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Critically evaluate a range of methodological approaches, research designs, and research methods appropriate to gather data from complex work-based settings, with due consideration to research ethics and issues of insider research (4500 words)

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Introduction

There are several philosophical elements which influence the process of research. All researchers, either consciously or subconsciously, will have an ontological and epistemological position, described as a research philosophy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These philosophical standpoints describe a researcher's perception of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) and have an impact upon the process of research, from the research question itself (Grix, 2002) to the methodology and methods used in the research process (Cohen, et al., 2017). This position has an influence on the methodological approach (Cohen, et al., 2017) which can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. Some researchers' philosophy may also lead them to a mixed method approach in which both methodologies are used. The combination of a research philosophy and methodology creates a research paradigm, which holds these beliefs, creating a framework for the research process (Bateson, 1972). These different paradigms will be explored within the context of vocal pedagogy, with a specific focus upon the impact of emotional distress upon the voice and how teachers can work with students to build vocal and emotional resilience to that distress.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is comprised of a researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions. These assumptions determine, not only *how* research is conducted (Dieronitou, 2014), but *what* a researcher chooses to research in the first place (Grix, 2002). This shows how important an understanding of these philosophical underpinnings are, as they influence the process of research at every level.

Ontology

A researcher's ontological position lays the foundations for the development of a research paradigm (Grix, 2002). Ontology refers to positions on reality: does reality exist externally and outside of human experience? Or is reality a construct of human experience? (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016; Ormston, et al., 2014). Different ontological theories are bred from

two disparate, early, ontological backgrounds: Heraclitus (c.535-c.475bc), who saw reality as moveable and changeable, and Parmenides, for whom reality was tangible and fixed (Crotty, 1998). Differing ontological theories have emerged from these two schools of thought, ranging from the belief that there is an objective truth that lies outside the researchers' experience (realism), echoing Parmenides, through to those who argue there is no truth at all (nominalism), echoing Heraclitus (Easterby-Smith, 2012).

It can be challenging to argue that no world exists outside of conscious experience (Crotty, 1998). As Kant (2014) argues, denial of an independent reality leaves the researcher at risk of 'the fallacy of solipsism'. Even if an individual holds the belief that the outside world exists solely because of conscious thought, they are still recognising that, in some form, an outside world exists (Kant, 2014). Mounce (1997) develops upon this idea, suggesting that, though we can only see the world within our own perspective, we cannot eliminate the perspective's we don't see without eradicating our own existence. Mounce uses the analogy of reading over the top of a pair of glasses: the words become blurry, and then clear again once he looks through his spectacles; "the change is not in the page. What has changed is my vision field or experience" (Mounce, 1997, p. 11). This awareness of alternative perspectives is relevant to research within vocal pedagogy: vocal pedagogues cannot see the mechanisms of the voice and a student may, for example, feel a sensation that teachers cannot hear. If we do not give credence to their perspective, do we not undermine our own experience of our voice? A student may then go for an ENT exam which reveals organic changes or audible variations to their voice may emerge. As with the page analogy, it is not the students initial experience that has changed, but our perspective of that experience. Using Mounce's (1997) analogy, for example, it is true that, for one person, without glasses, the page is blurry whilst, *at the same time*, existing in an unblurred form; therefore, both experiences are true. This reflects the relativist ontological position in which there are many truths (Easterby-Smith, 2012), and this philosophical standpoint may impact what, and how, a researcher chooses to research.

Epistemology

How a researcher chooses to make sense of, or find meaning out of, their perceived reality comes down to their epistemological position (Levers, 2013). These positions range from objective (Levers, 2013) or positivist (Cohen, et al., 2017; Easterby-Smith, 2012), to constructivist (Easterby-Smith, 2012; Cohen, et al., 2017) or subjective (Levers, 2013). An objective epistemological standpoint is where knowledge can be seen as singular and tangible and is often linked to a realist ontological position (Easterby-Smith, 2012). Here, meaning

exists beyond the conscious experience (Crotty, 1998), and an objective researcher aims to remove bias and find meaning regardless of social context (Levers, 2013). However, the mastery of the voice goes beyond the mastery of the vocal mechanisms itself, and “without the ineffable qualities of empathy and emotion, trained singers are not much more than finely calibrated tone machines” (Helding, 2020). This suggests that, to exclude research that explores the emotional, and subjective areas of vocal pedagogy, is to neglect a hugely important part of vocal research.

However, some areas of research do appear to stem from an objective epistemology. For example, Fancourt *et al*’s research (2015), on the impact of live music performances on the glucocorticoid response, shows that live performances increase cortisol levels, whilst low-stress music making reduces cortisol levels. The research question itself here reveals the epistemological stance, as the aim of the research is to identify tangible, objective information, presented in a numerical form. However, the relationship a singer has with their voice is nuanced and is intrinsic to an individual’s sense of self (O’Byrne, 2015). For the vocal pedagogue, therefore, the relevance of this research may come more from the subjective *impact* of the increase in cortisol and the consequential effect to feelings of stress.

This is where it is relevant to consider the subjective stance. Here truth is transitory, coming in and out of existence depending on experience (Crotty, 1998). This is of relevance to the vocal practitioner where, as Madill *et al.*, suggest, “the researcher and subject of research are both conscious beings interpreting and acting on the world around them” (2000, p. 9). The subjective stance also allows for the objective to be considered alongside (Crotty, 1998). For example, when Fancourt *et al*’s, (2015) study is considered *alongside* Musgrave’s research (2022) which ‘Examines the Paradox of Music-Making Positively Impacting Wellbeing but Musicians Suffering From Poor Mental Health’, the practicing vocal pedagogy researcher can gain an understanding of the wider complexities faced by their students (Crotty, 1998); a greater understanding of the *whole* picture is gained. The information from this piece of research is experiential and subjective, revealing a subjective, epistemological stance.

Research Methodology

Once a research philosophy has been identified, an appropriate research methodology begins to appear (Easterby-Smith, 2012; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Methodologies guide the researcher towards understanding what type of data is required and informs specific methods with which to collect that data (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). There are two overarching

methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is often focussed on tangible, statistical, or systematic experimentation, whilst qualitative research is more explanatory, with a focus on individual experience and non-numerical data (Mishra & Alok, 2017). Quantitative data, therefore, can be linked to realist ontological and objective epistemological positions (in which knowledge is tangible and reality fixed), whilst qualitative data can be linked to relativist ontological and subjective epistemological positions (in which there are multiple realities and knowledge is transient) (Coe, 2021).

There are benefits and criticisms to both methodological approaches. For example, the tangible nature of quantitative research often means it holds greater validity with policy makers (Easterby-Smith, 2012). However, Husén (1988, p. 7) argues, one is at risk of failing to recognise “multifaceted human behaviour, with all its context-bound subtle nuances”, limiting the impact of the research. Qualitative data, conversely, has been praised for its ability to reveal “subtleties and complexities” within research but criticised for the challenges in sustaining and measuring precision (Anderson, 2010, p. 2). Some would argue that the philosophical differences in these two approaches mean it is impossible to synthesise methodologies, and that an “either-or” conversation must be maintained (Smith & Heshusius, 1986). However, a contextual approach certainly seems a much more rational way to reconcile the differences and maximise upon the benefits of both methodologies (Ward, et al., 2015; Husén, 1988; Lund, 2012). This then opens the door to a mixed-methods approach, in which the researcher focusses less upon the philosophical basis for methodology, but a more practical, ‘what works best’ approach (Lund, 2012). The perceived lack of philosophical underpinnings is often cited as a criticism of the mixed-methods approach (Hafsa, 2012). However, others would argue that the approach is rooted in the philosophy of pragmatism, in which the solution-focussed approach acts as a philosophy in and of itself (Winter, 2020; Hafsa, 2012). This approach is highly relevant to the vocal pedagogue whose work is scientific, artistic, performative, and psychological in nature (Sell, 2016). Though often described as both mentally and time consuming (Hafsa, 2012), a mixed methods approach may allow the research to explore these elements in a detailed and rigorous fashion, consequently allowing for *both* validity and depth of data.

An example of this mixed methods approach can be in Grape *et al*’s., ‘Empirical Study of Professional and Amateur Singers During a Singing Lesson’ (2003). In this study, quantitative research methods are used to collect data on the biological response to singing. These include visual analogue scales (used to quantify emotional response) and computer analysis of heart rate. From this data, a theory is developed based on the effect of the independent variable (in this case, a singing lesson), upon the dependent variable (the

emotional response) (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). These research outcomes link to the philosophical position that the impact of singing on the emotional response can be objectively observed. The outcome of this research, therefore, presents almost as concrete, or, some would argue, irrefutable which is one of the paradigm's greatest assets (Easterby-Smith, 2012). This research, however, also includes a semi-structured interview in which participants are given time to discuss their experience. Though this element of the research design is given less weight within the body of work, the quotations from the interview offer a better view of the *wider* picture. Not only the physical results of the singing lesson are shown, but the *emotional impact*. This allows the research to be seen from multiple perspectives, placing the objective, scientific result, in an emotional, human context. This is of particular importance when considering the mental health of musicians.

Research Paradigms

Any researcher comes to the research process with a pre-existing ontological, epistemological, and methodological standpoint, both consciously or unconsciously (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This becomes a "net" (Bateson, 1972, p. 314) which holds the beliefs creating a research paradigm. Grix (2002), however, holds a more structured approach, in which an individual's ontological position (what can we know?) leads to an epistemological position (what can we know about it?) which, therefore, leads to a methodological position (how to gain that knowledge?). This more linear attitude helps to "demystify an often-impenetrable discussion" (Grix, 2002, p. 179) and encourages a researcher to make clear distinctions between the different philosophical standpoints which are often at risk of becoming conflated (Kant, 2014). However, a researcher's epistemological approach is not predetermined by their ontological standpoint; as Kant (2014) suggests, for example, a realist ontological position does not automatically lead to **an**, objective epistemological position. This can be seen in the case of critical realist scholars who take a realist ontological view (in which reality is objective) whilst taking a subjective epistemological approach (in which knowledge is transitory and socially constructed) (Vincent & O'Mahoney, 2018).

Throughout history, numerous research paradigms have been developed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017), too many to explore within the scope of this essay. However, four key classifications have been identified: Positivist, Interpretivist/Constructivist, Transformative and Pragmatic (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) and shall be explored in further detail, with a particular eye on their relevance within vocal pedagogy research.

Positivism

Positivism, with its roots in realist ontology, objective epistemology, and quantitative methodology (Easterby-Smith, 2012) was the dominant position during much of the 20th century (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2003). Yosunkaya's (2021) study exploring the link between stress and anxiety and voice disorders is an example of research conducted within the positivist paradigm. In this study, qualitative methods, such as the Beck anxiety scale, were used to identify levels of stress in women with vocal nodules and the results are statistically presented. The statistical presentation and quantitative research methods, with little focus on social context, is concurrent with the realist ontological position and objective epistemological positions. This piece of research, therefore, complies with positivist characteristics. Whilst the study did find the relationship to be statistically significant, Yosunkaya (2021, p.809) herself says "multidisciplinary studies" are necessary when trying to understand the psychological aspects surrounding voice disorders. This would suggest that research that sits within other paradigms can be useful to vocal pedagogical research.

This may be because the epistemological stance of positivism requires the researcher to sit independently from the subject, acting as an observer to the point of "absolute separation" (Park, et al., 2020, p. 691). This would be an incredibly challenging task for those conducting research within a work-based setting where singing teachers are often involved within the study group (Easterby-Smith, 2012). This "absolute separation" exists not only within the researcher-subject relationship but within the wider context of consciousness. Within the positivist paradigm, the mind exists separately from the body (Ward, et al., 2015). This does not conform to research which suggests that there is a cyclical nature to voice disorders, in which the impact of a voice disorder on an individual's mental health worsens, or causes, a voice disorder (Seifert & Kollbrunner, 2005; Rubin & Greenberg, 2002).

Constructivism

Constructivism (Ormston, et al., 2014) (sometimes known as interpretivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) sits at the opposite end of the paradigmatic spectrum to positivism. This paradigm is rooted in a relativist ontological (multiple realities) and a subjective epistemological standpoint (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Constructivism is also associated with qualitative methodology (Crotty, 1998). It differs from positivism in that it does not seek to find definitive answers, but to enhance our understanding, making sense of our experiences as conscious beings (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Constructivism operates on the understanding that reality cannot be viewed with complete accuracy as there are multiple perceptions, giving it

different meanings (Ormston, et al., 2014). The real benefit to adopting this position is constructivism's ability to create a story that goes beyond the visible narrative, making the most of the colourful range of experiences and ideas across the world (Crotty, 1998). Some would combat this with the argument that, in the world we live in, some voices are louder than others; the narrative, therefore, is likely to be skewed or guided in favour of the loudest perspective (Alanazi, 2016).

Despite its criticisms, there are certainly elements of constructivism that seem necessary when considering my research. In many ways, the *experience* of the subject seems to be incredibly relevant. For many people, for example, the experience of a voice disorder may be of little consequence. They are rarely life threatening, and not always felt as a chronic pain. The reason, however, it is important to research this is because of the *huge* negative impact it can have upon, not only a singers', but anybody's, life due to the relationship between the sense of self and the voice (O'Bryan, 2015). This would suit well to a constructivist approach as this kind of relationship is hard to quantify. There are parallels here, for example, with Oakland *et al's.*, (2017) research in which a qualitative approach, using case studies, is used to describe the experience of singers' sense of identity following redundancy. From this research, it is therefore possible to construct meaning and a greater understanding of musician identity than, perhaps, quantitative methods might.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a highly appealing paradigm for the vocal pedagogy researcher (Winter, 2020). Pragmatism varies from its positivist and constructivist counterparts as its philosophical basis is not rooted in the ontological/epistemological question (Morgan, 2014). The philosophical grounding of this paradigm is illustrated by Dewey's philosophy of 'experience' (Dewey, 2008; Morgan, 2014), in which research philosophy should become "rooted in life itself – a life that was inherently contextual, emotional and social" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047). This may resonate with the practice-based researcher, in which research stems from the identification of a problem and the attempt to then come to some kind of resolution, which directly links to Dewey's process of inquiry (Morgan, 2014) (Appendix 1).

Pragmatism tends to favour a mixed-methods approach in which quantitative and qualitative methodologies are valued equally as both are considered to contribute to knowledge and understanding (Yardley & Bishop, 2015). Researchers, no longer constrained to a metaphysical stance, are given the freedom to choose research methods that best enable

them to answer the research question at hand (Doyle, et al., 2016; Yardley & Bishop, 2015). Grape *et al's.*, (2003) project is an excellent illustration of the pragmatic approach in practice. In this study mixed methods are used to paint a comprehensive picture of the link between singing (for both amateurs and professionals) and wellbeing.

Transformative

The transformative paradigm, like pragmatism, takes a mixed methods approach to research. It's philosophy, however, is linked to ontological relativism and epistemological subjectivism, with a key focus on the relationship between researcher and participants. Parallels can, therefore, be drawn between transformative research and pragmatism. However, this paradigm is characterised by the focus on rebalancing power dynamics and addressing issues of social justice (Mertens, 2007). Transformative research holds a great deal of weight within the wider vocal pedagogy field: those working in community settings, for example, are politically motivated to improve health and wellbeing (Winter, 2020).

Gross and Musgrave's (2016; 2017), two-part research into the negative mental health impacts of a career as a musician acts as an example of research within transformative paradigm. This research was commissioned by Help Musicians in order present the experiences of musicians, whose voices are, ironically, often forgotten within the wider industry. The research recommends the implementation of a 'code of best practice' and a specialist musician mental health support service (Gross & Musgrave, 2017). There is, therefore, the suggestion that the objective of this research was to advocate for change. The mixed methods approach, using a combination of the large-scale survey (quantitative), which produced "staggering" results, alongside qualitative interviews with music professionals, which "augmented" the survey's findings, means this research is set apart from other studies (Kuuskoski, 2021, p. 2). This goes to show how the transformative approach can lead to incredibly comprehensive and compelling research.

Research Methods/Designs

Research methods and designs are often directly linked to the paradigmatic position a researcher takes (Grix, 2002). Experimentation, quasi-experimentation, and surveys, for example, are research methods used within the positivist framework. Qualitative research methods could include, though are not limited to, ethnography, action research, case studies and interviews. Again, a thorough exploration of all these methods is too large for the scope

of this essay. Therefore, those most relevant to vocal pedagogy, with a particular focus on emotional distress and the voice, will be explored.

Experimentation

Experimentation is used to test a hypothesis; subjects are assigned to a control or experimental groups. Variables are then imposed upon the experimental group and the effect of the change is measured in comparison to the control group (Easterby-Smith, 2012). This is an effective method as it can eliminate other explanations and is easy to replicate if held to public analysis (Easterby-Smith, 2012). There are, however, some criticisms of the method. For example, within an experimental context, human nature is likely to alter from its usual patterns, thus impacting the validity of the results (Easterby-Smith, 2012). Experimentation, therefore, may be best suited to the biological aspects of my research topic, such as Fancourt *et al's.*, (2015) study, in which the physical effects of stress are demonstrated during a live performance.

Surveys

Surveys are also a useful research method. Aligned with the positivist paradigm, surveys are a reliable method that allow the researcher to gain standardised information from large sample sizes, at a low cost (Mauldin, 2020). There are three types of survey methods which include: Factual surveys (associated with opinion polls and market research); exploratory surveys (deductive method which aims to look for patterns and predict behaviours); and inferential surveys (Easterby-Smith, 2012). It is inferential surveys which seem most relevant to my field of research. Inferential surveys aim to test if a *predictor* variable causes a *dependent* variable.

Examples of inferential surveys can be seen with Demirbatir's (2015) research, which tested the link between wellbeing (a dependent variable) and educational satisfaction (a predictor variable) and Yosunkaya's (2021) research, which explored the link between stress (predictor) and vocal nodules (variable). Whilst both surveys offered statistically significant findings, both also recommended further qualitative study to gain greater *meaning* behind these statistics (Yosunkaya, 2021; Demirbatir, 2015). In some ways, therefore, the generalisability of surveys, which is often considered a positive, can also become a negative, due to the lack of depth in the result (Mauldin, 2020). This perhaps is not a criticism of the study itself, as it is hard to criticise research for not achieving what it did not set out to achieve

(Grix, 2002). It is, however, important to note that the multidimensional nature of my general research topic may not lend itself well to surveys alone.

Action Research

Action Research is a practitioner-led, highly reflective form of practice in which the practitioner sits at the heart of the research (McNiff, 2013). The premise of action research is that the best way to learn about an organisation or institution is to change it, with the research being instrumental to delivering that change (Easterby-Smith, 2012). Action Research is cyclical in nature (see appendix 1); a problem is identified, a change is planned, that change is enacted, and the effects and consequences of that change are then observed, recorded and reflected upon (Koshy, 2005). This research method is often connected to the Transformative paradigm due to its connections with social change.

This is a highly appealing method to the practice-based researcher, particularly within educational settings, as it can enhance the experiences of students and teachers alike (Hine, 2013). Musgrave (2022) asks the question of how music educators can encourage music participation whilst also preparing students for psychosocial challenges of the work. This, perhaps, could be explored through action research strategies within institutions.

Case Studies

Case Studies are a qualitative research approach that generate in depth data, often used when covering complex topics (Mauldin, 2020). Often connected to the constructivist approach, case studies include the use of interviews, observation, and focus groups. Concerns surrounding the efficacy of case studies come largely from positivists, who criticise the lack of rigour. Large amounts of data are also generated; however, few larger generalisations can be made due to the often-smaller sample sizes (Easterby-Smith, 2012). However, there are several benefits to the process. Constructivists would argue that a greater depth of information can be garnered (Easterby-Smith, 2012; Mauldin, 2020). The positivist criticism here, once again, can be questioned as it is hard to credibly criticise something for having an inherently different value system, especially when neither positivism, nor constructivism can be proven to be right (Grix, 2002).

Therefore, Case studies have a strong appeal within my area of research. Perkins', (2013) study, for example, offers a thorough and in-depth analysis of the impact of conservatoire learning cultures and environments that a survey may not have achieved. Furthermore, having

the opportunity to hear the voices of those involved with the research is highly impactful and allows the researcher to understand the nuances within the different perspectives.

Ethics

Research involving humans, presents unique and important ethical considerations for the researcher, and different questions are raised depending on the scope of the research (Mauldin, 2020). There are fundamental principles to the ethics of research that have stemmed from the Hippocratic practice of “doing no harm”. These are illustrated by Beauchamp and Childress (2001) who highlight a specific “Framework of Moral Principles” (p. 12) which include:

- 1) “Respect for autonomy” – respecting and supporting an individual’s decisions, and action.
- 2) Nonmaleficence – Causing no harm or injury to participants.
- 3) Beneficence – Relieving harm and/or injury of participants.
- 4) Justice – Encouraging the fair distribution of the benefits of the research outcomes to participants and society as a whole.

(Byrd & Winkelstien, 2014; Beauchamp & Childress, 2001)

These basic principles go on in to inform an institution’s code of conduct which normally feature guidance on informed consent, honesty, data protection, and confidentiality (Mauldin, 2020).

Insider Research

There are further, specific, ethical considerations for insider research. From an epistemological standpoint, an inherent feature of insider research is the relationship between researcher and participant. Researchers, therefore, must take care to ensure that their research “is not just well-composed rhetoric of a well-meaning, but **biased**, researcher’s opinion” (Thirsk & Clark, 2017). Galdas (2017) poses that this can be achieved through maintaining reflexivity throughout the research process. It has been argued that reflexivity is “essential for good qualitative research” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 37). It involves demonstrating an awareness of oneself and one’s position within the wider world and is particularly important to outline when your own experience is relevant to your research (Braun

& Clarke, 2013). For example, I have a specific interest in the relationship between the conservatoire setting, emotional distress, and the impact of the voice. I cannot deny that my interest in this is due to both my own, and observation of others', experiences whilst I was studying. To incorporate that into my research may add an extra dimension. To *exclude* that information may leave me at risk of dishonesty, thus devaluing the results of any future research (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Power dynamics are also something to be aware of when conducting insider research. Pamphilon (2002) accurately highlights this problem as a "paradox". If the researcher maintains a more objective, authoritative role, participants are likely to frame their answers to suit the researcher's needs; if the researcher assumes a more relaxed style, the experience can feel incongruent to their expectations, leaving participants feeling exposed. The power dynamic remains but is now "covert" (Pamphilon, 2002, p. 36). However, this dynamic can be addressed with reflexivity and reflection; if the researcher takes the time to consider how their presence and role within the research has affected the data, the data can then be interpreted accordingly (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Issues of consent should also be considered carefully when conducting insider research. In an educational setting, students may consider participation to be a "requirement" (Humphrey, 2013). Teachers must, therefore, address this with care. There are also wider issues of consent. In the context of case studies, for example, consent to share anecdotal information is gained from participant. However, it is near impossible to gain consent from other characters, though anonymised, within those anecdotes. This has relevance within insider research in which, to gain a complete, clear picture, students may, for example, need to share an experience with a teacher within that organisation. There are ethical issues, therefore; it is not possible to gain consent from secondary participants without breaking the initial researcher-participant code of confidentiality (Humphrey, 2013).

Irrespective of the institutional requirements to research, it is vitally important that the researcher themselves feels comfortable with the ethical practices in place. Great care should therefore be taken to plan and research the ethical considerations surrounding insider research at every stage of the process (Bell & Waters, 2014).

Conclusion

Overall, this essay has explored the different philosophical assumptions that underpin research methodologies (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method approaches). There is a

broad spectrum of research philosophies. At one end, there is the realist (ontological) and objective (epistemological) standpoints, in which reality exists independent of existence, and knowledge is tangible and concrete; at the other, there is the nominalist (ontological) and subjective (epistemological) views, in which there is no reality, and knowledge is dependent upon experience (Cohen, et al., 2017). Where a researcher sits upon that spectrum will influence research at every level, from the initial research question (Grix, 2002), through to presentation of results (Dieronitou, 2014). The combination of a research philosophy and methodology form a research paradigm which provides a framework for how research should be approached (Grix, 2002; Bateson, 1972). Whilst there has been a great debate over the most effective paradigm, it is important to recognise that to challenge a paradigmatic approach, is to challenge an individual's inherent philosophical belief which is somewhat futile (Grix, 2002). Within the field of practice research, a pragmatic paradigmatic approach conforms to a research philosophy that will resonate with many vocal research practitioners (Winter, 2020). This paradigm works well within an environment that is "inherently contextual, emotional and social" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047) which is often the case for vocal pedagogues (Helding, 2020). There are, furthermore, a number of ethical considerations for all paradigms and their relevant methods and it is imperative that these are considered in the development of the research design to ensure the results maintain validity. Please see appendix 2 for a personal reflection.

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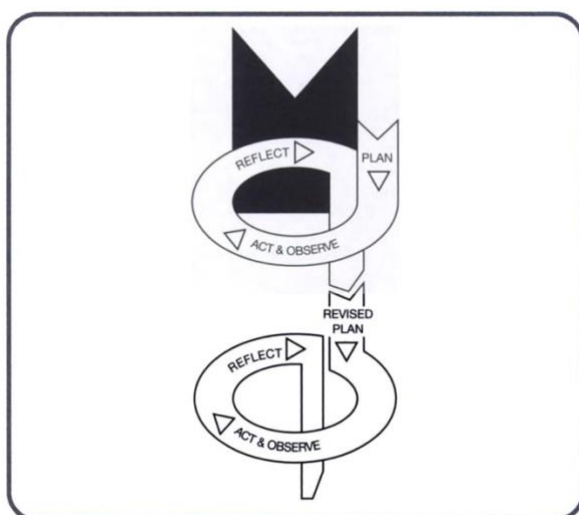
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Appendices

Appendix 1



(Koshy, 2005)

Appendix 2

Reflection

It would be very easy to become deeply emersed in the philosophical debate that characterises the research conversation. However, the questions I am keen to explore would not be explored in their fullest form with the sole use of either quantitative or qualitative research. There is great strength in the arguments for taking a more pragmatic approach, with in roots in inquiry and curiosity, and this seems to align well with my topics of research. A mixed methodological approach seems an exciting way to begin to explore the relationship between emotional distress and the voice. This paradigm gives the scope to paint a thorough, rigorous and credible picture surrounding future research. The transformative approach also seems to have relevance within this field, as I hope to be able to use my research to advocate for greater codes of practices within the wider music industry. Ethical considerations are also hugely important when developing a research design, as failing to plan accordingly places the validity of the final product at risk.