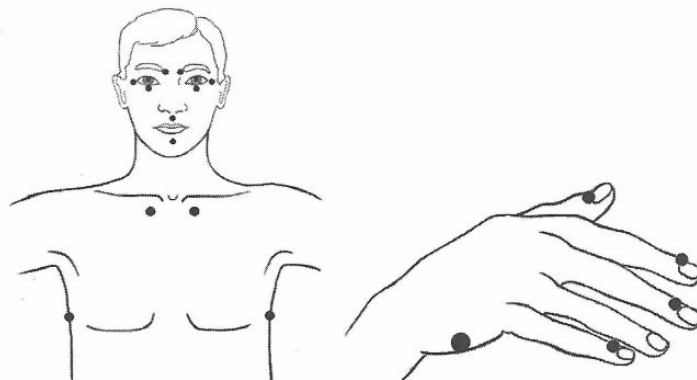
- 1. Where in your body** do you feel the emotional issue most strongly?
- 2. Determine the distress level** in that place in your body on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is maximum intensity and 0 is no intensity:

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

- 3. The Setup:** Repeat this statement three times, while continuously tapping the Karate Chop point on the side of the hand (large dot on hand diagram below):

"Even though I have _____ (name the problem), I deeply and completely accept myself."

- 4. The Tapping Sequence:** Tap about 7 times on each of the energy points in these two diagrams, while repeating a brief phrase that reminds you of the problem.

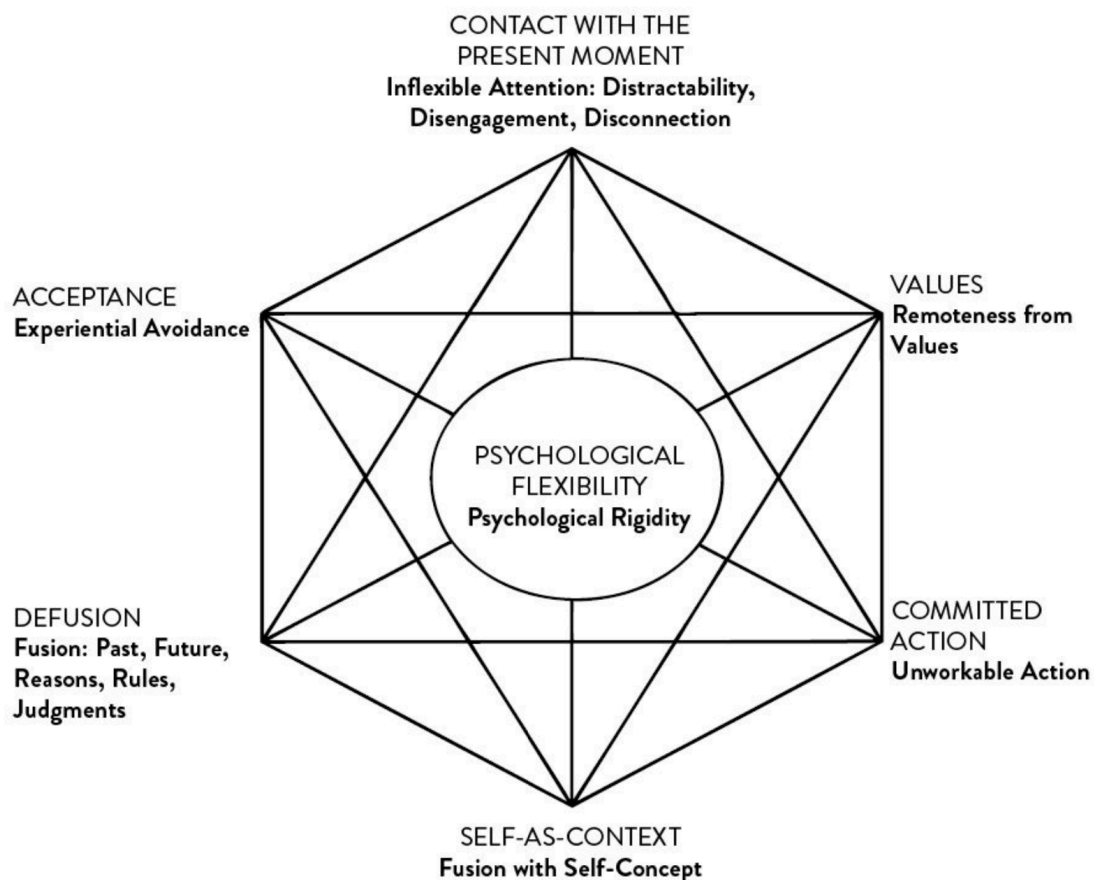


- 5. Determine your distress level** again on a scale of 0 to 10 again.
If it's still high, say:
"Even though I have some remaining _____ (problem), I deeply and completely accept myself."
- 6. Repeat from Step 1** till your distress level is as close to 0 as possible.

Find dozens of Tap-Along videos at EFTUniverse.com

The ACT Hexaflex contains six core therapeutic processes that target cognitive fusion and promote psychological flexibility, which can be addressed in any order (See Figure 4) (Harris, 2019). As the research base for ACT covers a vast range of populations and psychological issues, a large variety of models of implementation exist - Stephen Hayes, the originator of ACT, acknowledges that the range of books available on the subject is intimidating, and can discourage therapists from integrating ACT into their work (Harris, 2019). While reviewing all models of practice has not been possible, two key strategies have been chosen: Harris's Choice Points and Moran and Mings's MAP (Harris, 2019; Moran and Ming, 2020). Choice Points offers a framework for easily explaining and guiding an individual through the ACT processes with clear language, while Moran and Ming (2020) offer a single worksheet to apply to creating targets for managers who wish to train in the model in more corporate settings. I have also drawn Eifert and Forsyth (2005) for deeper understandings of the ACT model.

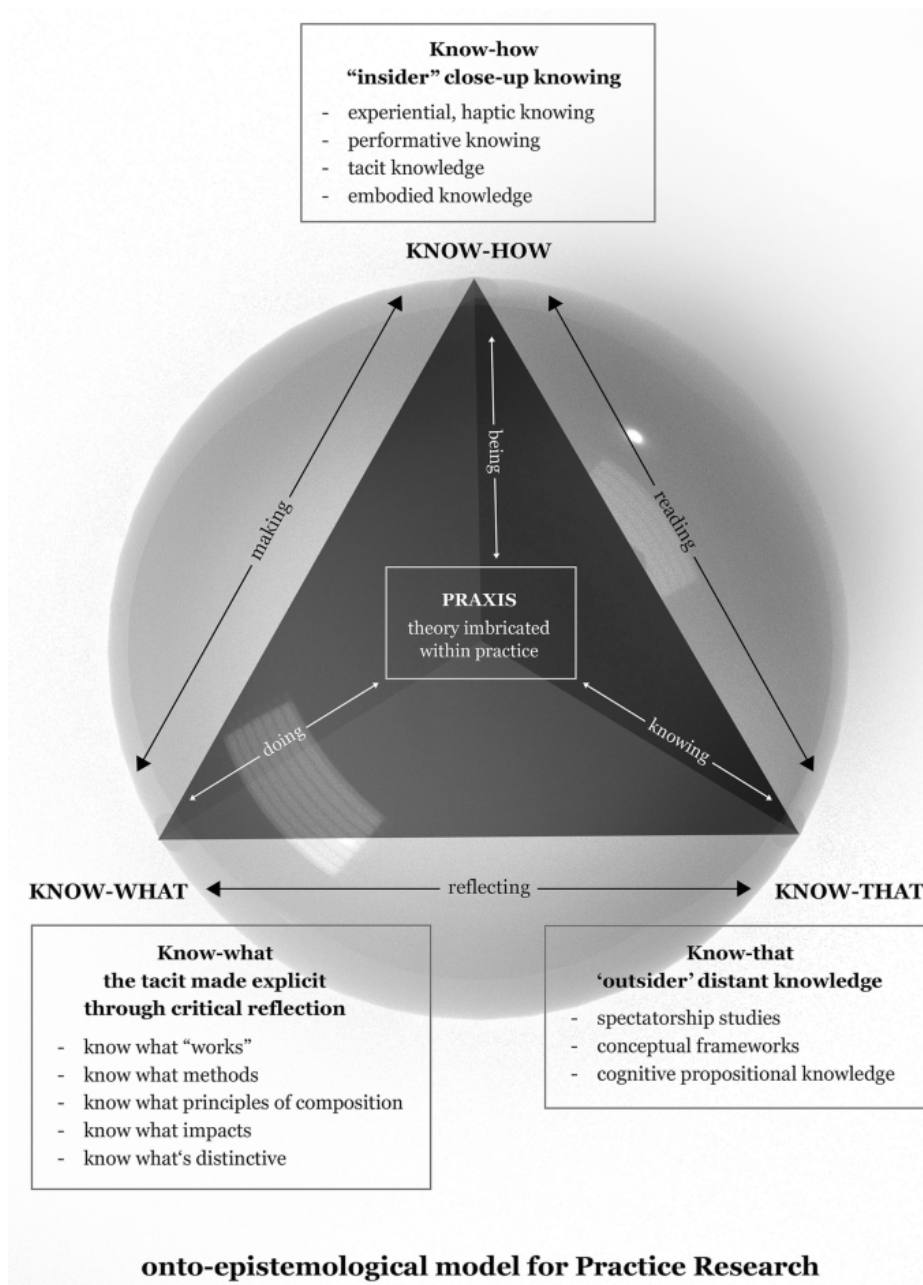
Figure 4: The ACT Hexaflex (Harris, 2019, p.59)



Methodological influences

The conservatoire model of training for developing expertise in the arts has been subsumed in many places throughout Europe into Universities, bringing with it an emphasis on empirical research as the product of higher learning and understanding (Nelson, 2022). This has led to the devaluation of the kinds of skills and insights that can come from high level embodied practice, as

Figure 5: Practice as Research (Nelson, 2022, p. 46)



the outcomes of such are not considered equivalent to academic ideals of rigour and relevance as found in positivist, empirical research (Winter, 2020). PaR was developed as a response to this context, to bridge empirical research and embodied arts practices, and has an onto-epistemological model that incorporates different kinds of knowing, conceptualised as *Know-how*, *Know-what*, and *Know-that* - See Figure 5 (Nelson, 2022). PaR research asks the practitioner to *attend differently* to their

work to attain critical distance that can lead to clear reporting on practice and the location of that practice in a broader context. *Know-how* is insider knowledge. It is often tacit, embodied, experiential, and performative. *Know-what* is clear, explicit discernment and articulation of aspects of practice through critical reflection - such as knowing that a particular strategy works well for a particular problem, understanding the principles of that strategy, and how it differs from others. Finally, *Know-that* incorporates academic practices and outsider perspectives, such as reviews of studies, theories of knowledge, and carrying out empirical research (Winter, 2020). These areas are interdependent and iterative within PaR, where a balance between them creates a praxis (Nelson, 2022). The manner in which this will be used in the work will be outlined in the Methodology section.

Hermeneutics originates from the interpretation of text in the context of philosophy, theology, and literature. Knowledge emerges through dialogue between the text and the reader, or between different interpretations of a text, which fuses the “horizons” of those perspectives and produces understanding (Paterson and Higgs, 2005). It is also conceptualised as the oscillation between select parts of a text to the text as a whole, a metaphor created by Heidegger known as the “hermeneutic circle” (Paterson and Higgs, 2005). As a process takes us deeper in understanding a particular text or phenomena, our understanding of the whole is developed, and so we repeat the cycle, creating a spiral of understanding known as the “hermeneutic spiral” (Paterson and Higgs, 2005). The hermeneutic approach is thought to be a rigorous but adaptable methodology (or method) for studies involving evidenced-based practices and client-centred approaches, sometimes used to create ‘orderly planning’ around the sometimes “disorderly” creative processes within PaR (Trimingham, 2002; Paterson and Higgs, 2005). It is particularly appropriate where the research goal contains some element of seeking to understand or interpret a phenomena (Paterson and Higgs, 2005). It is envisaged that the literature review and the development of the artefact can be supported by a hermeneutic spiral as tool for critical reflection, analysis, and clear reporting. This study will use Von Zweck (2008) as a model. See Appendix 1 for the hermeneutic spiral created by this research (p. 60), and Appendix 2 for different drafts of the artefact (p.61).

2. Methodology

Overarching methodology: PaR

PaR, with its flexible onto-epistemological model, falls within the pragmatic paradigm of research. For this study, my practice, experience, and current knowledge is the *know-how* component of the PaR, which will be woven in throughout the creation of the resource, including pre-existing knowledge of ACT and EFT, and my experience as a teacher. The research question came from the *Know-what* process, several weeks of reflecting on my own practice (See Appendix 6, p. 62), making explicit what was tacit. A process of writing and reflecting will also feed into the drafting and re-drafting of the resource. *Know-That* consists of engaging with scientific literature and best-practice to provide an outsider perspective that will facilitate *defamiliarisation* - a way of gaining critical distance from the work such that patterns and implicit understandings become more evident - a key process in the creation of a Praxis. A literature review in this case, an integrative review, will be used to search, collate and synthesise information from outsider perspectives (*Know-that*). Nelson (2022) suggests that different frameworks and methods can be used to carry out PaR; these will be largely iterative to allow the process of moving between practice, critical analysis, research and literature to generate knowledge and insights (Winter, 2020). The analysis of this work will be thematic, focusing on understanding key concepts in ACT and EFT, and their application for singers with MPA. I will also maintain a research journal for reflexivity and reflection, and detailed notes on each study to aid in all stages of the work (Know-what). I will develop a resource for teaching using Freeform (an app that allows for sketching, drawing, and diagram creation as well as typing) to aid in the process of synthesis, analysis and resource creation (*Know-how*).

Methods

Literature review: an Integrative review

Literature reviews are used to assess the current state of knowledge in a field of enquiry (University of Toronto, 2023). Integrative reviews are designed to examine and report on literature where the concepts, knowledge, and methodologies from different fields (or niches within a field) are studied, analysed, and compared in order to synthesise them in some way (Torraco, 2016; Snyder, 2019). They are used for generating new perspectives about a body of research, exploring new theoretical models to resolve problems, identify new research topics, and inform policy and practice (Torraco, 2016; University of Toronto, 2023). The synthesis of ACT and EFT for MPA is novel, and may lead to new perspectives, new research topics, and potential impacts on policies and practices if a viable tool emerges. Integrative reviews can incorporate literature with different paradigms (Synder, 2019; Cronin and George, 2023; University of Toronto, 2023). This is well matched to the purposes of this study and the aims of PaR, as the literature pertinent to create a resource requires broad inclusion criteria that is not limited by discrete paradigms (Cronin and George, 2023). With respect to coverage, some argue that integrative reviews should include exhaustive engagement with all literature available in both fields to facilitate a balanced synthesis (Cronin and George, 2023). Others state the opposite (University of Toronto, 2023), or simply note that different levels of coverage exist relative to the research aims of a given study (Torraco, 2016; Snyder, 2019). Snyder (2019) states that Integrative reviews about emergent topics are usually not exhaustive. Given that the present study is an assignment for a masters programme, time constraints preclude the possibility of an exhaustive review. The emergent nature of the proposed synthesis warrants an approach to coverage that strives to be representative rather than exhaustive (Torraco, 2016). As an integrative review can accommodate the synthesis of different fields, representative coverage of those fields, and the inclusion of different kinds of literature, it seems to be an appropriate format for the present study. The limitations of this method include risks of misrepresentation of different fields (as the review will not be exhaustive), a potential lack of clarity and rigour in the framework of the review, and opaque processes of analysis and synthesis (Cronin and George, 2023; University of Toronto, 2023). These can be addressed and mitigated to an extent through the design of the study, clear reporting, and reflexivity.

Research journal

In qualitative research, reflexivity is a key tool to make the biases and judgements of the researcher explicit, allowing readers to better interpret and utilise findings (Coen et.al, 2018). A research journal will be kept to track reflections, aid in recollection, and ultimately support clear reporting, as this will be more reliable than memory alone. This record will also be invaluable during the final stages of critical reflection (Dey, 1993). When using this method in a previous study (O'Reilly, 2023a) it offered rich information for qualitative analysis of the process of learning, but a limitation of its use was that I under-utilised its potential for critical reflection, rather than simple record-keeping. This journal will not be analysed as rigorously as in the previous study, and so it will need to be used more consciously and reflexively in order to provide insight and contribute to the analysis and presentation of my practice and reporting. (See Appendix 9 for research journal, p.65)

Artefact creation: Freeform

The teaching resource, intended to be a guide to using AC-EFT, will be developed in tandem with the literature review using Freeform, an app that allows for text, freehand writing, and intuitive visual forms to be easily incorporated into a board and exported as a document (Apple Inc. 2022). Cronin and George (2023) note the power of figures to elucidate relationships between different concepts, and this highly visual app will allow for the easy creation of figures and structures that facilitate integration of different aspects of ACT and EFT. PaR methodology values the process of the practitioner as generative of knowledge in itself when done critically and attentively, and the creative act of making this resource is in keeping with this methodology (Nelson, 2022). Drafts the resource are built into the structure of the study in order to elucidate how the creative work supported analysis (See Appendix 2, p.61) While this resource may fall short of a perfect integration, or even a viable guide, Torraco (2016) states that the outcome of an integrative review

need not be new knowledge, but rather a proposition or theory about how the synthesised fields might fit together - which is what this resource will attempt to do.

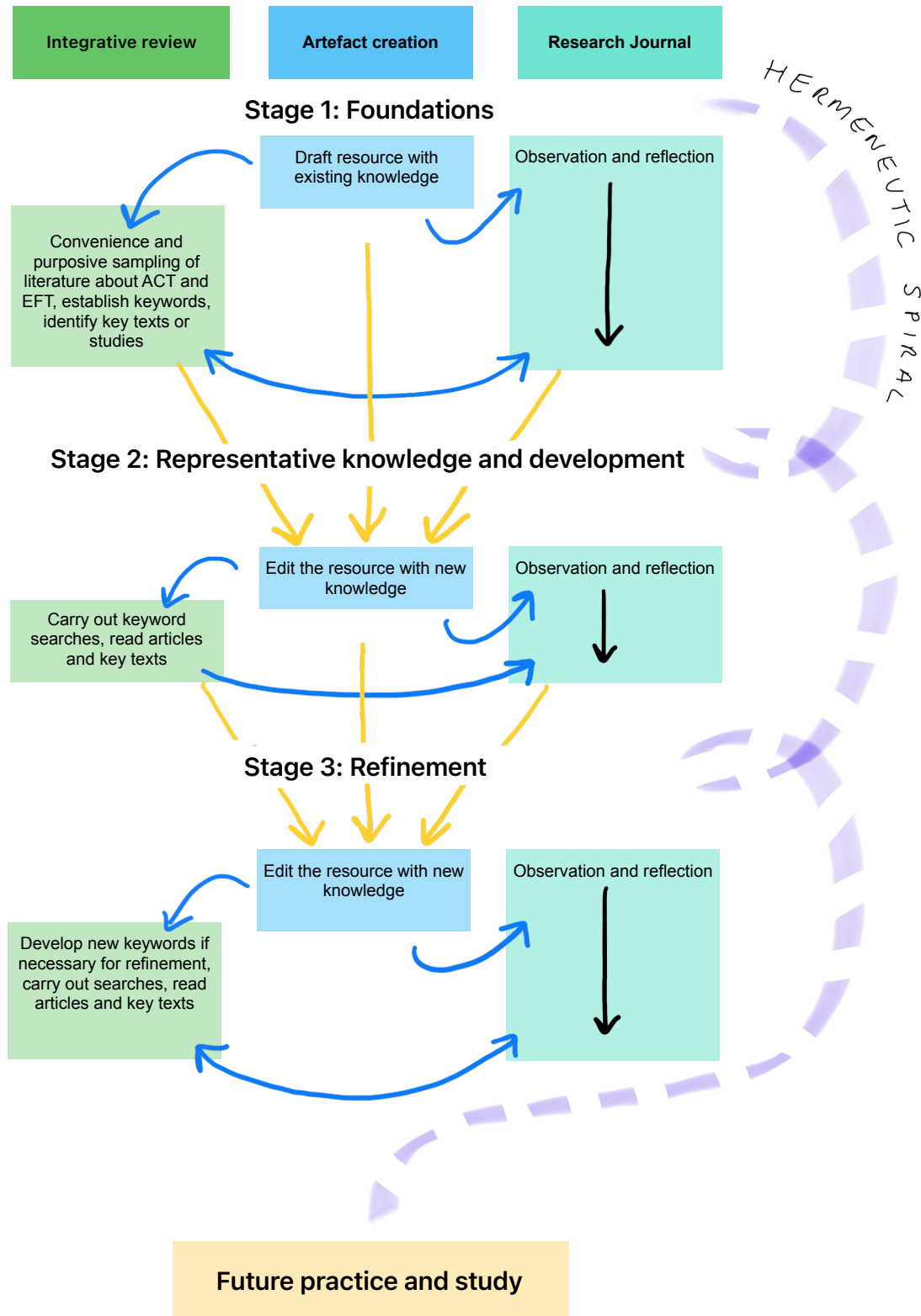
Study structure

This study divides into three stages to allow for continual reflexivity, synthesis and analysis, and increasing specificity of engagement with literature (See Figure 6 p.22). Each stage begins with a new draft of the resource, a practical task that allows for practitioner insights and knowledge to emerge, while creating a record of the different horizons of knowledge reached during the study as per hermeneutic analysis (Paterson and Higgs, 2005). The drafting process will inform the literature review, and the process of journaling and reflecting on the work will take place throughout for reflexivity. The final report will be in draft throughout the study. The findings of the study will be analysed and organised thematically - relevant themes that emerge from the literature will be used to organise and interpret the findings and their application to the resource (Torraco, 2016). The analysis will be ongoing throughout the work, and feed into the creation of the resource, the research journal, and the literature review in an iterative manner. Earlier versions of the study design can be found in Appendix 3 (p.62).

3. Timescales and review dates

The given timeframe for this assignment is 19 weeks. Proposed activities and goals for each week of the study have been created in a spreadsheet. This includes dedicated time for reflecting on progress in tutorials, and a formative deadline in week 17 for a draft of the work to be submitted. For details of the initial planning of the review, as well as the working document that reported on the realised process, please see Appendix 4 (p.62).

Figure 6: Proposed Study structure



4. Ethical considerations

The design, subject matter, and purposes of this study present specific ethical considerations. As the teaching resource is intended for use with students in a vulnerable position experiencing MPA, a clear account of what aspects of ACT and EFT are included is crucial to provide an honest indication of its potential efficacy - striving for clear representations of both models can support this (Cronin and George, 2023). As the literature review is representative rather than exhaustive, there is a risk that key aspects of each field could be misrepresented, or misunderstood, undermining the findings of the study and the credibility of the resource. To mitigate the risk, notes will be carefully taken of key literature to give context to which texts, studies and resources are commonly used in the practice of these two models. While this does not eliminate the risk, transparent reporting of the review process should support the reader in critiquing and assessing the credibility of the research findings (Coen et al., 2018).

The practitioner-researcher perspective can have implications for ethical conduct; the researcher has personal involvement and experience of the subject which can provide rich insight, but also biased judgements, as critical distance from the subject is harder to obtain (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This study relies on subjective methods and judgements about what to include and exclude, which creates a further risk of bias. PaR may initially appear to exacerbate this risk, however the aim of PaR is not unbridled subjectivity, but rather a mechanism to gather valuable insights and from embodied work, locating them clearly within a broader field of research. Reflexivity is woven into the fabric of PaR; it emphasises the importance of critical distance and explicit reporting (*Know-what*), and encourages the inclusion of outsider perspectives (*Know-that*) (Nelson, 2022). Within EBVP, Ragan (2018) advocates for inclusion of practitioner insights as a model of evidence-based practice, although she notes that publication standards for such insights are not readily available. In this study, the research journal, the use of a hermeneutic spiral, and records of the different stages of the resource's development are in place to capitalise on the creative work of making a resource, while explicitly outlining thought processes and decisions for review.

Critical reflection

This reflection uses the “What, Now What, So What?” Model created by Borton, for its ease of use, helpful prompts, and directionality, which encourages acknowledgement of a process or event, understanding the context of that event, extracting the lessons from it and determining how to move forward (ModelThinkers, 2023). It is regularly used to facilitate reflection in healthcare settings (where it is attributed to Rolfe et al., 2000), but is also thought to be useful for those engaging in experiential learning, as the logical order of the steps allows for critical engagement with an activity or study that has just been carried out (University of Hull, 2022; MTa Learning, 2023). For the prompt questions used see Appendix 8, p.63). The hermeneutic spiral created as part of the study and the research journal provided a useful resource to aid in this reflective process (See Figure 7, p. 26)

1. Research aims, objectives and outcomes

What?

This study has achieved most of its aims; it has fostered deeper understanding of the models in question, a resource has been created, and my sense of practice as a source of research insight has greatly increased - these aims are in line with what an integrative review facilitates, and what PaR supports practitioners in achieving (Nelson, 2022; Cronin and George, 2023). This is supported by the hermeneutic spiral on p. 26. The objectives of this study were carried out successfully, and most research outcomes were achieved; I have a clear grasp of how ACT and EFT are thought to work, their efficacy, and their limitations. I created a specific strategy utilising this information and reflected on its implications for practice. Adopting a position on the viability of the proposed AC-EFT model constituted one of the research aims, and a research outcome - due to the limited nature of my reading and experience in both models, my scope to assess viability is somewhat limited, and this in turn may limit my understanding of its utility for future research. A

further limitation to viewing the resource as viable at this stage is the nature of the research base that supports both, as discussed in component 2 (p.39).

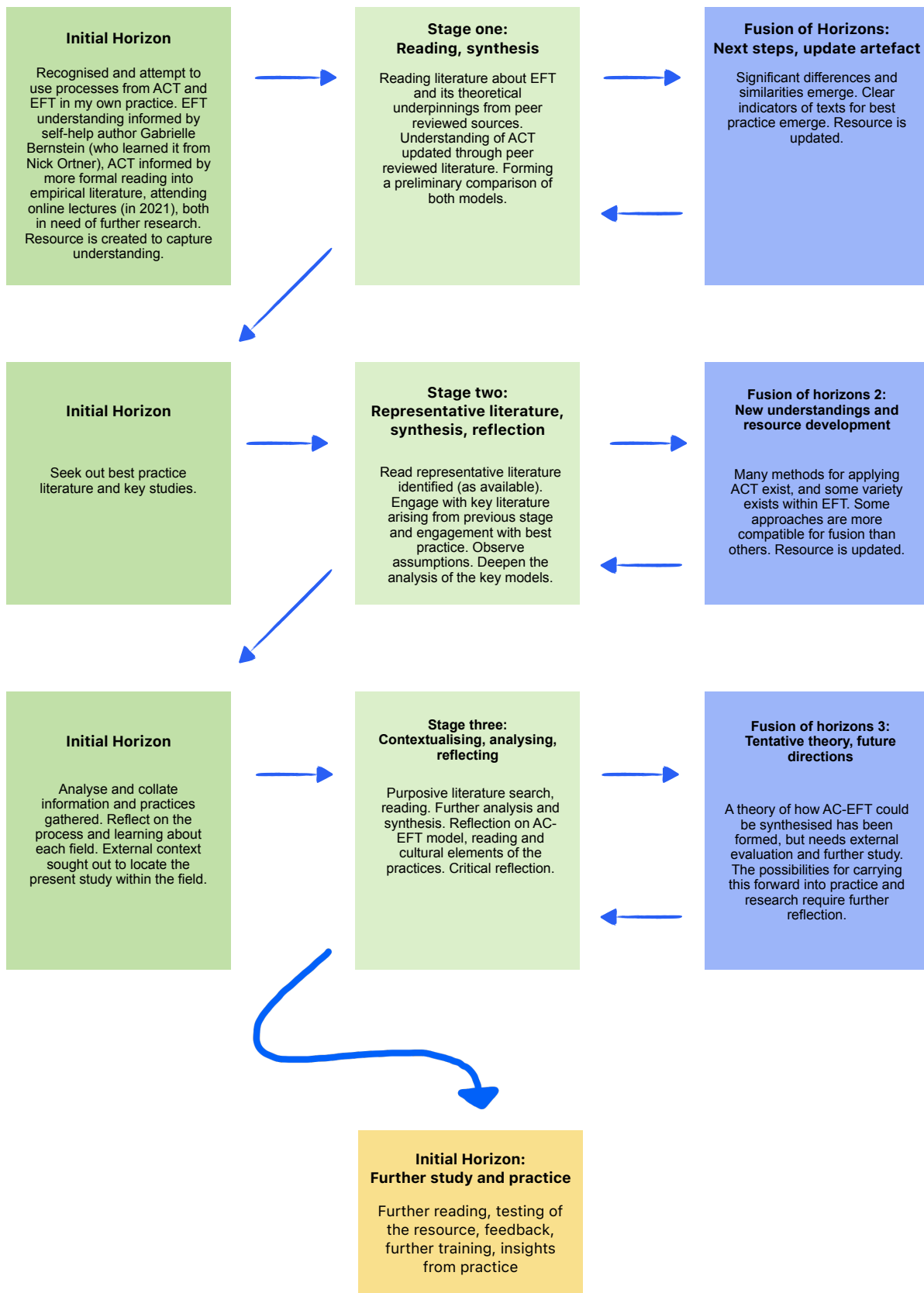
So What?

Trimingham (2002) contests that PaR should not lose sight of the overarching aim of research to bring benefits to a community through its insights. While this study has provided me with a strong bedrock of knowledge about ACT and EFT that will improve my use of both models in my practice, and this might benefit the community of students I teach, it would be premature to disseminate the resource I have created. This situation is not uncommon for emergent topics - it is widely understood that today's efficacious practices were once unproven theories - but in the case of this resource, a true assessment of the viability lies beyond the scope of this work, also indicted by the hermeneutic spiral (p.26) (Cronin and George, 2023). While this research does constitute a novel framework, its emergent nature does place a limit on what I can conclude about AC-EFT (Snyder, 2019).

Now What?

This research has provided a solid foundation from which to proceed to training in either model (which is readily available online for both), reaching out to researchers and practitioners with more experience for feedback, carrying out a pilot study of the resource, or simply doing additional reading to further broaden my sense of each field, particularly where their applications to practice are concerned. A combination of all of the above is likely the best route forward, although this would constitute a longer term goal as trainings and literature in specialised subjects can be expensive. My next module in my studies is a research project for which this resource could be an ideal opportunity to read more broadly and test the resource.

Figure 7: The Hermeneutic Spiral (based on Von Zweck, 2008)



2. Skills development and experiential factors

What?

This study was carried out under PaR, using an integrative review, the creation of a teaching resource, and the maintenance of a research journal. As a teacher, it was a useful form of continued professional development (CPD) in an academic context. My knowledge as a practitioner and a researcher has greatly improved, but I am unsure of my skills development, as the project proved far more ambitious than intended, placing considerable constraints on time and increasing stress and anxiety. While the topic was rich ground for exploration and innovation, as an emergent subject it felt fraught with limitations that were beyond my expertise to address.

So What?

In a longitudinal study, Research-based learning (RBL) was shown to improve research competencies as rated by students across the course of their studies, including 'research, methodology, reflection on research findings, communication, and content knowledge' in undergraduates (Thiem et al., 2023, p.1048). Similar outcomes were found in Sota and Peltzer (2017), alongside student satisfaction with application of learning to a practical environment. While my knowledge has improved through carrying out this study, I find it difficult to locate my own skills development or a sense of satisfaction in the work completed; previous assignments have reflected similar problems largely due to time pressure and the pressures of academic presentation (O'Reilly, 2023a; O'Reilly, 2023b). Thiem et al., (2023) found that among masters students, self-rated communication and content knowledge did not improve. It is theorised that this may be due to the introductory nature of research assignments at undergraduate level, and the more advanced requirements of research at masters level (Thiem et al., 2023). While difficulty recognising skills development may not be unique to my work, it does not mean that such development has not occurred. Chi et al.(2023) found that 34.8% of post-graduate students suffered with anxiety, the

cause of which were "employment prospects, inability to maintain work–life balance, inability to complete academic tasks on time, high academic competition, and long study period[s]" (p.12). Thus my experience of progress is not entirely isolated. I believe overlapping professional and personal responsibilities also contribute to the difficulty of creating the work; in professional CPD in education, time management is an oft cited factor that hinders engagement (Kennedy, 2011).

Now What?

Several factors within this context are not within my control; economic pressures, structures of academic assessment, and my status as a developing researcher. However, in my next study, it is possible to choose a topic in which I already have the foundation of a formal study which could offer numerous benefits - it may ease time constraints and stress, it may allow for research and analysis to reach a new level of depth, and allow for a greater period of reflection for the work. This improved period of reflection could be beneficial for productivity and satisfaction with my work (ModelThinkers, 2023).

Conclusion

This study was designed to support the creation of a teaching resource, cultivate the connection between practice to research in my work, and deepen my understanding of ACT and EFT. I believe the study design supported me in meeting these aims, with the exception of a confident assessment of viability. The study has supported me in reflecting on my practice in a manner that will benefit my students with MPA as I have a clearer and more ethical framework for discussion with them. Further to this, it has provided rich ground for future study, and critical reflection has facilitated useful insights that may serve me in improving future academic work.

Component 2: Written Assessment

Introduction

As a singing teacher, Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) is a frequent occurrence for many of my students. MPA, in appropriate doses, can positively affect performance, but in the case of too much anxiety, it can be debilitating for the singer both physically and mentally (McGrath, 2012; Juncos et al., 2017; Wiedemann et al., 2021). For singers in my practice, problematic MPA has led to either extreme mental and physical discomfort before and during performance, or the avoidance of performance altogether. Studies focusing on music with MPA note similar symptoms and avoidant behaviours (Juncos and Markman, 2015; Shaw et al., 2020). A recent period of reflecting on my practice led me to observe the combination Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) to support students with MPA. Two years before this reflection, I attended some seminars on ACT for MPA and engaged with some of the empirical studies in this niche, but never continued to formal training or study. Over a decade ago, I encountered EFT informally online through a self-help author (Gabrielle Bernstein), and the technique had resurfaced on my personal social media accounts in the past year. The surfacing of these models in my practice has led me to ask whether ACT and EFT can be combined for the treatment of MPA and whether a viable resource, relevant to practice, could be created by a singing teacher. This study aims to investigate the potential synthesis of ACT and EFT through means of a integrative literature review, the creation of a teaching resource, and reflective journaling throughout the process. This study is underpinned by Practice-as-Research (PaR), a model that theorises the intersection of embodied practice (*know-how*), reflection and explicit understanding (*know-what*), and outsider perspectives like that of academic knowledge (*know-that*) as a vehicle for creating a rounded practice (praxis) that can bridge the divide between knowledge from embodied work and empirical research. As this study encounters many models of working, theories of thought, there are many acronyms in use; readers may wish to refer to the glossary throughout (p.4).

Readers may also wish to view the map of practice created during the aforementioned reflection period, available in Appendix 6 (p.62).

Literature Review

This review aims to provide a clear picture of the models of ACT and EFT to inform how they might be synthesised and utilised in a resource beneficial for students of singing struggling with MPA. Integrative reviews are designed for the investigation of two different fields, in order to build new theories and research directions (Synder, 2019). They are also useful for emergent fields and synthesis (Cronin and George, 2023). For this integrative review, the search was broken up into three stages, each with a specific purpose relevant to the study, with specific keywords and databases used.

Structure

Stage 1: Foundations

This stage was to develop understanding of the areas of ACT and EFT through recent empirical studies, gleaning information about efficacy, representative literature, and what keywords might be relevant to searching for further, representative work. Google scholar and VSC library were used to scan for relevant work. I aimed to fully read approximately 5 studies per subject, with recent systematic reviews being preferred. Abstracts were read prior to full-reads of articles to ensure relevance. Common references or key texts and authors were noted. A broad range of keywords were used in this stage of the review including "EFT anxiety systematic", "Cognitive Therapy", "Exposure Therapy", "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Systematic", "Acceptance and Commitment Therapy meta-analysis"; which indicates the kind of knowledge was being sought at

30

this stage (a full list can be found in Appendix 5 (p.62). In practice, representative resources for EFT were more evident and accessible, so this stage was more iterative than previously anticipated as the research for EFT moved at a different rate to ACT.

Stage 2: Representative works and depending understanding

Results from Stage 1 indicated relevant key texts and models. Tutor support was another source for recommendations. Sourcing relevant texts was the primary action of this stage. Numerous databases and libraries were consulted; Google, Google Scholar, Research gate, and the libraries at UWTSD, VSC library, Millennium Library (Norwich, Norfolk, UK), Norwich University of the Arts (NUA), The British Library, The University of East Anglia (UEA), and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). In some cases, the reference lists of certain articles were consulted to search for key texts or works related to the models under discussion, particularly with ACT. Reflection, drafting of the study and analysis of the concepts from stage 1 prompted some new keywords and some studies. All texts and studies reviewed for this stage are noted, in addition to keywords used (See Appendix 5 (p.62).

Stage 3: Refinement

This stage was intended to search for relevant information ground the analysis in a broader perspective of practice - Locating one's practice along intersecting continuums of working, thinking and creating is a key aspect of PaR (Nelson, 2022). In practice, this stage also included keywords used to delve more deeply into aspects of ACT and EFT that were still unclear. Keywords included "The apex effect Emotional Freedom Techniques", "Theory of Psychological reversals" and "Research based learning" among others (See Appendix 5 (p.62).

The outcomes of these research stages is reflected in the hermeneutic spiral in Appendix 1 (p. 60)

Findings: ACT, EFT and their synthesis

The aim of this integrative review was to explore the possibility of combining ACT and EFT within a single practice, referred to as AC-EFT, to help students with problematic MPA. Within integrative reviews, the integrity of each model is important, and each will be discussed in language that reflects how these models appear in the literature reviewed (Cronin and George, 2023). The discussion below analyses these fields for commonalities and differences with a view to practice. Readers may also wish to refer to the Glossary for definitions of acronyms (p.4).

What's the problem?

ACT and EFT both aim to remove barriers that prevent an individual from learning that an uncomfortable stimulus may not present a real threat (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005; Abromowitz et al, 2019). While EFT is explicitly connected to Exposure therapy (ET) in the literature, the manner in which ACT is described is what aligns with many of the fundamental theories that inform ET, certainly within Eifert and Forsyth (2005). In ET, when the fight or flight response is triggered, emotional reasoning can create a persistent cycle of arousal (fear, anxiety or stress), prompting behavioural avoidance where individuals devise strategies to avoid the stimulus that triggered them (Abromowitz et al., 2019). This prevents learning that could lead to a greater sense of safety around the stimulus, thus maintaining the anxiety rather than reducing it (Abromowitz et al., 2019). This also means that both therapies target the manner in which psychological processes perpetuate the problem (maintenance), rather than its origins (etiology) (Abromowitz, 2019).

Both ACT and EFT have similar underpinnings in Cognitive Therapy (CT) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (Harris, 2019; National Health Service, 2022). Therefore both view thoughts (cognition) as forms of behaviour that can affect other behaviours (Hooper and Larsson, 2015). Working collaboratively with the individual to examine entrenched cognitive patterns are a central to both ACT and EFT (Hofmann, 2013). ACT goes further; It is informed by Relational

Frame Theory (RFT), which conceptualises the process of relating different stimuli as a type of learned behaviour (Hayes, no date). These patterns of relating can inform responses within entirely separate networks or relational frames, creating relational links - or sentences -that harden into rules and hierarchies of networks, manifesting in verbal and physical behaviours (Hayes, no date). The behaviour of relating is expressed and managed through language (overtly and covertly through cognition) by the individual (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). In this way a stress response can be triggered verbally via thoughts and speech, so language itself is considered a site of maintenance within ACT (Juncos and Marksman, 2015). EFT also uses language to expose an individual to their feared stimulus, and advises practitioners to attend to the language of the individual seeking support as it can be an "aspect" that has been "tagged" as dangerous by the threat response system in the brain (Church, 2018). Although the underlying approach to language is different, it is a central mechanism through which a psychopathology can be maintained in both models.

EFT also proposes a somatic, energetic dimension to the problem, the blockage of the body's energy meridians, and this is typical of a practice within Energy Psychology (EP) like EFT (Viral et al., 2019). This is derived from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), where the body's 14 meridian lines must have correct energy flow for wellbeing and health, thus in EFT the energy blockages must be alleviated as part of the intervention by tapping on the endpoints of these meridians (Ortner, 2013; Church, 2018). While ACT also draws on mindfulness for therapeutic aspects of the model, it does not seem to reference Buddhist concepts about suffering in its conceptualisation of the problem. Resonances between Buddhism and ACT have been directly addressed by ACT's creator, Hayes, who professes a long term interest in the religion but is (confusingly) dismissive of that idea that such modalities of knowledge could claim scientific validity (2002).

Ultimately, ACT locates behavioural avoidance as the key issue, with psychological flexibility as the primary desired outcome (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). EFT sees negative cognitions and anxiety as the key issue, with a reduction in these symptoms being the primary desired outcome (Church, 2018). Anxiety management, eradication or suppression is not used within ACT; instead it aims to

teach individuals that these emotions are a normal part of life, and that their quality of life need not be contingent on the presence or absence of negative emotions (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005).

Both ACT and EFT utilise language and the acknowledgement of feelings (exposure) within their models, and so in this respect they are well aligned. Their overall conclusions about the issue seem difficult to reconcile, which in the context of creating a teaching resource prompts me to take a position. Within my own practice, I teach students about the stress response cycle and how to complete it (based on Nagoski and Nagoski, 2020), and I see anxiety as a natural component of how our body functions, albeit one that can be easily triggered in the absence of a threat. ACT's concept of experiential avoidance as the main issue that prevents the natural cycle of learning, is one that I agree with (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). If this is the case, why continue to consider EFT? While EFT as a model aims for anxiety reduction, the process of tapping on one's body is axiologically neutral, and can potentially be used to enhance the effects of any form of psychotherapy (Church et al., 2022). I also wonder if, in the case of a student with debilitating MPA, a practice that does offer some reduction of anxiety is useful, if only as a breathing space to allow a student to reengage with performing, facilitating new learning. The function of EFT could be presented within the context of ACT's focus on commitment to values, rather than a method of anxiety reduction. Finally, while it is tempting to base a fusion of ACT and EFT on clearly delineated diagnoses, manualised interventions, and strict application of theories of cognition, human beings rarely fit neatly within the bounds of diagnostic criteria, and singers may need a range of measures to support them. In this way I feel a synthesis of both practices is still relevant.

How does it work?

ACT aims to reduce experiential avoidance by tackling cognitive fusion (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). This is when an individual's perception of an event becomes fused with the event itself in a rigid manner, which leads to experiential avoidance as a coping strategy, with language as a vehicle that maintains the condition (Hayes, 2002). Through using mindfulness-based techniques, the individual learns to detach their perception and experience of the triggering stimuli from the stimuli

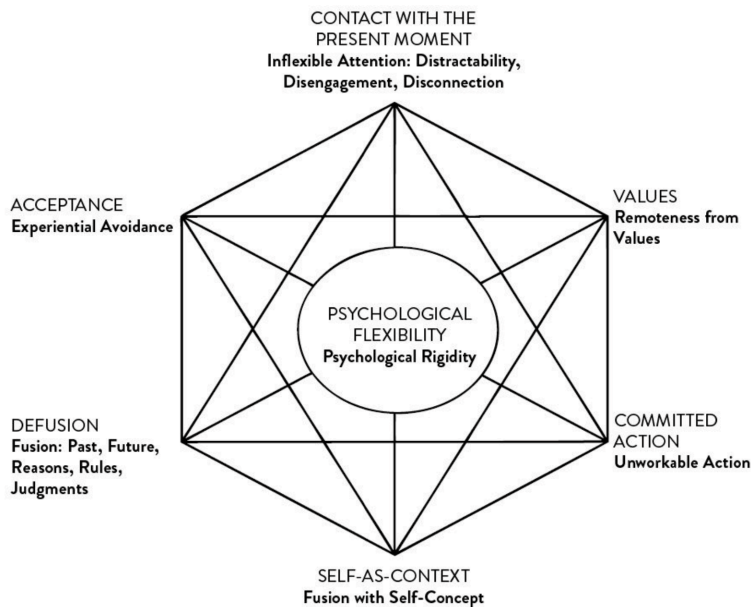
itself (cognitive defusion), accept the presence of uncomfortable emotions, and take actions of personal importance to them in the presence of uncomfortable feelings (Valued actions)(Juncos and Markman, 2015; Clark et al, 2020;). The ability to engage in valued behaviours in the presence of emotional distress is referred to as Psychological flexibility (Juncos et al., 2017; Harris, 2019). Some measurements of progress are devised collaboratively with the individual in need of support, while a range of formal measures of symptoms are employed, some of which have been developed specifically for ACT (Juncos and Paiva e Pona, 2018, and Barney et al., 2019).

EFT is thought to work through its impact on the limbic system - the brain area responsible for encoding memories with negative associations to efficiently alert us to threats (Church, 2018). EFT exposes the individual to their triggering stimulus, but does so through identifying the language and cognitions that evoke a threat response (Hofmann et al., 2011; Church et al., 2022). This allows the individual to reappraise the threat level of the memory or stimulus, enabling the limbic system to down regulate its reaction to not only that particular stimulus, but similar stimuli (Hofmann et al., 2011; Church, 2018). A systematic review of EFT for depression found that the stimulation of acupuncture points in the body regulated the autonomic nervous system and the threat response in three fMRI studies (Nelms and Castel, 2016). In this way, the physical component of tapping on designated "acupoints" is thought to enhance exposure and cognitive framing to counter-condition the limbic system (Church, 2018). Clinical EFT - the form of EFT that has been tested in numerous Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) - includes asking the individual to rate the intensity of their feeling before and after tapping using the Subjective Units of Distress Scale (SUDS), where 0 is no distress at all, and 10 is the highest level of distress (Ortner, 2013). This helps the clinician and the individual to measure progress and determine if another round of tapping is necessary. EFT aims to achieve a SUDS rating of 0 (Church, 2018).

As both interventions take place through language, it is possible that the mindful goals of ACT could be transferred onto the physical structure of tapping.

How does it look in practice?

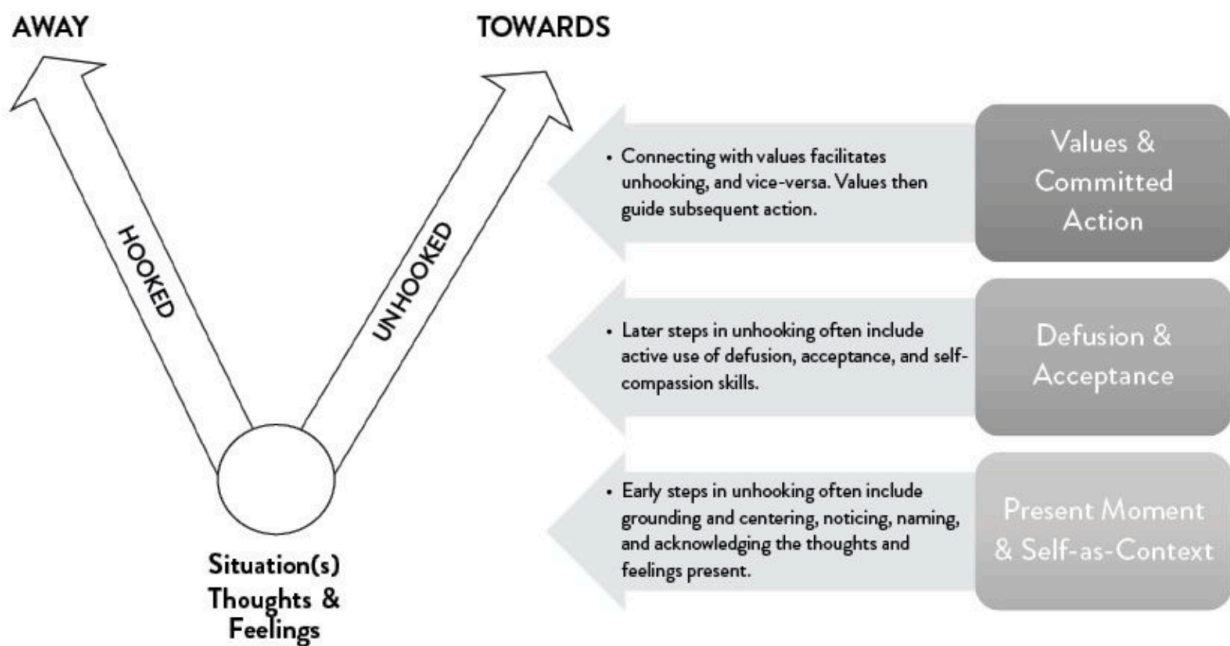
Figure 8: The ACT Hexaflex (Harris, 2019, p.59)



The therapeutic model for ACT is the “Hexaflex”, containing six areas of focus: Cognitive defusion, acceptance, self as context, contact with the present moment, values, and committed action (Han and Kim, 2022; Klimczak et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023) See Figure 8. Practitioners can target these core areas in any order they wish (Harris, 2019). In practice, ACT is not limited to therapeutic settings;

models of ACT adapted for other areas such as Acceptance and Commitment Coaching (ACC) and Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACTraining) have been used in the singing studio and in workplaces as strategies for management respectively (Shaw et al., 2020; Moran and Ming, 2020). While there is a variety of ways the Hexaflex can be deployed, there are some common features. ACT generally begins with some form of exposition about the nature of the approach. In some cases, this is the opening chapter of a book (Ciarrochi and Hayes, 2020), or a discussion which may contain explicit reference to the ACT hexaflex (Mahony et al., 2022), or simplified models, like Harris’s Choice Points - Figure 9 (p.37) demonstrates the relationship of this model to the Hexaflex processes.(Harris, 2019). Harris uses a diagram that frames the ACT model in terms of choices - there are moves “towards” the person we want to be (psychological flexibility and valued action), and moves “away” from these values, often because we are “hooked” by our thoughts and feelings about our situation (cognitive fusion and experiential avoidance). Harris uses this model to explain the need for “unhooking” skills, so that we are more likely to make “towards” choices that lead us to be the person we want to be.

Figure 9: Choice Points (Harris, 2019, p. 40)



From here, the practice can focus on verbal identification of the individual's values, or mindfulness skills that support the individual in defusing from their thoughts and feelings - it depends on the needs of the individual (Harris, 2019). Mindfulness skills can be developed through a range of mediums and methods - Harris (2019) states that ACT is a flexible and creative model in this respect. 12 sessions of treatment is a common number for an ACT intervention according to Harris (2019), but effective, significant results have been produced in significantly less time with singing teachers trained in ACC (Shaw et al., 2020, Mahony et al., 2022). For both Shaw et al.(2020) and Mahony et al. (2022), sessions were entirely focused on using the ACT model to support singing students with MPA, and 7-8 hours of training in the model were received by Shaw and Mahony respectively, who delivered the intervention. These studies present an argument for the ability of singing teachers with no clinical background to support students with MPA (with appropriate training), and a rationale for creating a specific set of sessions solely focused on administering ACC (for a sample of planning, see the additional resource linked in Mahony et al., p.20). While this could be valuable to a singing student, not all students will be able to afford a separate set of classes for their MPA, or may wish to have a more integrated approach.

EFT

All forms of EFT are based on "The Basic Recipe". This is freely available from EFTUniverse.com, and is explained in more depth in The EFT Manual (Church, 2018). Once a particular problem or issue is selected to be "tapped on", It operates as per Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: The Basic Recipe (Church, 2018)

EFT on a Page

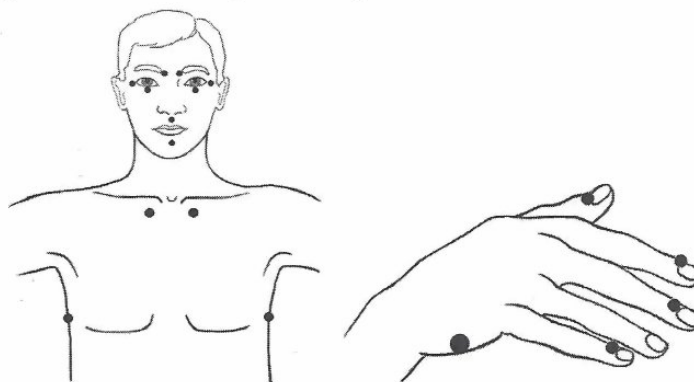
- 1. Where in your body** do you feel the emotional issue most strongly?
- 2. Determine the distress level** in that place in your body on a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is maximum intensity and 0 is no intensity:

10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0

- 3. The Setup:** Repeat this statement three times, while continuously tapping the Karate Chop point on the side of the hand (large dot on hand diagram below):

"Even though I have _____ (name the problem), I deeply and completely accept myself."

- 4. The Tapping Sequence:** Tap about 7 times on each of the energy points in these two diagrams, while repeating a brief phrase that reminds you of the problem.



- 5. Determine your distress level** again on a scale of 0 to 10 again.
If it's still high, say:
"Even though I have some remaining _____ (problem), I deeply and completely accept myself."
- 6. Repeat from Step 1** till your distress level is as close to 0 as possible.

Find dozens of Tap-Along videos at EFTUniverse.com

EFT encourages practitioners to explore all underlying memories that may lie at the root of an individual's discomfort, as more than one experience can inform the limbic system's activation of the stress response (Church, 2018). The importance of attending to different aspects of the experience is stressed; for some a particular word, visual, olfactory or sonic aspect of the event may be triggering, and all aspects need to be tapped on until the SUDS rating has come down between 0-2 (Church, 2018). This is not the only format of practice; there is a "Full Basic Recipe" where additional acupoints on the hand, and eye movements are incorporated. The manner in which the problem is verbalised can also be more flowing and conversational, as demonstrated in scripts for EFT throughout *The Tapping Solution* by Nick Ortner (2013). Where an intervention is ineffective, Church suggests that a different memory may lie at the heart of the issue, that a key aspect of a memory may not have been addressed, or that secondary gain (where an individual derives some gain from their difficulty) could be operational (Church, 2018). For a singing student with MPA, secondary gain may be the benefit of avoiding the criticism of others. EFT also cites psychological reversal as a reason for ineffective treatment - within EP, this is when the electrical polarities of a person's body are reversed, which can impede healing. Tapping on the SH point is thought to correct this polarity (Church, 2018). This concept is poorly defined, however, and has also been used in early versions of EFT to dismiss critics of the practice, framing the individual's "negative thinking and a tendency to self-sabotage" as the root of the intervention's failure (Pignotti, 2007; Panneerselvam and Ramasamy, 2022, p.413). Some of the concerning practices within the online culture of EFT and its precursor, Thought Field Therapy (TFT), will be addressed again in the Impact section (p.49).

Is it effective?

ACT is a "well-established" treatment for a variety of health problems" many of which centre on anxiety (Levin et al., 2017, cited in Juncos et al. 2017). This assessment of the research is telling; while ACT does not aim to treat anxiety, anxiety reduction is a byproduct; one that is often noted within the literature, where many studies note reductions that are maintained below the original

level of at follow up (Hooper and Larsson 2015; Juncos and Markman, 2015; Juncos et al. 2017; Clark et al., 2020; Shaw et al., 2020). The evidence base for ACT suffers from poor methodological quality and is difficult to aggregate (Öst, 2014; Mowrey, 2015). An ethical question of the appropriateness of singing teacher to use ACT is a further question. Studies into online, self-help protocols that coach individuals in the use of ACT have been shown to promote psychological flexibility and reduce anxiety significantly (Hooper and Larson, 2015). ACT interventions led by nonspecialists who had been trained in ACT to support participants struggling with weight loss had positive outcomes (Richards, et al. 2022). Similarly, Wetherall et al. (2011) used novice therapists to deliver ACT to depressed participants and noted symptoms reduction (cited in Hooper and Larson, 2015). Mowrey (2015) indicated in her meta-analysis of ACT that the practitioner's level of experience as a therapist was not a significant predictor of treatment outcomes. This dovetails with the findings of Juncos and Paiva e Pona (2018), Juncos and Markman (2015), Clark et al., (2020), Shaw et al., (2020), Mahony et al., (2022), where music teachers with non-clinical backgrounds delivered ACT interventions, achieving significant results efficiently. The student-teacher relationship as a mirror to client-therapist alliance is also noted as a potentially useful relationship for the treatment of MPA (Shaw et al., 2020; Mahony et al., 2022). The possibility that ACT could be safely, ethically and effectively administered by a singing teacher with some training in the model does have some support in the literature.

Clinical EFT meets the standards for an empirically validated therapy for anxiety, depression, phobias, and Post-traumatic stress disorder set by the American Psychological Association (APA) (Bach et al. 2019; Church et al., 2022; Stapleton et al., 2023). EFT is often met with scepticism, particularly for the tapping aspect of the treatment (Feinstein, 2022). Stimulating acupuncture points is well supported by the evidence base as supporting the regulation of the body's stress response; a longitudinal study at Harvard analysed brain areas through needling, and discovered that areas associated with fear and pain were consistently and rapidly regulated by acupuncture (Hui et al., 2005; Napadow et al., 2007; Fang et al., 2009). The anatomical basis for meridians is still considered theoretical in western medicine, but some studies have identified certain fascia and vessel-nerve-bundles that closely resemble the meridian lines (Maurer et al., 2019), while others

have used dye injections at acupuncture points revealing linear migrations closely aligned with the meridian structure (Li et al., 2021). Further to this, six studies and a meta-analysis have found that cognitive framing and exposural elements of therapy are enhanced by tapping; it is an active component in the intervention (Stapleton et al., 2023). EFT also has some support for “borrowing benefits” - this is where a person can benefit from watching EFT be carried out, and it has been tested with PTSD group workshops (Church et al., 2022). Within *The EFT Manual*, “The Apex Effect” and Psychological Reversal are cited as factors that impact EFT’s efficacy. Church et al. (2012) claims that The Apex Effect has been reported in EP research as an incident where an individual forgets the intensity of their discomfort once it has been alleviated, citing this as the reason to use a SUDS rating before and after treatment, and Church et al. (2018) and Ortner (2013) also mention this. No studies examining effect could be found to elucidate or corroborate this outside of informal observation for the present study. Of the two articles mentioning this effect on EFTUniverse website, one worryingly cites the effect as a cause for concern because “a person who is affected will not go and tell everyone about EFT” (Hartmann, 2023). Similarly, the citations for psychological reversal in Church et al. (2018) and Ortner (2013) do not reference any formal studies into the phenomenon; it is not elucidated in these texts how magnetic polarities might be related to similarly named concepts within psychology - namely psychological reversals or reversal theory, which appears to be about a framework of understanding and conceptualising human motivation (O’Connell, 1991; Watkins et al., 2022).

While both models have limitations within their research, both also enjoy empirical support for outcomes relevant to students with MPA.

Praxis:

A guide to AC-EFT

This teaching resource is not a final product but a theory of how ACT and EFT might weave together (to create AC-EFT), and to provide the teacher with a practical overview of how it might be

approached. As outlined above, ACT and EFT are both supported in empirical literature as effective approaches for anxiety, and are well met in terms of their shared basis in CBT, an approach that views language and cognitions both as sites of maintenance and of healing. While ACT and EFT do not agree on the same symptoms to treat, EFT's physical components can still be used, as well as its method of cognitive framing and exposure. The main frameworks for the practice of ACT used in this resource are Choice Points (Harris, 2019) and the Mindful Action Plan (MAP) (Moran and Ming, 2020). Choice points is a clear and visual way of explaining ACT that quickly and effectively conveys the goal of encouraging students to respond to their present situation in a manner consistent with their values as a performer. Although Choice points reflects the six core therapeutic aspects of the ACT Hexaflex, but it does not utilise conceptual domain language from that field, making it more accessible. While the teacher should have a deeper knowledge of ACT and the Hexaflex, ideally through some training in the model, this resource is intended for use in 1:1 private sessions: we are not striving to go to the same depth of application as a therapist, or a trained practitioner delivering an focused series of ACT interventions for MPA as in Shaw et al. (2020), or Mahony et al., (2022). In this context, the brevity of the model is an asset, as it allows us to explain the model concisely while imparting the key concerns and motivations of ACT that will inform the AC-EFT process. In order to retain the framework of the Hexaflex in the midst of speaking while tapping with the student, MAP's structure of combining the six core elements in a single statement has been adapted as a manner of touching on key aspects of ACT during the tapping process (Moran and Ming, 2020). While this statement differs from EFT's set up statement, Church does advise that once familiar with EFT, the set up statement can be changed as long as it includes a component of exposure to the individual's discomfort, and a positive statement of self-acceptance (Church, 2018).

For this proposed fusion of ACT and EFT, the basic recipe (rather than the full basic recipe) will be used for tapping points, but the "script" of the tapping will follow a more conversational tone as in Ortnier (2013). Church notes that experienced practitioners often learn to make the flow of the "reminder statements" take on a more conversational tone, and that some individuals even benefit from tapping as they recount a stressful event (Church, 2018). Ortnier (2013) also advises that

when an individual seems to have gained relief from EFT, we can switch to positive, affirming statements. This provides us the space to incorporate the student's language about their experience of MPA, alongside acceptance and alignment with their values as a singer and performer. Perhaps the biggest change to either model within this proposed fusion is the omission of the SUDS scores at the beginning and end of the practice. As ACT does not seek to control anxiety, using a SUDS score could encourage the student to employ the AC-EFT practice as a means to avoid their discomfort. Harris notes this is also a danger with many of the mindfulness practices found in ACT, and should be gently discouraged (Harris, 2019).

The resource is organised into two parts with scripts, notes from practice, and diagrams. It can be viewed in full in Appendix 2, Version 3 (p.61), alongside earlier versions of the resource.

Part 1: Understanding and Preparing

This is organised into five sub-sections:

1. Empathy and listening: The student's experience and perspective

In ACT and EFT, the language used by the individual seeking support is important - within that language is information about the stimulus that triggers them, the relational patterns that underpin the entrenched response, somatic symptoms, and rules that inform our student's concept of what, and why, they are experiencing the anxiety (Church, 2018). The process begins by inviting the student to describe their experiences. Listening attentively and asking questions relevant to MPA gives us a chance to gather key information about the student's thoughts, feelings, somatic experience, and environmental factors, all of which will support the tapping process in part 2. During this time, we gently keep the student on the topic, so that we do not stray into conversations outside the scope of the lesson. It may become evident during this conversation that a student requires more specialist support; it may be necessary for the teacher to reiterate their scope of practice, and suggest a referral. In the context of Choice Points, (Harris, 2019), at this stage the

student is giving us a rich description of the thoughts, feelings and situations that guide their choices, as well as information about how “away” and “towards” moves manifest for them. As we listen, we compassionately validate their feelings - modelling what we will ask them to do in part 2 when we begin to tap. Sometimes in practice, this information is gathered over the course of many sessions, rather than just one. A sample of the scripts for this section can be viewed in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Sample questions from AC-EFT resource

- Somatic symptoms - *What does it feel like in your body when you perform?*
- Underlying concerns - *In your mind, what are you worried people in your audience will think?*
- Thoughts/ Feelings
- Environmental factors (educational/professional cultures) - *You're studying singing at college; How do the other singers talk about singing? How do they talk about people making mistakes?*
- Cultural understanding of self-presentation - *Is there an element of what other people expect from you at play? Is this different in different spaces in your life?*
- Impact - *It seems like this is ongoing for you. How do these nerves impact your performing?*

2. Choice Points: Setting the stage

This stage introduces the Choice Points model to the student. Harris (2019) advises the practitioner is advised to draw it step by step to allow the student to digest the model. The aim is to show them that our proposed strategy may not target anxiety in the manner that they might anticipate, but rather empower them to make decisions. The term “hooked” here is used to describe cognitive fusion, where a student’s belief in the content of their cognitions guides behaviour unchecked. A script based on Harris (2019) is provided to ensure relevance to the singers (See a sample in Figure 12).

Figure 12: An extract from a script for Choice Points from the AC-EFT resource

"As humans, we are creatures of behaviour. We *do* things. We choose *not to do* things. This applies to our singing too. So, some of the things we do (or don't do) move us closer towards the performer we want to be."

[Draw the towards arrow, add label "towards"]

"These might be things like warming up. Writing a song. Submitting a demo somewhere. Eating well. Resting when you're sick. They all nudge us closer to that goal of living as the person we want to be. On the other side of that, we have things that move us away from what we value."

[Draw the away arrow, add label "away"]

"These are choices we make that hold us back from those values - this could be things like not playing open mic nights, not watching back recordings of your performances, never going out to gigs, not practicing, shouting in the company of friends - all sorts of things. Here's an important fact about how we make these choices: they always take place in a context - contexts like the situation we're in, how we're feeling, or how we're thinking. And this can really impact on what we choose to do."

[Label "Situations, feelings and thoughts", leaving space for choice points]

3. Location Location Location: Your student in the broader context.

To aid students in “unhooking”, The Choice Points model provides an opportunity to discuss some of the external context that informs their situation, demonstrating that many circumstances of their performing - including their own cognitions - may not be within their control. In my experience, while students have little information about MPA specifically, and believe that their reaction is a personal failing and a problem that they need to get rid of in order to perform well (McGinnis, 2005). This new context can challenge some of their existing internal hypotheses about their MPA (as in cognitive therapy more generally) (Hofmann, 2011). It can connect them to common humanity - a shared experience of the human condition - which has been found to be a key component of self compassion (Neff, 2011). I also draw on descriptions of the Stress response cycle by Nagoski and Nagoski (2020), anecdotes about high level artists and their experiences of MPA, and the possibility of mistakes in performances at any level. As problematic MPA is unlikely to disappear overnight, you will likely have many sessions to provide a range of examples that give context to the student’s anxiety. See sample talking points in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Sample talking points for contextualising anxiety from the AC-EFT Resource

- **Why do we need Anxiety?** We can explain that a certain level of it can help to keep you safe and alert in times of danger or high stakes. The student might have more anxiety than they need with MPA, but we'd also be concerned if you never had any at all. Urbach-Weithe Disease is an interesting example of a condition where a person doesn't have the usual brain structure to feel fear; this leads to all sorts of dangerous situations - economically, physically because they don't feel fear, even when they should (Costandi, 2013).
- **The Stress Response cycle** - I find it useful to share with my students that once activated by a trigger, your body opens up the stress response cycle, but that we're not often taught about how to complete the cycle. This can mean we have numerous cycles open and this can build in our system. See Burnout by Emily and Amelia Nagoski for a very accessible explanation of the process, including the best ways to close it (as backed by empirical research). Spoiler alert: Exercising for 30 minutes is the quickest way!
- **Trying new things:** As our careers grow and different opportunities come along, they will be unknowns to you, and you may well feel anxious. Anxiety will be present as our careers grow and present new challenges.
- **You can have risk factors outside of your control for anxiety** - One study has found that musicians under 30, especially women, are at a greater risk for MPA (Kenny et al., 2012)
- **You can be a high level artist AND have MPA**- Your students are in good company! I like to share examples of high level artists making mistakes, or being interrupted by other factors, emphasising how these mistakes don't at all diminish their skills or impact. One study found that 31% of the professional orchestral musicians it surveyed were taking medication for MPA (Kenny et al., 2012)

4. What are we doing it for? The Student's Values

Here we ask the students about their own deeply held values around performing to gather insight that will serve us in part two. A sample of the suggested questions is found in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Sample questions to explore student values from the AC-EFT Resource

- *"Why music? What is it you love about it?"*
- *"What drives you to share music through performance?"*
- *"What is your favourite thing about your favourite singer vocally?"*
- *"What does your favourite singer use their platform to do?"*

5. The Strategy: Unhooking with AC-EFT

At this point I recommend the inclusion of a summary of what we understand about the Choice Points model and the student's values, before offering AC-EFT. It is useful to demonstrate a cycle of tapping and the manner of speaking, so they can understand what they are consenting to. A suggested script is provided in Figure 15.

Figure 15: A script for offering AC-EFT from the AC-EFT Resource

"So here's where we're at: Anxiety is a normal part of us, we don't get to control it, and we're not going to worry about getting rid of our anxiety, but rather focus on unhooking from it so that it has a sensible place in the picture. That unhooking makes space for our values to tell us what we should do - it creates more balance. For example - Self-expression is an important thing for you - it's so important you're already taking steps towards it. The fact that you are doing your best to express yourself with your music making shows that you can unhook - that you have the determination and the courage to do it. It's already there.

I'd like to try something with you - it's a modified version of a practice called EFT, where you tap on different points in your body while you talk yourself through what you're feeling. I think it can be useful because it gives you a process you can do to help yourself unhook and make space for your values when you need it - and you can record it on your phone if you like. I'll show you what it looks like..."

Part 2: The AC-EFT process

Using call and response with the teacher leading, a modified version of the MAP statement is spoken and repeated three times on the SH point. The teacher then carries on to a conversational run through of the student's MPA (still using call and response), and cycles through the six

Hexaflex items in a modified order that facilitates my sense of a natural flow of concepts from my work with singing students. No changes have been made to the acupoints or their order from EFT's basic recipe. Students could record this practice for use at home on their phone. Figure 16 shows an illustration from the resource, and a sample script in Figure 17 (p.48).

Figure 16: AC-EFT tapping diagram from the AC-EFT Resource

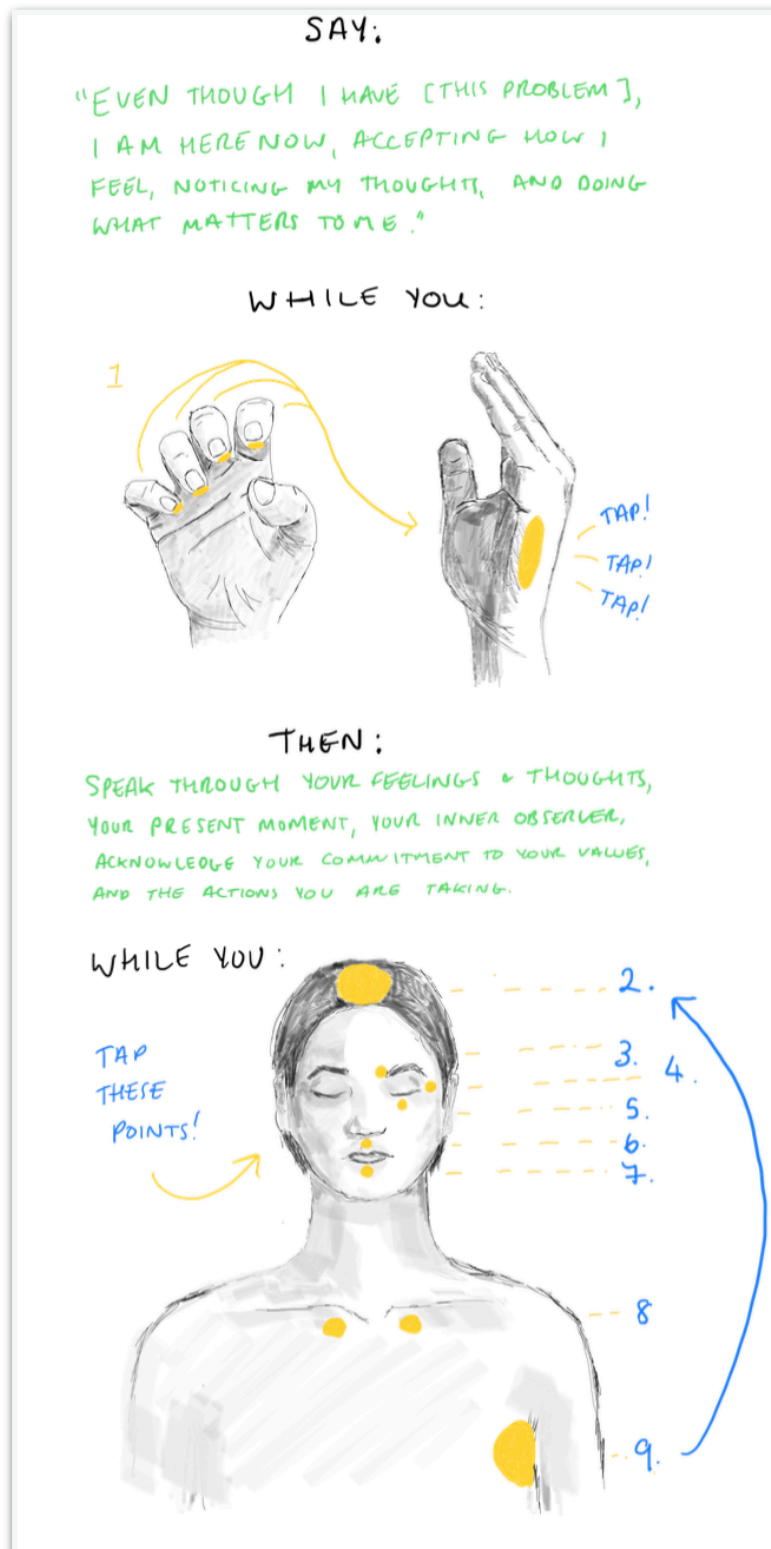


Figure 17: A sample script for AC-EFT from the AC-EFT Resource

I feel really nervous and panicked right now. I feel really nervous and panicked right now. I can feel my heart beating. I'm sweating. and I'm scared. I'm really scared. I am willing to acknowledge these feelings, And I can accept them, even though I'm uncomfortable. Even though I'm really uncomfortable, I can accept them.

My thinking is really fast. I keep worrying about how my voice will shake because I'm nervous. I keep thinking about what people will think of me, or what they will say. I'm worried people will think I'm not good enough. The tone of my thinking is fearful and negative. I can accept them because I know how scared I feel.

At the same time as I'm feeling scared, I can feel my feet on the ground. I can feel the chair beneath me. I can feel my hands tapping. I can feel my breath. There's a part of me that's able to notice my body is here, And it doesn't seem to be affected by the fear. There is a noticing part of me. There is a part of me that observes. That part of me is present in good feelings or bad feelings. It can notice neutral things like me sitting on this chair. I am sitting on a chair. I am tapping. I can trust that that part of myself will still be here, no matter what, still able to see what's happening. This is a real part of me. It's just as real as the feelings I'm having. It will still be here, unchanged, after the performance. This part of me will still be here after the performance.

Part of me is scared. Part of me is thinking quickly. Part of me is neutral. A huge part of me is here because I care about doing something brave with my life. I am here because I want to be brave. We don't have a lot of time and I think getting up onstage is brave. I can be brave and scared at the same time. I can be brave and scared at the same time. I've been brave and scared before! Giving this my best shot really matters to me. I am living with courage. I am being brave. This is me living corageously! This is me being brave.

I sometimes think I'm not able for this. That hurts. But I signed up to perform because I care about being brave. I signed up even though this is uncomfortable for me. Signing up was brave. And I'm still here. I'm still here. I'm still here. I'm not onstage yet, but I am still doing the work that it takes for me to be onstage. I respect that commitment. I am doing what matters to me. I can look at myself in the mirror And say "you did that". "It was hard for you. But you did that." That's really meaningful for me. It's so meaningful for me.

I can be nervous and scared and still do this. I don't have to do it perfectly to be brave. I don't have to do this perfectly to share something real with this audience. I don't have to do this perfectly to connect with this audience. I'm doing exactly what I care about right now. I'm doing exactly what I care about right now. I'm doing exactly what I care about even though I feel nervous.

I think I feel a little more grounded now. Maybe a little. I know I am nervous but I have purpose. That purpose is what matters. No matter what, I won't abandon myself. I won't abandon myself. No matter what, my inner observer is still there. I can still sit in this chair. I can still see myself And accept my feelings and thoughts. I'm going to do what matters to me. I know I can do what matters to me. No matter what, I have my own back.

I accept myself. I support myself. I believe in being brave.

Impact

The resource created can be viewed both as the product of practical application and an assessment of what aspects of each model can viably sit together. As AC-EFT has arisen from a singing teacher's practice, its potential benefits speak to that context. Were this model to prove effective, some of the benefits could mirror those discussed by Shaw et al (2020) and Mahony et al., (2022) - It could provide a cost-effective and targeted way for a student to address their MPA that may feel more congruent and less stigmatising to a student than seeking out therapy. A strong therapeutic alliance between individual and therapist correlates with more positive outcomes, irrespective of the form of therapy used, and this could boost the efficacy of the intervention in the

case of the partnership between student and teacher (Shaw et al., 2020). Additionally, The implications for my time management and boundaries around my scope of practice are also positive; this resource has made me consider more efficient ways of exploring MPA in discussion, and at what stage of a conversation I should make a referral. Choice Points and MAP also have the benefit of using clear, everyday language that will be easier to recall to the student as they grow and develop. This could mean that one lesson spent utilising the resource lays the foundation of a process the student and teacher can engage with efficiently when negative or difficult experiences arise in their work.

The limitations of this study must be considered for their potential impact. Several aspects of this resource are inconclusive; I would have liked to have worked on an integrated set up statement for the practice for longer, included videos for instruction, and created some fabricated “student profiles” as samples of how the scripts might work in different cases. As this study is theoretical and emergent, there are many potential limitations to its application. The synthesis is limited by my lack of training and expertise in ACT and EFT, which could mean that rather than experiencing the benefits of both models, the student receives a watered-down version of each, benefitting from neither. The time constraints of this study inhibited my ability to look more deeply into the epigenetic effects of EFT, or the implications of what neural imaging has revealed about how it works (Church et al., 2022). It also precluded a wider breadth of sources from practice - The work of Joe Oliver and John Hill in Acceptance and Commitment Coaching (ACC), or the resources for EFT on Dr. Peta Stapleton’s website to name just two. A further crucial work by Juncos and Paiva e Pona, specifically about ACT for MPA was unavailable for review, despite searching through many libraries (as indicated in Stage 2 of the literature review, p.31). More time spent researching MPA would also have benefitted the work. This study is also inhibited by its limited engagement with wider conversations about the teacher as therapist.

Some limitations of this synthesis lie with the research base. Establishing the efficacy of a psychotherapeutic intervention can be difficult; according to APA standards, blind-tested RCTs are the gold standard for testing - where the person administering an intervention is unaware whether

they are offering an active treatment or a control (Church et al., 2022). While this is important for mitigating bias, a psychotherapeutic intervention does require the practitioner to know what kind of treatment they are offering, and this can limit its ability to meet the APA's standards (Stapleton et al., 2023). Further to this, many systematic reviews and outcome studies in EFT are carried out by key proponents of the style, like Dawson Church, David Feinstein and Peta Stapleton; where they are not the primary author, they are frequently members of the research teams carrying out the review. Something similar can be found within the niche body of research in ACT for MPA - David Juncos is regularly featured as an author, trainer, or contributor in these studies. This is not necessarily a problem; Higgins et al. (2022) advises that systematic reviews are carried out by teams which must include experts in the field. It stands to reason too that proponents of a model would wish to carry out research into its efficacy. It does, however, point to the importance of replicating such studies with independent researchers where possible, but this too is difficult - the Open Science Collaboration's research in 2015 found that of 90 major studies across three reputable psychology journals, less than half of those studies could be replicated (cited in Feinstein, 2022). Both bodies of research encounter the potential for bias in different ways; EFT has been manualised from its inception making studies easier to replicate and aggregate results, but as it is still emergent, more studies that are independent of its key proponents are necessary (Feinstein, 2022). Conversely, ACT is a vast field of research with many independent studies, but the heterogeneity of study designs it encompasses make it difficult to meaningfully aggregate and assess its efficacy (Öst, 2014; Mowrey, 2015). Frequent disparities in measurements used for everything from ACT outcomes to therapist adherence mean that some question its status as an efficacious treatment for any disorder (Öst, 2014). Within the niche of ACT for MPA, it is evident that these critiques are being considered; homogeneity of measurements used to assess ACT's outcomes increases and improves across the studies, clearer reporting about the experience of those administering the practice, and the manner in which they were supervised and trained, is evident (Juncos et al., 2017; Juncos and de Paiva e Pona, 2018; Shaw et al., 2020, Mahony et al., 2022). In this way, while both fields are working towards clear, empirically supported practices, this process is not without challenges and uncertainties still remain. This teaching resource is bound to such uncertainties.

Although EFT enjoys empirical support, its history and surrounding culture leads me to view it with caution. Thought Field Therapy (TFT), EFT's precursor, was created by Roger Callahan in the 1980s, when he experimented with combining kinesiology and ET, using tapping in a similar manner to EFT (Pignotti, 2007; Panneerselvam and Ramasamy, 2022). TFT's conceptual framework proved to be pseudoscientific, and practices of training within the organisation were extremely unethical (Pignotti, 2007). When TFT was ineffective, Callahan's concept of Psychological reversal blamed an individual's repeated contact with "toxins" - Pignotti's account of clients paying Callahan \$600 per hour (with 5 hour minimum per booking) to supervise what they ate to eliminate such "toxins" is chilling, even if well-intended (Pignotti, 2007; Panneerselvam and Ramasamy, 2022). It is disappointing to see Psychological reversal so poorly defined in *The EFT Manual*; while unsubstantiated concepts are an inevitable part of emergent fields, psychological reversal and the apex effect are described alongside proven aspects of the method without any signposting that they are not yet supported by formal research (Church, 2018). This seems unethical of a book authored by one of EFT's leading researchers. *The EFT Manual* and trainings associated with it, are closely linked to a website called "EFT Universe", where one can find mailing lists and resources about the method, and there are many concerning aspects to the manner in which EFT is being disseminated by this group. Having signed up for a mailing list as part of the process for this study, I have received many emails each week, with some concerning subject lines such as "Yes, PTSD is curable!", and copy that emphasises financial remuneration one might receive as a trained practitioner - "Clients are delighted to pay certified practitioners \$100 an hour or more for their expertise" (EFT Universe, 2023; Church, 2023). While leading experts like Church are entitled to earn a living from their skills and from training others, it seems incongruent to me to espouse empirical evidence as a core value of a model, while simultaneously gaining financial benefit from abandoning ethical restraint in descriptions and promotion of that model. While this is only a reflection of one community related to EFT, and one practitioner's account of TFT, it may indicate that the culture surrounding EFT has not yet divested from the practices of its predecessor. I would be very cautious about setting my students down a path where they could be given misleading information and resources that could negatively impact their

wellbeing, although further research may reveal other communities of practice that handle EFT with more care.

Future research

This study is likely to impact on future directions for my practice and research, and this could take many forms such as training in ACT, training in EFT, creating a study to pilot the resource, and consulting with experienced practitioners for feedback. Many of the areas and resources not reviewed for this study could be engaged with, either formally or informally, in order to improve my understanding of each model and the way they are used in practice.

Conclusion

This study set out to research a potential tool for students with MPA that arose from my practice, through means of a literature review, the creation of a teaching resource, and the maintenance of a research journal. The three components of PaR were employed: my practice as a singing teacher (*know-how*), creating a resource that explicitly outlines contexts and methods of practice of AC-EFT (*know-what*) and outsider perspectives through best practice texts and empirical studies (*know-that*). The review led me to a number of conclusions about the compatibility of ACT and EFT for synthesis - ACT and EFT have many common approaches, such as exposure to and acknowledgement of thoughts, feelings and situations, and emphasis on compassion is shown in the best practice resources selected for this work. The biggest difference in the models is their approach to anxiety; ACT does not see anxiety reduction as a focus, whereas EFT measures this outcome carefully. My position has been to take ACT's view of psychological avoidance as the root of the problem, while still holding some space for symptom reduction through the use of EFT. Further to this, as EFT is a physical practice, it could give the singer a sense of taking action to

support themselves in times of difficulty. While differences between ACT and EFT have not necessarily been resolved by this theoretical model, this has greatly improved my own sense of how I might engage with a student in discussion about MPA that stays within the remit of my practice. Future directions for this research could included further literature reviews, consultation with experts and experienced practitioners, or piloting the resource in a formal context.

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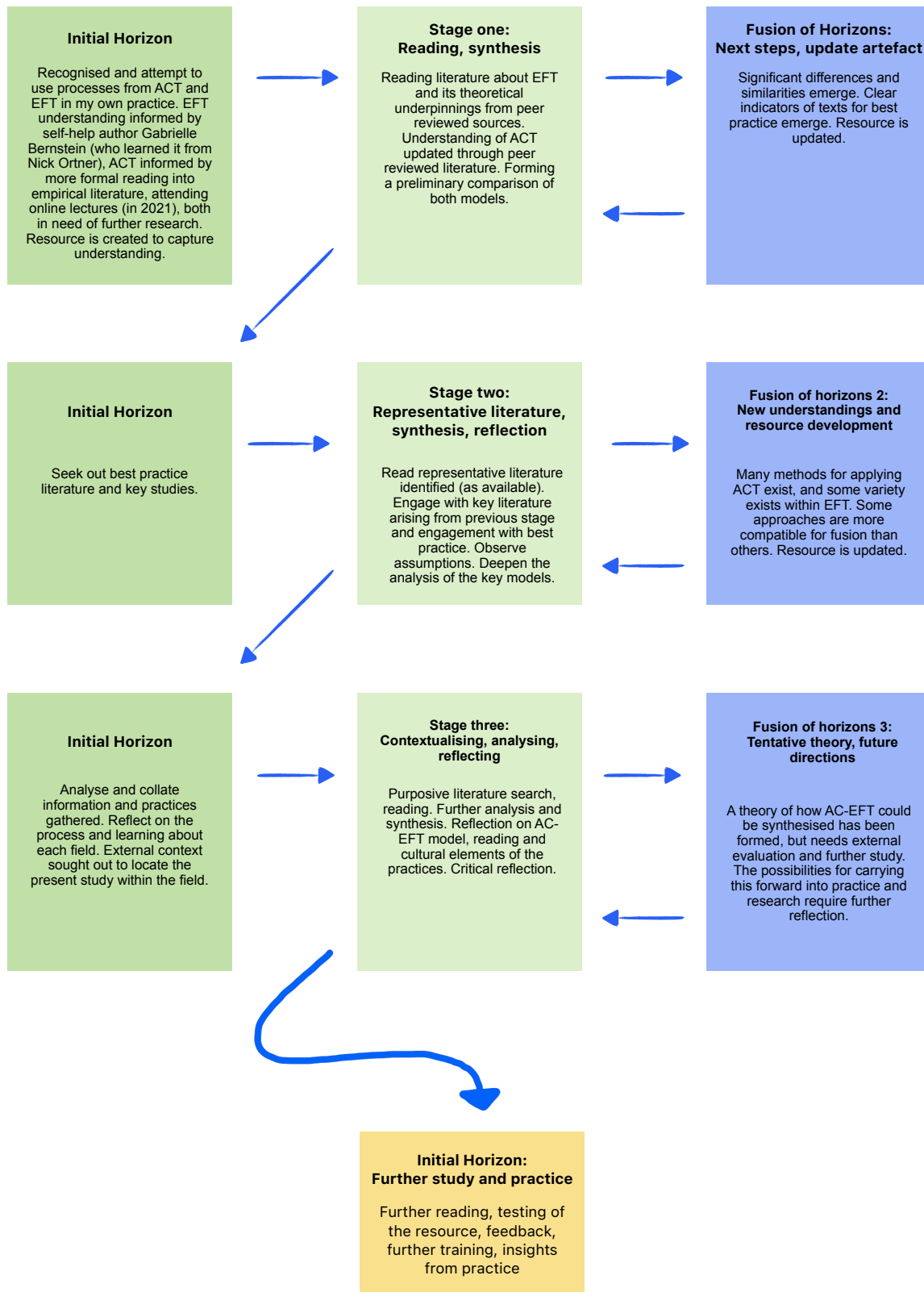
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Hermeneutic Spiral



Appendix 2: Artefact Development

This appendix contains links to the drafts of the artefact, and some context for the progress of the work at the point that they were created.

Version 1

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IN8nK_NkmGfIhi82WBip0mN2MDnnp_X_/view?usp=drive_link

This version was created in Freeform at the outset of the study in advance of the literature review, designed to capture my understandings and thoughts about what this synthesis might entail.
Please Zoom in to read smaller text.

Version 2

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ePlqazvREkUj0VzAMxaSE4J6Ud3pMrjw/view?usp=drive_link

This version was created between the first and second phases of study, before resources for best practice had been read. New understandings of each practice had been reached through the exploratory phase. At this point, I was beginning to look at ways of integrating the two models, and thinking about what levels of explanation teachers might need to be able to use them.

Version 3

https://drive.google.com/file/d/191SuQ-q_mZG1gie6lugPDusQyDz_8B9X/view?usp=sharing

Version 3 was created after best practice resources had been read and some reflection had been done on the literature review.

Appendix 3: Early Study design

Version 1:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OlpJT-V3i9ymZ0k1jF0rDa7JWVJQHkTk/view?usp=drive_link

Version 2:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19zHS4HpAKM24JUckOTjtrUw17ogF6jih/view?usp=sharing>

Appendix 4: Timescales & Schedule

Please see this link to access the initial timeframe for this project and the working document.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aXIUF9nyD_c5GGcPqcNxW1Gi2_WfHCKt/view?usp=sharing

Appendix 5: Search records

A spreadsheet recording search terms and databases used throughout the study can be found on the link below. Please use the tabs on the bottom of the spreadsheet to navigate the different stages of the review.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1g3gzwQ6p4Rncol0SB0q8NwD9GEpAMI__ZRx34hUfiXo/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix 6: My Practice

During the first 8 weeks of the study, I spent time reflecting on and understanding my own practice. This was created over some weeks, and continually tweaked and adjusted. It is not considered to be a finished document but rather a site of attending to practice differently, in order to build on and develop my understanding of my work.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x_HxbETcHFDSLt0MsZGzK-vFCL3i6lxE/view?usp=share_link

Appendix 7: Mindfulness Action Plan resource

Taken from Moran and Ming (2020)

<i>I am here now, accepting the way I feel and noticing my thoughts, while doing what I care about.</i>		
	Addressing Internal-World Issues	✓
I Am	Notice if you are being influenced by any unhelpful self-descriptions. Let go of any problematic thoughts that you are believing about yourself.	
Here Now	Center your situational awareness on what you are doing. Notice what is happening here and now, and rather than getting wrapped up in events not in your present control, let go of these distracting events. Focus on what is relevant to your actions.	
Accepting	Allow yourself to acknowledge any emotions you are having without trying to control the emotions. Be willing to simply have those feelings while moving forward with valuable actions.	
Noticing	Prepare to simply notice thoughts that arise while moving forward with your valued actions. Let those thoughts go if they are not helpful. Treat distracting thoughts as disconnected from action while choosing to act in a meaningful manner.	
Doing	To-Do List	
What I Care About	Values-Based Motivation	
	-- Personal Values: Describe your motivation for engaging in your chosen actions and why you aim for optimal performance.	
Designing Success with Performance Management		
Make sure all required resources for successful actions have been acquired.		
Publicly announce your commitment to meet performance goals.		
Alert your accountability partner about your commitment and goals.		
Describe incentives, performance criteria, and deadlines:		

Appendix 8: What, Now What, So What

Taken from ModelThinkers (2023).

STAGE	FOCUS	POSSIBLE QUESTIONS
WHAT?	Past: describe what happened	• What was your experience? • What happened, focusing on the actual facts only? • What did you particularly notice? • What worked well and what didn't? • Who else was involved? • What did you do? • What was the related data or information?
SO WHAT?	Present: analyse and sense-make	• How did you feel when it happened? • What might have been behind your response? • Was this event part of a broader pattern? • What caused this event? • Why might have other people acted the way they did? • What other insights or hypotheses might be drawn from the experience and data?
NOW WHAT	Future: effective next steps	• What lessons can you take forward in similar and other contexts? • How might you prevent negative outcomes or problems in a similar situation? • What would you do differently if a similar situation arose? • How might you better prepare and resource yourself for a similar situation? • How might you test out your understanding or hypotheses through tests or experiments?

Appendix 9: Research Journal

This resource is available for viewing online at this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VbWDMewxWHx2EGl5oesgLsf7RhZWQgao/view?usp=sharing>