

“Critically evaluate a selected range of methodological approaches appropriate for research in work-based settings, with due consideration to research ethics and insider research issues”

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to formulate my stance towards research, exploring various philosophical paradigms. The four components of a research paradigm are discussed: Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology, and Methods. An interest in Performance Coaching and the impact of psychological elements such as mental health on musicians, it is imperative ethics be taken into account, including potential bias of insider research. I will additionally discuss the wider role of Axiology - my personal values.

ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY & AXIOLOGY

A research paradigm is built on our personal ‘worldview’ (Kuhn, 1962); our philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality - **ontology**, what is knowledge - **epistemology**, our values and ethics - **axiology** (Kawulich, 2012; Slevitch, 2011). The researcher’s ontological position lies at the very heart of the adopted paradigm (Sale et al, 2002; Cohen et al. 2007; Ladyman, 2007) and can completely differentiate one paradigm from another (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Whether we believe in one objective reality to which we all prescribe or multiple, socially-constructed realities formed through individual experiences places us within either of two dichotomous ontological camps: **realism** or **relativism** (Cohen et al, 2007). Although highlighting the majority of performance coaching studies as relativist, Harding (2009) implies both standpoints may be considered; some call for an increase in objective studies, others encourage coaching researchers to ‘make connections’ and ‘look beyond’ static viewpoints.

The **realist** belief of one reality independent of human experience juxtaposes with my personal stance. My core belief that individuals are unique in learning, life, and performing, including symptoms and causes of traits such as Music Performance Anxiety (MPA), coincides with the perspectives of founding performance coach Don Greene (Greene & Savage, 2009). Furthermore, coaching of such phenomena is encouraged to be “...person- and performance-specific” (Welch et al, 2008, pg. 1). However, I also trust that such phenomena can be categorised, predicted via specific patterns of personal experience, and aided using specific methods (Arneson, 2010; Monti et al, 2016; Kenny, 2016), implying a realist, universal truth.

Much of existing coaching research belongs to **relativism**; reality is constructed within the human mind via the individual’s lived experiences (Harding, 2009; Moon & Blackman, 2017). **Idealism**, as “an ontological view asserting that reality depends on one’s mental structure and activity” (Slevitch, 2011, pg.77) may be the most suiting standpoint for a performance coaching study. It’s emphasis on multiple realities, created via personal construction and interpretation, and stance that reality

does not exist prior to the moment examined, ceasing to exist when research concludes, allows for variables and flexibility to a subject's personal sense of reality throughout a study (Smith, 1983, as cited in Slevitch, 2011). For instance, a student begins research believing themselves as an incompetent performer but may leave the study with an entirely different reality and sense of self-efficacy.

Epistemology, the acquiring of knowledge and justification of truth, influences both methods to discover knowledge and interpretation of findings (Moon & Blackman, 2014; Ladyman, 2007; Gall et al. 2003). Following ontology, two main camps of thought exist; **objectivism** and **constructivism**. Ontological perspective imposes limits on the epistemological viewpoint (Morgan, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). If aligned with realist ontology, objectivism applies. Objectivism perceives knowledge as 'hard, objective and tangible', demanding researchers take an observer role (Cohen et al, 2007). Additionally, it believes the investigator can separate themselves from the study, isolating facts from personal values, thus achieving the ultimate, universal truth (Slevitch, 2011). Whilst objectivism may be useful in some contexts, such as providing reliable data and scientific evidence of an increase in graded vocal performance marks or the biological reduction in anxiety due to the implication of a specific tool, the observer 'expert' role appears incompatible with a one-to-one environment (Moon & Blackman, 2017), in which my practitioner research will be conducted.

Constructivism "imposes on researchers an involvement with their subjects" (Cohen et al, 2007, pg.7). Highly linked to relativism and idealism, constructivists believe knowledge is constructed in the mind via interaction with the world and, thus, cannot be value-free due to being subjective and unique in nature (Slevitch, 2011; Cohen et al, 2007). By engaging in constructivism, a contextual understanding of a topic or problem can be generated (Moon & Blackman, 2017). Moon and Blackman expand on constructivism via **Subjectivism**; "what constitutes knowledge depends on how people perceive and understand reality." (Moon & Blackman, 2014, pg.6) Contrary to constructivism, it expresses a focus on the inner rather than the outer world, intending to 'understand the knowledge, interests, purposes, and values of individuals' and reveal how individual experience shapes unique reality. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) comment a subjectivist believes 'no object can be investigated without being affected by the researcher.'

As with ontology, there may be value in accommodating both epistemologies (Moon & Blackman, 2014); Stober et al (2006) encourage a combination of scientific integrity and practical utility in coaching research, implying the importance of combining the reliability and validity of an objectivist's empirical viewpoint with subjectivism's consideration of both coach and coachee's values.

Despite objectivism's attempt to remove oneself from personal bias via adopting the roles of 'observer' and participants as 'subjects', Kawulich (2012) argues choice of paradigm, topic,

methods, interpretation of findings and the method of reporting are all inevitably informed by personal values. Thus, **axiology**, what is considered valuable and ethical by the researcher (Killam, 2013), is arguably the foundation of paradigms. Whilst Morgan (2007) agrees the undeniable importance of both ethical issues and values in social science research, they proceed to state merging axiology with epistemological and ontological concerns has no obvious basis as it departs too far from the core paradigm emphasis of gaining and defining knowledge. Contrastingly, Hoey (2014) proposes individual researchers are led to their own particular approach and methodology via personal and professional experiences. Reflecting on my field of potential research, identifying personal values is a key element of the coaching process itself (Stelter, 2009). Therefore, being cognisant of my personal values, attitudes and biases alongside taking into consideration the value of such research on participants is essential to my research in performance coaching, especially as my choice of domain is informed by both direct and indirect experience of psychological elements of performance.

PARADIGMS

Ontological and epistemological positions have formed 'two paramount theories'; **Positivism** and **Interpretivism** (Adom et al., 2016). I shall explore these key paradigms alongside the 'alternative' paradigm, **Pragmatism** (Creswell, 2014). Whilst not all suitable for my philosophical inclinations, it is essential to be informed of their underpinnings; the researcher ignorant of other paradigms "is not in a good position to appraise research conducted under a different tradition." (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016, pg.53).

Grounded in realism, **positivism** believes one truth is 'out there', awaiting to be 'received' (Lavery, 2003; Slevitch, 2011). Hailing beliefs and methods from the natural sciences, positivism assumes the only way to understand social phenomena is by adopting the same empirical approach (Kawulich, 2012). Positivists instil objectivism, applying natural science methods to social sciences via **quantitative** research (Pham, 2018). Researchers adopt the role of 'disinterested scientist', remaining devoid of personal values or biases (Lavery, 2003) and whose experiment does not affect or disturb the observed subject (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The positivist scientific approach is considered incompatible when studying individuals and social phenomena (Gall et al. 2003; Grix, 2004), thus incompatible with my one-to-one work-based setting. Pham (2018) suggests human intention, thoughts, and attitudes cannot be empirically observed, and positivism's aim to generalise data places the individual interpretation of phenomena - which may reveal a lot of truth about reality - at risk of neglect. Furthermore, the stringent control over variables in positivist research may not reflect real world situations of the phenomenon, rendering results inapplicable (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Such criticisms resulted in 1960's emergence of **Post-Positivism**.

Although grounded in relativism, post-positivists claim no knowledge can be 'absolute' when studying human action and behaviour (Creswell, 2014). Grix (2004) defines post-positivism as 'straddling' both positivist and interpretivist paradigms, whilst Kawulich (2012) simply calls it a 'less

strict' form of positivism. Influenced by **critical realism**, it "still assumes an objective reality but grants that it can be apprehended only imperfectly and probabilistically" due to the complexity of social phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111). Hence, theories can be modified and retested, and reality must be captured by broad critical examination (Kawulich, 2012; Moon & Blackman, 2014). It recognises the possibility of personal values influencing observations (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Unlike positivists where the aim is to verify theory, post-positivists are reductionist, concerned with probability; they do not aim to prove a hypothesis but to use theory falsification (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For example, five-hundred students with MPA experiencing sweaty palms as a symptom to a positivist may prove all whom suffer from MPA experience said symptom; for post-positivists, one student with MPA who doesn't experience sweaty palms disproves such a theory.

The above paradigms utilise **quantitative** research; studies producing statistical, numerical data. They believe that, when studying human behaviour, developing numeric measures of observations is paramount (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research embeds the epistemological view that "the investigator and the investigated are independent entities" (Slevitch, 2011, p.76), thus a researcher can study social phenomena without the issues of influence. Slevitch (2011) describes quantitative research as either experimental or manipulative due to the stringent control of variables. However, the use of quantitative methods and measurements implies a highly reliable and replicable set of data that may be generalised for a vast population (Pham, 2018; Bell & Waters, 2018). In a purely quantitative study, however, human thoughts and feelings are not taken into account (Bell & Waters, 2018). Despite this, many studies concerning subjects related to performance coaching, such as MPA and self-efficacy, are quantitative in research design. For example, Dempsey and Comeau's (2019) post-positivist investigation into the relationship between age, gender, self-efficacy and MPA in young musicians.

Understanding the world as others experience it is at the heart of both **constructivism** and **interpretivism** (Kawulich, 2012). Thus, if one is to utilise these related paradigms, they must 'give up' all notion of realist ontology (Dagar & Yadav, 2016) - reality is not only constructed by each individual but altered by them (Lavery, 2003). Dagar & Yadav (2016) emphasise constructivist knowledge is learnt by using it, and it is used to solve problems. Interpretivists argue that "methods used to understand knowledge related to human and social sciences cannot be the same as its usage in physical science because a human interprets their world and then acts based on such interpretation while the world does not." (Hammersley, 2013, p.26). Hence, **qualitative** research stems from these intertwined, idealist paradigms (Adom et al, 2016); by emphasising verbal, descriptive data rather than statistical data, qualitative scientific investigation aims to acquire better understanding of social phenomena from the point of view of study participants (Slevitch, 2011; Bell & Waters, 2018). Descriptive data will be collected over a vast period of time via methodologies such as Ethnography, and theory will emerge from the data rather than be applied to the data as with positivism (Grix, 2004). The constructivist/interpretivist researcher plays a

central role in the construction of what is 'true' (Polkinghorne, 1983), their role a 'passionate participant' (Laverty, 2003). Drawing on subjectivism, constructivists recognise an inevitable influence of axiological factors and admit the 'value-laden' nature of their study. I consider Constructivism a potential avenue for my own research due to its consideration of participants and emergent design; it correlates with the facilitatory role of teacher and performance coach.

Commonly inductive in analysis (Burnard et al. 2008), **Qualitative** research engages open-ended questions supporting the discovery of new information via 'real world' settings (Hoepfl, 1997; Bashir et al., 2008). Quantitative measures of reliable and valid data are inapplicable to qualitative research, as we "maintain our humanity throughout the [qualitative] research process..." (Bashir et al., 2008, p.35). Obtaining descriptive data via thematic content analysis (Burnard et al. 2008), Guba & Lincoln (1994) propose trustworthiness (reliability) be judged instead by credibility. A key characteristic of qualitative researchers is theoretical sensitivity; an awareness of subtleties in meaning, a skill shared by teachers/coaches, is essential for credibility and derives from the personal/professional experience of the researcher (Hoepfl, 1997). This implies choosing a topic in which I have personal experience, such as implications of anxiety on vocal performance, enhances the validity of the study. To avoid issues concerning validity and bias, qualitative methods demand data be recorded verbatim, with minimum alterations (Crowther et al., 2017). Further suggestions include: employing multiple sources of data and methods of data collection; audit trails via journaling; cross-checking interpretations with participants; where necessary, implementing further clarification; providing detailed descriptions of those involved (Breen, 2007; Bashir et al., 2008).

Pragmatism, known as the 'alternative paradigm', is grounded in uncertainty (Feilzer, 2010). An answer to the paradigm 'wars', it combines realism and idealism: "On one hand, our experiences in the world are necessarily constrained by the nature of that world; on the other hand, our understanding of the world is inherently limited to our interpretations of our experiences." (Morgan, 2014, p.1047) On reflection, I very much agree with this perspective. Social phenomena of which performance coaching is concerned, such as MPA or perfectionism, could be considered both objective in nature and subjectively created by the human mind - we are both a result of the experiences placed on us by outer world reality *and* our personal interpretations of said experiences. Instead of fixating on ontological and epistemological questions, pragmatism's emphasis is axiological. Dewey (2008, as cited in Morgan, 2014) places moral value at the heart of pragmatism; individuals and communities are free to identify and pursue issues that matter most to them. Cox (2013) encourages a pragmatic approach to both coaching practice and research: "We need to recognise theories as important, but also see them as socially constructed 'truths' that are open to challenge. Pragmatist coaches...take the theories, tools and techniques that they deem useful, employ them in practice, and then report on their effectiveness, mapping them back to their respective theoretical origins. The pragmatic method insists that truths be tested against practice or action." (Cox, 2013, pg.1)

Similarly to combining ontological and epistemological perspectives, pragmatism encourages combining quantitative ('close-ended') and qualitative ('open-ended') data (O'Hanlon, 2018). **Mixed Method Research** (MMR) allows practitioners to construct alternative frameworks and accommodate diverse research (Feilzer, 2010), focusing on solving an identified problem rather than adhering to a philosophical stance (Creswell, 2014). The suitability of method to answer the question, not the suitability of method to the paradigm, matters (Sadin & Yaacob, 2016). Freedom of choice to choose methods that best suit my needs and purpose is attractive, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding and strengthened validity through the gathering of both numeric and textual information (Bell & Waters, 2018; MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006). Nevertheless, the integration of two opposing methods of data collection can be challenging (Bell & Waters, 2018). However, such tensions can create significant insights into the data (Lingard et al., 2008); **triangulation**, the combining of counteracting methods, is a key component of MMR and aims to increase validity (O'Hanlon, 2018; Bashir et al., 2008). Fisher (2014) and Shaw et al. (2020) combine the use of quantitative surveys and qualitative interview and observation to provide empirically valid yet practical data in the areas of self-efficacy and MPA treatment, addressing the impact of voice change on singing self-efficacy and Acceptance Commitment Coaching on MPA respectively.

METHODOLOGIES

Methodology is not a 'correct method' to follow, but a research approach establishing the investigation's aims and principles, informing the researcher of suitable data collection methods for the chosen perspective (Laverty, 2003; Slevitch, 2011). Crowther et al. (2017) consider it unhelpful to assign methodologies to particular paradigms, as those omitted may prove more yielding than assumed. Bell & Waters (2018) insist that the selection of one methodological approach does not mean the researcher is locked into the methods that are normally associated with said methodology. However, methodology is undeniably guided by one's ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions (Kawulich, 2012).

Utilising the quantitative ideals of positivism/post-positivism, **Experimental** methodology allows for objective, statistical conclusions to be drawn about cause and effect via the sampling of groups (Bell & Waters, 2018). Hypotheses are proposed, tested and verified utilising methods that alleviate and isolate potential variables and bias (Kawulich, 2012). Requiring large sample groups to control the many variations and ambiguities of human behaviour, such experiments are expensive and time-consuming (Bell & Waters, 2018). Cohen et al. (2007) discuss ethical dilemmas of applying experimental methodology to the social sciences due to the manipulation of human beings for controlled, objective data, commenting the 'antiseptic, artificial' world of experiments does not reflect real life, thus making results obsolete. However, some argue that in order for studies concerning musical performance psychology to be held to a higher level of validity, practitioners working with musicians must implement an empirical, rigorous approach (Juncos & de Paiva e Pona, 2018).

Mirroring the rise of relativist paradigms is the rise of methodologies aligning themselves with qualitative research designs (Lavery, 2003). **Phenomenology**, **Hermeneutics**, **Ethnography**, **Case Study** and **Grounded Theory** all encourage a greater amount time to be spent with participants in their 'natural contexts' so that real facts of phenomena are unveiled (Adom et al, 2016). This implies suitability to my insider-research as a practitioner working with long-term students. However, Cain (2012) argues that teachers "cannot study their students as if in some natural state because in the classroom, any natural state the students might be presumed to have is influenced by the teacher." (p.9) Thus, the collaborative nature of **Action Research** may be more applicable.

Phenomenology and **Hermeneutics**, considered central to the interpretive paradigm (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007), are often referred to interchangeably yet, whilst both seek to uncover the human experience 'as it is lived', differing ontological and epistemological perspectives separate the two (Lavery, 2003). Husserl's **phenomenology**, epistemologically focused, concerns individual interpretation of the world's one reality (Van Manen, 2007). It attempts to 'throw light' on previously ignored phenomena through study of human consciousness and self-awareness, correlating with the domain of performance coaching (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). However, it requires the researcher to use reduction - 'bracketing' - the complete removal of personal values and experiences so that investigation may begin from a 'pure' starting point (Kakkori, 2009). Phenomenology challenges my epistemological and axiological inclinations, and contrasts with the values of Performance Coaching.

Cronin and Armour (2015) suggest an interpretive paradigm with **hermeneutical-phenomenological** methodology is 'particularly promising' for coaching research due to emphasis on subjective lived experience, 'lifeworld' view, and focus on the 'essence' rather than 'incidence' of phenomenon, forming "a sound body of knowledge that acknowledges the many multi-faceted complexity of practice" (p.2). Heidegger's evolution of phenomenology concerns the ontological question of reality (Lavery, 2003), believing we cannot have the same experience twice (Kakkori, 2009). Studying 'the processes of interpretation' (Kakkori, 2009), Hermeneutics reveals meaningful aspects of phenomena via language (Crowther et al., 2007). Context-bound, it requires intimate understanding of both the researcher and participants' experiences (Van Manen, 2007); the researcher is encouraged to reflect on personal values and bias (Lavery, 2003). Hermeneutics incorporates my inclination towards idealism, subjectivism, and the axiological impact of practitioner value and experience, harnessing an ethical foundation. Its focus on communication and hidden meaning correspond with the discipline of performance coaching.

Emerging from anthropology, **Ethnography** is well suited to studying beliefs, interactions and behaviours (Naidoo, 2012). Similarly to Hermeneutics, the researcher's personal interpretation and reflexivity is vital, with phenomenological meaning provided through participant observation (Reeves et al. 2013). However, the depth of observation required for an ethnographic study is

heavily time-consuming; it is recommended researchers with time-limits on their study refrain from adopting Ethnography (Bell & Waters, 2018). Whilst similar in their observational approach, **Case Study** whittles down the broad social perspective of Ethnography. Bell & Waters (2018) portray the methodology's in depth focus on one aspect of a problem as particularly appropriate for individual researchers. Whilst normally freestanding, case studies can combine with other methodologies, potentially to 'flesh out' previous sourced data or identify key issues that merit further investigation. Intrinsic case study, with a researcher's want to better understand a particular case, depicts a high consideration for what is valuable to both researcher and participant. However, concerns are often voiced about the value of studying single events and the potential for selective and distorted reporting (Bell & Waters, 2018). Systematically utilising numerous methods such as interview, observation, life histories, documents to create a rich and detailed type of information, the approach is heavily linked to the domain of psychology (Berg, 2001). Thus, individual case study can be considered fitting for performance coaching research.

Reacting to the hypothesis-testing nature of other methodologies, **Grounded Theory** asks open-ended questions to develop new, contextualised theories that emerge directly from qualitative data (Mills et al., 2014). Concerned with how we manage and construct social processes (Crowther et al, 2017), it uses a wide range of research methods, including semi-structured interviewing and participant observation, to provide explanatory frameworks to understand phenomena. The role of the researcher is as 'witness' (Mills et al., 2014), imparting four distinctive strategies of 'line-by-line' **coding** of collected data, **memo writing**, **theoretical sampling**, and **theoretical saturation** to identify and label key concepts and meaning (Charmaz, 2008). Axiologically, personal values and assumptions are not imported onto the data so that theories emerge uninfluenced. Whilst some consider the methodology as positivist, Charmaz (2008) argues a constructivist approach may be adopted. **Constructivist Grounded Theory**, concerning individual participant experience and incorporating researcher's reflexivity, is attractive to me as, unlike most other methodologies, the merging of data and constant analysis and refining of theory offers a qualitative approach with potentially more rigour. Furthermore, commonly adopted for psychologically-inclined research (Mills et al., 2014), it is implied as appropriate for studies concerning the psychology of the performer; Japp & Patrick's (2011) use of an inductive, qualitative approach is a good example of Grounded Theory's use of coding and cyclical re-analysis of interview data in musical ability, allowing the emergence and understanding of individual experience and characteristics that impact individual perception of musical self-efficacy.

Additionally, **Action Research** is a highly applicable methodology: "it is applied research, carried out by practitioners who have themselves identified a need for change or improvement" in their work-based environment (Bell & Waters, 2018, p.39). Differing from the previous methodologies, 'it assumes a tight coupling between research and action' and places importance on the learning achieved by the practitioner via the research rather than generalised knowledge (Rowley, 2003). Commonly used in educational settings and teaching practices, it can include all types of data

gathering methods, rendering it time-efficient and inclusive of client-based perspectives (Berg, 2001; Hine, 2013; Rowley, 2003). A collaborative approach, it integrates the participants into every stage of the research, 'from identifying the problem to disseminating the results' to implementing practical action and change (Lingard et al, 2008). Such an approach coheres to the role of a performance coach as a facilitator of change (Passmore et al., 2018). Furthermore, it is an approach that encourages self-study, allowing for practical and critical evaluation of my own practice and growth (Rowley, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to successfully establish the relationship between performance elements such as MPA and self-efficacy, it is widely considered imperative to carry out rigorous, empirical measures (Ritchie & Williamon, 2010). The use of self-report large- or small-scale **surveys** via close-ended questionnaires appears very common in assessing qualities such as self-efficacy and MPA (Shaw et al, 2020; Monti et al, 2016; Fisher, 2014; Cohen & Panebianco, 2020; Ritchie & Williamon, 2007; Craske & Craig, 1984; Lewis et al, 2021; González et al, 2017; Orejudo et al, 2016; Juncos et al., 2017; McPherson & McCormick, 2006). Utilising a Likert-type scale, popular questionnaires to consider include the Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (KMPA-I) and General Self Efficacy Scale (GSS). Developing specific scales for unique studies also appears common place, for example Ritchie & Williamon's (2010) adapted GSS for musical performance and Fisher's (2014) creation of the Singing Self-Efficacy Scale.

The use of multiple surveys in one research design is also commonplace. For example, Monti et al (2016) compare two surveys, the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA) and their own creation of the Singing Voice Handicap Index to help understand the relationship between past trauma and vocal characteristics. A potential practitioner study may include the use of multiple quantitative questionnaires to assess and cross-examine the specific phenomenon of raised MPA levels in singer-musicians when singing without their instrumental accompaniment.

Whilst many of the above studies adopt a traditional positivist approach, surveys can be applied outside of a positivist paradigm; "Interpretive quantitative research has the potential to yield results that are more meaningful, more understandable and more applicable (from a policy standpoint) than those achieved through conventional positivist approaches." (Babones, 2016).

There are various qualitative methods to consider including **observation**, **textual analysis** and **focus groups** (Stewart et al., 2008). I am especially inclined to incorporate survey with qualitative inquiry via **interview** into a MMR approach. Utilising open-ended questions in contrast to close-ended questions of quantitative surveys, interviews allow for 'individual variations' (Hoepfl, 1997). The three fundamental forms of interview are **structured**, **semi-structured**, and **unstructured** (Gill et al., 2008). In comparison to the rigid questioning of structured which restricts access to participants' perspectives and 'understandings of the world' (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), and the

'difficult to manage', time-consuming unstructured interview, the flexibility of semi-structured interview "allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team" (Gill et al., 2008, p.291), cohering with my inclination to place the experience of the participant at the heart of my practitioner research.

ETHICS & INSIDER RESEARCH

An Insider-Researcher researches topics related to their field, to which they are already exposed, or to a group they personally associate with is (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016). The ability to 'combine professional and academic interests' seeks to enhance my current practice and empower my evolution into performance coaching in combination with aiding and understanding students' unique experiences of phenomena, such as MPA (Costley, 2006). Due to my role as a one-to-one teacher and coach, my interest in coaching research topics is both intrinsically motivated via personal mental health experiences as a performer and vicariously through the experiences of my students and fellow vocalists/musicians.

As with all elements of research, there are both advantages and disadvantages to the adoption of the insider role (Unluer, 2012). Bonner & Tolhurst's three main advantages of insider research are well documented (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016; Unluer, 2012; Breen, 2007): 1) an insider has a superior understanding of the issue being studied; 2) an insider is able to naturally interact with participants and will not disrupt the flow of social interaction; 3) an insider is able to extract 'true' data from the participants as they can relate well to them. Understanding participant values and the direct access to data practitioner-led enquiry allows provides highly specific, contextual and comprehensive insight (Costley, 2006).

However, insider-research brings with it many qualms about ethics, validity, and rigour (Costley, 2006), many of which are due to the research's qualitative nature (Laverty, 2003). Whilst the most important aspect of insider research, role-duality as a researcher-practitioner is of key concern and may be difficult to balance (Unluer, 2012). Challenges that may occur include: difficulties with participants if the research challenges 'dearly held views and practices of participants' (Bell & Waters, 2018); the bias of influence in teacher-student relationships (Cain, 2012); participants assuming the researcher already knows interview answers, thus a potential lack of participation, due to relational intimacy (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016); researcher assumptions based on prior knowledge of topic and of participant (Breen, 2007). Nevertheless, there are practical approaches to overcome such challenges and the bias researching a familiar field may bring, including confronting personal prejudice by enlisting an external advisor, sharing and checking interpretations with participants, and maintaining a researcher's journal (Unluer, 2016).

Trust is at the heart of insider-research, trust between research and participants, and also trust in the credibility of emerging data (Unluer, 2012). Due to the in-depth knowledge of their subject area,

an insider-researcher is at risk of revealing too much sensitive information; ethically, utmost care must be taken in respecting the anonymity and privacy of participants. In coaching studies, it is essential to consider the influence of the researcher's role on the participant and respect access to privileged, sensitive information. Informed consent and nonmaleficence is crucial.

CONCLUSION

"The most valuable outcome of practitioner-led enquiry might not be the research itself but the practitioner's own self-development." (Costley, 2006, p. 1)

The primary aim of coaching researchers is "to gather evidence that will help in understanding what is happening in the coaching process, with the ultimate goal of improving practice." (Harding, 2009, p.13) Central to my studies is my growth in understanding individual experience of psychological performance-related phenomena and my ability to aid such phenomena via the role of performance coach. Informed by personal experience, reflexivity is an essential component to include. Considering individual experience paramount to my studies, the axiologically concerned pragmatic paradigm and emergent grounded theory or action research methodologies appear most suitable. MMR and triangulation will maintain popular use of quantitative survey and empirical validity required by those seeking to validate performance coaching practices whilst also allowing qualitative accounts that maintain my axiological and subjective stance. Overall, I aim to achieve balance in a research project that both strengthens my own practice and places the participant, the most important component, at its heart.

WORD COUNT: 4,945

REFERENCES

- Adom, D., Yeboah, A. And Ankara, A. K. (2016). Constructivism Philosophical Paradigm: Implication for Research, Teaching and Learning. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(10), pp.1-9
- Arneson, C. (2010). Performance Anxiety: A Twenty-First Century Perspective. *Journal of Singing*, 66(5), pp.537–546.
- Babones, S (2016) Interpretive quantitative methods for the social sciences. *Sociology* 50(3): 453–469.
- Bashir, M., Afzal, M. and Azeem, M. (2008). Reliability and Validity of Qualitative and Operational Research Paradigm. *Pakistan Journal of Statistics and Operation Research*, 4(1), pp.35-45.
- Bell, J. and Waters, S. (2018). *Doing your research project : A guide for first-time researchers*. 6th ed. London Mcgraw Hill Education.
- Berg, B. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bernard, P., Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., and Chadwick, B. (2008). Analysing and presenting qualitative data. *British Dental Journal*, 204(8), pp.429-432.
- Breen, L. (2007). The researcher 'in the middle': Negotiating the insider/outsider dichotomy. *The Australian Community Psychologist*, 14(1), pp.163-174.
- Cain, T. (2012) Too hard, too soft or just about right: theoretical underpinnings of music teachers' action research, *British Journal of Music Education*, 29(3), 409-425.
- Charmaz, K. (2008). Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds), *Handbook of Emergent Methods* (pp.115-172). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). London and New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Costley, C. (2006). Practitioner-led enquiry as development of professional practice. *Academia*.

Cox, E. (2013). *Coaching Understood: A Pragmatic Inquiry into the Coaching Process*. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 8(1), pp. 265-270.

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Cronin, C. and Armour, K. M. (2015). 'Being' in the coaching world: new insights on youth performance coaching from an interpretative phenomenological approach. *Sport, Education and Society*.

Crowther, S., Ironside, P., Spence, D., and Smythe, L. (2017). Crafting Stories in Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research: A Methodological Device, *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(6), pp.826-835

Dagar, V. and Yadav, A. (2016). Constructivism: a Paradigm for Teaching and Learning. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 7(4). doi:10.4172/2151-6200.1000200.

Dempsey, E. and Comeau, G. (2019). Music Performance Anxiety and Self-Efficacy in Young Musicians: Effects of Gender and Age. *Music Performance Research*, Vol. 9, pp.60–79.

Feilzer, M. Y. (2010). Doing Mixed Methods Research Pragmatically: Implications for the Rediscovery of Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(1), pp.6-16.

Fisher, R. A. (2014). The Impacts of the Voice Change, Grade Level, and Experience on the Singing Self-Efficacy of Emerging Adolescent Males. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62(3), pp.277-290.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., and Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*, 204(6), pp.291-295.

Greene, D. and Savage, D. (2009). An Answer to Performance Anxiety. *American Music Teacher*, 58(4), pp.26–29.

Grix, J. (2004). *The Foundations of Research*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, pp.105-117. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hammersley, M. (2013). *What is Qualitative Research?* London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Harding, C. (2009). Researcher as Goldilocks: searching for a methodology that is 'just right' for a coaching and mentoring study. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 3, pp.11-21

Hoepfl, M. (1997). Choosing Qualitative Research: A Primer for Technology Education Researchers. *Journal of Technology Education*, 9(1), pp.47-63.

Hoey, B.A. (2014). A Simple Introduction to the Practice of Ethnography and Guide to Ethnographic Fieldnotes, *Marshall Digital Scholar*, pp.1-10

Japp, A. and Patrick, F. (2011). The Role of Perceived Self-Efficacy in the Development of Musical Ability: what can the study of successful musicians tell us about teaching music to able children? *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, Vol. 10 (1), pp.46–55.

Juncos, D.G., Heinrichs, G.A., Towle, P., Duffy, K., Grand, S.M., Morgan, M.C., Smith, J.D. and Kalkus, E. (2017). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for the Treatment of Music Performance Anxiety: A Pilot Study with Student Vocalists. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8.

Juncos, D.G. and de Paiva e Pona, E. (2018). Acceptance and commitment therapy as a clinical anxiety treatment and performance enhancement program for musicians. *Music & Science*, 1.

Kawulich, B. (2012). Selecting a Research Approach: Paradigm, Methodology and Methods. In: *Doing Social Research: A global context*. London: McGraw Hill, pp.1–21.

Kakkori, L. (2009). Hermeneutics and Phenomenology Problems When Applying Hermeneutic Phenomenological Method in Educational Qualitative Research. *Paideusis: Journal of the Canadian Philosophy of Education Society*, 18(2), pp.19–27.

Kenny, D.T. (2016). Short-Term Psychodynamic Psychotherapy (STPP) for a Severely Performance Anxious Musician: A Case Report. *Journal of Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 6(3).

Killam, L. (2013). *Research terminology simplified: Paradigms, axiology, ontology, epistemology and methodology*.

- Kuhn, T.S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago Uni. Chicago Press.
- Ladyman, J. (2007). "Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Positions", *Handbook of the Philosophy of Science: General Philosophy of Science*, Elsevier: Amsterdam, pp. 303– 376.
- Laverty, S.M. (2003). Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), pp.21–35.
- Lingard, L., Albert, M. and Levinson, W., 2008. Grounded theory, mixed methods, and action research. *Bmj*, 337.
- Mackenzie, N. and Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research*, 16.
- McPherson, G.E. and McCormick, J. (2006). Self-Efficacy and Music Performance. *Psychology of Music*, 34(3), pp.322–336
- Merriam, S. and Tisdell, E. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. 4th ed. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, J., Birks, M. and Hoare, K. (2014) Grounded Theory.. In: *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide*. SAGE Publications, Inc. pp.69-82.
- Monti, E., Kidd, D.C., Carroll, L.M. and Castano, E. (2016). What's in a singer's voice: The effect of attachment, emotions and trauma. *Logopedics Phoniatrics Vocology*, 42(2), pp.62–72.
- Moon, K. and Blackman, D. (2014). A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists. *Conservation Biology*, 28(5), pp.1167–1177.
- Moon, K. and Blackman, D. (2017). A guide to ontology, epistemology, and philosophical perspectives for interdisciplinary researchers. [online] Integration and Implementation Insights. Available at: <https://i2insights.org/2017/05/02/philosophy-for-interdisciplinarity/>.
- Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1(1), pp.48-76.
- Morgan, D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a Paradigm for Social Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* Vol. 20(8) pp.1045-1053.

Naidoo, L. (2012) 'Ethnography: An Introduction to Definition and Method', in Naidoo, *An ethnography of global landscapes and corridors*. Croatia: InTech, pp.1-7

O'Hanlon, F 2018, Mixed methods research: Achieving a robust design. in J Ravenscroft & L Hamilton (eds), *Building Your Research Design in Education: Theoretically Informed Advanced Methods*. 1st edn, Bloomsbury, pp. 207-253

Passmore, J., Stopforth, M. and Lai, Y. (2018) Defining coaching psychology: debating coaching and coaching psychology definitions. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 14 (2). pp. 120-122.

Pham, L. (2018). A Review of Key Paradigms: positivism, interpretivism and critical inquiry. *University of Adelaide*.

Rehman, A. and Alharthi, K. (2016). An Introduction to Research Paradigms. *International Journal of Educational Investigations*, 3(8), pp.51–59.

Reeves, S., Peller, J., Goldman, J. and Kitto, S. (2013) Ethnography in qualitative educational research: AMEE Guide No. 80. *Medical Teacher* 35, pp.1365-1379

Ritchie, L. and Williamon, A. (2010). Measuring Distinct Types of Musical Self-Efficacy. *Sempre*, Vol. 39(3), pp.328–344.

Rogers, M. (2012). Contextualising Theories and Practices of Bricolage Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(7) pp.1-17

Saidin, K. and Yaacob, A. (2016). Insider Researchers: Challenges & Opportunities. *Proceedings of the ICECRS*, 1(1), pp.v1i1-563.

Sale, J., Lohfeld, L. H. and Brazil, K. (2002) Revisiting the Quantitative-Qualitative Debate: Implications for Mixed-Methods Research. *Quality and Quantity*, 36, pp. 43-53.

Shaw, T.A., Juncos, D.G. and Winter, D. (2020). Piloting a New Model for Treating Music Performance Anxiety: Training a Singing Teacher to Use Acceptance and Commitment Coaching With a Student. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11.

Slevitch, L. (2011) Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies Compared: Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 12(1), pp.73-81

Stelter, R. (2009). *Coaching as a reflective space in a society of growing diversity - towards a narrative, postmodern paradigm*. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 4(2), pp. 207-217.

Stober, D.R., Wildflower, L. and Drake, D., (2006). Evidence-based practice: A potential approach for effective coaching. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 4(1), pp.1-8.

Unluer, S. (2012). Being an Insider Researcher While Conducting Case Study Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(29), 1-14.

Van Manen, M. (2007), *Phenomenology of Practice*, 1(1), pp.11-30.

Welch, G. et al. (2008). Investigating Musical Performance: Performance Anxiety Across Musical Genres. *Teaching and Learning Research Programme*, 57.

Wojnar, D. M., and Swanson, K. M. (2007). Phenomenology: An Exploration. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 25(3), pp. 172-180.