

Summative Assignment Cohort M

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“Reducing Music Performance Anxiety with Positive Self-Talk in Performing Students.”

Introduction:

In the competitive and emotionally charged realm of music performance, Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) represents a formidable barrier to artistic expression and personal fulfilment for many students. I am a voice teacher, Estill Master Trainer, and Vocal Habilitation Professional. I teach privately and coach Musical Theater Major students one-on-one at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. I undertook this topic because I have witnessed firsthand the debilitating effects that MPA can have on talented individuals. These effects not only compromise the quality of their performances but also, more critically, affect their self-esteem and passion for music. This critical evaluation paper explores the efficacy of Positive Self-Talk (PST) as a strategic intervention to reduce Music Performance Anxiety among performing students.

What is MPA and its impact?

“MPA is defined as “the experience of persisting, distressful apprehension about and/or actual impairment of, performance skills in a public context, to a degree unwarranted given the individual’s aptitude, training, and level of preparation” (Salmon, 1990, p.3, cited by Junco et al., 2014, p.1). According to Kenny (2009b), Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) can be caused by biological or psychological vulnerabilities or conditioning. Symptoms of MPA can be emotional, cognitive, physical, or behavioural. The severity of MPA is often related to ego involvement, fear of failure, and the pressure of being evaluated. MPA can be limited to music performance alone, or it may coexist with other disorders, such as social phobia. It affects musicians throughout their lives, regardless of their training hours, practice, or ability levels. The quality of performance may or may not be affected by MPA (Kenny, 2009b). In an article related to public speaking, Shadinger et al., 2020 suggest that the fear of public speaking can vary in intensity from mild unease to debilitating anxiety, which may require counselling. Some students may even drop courses or performances solely to avoid speaking in public.

How is MPA affecting my students?

As a voice teacher, I've observed a unique challenge in my students with Music Performance Anxiety (MPA). In the classroom, their talents shine through with precision and confidence, particularly on challenging high notes and complex passages. Yet, this mastery often cannot be executed in the spotlight of live performance. The transition from a safe, supportive classroom environment to the high stakes of public performance introduces an anxiety that can significantly impact their ability to replicate their well-honed skills. This has prompted me to explore strategies that address not just the technical but also the emotional components of singing.

Defining Positive Self-Talk and Its Efficacy

Self-talk refers to the process of using cue words in a dialogue with oneself, either silently or aloud. This process involves two important aspects: firstly, verbalisation is a crucial component, and secondly, the message's sender is also the receiver (Kim et al., 2021). Positive Self-Verbalisation/PST is a cognitive therapy technique where patients modify negative self-statements into positive self-statements and read alone to themselves to counter or replace original self-deprecatory thoughts (Lange & Richard, 1997). According to Joann Kircher's 2004 article in *American Music Teacher*, performance anxiety is often characterised by negative thoughts and feelings. To overcome this, replacing these negative thoughts with more positive ones is crucial. Kircher suggests that musicians should incorporate positive thoughts into their practice sessions, enabling them to recall these thoughts quickly during performances (Kirchner, 2004).

PST is part of the Mental Sport Training Model employed by athletes, encompassing positive self-talk, concentration and relaxation exercises, biofeedback and imagery, performance planning and goal-setting. Based on each student's needs, incorporating some or all of these techniques into the studio setting is well worth the teacher's time and effort (Riley, 2012). "It has been suggested that self-talk interventions and procedures are some of the most widely applied and effective strategies used by athletes" (Park, 2000; Weinberg, Grove, & Jackson, 1992, cited by Hamilton et al., 2007). In a study by Schöler and Langens 2007, the effectiveness of self-talk as a strategy for reducing psychological distress during marathons was examined among non-professional runners. The findings revealed that individuals who utilised self-talk during severe crises displayed better coping abilities than a control group (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2014). Research by Kendrick, Craig and Lawson examining the proactive management of performance anxiety has demonstrated the effectiveness of group discussion therapy and systematic desensitisation. These studies have consistently found that these approaches are

successful in modifying performance anxiety (Lee, 2002). Assisted self-talk intervention was even introduced to swimmers during a study by Hamilton, Scott & MacDougall in 2007 to help swimmers acquire PST skills more efficiently (Hamilton, Scott & MacDougall, 2007).

The mental training techniques employed by athletes can be readily applied to music practice and performance with minimal or no modifications (Riley, 2012). A survey of Australian orchestral musicians conducted by Kenny et al., 2012, suggested that PST was one of the most sought-after coping mechanisms for reducing MPA by musicians (Kenny, 2009b). Given the positive impact of self-talk on attention and emotion regulation, it has become a widely adopted technique for enhancing performance in sports, promoting academic engagement, and managing anxiety or depression in clinical settings (Kim et al., 2021).

“Meichenbaum and Cameron (1974) introduced the idea of “self-instructional training” (SIT). They showed that hospitalized schizophrenics could be trained to change dysfunctional self-statements to more appropriate self-talk (Meichenbaum, 1975), thus improving their cognitive skills” (Lange & Richard, 1997, p. 161). Dush, Hirt, and Schroeder (1983, 1989) suggest that self-instructional training, when combined with other cognitive techniques, is an effective approach for adult patients. Furthermore, self-verbalization has the potential to be effective in treating disorders characterised by dysfunctional cognitions and those that require self-control. Examples include addictions and interpersonal problems, where directly modifying self-statements could prove beneficial (Lange & Richard, 1997).

Different types of PST:

Numerous studies have explored the impact of different types of self-talk on performance. Hatzigeorgiadis et al. (2007) investigated the effects of “instructional” and “motivational self-talk” on self-confidence, anxiety levels, and the frequency of interfering thoughts. The findings revealed that both types of self-talk were beneficial for enhancing performance, but motivational self-talk was particularly effective in reducing anxiety compared to instructional self-talk (Hatzigeorgiadis et al., 2009).

Perlman also conducted a study investigating the efficacy of Self-Determination Theory and teacher instruction. Based on their data analysis, students in the autonomy-supportive context demonstrated significantly higher levels of performance and involvement than the other groups (Perlman, 2014). “Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon and Barch (2004) reported that an autonomy-supportive teacher will support students at more of an individual level, be more concerned about student welfare and allow students to voice their opinions” (Perlman, 2014, p.

16). Teachers who foster autonomy will demonstrate patience towards their students, allowing ample time for task completion and flexibly communicating their intentions to students. On the contrary, a controlling teacher exerts influence over student behaviour by imposing criteria and deadlines and making statements that create pressure on students (Perlman and Webster, 2011, cited by Perlman, 2014). “For example, the autonomy-supportive teacher would use terms such as *could* or *would*, while a controlling teacher would use the term *must* when providing instruction” (Perlman, 2014, p.17). However, we should keep in mind that each approach possesses a particular degree or level of both elements (Guay, Ratelle & Chanal, 2008, cited by Perlman, 2014).

Motivation and Self-talk

“Student motivation is broadly defined as into three overarching categories or levels: intrinsic, extrinsic and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). From a motivational perspective, it is ideal if a student is more intrinsic or self-determined within their motivational level as this lends itself to increased levels of in-class physical activity (Lonsdale, Sabiston, Raedeke, Ha & Sum, 2009; Perlman, 2012) and engagement (Ntoumanis, 2001; 2005)” (Perlman, 2014, p. 16). Lange and Richard’s study (1997) also compared two types of positive self-verbalization. The instrumental type, which is used in treatment programs, involves statements focused on problem-solving and self-efficacy. The other type emphasises general aspects of self-esteem, such as recognising personal strengths and values. The latter was found to be particularly effective for patients with social phobia. However, it is not recommended for patients with depression to employ this type of self-verbalization, as it may be perceived as unrealistic.

Hamilton, Scott, and MacDougall (2007) find that assisting athletes in the early stages of skill acquisition through positive self-talk interventions can accelerate their skill development, maintain motivation over a more extended period, foster self-confidence at an earlier stage, and facilitate earlier performance improvements. However, this study also has controversial findings. They discovered that two of the three participants who received assisted negative self-talk intervention demonstrated improvement in their performance. This finding contradicts previous research by Goodhart, 1986; Van Raalte et al., 2000, which has suggested that negative self-talk is detrimental to achieving success in sports. (Hamilton, Scott, and MacDougall, 2007). “However, this result does partly support the suggestion that negative self-talk may only be harmful to the performance of specific athletes and that for some individuals, self-talk may serve as a motivational tool (Goodhart, 1986; Van Raalte et al., 2000, cited by Hamilton et al., 2007).

How can teachers mitigate MPA in Music students with PST?

In order to help mitigate the symptoms of MPA in music students, educators should prioritise creating a student-centred learning environment where the focus is on the student's aspirations rather than the teacher's personal agenda. It is essential to establish a safe and nurturing space where students feel comfortable openly discussing any challenges they may face during lessons without fearing negative reactions from the teacher. Engaging in meaningful dialogue with students about their performance motivations and anxieties is another important aspect for educators. This dialogue helps to clarify objectives and resolve any internal conflicts that may hinder their progress. By identifying and replacing negative thought patterns with positive self-statements, teachers can help students develop a more balanced and less self-critical perception of themselves, which is conducive to their musical growth and development. Prioritising open communication allows educators to uncover any limiting mindsets that may hinder students' potential, and by fostering supportive self-talk, teachers can cultivate the resilience necessary for success in advanced musical training (Riley, 2012).

1) Journaling

Teachers can implement a practice where students are required to submit weekly self-evaluations regarding their performance and mindsets. Sharing these entries provides an opportunity to identify any negative self-judgments and reframe them into more supportive perspectives. Research indicates that consistently disciplining thought patterns through positive self-talk can effectively reduce anxiety at both personal and performance levels. Encouraging students to journal their inner experiences promotes the development of critical self-reflection skills (Emmons and Thomas, 1998, cited by Riley, 2012).

2) Awareness-based teaching/instructions

Barry Green, as cited by Riley in 2012, recommends awareness-based teaching over direct instruction. Instead of "telling" the students what to do, awareness-based teaching encourages students to explore and experiment, thus cultivating their own awareness. According to Green, cultivating awareness leads to a shift in mindset, where learning arises from internal observation without the notion of "right" or "wrong." This approach eliminates confusion caused by complex steps and avoids placing excessive physical demands beyond one's capacity. Moreover, by focusing solely on attentiveness to ongoing processes rather than making quality judgments, awareness helps sideline doubt. Drawing parallels to the natural development of walking, this approach maximises learning at an innate level (Riley, 2012).

3) Reappraising pre-performance anxiety as excitement

Based on the fact that both anxiety and excitement are high-arousal emotions, we can consider them arousal congruent. Minimal interventions could be adequate to transform feelings of anxiety into excitement (Brooks, 2014). Brooks suggested in 2014 that when anxiety was reframed as excitement, as opposed to calmness or no reappraisal, it led to increased subjective excitement and improved performance in singing, public speaking, and math tasks. The act of reconceptualising anxiety as excitement promoted a mindset focused on embracing opportunities, ultimately enhancing outcomes. These findings suggest that reframing anxiety can effectively transform performance anxiety into a more empowering experience through the use of positive self-talk (Brooks, 2014).

4) Alleviation of self-blame

In a recent study conducted by Sinnott, Park, and Huedo-Medina (2022), a parallel can be observed in the cognitive coping strategies used for reducing Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms (PTSS) and MPA. Specifically, the study suggests that trauma survivors who experience self-blame may benefit from employing cognitive coping strategies that involve compassionate self-talk, such as positive reframing and acceptance. These strategies have been found to effectively enhance individuals' sense of control in the aftermath of traumatic experiences (Sinnott, Park & Huedo-Medina, 2022). Teachers may consider utilising Positive Self-Talk (PST) as a strategy to support students who face Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) due to previous experiences of performance failure.

Limitations:

While music students have recognised PST as a helpful coping skill for MPA, further research is needed to establish its efficacy, especially with larger sample sizes. However, there is accumulating evidence from the Performance Anxiety Program, including participant reports, indicating a significant reduction in performance anxiety. Participants unanimously reported an improved ability to internally activate coping mechanisms when MPA arises, rather than reacting helplessly, which has a positive impact on their performance quality (Himel, Nagel, and Papsdorf, 1981). On the other hand, Goodhart (1986) suggested individuals who engage in negative self-talk may actually be motivating themselves to avoid negative outcomes and thus exert more effort compared to those who utilise positive self-talk (Hamilton, Scott & MacDougall, 2007).

Limitations of self-talk

Although positive self-talk is generally beneficial, negative self-talk can sometimes contribute to achievement by reframing challenges as opportunities rather than deficiencies (Kim et al., 2021). Also, efficacy can decrease with repeated use of the same PST statement, as demonstrated in a study by Shadinger et al. (2019). They found that using the same PST statement multiple times in different assignments within the same course and academic term did not result in a significant or additional reduction in Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) compared to using it only once for a single speech or presentation during the term. Furthermore, engaging in PST focused on self-respect may have a negative impact on cognitive performance by increasing impulsiveness, akin to risky behaviours associated with overconfidence that is disconnected from actual results. To comprehensively comprehend the effects of PST on cognitive performance, further research is required using alternative self-talk tasks, as there are various methods beyond self-respect for positive self-talk (Kim et al., 2021). In some cases, certain athletes perceive negative self-talk as a challenge and respond positively to it. For these athletes, negative self-talk can be better described as challenging self-talk, resulting in performance improvement. However, the specific cognitive restructuring process that leads to this interpretation of self-talk and subsequent performance changes requires further investigation. The result of Hamilton's study also suggested that different conditions require different types of self-talk. It is crucial to align the category of self-talk with the specific sport as well as with the individual engaging in it. The efficacy of assisted self-talk interventions may be limited when developed without input from the participants themselves (Hamilton et al., 2007).

In a clinical setting, the decision to utilise PST is based not solely on symptomatology but also on the importance of cognition in the problem and the feasibility of creating realistic positive self-verbalizations. Case studies indicate that depressive patients who exhibit highly negative self-talk typically do not respond positively to the suggestion of writing an essay about their positive qualities (Lange, 1994, cited in Lange & Richard, 1997). In most cases, they struggle to identify anything positive about themselves. In the context of depression, this method seems to be more effective when used after other interventions have already shown some degree of success. The timing of the intervention is evidently a critical factor to consider (Lange & Richard, 1997).

How do I plan to apply PST to my teaching:

I plan to implement PST in my studio teaching based on the therapeutic model of self-verbalisation suggested in Lange and Richard's case studies in 1997. One of the models

they used involved two stages. To begin with, patients are asked to write a reflective essay highlighting their positive attributes and then condense it into short positive statements about themselves. In the second phase, they will override self-deprecating thoughts by regularly reciting those positive statements. Starting with the essay-writing process serves multiple purposes, including creating a positive framework, encouraging the production of accessible positive attitudes, and facilitating the formation of scripts for appropriate behaviour. The therapist guides the patient in writing the essay and summarises it on a small card that can be modified. During the second stage, patients replace negative rumination with constructive thoughts by consistently reading their positive self-statements, either at specific times or in response to distress, depending on their condition. The teaching plan will include three steps:

1. Disclosure
2. Awareness and the challenge of automatic thoughts
3. Positive self-verbalisation

(Please see Appendix B for a full teaching plan)

Conclusion and ethical consideration:

In conclusion, research indicates that performance anxiety can be effectively addressed through various approaches, including cognitive, pedagogical, psychodynamic, skills-based, and biological interventions. Teachers can incorporate PST into music instruction to help alleviate music performance anxiety in students (Lee, 2002). Educators may utilise diverse teaching strategies to accommodate the varying needs of their students. However, the effectiveness of these strategies may differ for each student, necessitating teachers to exercise professional judgment and assess their suitability. This requires a profound understanding of students' individual learning requirements. Teachers must also be aware of the appropriate avenues for referring students to specialised support services, such as medical professionals and chartered psychologists (Daubney and Daubney, 2019) while acknowledging their own boundaries and limitations in providing care. I propose that future research explore the adaptation and application of assisted self-talk methods in music instruction to enhance musicians' learning processes and performance.

Critical Reflection

Coming up with the question for this assignment proved to be challenging. Initially, researching seemed difficult, but through this assignment, I discovered new ways to enhance my research skills. My intention was to explore pedagogical methods for assisting students with

Head and Neck Anchoring in Estill Voice Training, a technique involving lifting the soft palate. I observed that many students struggle to locate the soft palate or understand how to control it.

As I delved into readings and seminars, I realised my lack of interest in Feldenkrais. This realisation caused panic as I felt pressed for time. In hindsight, I should have familiarised myself with the techniques before collecting articles. Gathering all the articles beforehand was a mistake, and had I been more knowledgeable, I would have changed the topic earlier. Due to time constraints, I opted to build upon my previous Formative assignment.

This process also taught me about my learning style. I require ample time and a slower pace to truly absorb what I read. Working under stress, especially with time limitations, proves challenging for me. Better planning and dividing tasks along the way would have been beneficial. However, I've always struggled with procrastination. When faced with stress, I tend to freeze or feel paralysed. While therapy sessions have helped, the infrequency due to time and financial constraints limits their effectiveness. I found Deep Brain Orientation helpful, and I incorporate daily mantra chanting as a form of meditation. Exploring Music Performance Anxiety as my topic may provide further insights and support.

I noticed a tendency to engage in other tasks to avoid starting on my assignment. I believe deep down, I feel intimidated. This fear stems from not knowing exactly what to do, perhaps influenced by the Asian education system that emphasises following rules rather than encouraging creativity. This need for certainty stems from a fear of being wrong, a form of perfectionism. The lack of a step-by-step structure and personal guidance heightens my insecurity. Fortunately, we have Claire, our excellent tutor, who has been instrumental in providing me with real-time feedback and guidance throughout my academic writing journey. The assistance from a tutor had given me tremendous help.

As I began writing this Summative assignment based on my Formative assignment, I realised it was more challenging than anticipated. Piecing together information became difficult, and I sometimes struggled to recall the source of my notes. I recognise the need to improve my note-taking and organisation methods to locate quotes and information more efficiently. My scattered approach leaves me feeling overwhelmed and unable to pinpoint which articles certain information came from.

Additionally, I was uncertain about how to include an appendix properly. After submitting the draft, I will have the opportunity to clarify this with Claire. In the meantime, I will research and familiarise myself with the appropriate format for an appendix. I still have room for improvement in my academic writing skills, particularly regarding formal formatting. Moving forward, there are two main areas I would like to improve.

1. Time Management and Planning Skills: During my research on time management strategies, I discovered “time blocking” and am interested in trying it out. It is the practice of scheduling dedicated periods for different tasks or activities. By allocating specific blocks of time for tasks, you establish a structured framework that enhances accountability and minimises procrastination. This strategy promotes focus and enables effective prioritisation of important tasks (Newport, 2016). Also, using mindfulness in time management to combat procrastination can be helpful. Set clear priorities, break tasks into smaller steps, and stay focused to enhance productivity and reduce stress. (Sauer-Zavala et al., 2019).

2. Effective Note-Taking and Organization Strategies: Improve note-taking methods to enhance information recall and categorisation. Establish an organised filing system to keep track of references and sources for future use. While exploring different options and apps for note-taking and organising, I came across the Cornell Note System and the note-taking app Notion. “The Cornell Note System was developed and used by students locally until it was published in the first edition of How to Study in College written by Cornell University Professor of Education Walter Pauk in 1962” (Saran, Krentz, and McCarty, 2022, p.37S). It is a system that utilises a cue column on the left, a note-taking area on the right, and a summary area at the bottom of the page (Saran, Krentz, and McCarty, 2022). After gaining a deeper understanding of this system, I concluded it is better suited for note-taking in class rather than organising quotes from articles. However, I discovered the Notion app while participating in the Cohort M chat group. Intrigued, I explored the app and found it ideal for organising quotes and articles. I adopted a table format and utilised tags to categorise the quotes I gathered from my readings. This approach significantly improved my ability to locate relevant information quickly and efficiently during writing. Furthermore, the Notion app allows for effortless toggling of quotes into a card format, facilitating easy connection of ideas.

In conclusion, I have identified several of my strengths and weaknesses during the writing of this Summative assignment. Moving forward, I am committed to improving upon my areas of weakness. For instance, I am presently unfamiliar with proper academic writing formats, struggle with effective time management, and seek ways to mitigate my own fear and anxiety when working under pressure, as I find it challenging to maintain focus for extended periods.

This process of composing a critical reflection has provided me with a valuable opportunity to truly learn about myself and contemplate strategies for progressing. This reflective journaling has compelled me to confront my deep-seated fears, and I hope to uncover methods to alleviate this issue and become more productive overall. By gaining this

self-awareness, I can thoughtfully address my limitations and capitalise on my strengths to enhance my academic writing skills and overall performance. This reflective exercise has illuminated areas requiring further development, which I am eager to tackle with renewed determination.

Appendix A

Personal Development Plan:

Develop Mindfulness to combat anxiety

1. **Activity:** Enroll in an online course dedicated to working on anxiety, which also aligns with my own belief system as a Buddhist. "Healing Stress, A Buddhist & Psychoanalytic Approach to Working with Anxiety in Body, Mind & Spirit with Pilar Jennings."

<https://enroll.embodiedphilosophy.com/healing-stress?WickedSource=Facebook&WickedID=6587116742956>

Objective: To learn to reduce the amount of stress and anxiety. By doing so, I am hoping to mitigate my procrastination.

Action: Enroll in the above course.

Timescale: Intending to complete before the end of 2024.

Develop accredited skills in coaching

1. **Activity:** Acceptance Commitment Therapy certification course

<https://wisemind.com/series/act-therapy-training/>

Objective: Gain accredited qualification for ACT to better help students with MPA.

Action: Enroll in the above course.

Timescale: Intending to complete before the end of 2024.

2. **Activity:** Enroll in the Accredited ITOL-certified Mental Health Informed Practitioner Certificate with Dr George Musgrave (a four-week course).

<https://voicestudycentre.com/online-certificated-courses/mental-health-informed-practitioner-certificate-with-dr-george-musgrave/>.

Objective: Gain knowledge and skills in understanding and addressing mental health issues and develop strategies for promoting mental well-being in personal and professional settings.

Action: Enrolled in the above course already.

Timescale: Intending to complete before the end of May 2024.

Develop Skills to combat procrastination

1. **Activity:** Enroll in an online course, “How To Stop Procrastinating” by Chris Hall.

<https://www.udemy.com/course/how-to-stop-procrastinating/?couponCode=ST6MT42324>.

Objective: Learn effective techniques and strategies for overcoming procrastination and increasing productivity.

Action: Enroll in the above course.

Timescale: Intending to complete before the end of 2024.

Appendix B

Teaching Plan:

This teaching plan is based on the model suggested in Lange and Richard’s case studies 1997. It consists of three main steps: disclosure, awareness and the challenge of automatic thoughts, and positive self-verbalisation. This model aligns with the journaling method proposed by Emmons and Thomas (1998), which involves students maintaining a weekly self-evaluation journal that can be reviewed together with teachers. According to Barry Green, cited by Riley, 2012, teachers can support students in adopting a self-motivated approach to cultivating their own awareness through awareness-based instructions.

1. Disclosure

Students will be asked to disclose their fears regarding music performance and public performance in general to trusted individuals, such as peers or teachers. “Since one cannot fail if one has already announced that failure is imminent, this helped to decrease his fear and be more relaxed in social and professional situations” (Lange, 1980, cited in Lange & Richard, 1997). Students can make a list of trusted individuals they would like to disclose their fears.

Figure 1: a list of trusted individuals.

	List of trusted individuals
1.	(i.e., Mom)
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. Awareness and the challenge of automatic thoughts

Next, students will be asked to monitor when anxiety is being triggered. In moments of anxiety, the individual will allocate time for self-reflection and engage in journaling that explores the potential negative outcomes and reasons why these outcomes may not be as catastrophic as initially perceived (Lange & Richard, 1997). Students will be required to keep a journal on their anxiety and fears during performance.

Figure 2: an example of a journal entry.

Journal for MPA

As a singing student, Performing in front of others triggers my anxiety. The fear of judgment and the pressure to meet expectations weigh heavily on my mind. I feel like I am not good enough. I worried about forgetting lyrics or hitting the wrong notes.

On stage, I was trembling, and my heart was palpitating. I could not hit the high notes as well as I usually can. Although the audience applauded, I am not sure if they were just being nice or if I really did a good job.

3. Positive self-verbalisation

The students will be prompted to engage in introspection regarding their positive qualities and proceed to write in their journals highlighting these aspects. Contrary to their initial expectations, they discovered numerous strengths, such as professional competence, colleague recognition, and being a good parent and friend. Following the completion of the journals, they will condense the main points onto a card, written in the first person. This card was a constant reminder and was read aloud twice daily (Lange & Richard, 1997).

In this phase of positive self-verbalization, we can also reinterpret pre-performance anxiety as excitement. This is because minimal interventions are required to transform anxiety into excitement, given their similar nature of arousal. (Brooks, 2014).

In this stage, we will review the students' journals and transform previous negative comments or fearful statements into positive confidence-building and excitement-arousal statements. Students will be asked to write these positive affirmations on a card and then read them aloud at least twice daily.

Figure 3: positive affirmation card.

1. I am safe on stage, and all is well.
2. My audience loves me.
3. I am good enough.
4. Everything will go smoothly on stage.
5. I am well-prepared for my performance.
6. ...etc.

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