

A study comparing the differences
between “Static” postural practices
and “Dynamic” postural practices
with novice singers.

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Agenda

- Context/ Justification
- Literature review
- Methodology
- Ethical Implications
- Findings
- Conclusion



Context/ Justification

- - This project explores students' perceptions of postural practices during classes and aims to discover if there is a clear line between "static" and "dynamic" postural practices.
- In the existing research the primary focus tends to be on classical and professional singers, with limited studies on novice singers and their teachers, I aim to help bridge that gap with this study.
 - (Leborgne W.D. and Rosenberg R.D, 2021) (Florence Peterson Kendall et al., 1993) (Tosi1743)Baltz(2007)

Literature Review

- There are many academic resources regards “dynamic” posture, however, the is little on “static” posture.
 - Sell, K. (2017) Notes how teachings was passed down through word of mouth.
 - “It is difficult to pinpoint the beginnings of voice pedagogy.” Sansom, (2020)
- Tosi(1743) Started the groundwork for academic studies describing ‘static posture’ as «graceful posture»
- *There is, however grey literature available regarding static posture. (Pappas, C. and Williams, I. 2011)*
- *Dynamic structure places focus on how our body functions and how each part is connected (Leborgne W.D. and Rosenberg R.D, 2021) (Arboleda, B.M.W. and Frederick, A.L. (2006) (Friedlander, C. 2018) (LChapman, J. 2016)*

What is a “Traditional” Posture?

- The traditional opinion of posture insists on a 'correct' or 'incorrect' way to hold one's body, often associated with ideas about aesthetics, fitness, health or singing. (Physiopedia, 2022)
- The importance of finding the correct position and maintaining it. Striving for that “perfect Posture” (Tosi1743)
- As a singer, it is important to maintain correct singing posture in order to maximise your lung capacity and improve airflow and resonance in the upper body. (Nisbet, 2021)

What is an “Alternative” Posture?

- The newer opinion of posture is that viewing it as a position is an oversimplification. Instead, Posture is viewed as more of a dynamic structure. Focusing more on how each part of the body interacts with each other and how they impact you and your voice. (Leborgne W.D. and Rosenberg R.D, 2021)
- The idea that everyone has an individual posture that best suits them. There is more of a holistic component to it. (Chapman and Morris, 2023)

Methodology

- Focused on qualitative data collection to understand the novice singer's experience.
- Used focus groups, observation, and questionnaires to gather qualitative data.
- I Adopted a pragmatic approach, acknowledging the interplay between subjective beliefs and objective realities. Recognising a continuum between positivism and constructivism helps in understanding these dynamics.
- I have observed ongoing shifts between objective and subjective perspectives of postural practices within my research.

Ethical Implications

- Ensuring participant health and safety.
 - Ensuring clean and safe classrooms.
- Adherence to university and Age UK's rules.
 - Ensuring participant consent forms.
- Emphasizing not pushing participants beyond their capabilities.
 - Encouraging break and participation at any time.
- Making participants aware of necessary safety factors.
 - Approval from UWTSD

My Findings

Questionnaire

- Used open-ended questions, hoping to give them room to describe their thoughts.
- However, they found having to write down their thoughts intimidating.
 - Data gathered was sparse
- There was an overall understanding of posture being a static structure.
- It is something I would improve on if I was to expand on this study in the future.
 - Less than 50% took part

Focus Groups before sessions began

The first focus group was to gain an understanding of participants' current knowledge of posture this focus group took place at the beginning of the study.

The themes that came from this focus group were:

"Good Posture" vs "Bad Posture"

Static Posture "standing straight"

Cultural

Generational

Gender roles

Media

The overarching understanding of posture being that it is a static position.

Examples of exercises

Plumbline posture

Imagine a plumb line running through your ear and all the way down to the front of your shoulders, middle of your hip and knee, and in front of the bone outside your ankle. Stand straight and tall with your shoulders upright and relaxed. Let your arms hang naturally by the sides of your body. (24Life 2024)

Mindfulness

- Focusing your awareness on the present moment.
- Observing thoughts and feelings without judgment. (psychologytoday2024)
- Being intensely aware of sensations and feelings without interpretation or judgment.
- Being fully engaged in the present moment without distraction or judgment. (headspace2024)
- Learning to observe thoughts and emotions without reacting to them.

Exercise Body Scan meditation(O'Bryan, 2021)

Observations during sessions

- There was obvious tension and holding patterns when they first approached the exercises.

- The more they understood the more at ease they became.
- There was more of a divide between preferences to different exercises than expected.
- The more they came to understand the more improved the vocals became, they were no longer holding back and gave more support to their voice.

Focus Groups after sessions

This focus group was conducted at the end of the study and my findings were illuminating.

The themes of this focus group were;

“Posture is not one size fits all”

They found merit in both “static.” and “dynamic” postural practices.

“Importance of the body-mind connection”

Cultural, Generational, Gender roles and Media reemerged.

“Understanding more about posture it made it easier to do.”

They felt that being introduced to more in-depth knowledge about posture helped them gauge what parts of the practices were beneficial to them.



Conclusion

- Though the academic literature seems to favour a dynamic viewpoint of posture, there is still merit in the static point of view.
- There is still much to be explored with the ideas of posture.
 - It is not one size fits all
- It is important as a tutor to have an open mind and take the singer's understanding of posture and the physical attributes into account before diving into teaching.



Impact and Recommendation

- Overall, this has helped me gain a better understanding of the importance of knowing the student's background and physiology.
- It is also important to avoid bias and explore multiple points of view.
- This study has only scratched the surface of what information is out there and more in-depth studies would be beneficial.

Any Questions

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