
Dance and Psychological Well-being

Lecture 3: Continuing with Motivation Anxiety, Stress and Arousal

Motivation Articles - Review

What were the articles you found?

What did you learn?

Where did you find them?

Why do we review articles?

Why do we review articles?

Necessary for an academic paper/essay/dissertation

Search and evaluation of available literature in your topic

Documents the state of research and subject that you are writing about

You need to evaluate the resources to make sure they contain information that is authoritative, reliable and relevant

How to read an article

- Read, summarize or describe each article noting your findings and impressions. Examine each article for strengths and weaknesses and validity of findings
- Is the author objective? Is the information presented in an unbiased manner?
- Try to extract the unique concepts of the article that are central to a full understanding of the topic.
- Look for points of difference between the articles if reading more than one.
- Note that researchers may favour different methods such as quantitative or qualitative studies, look for what methods were used.
- Take thorough notes on each article or book to be included to help ensure that you don't have to go through them over and over again.

Things to consider

- Who funded the research studies?
- Who did the research?
- What was the (political, historical, social) context surrounding this research or study?
- Pay attention to methodology: is it sound? what testing procedures, subjects, materials were used?

Be objective

- Researchers should remain objective about their work.
- keep an open mind
- represent both sides of a contentious idea
- consider work that runs counter to your own research hypothesis

Write a summary of the article

Write a 200 word summary of one of your chosen articles, noting your findings and impressions. Examine its strengths and weaknesses and validity of findings

- You should highlight whether the author is objective and if the information presented is unbiased
- Try to extract the unique concepts of the article that are central to a full understanding of the topic
- Note that the researcher/s may favour different methods such as quantitative or qualitative studies, look for what methods were used and how

Present your summary to the group

Next week

Literature review

What are they?

Why do we need to do them?

Key points to remember

Structuring a literature review

How to do a literature search

Part 2: Anxiety, stress and arousal

Anxiety, stress and arousal

Megan is about to go on stage

She starts to feel weak and her body is limp

Her hands are shaking

Her mind wonders - what will happen if she doesn't get the really fast section right?

Will the audience notice? The choreographer will

She doesn't want to let her down

Her heart is pounding

...

Pressure in military and emergency services, where life and death can truly test one's decision making, coping and performance skills, success and failure in dance, especially at high levels and in education, can also produce extreme anxiety.

Anxiety, stress and arousal

Anxiety – is the feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild to severe. Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life i.e. sitting an exam, medical tests. For dancers these might be auditions, performances, stressful rehearsal situations

Stress – is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure. Pressure turns into stress when you feel you are unable to cope. People react differently to different levels of stress and stressors. A particular situation might be motivation of one dancer but very stressful to a different dancer.

Arousal – is the physiological and psychological state of being awoken or of a sense organs are stimulated to a point of perception. This might be nerves, butterflies in the stomach, heart pumping, skin clammy.

On nerves before a performance: Stuart Skelton, Opera Singer talks about not being nervous and reframing nerves on the Only Artist Podcast BBC Radio 4. Nerves before a performance is unexpended energy that doesn't have an outlet until he gets on stage. Once the show opens and he is on stage that energy gets sent out towards the audience.

Arousal

Arousal is the blend of physiological and psychological activity in a person and it refers to the intensity dimensions of motivation at a particular moment. The intensity of arousal falls along a continuum (Low – Medium – High)

The range is from not at all aroused i.e. comatose, to completely aroused i.e. frenzied (Gould, Greenlead & Krane, 2002)

Highly aroused individuals are mentally and physically activated.

They have increased heart rate, respiration and sweating

Not automatically associated with positive or negative events e.g. both, when you win £100 million in the lottery or the death of a loved one, will cause arousal.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a negative emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension

It is associated with activation or arousal of the body

Anxiety although perceived as negative/unpleasant does not necessarily affect performance negatively

Anxiety has two components

- Cognitive anxiety – worry, apprehension
- Somatic anxiety – physical activation

It is important to distinguish between State and Trait Anxiety

State Anxiety

Anxiety can be referred to as a stable personality component or a changing mood state

State anxiety refers to the ever-changing mood component or emotional state characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Part of the nervous system responsible for control of the bodily functions not consciously directed i.e. breathing, heartbeat and digestive system)

This state changes constantly in performance, rehearsal etc

Cognitive state anxiety concerns the degrees of which one worries or has negative thoughts

Somatic state anxiety concerns the moment to moment changes in perceived physiological activation. It is not necessarily a change in physical state but the perception of such a change

*Perceived control or regulatory component of state anxiety is the perception a dancer has of their own resources and ability to meet challenges is an important component of state anxiety

Trait Anxiety

Trait anxiety is part of the personality

It is an acquired behavioural tendency or disposition that influences behaviour

Predisposes a person to think something is threatening a range of circumstances that objectively may not actually be dangerous

The person then responds to the situation in a state of anxiety with disproportionate levels of intensity and magnitude to the situation

Three components:

- Somatic trait anxiety e.g. the degree in which physical symptoms are felt such as muscle tension
- Cognitive trait anxiety e.g. the degree of worry one has
- Concentration disruption e.g. the degree of disruption to concentration i.e. in a performance or rehearsal

Defining stress

Stress can be defined as a substantial imbalance between demand, either physical or psychological, and the response capacity under conditions where failure to meet that demand has important consequences

It is a process or sequence of events that will lead to a particular end

McGrath's model of four stages:

Stage 1. Environmental demand – demand placed on the individual e.g. learning new choreography

Stage 2. Perception of demand – how dancer interprets the demands of the choreography. Trait anxiety will determine how they perceive the work. High trait-anxious people will perceive situation as threatening – trait anxiety important factor in stage 2

Stage 3. Stress response – physical and psychological response to their perception of the situation. If imbalance between demand and their response capability will cause them to feel threatened, increase state anxiety, leading to increased worry (cognitive state anxiety) and/or heightened physiological activation (somatic state anxiety). Changes in concentration, increased muscle tension.

Stage 4. Behavioural consequences – behaviour under stress then feeds back into stage 1

Implications for Practice

Task

As a rehearsal director you have been asked to support a company understand and deal with increasing levels of stress in a company. First consider each stage and develop a brief plan to combat stressors at each level.

1. Stage 1
2. Stage 2
3. Stage 3
4. Stage 4

Triggers of anxiety and stress in dancers

Life circumstance
Positive successes
New experiences
Finance
Injury
Unemployment
Essays and assessments
Unable to dance
Fatigue
Time management
Body image
Weight
Criticism
Performance
Chemical imbalance in the brain

Triggers for teachers, choreographers, rehearsal directors

Question?

Situational sources of stress

Event importance

- More important the more stressful
- Greater degree of uncertainty of outcome, other's feelings, evaluations
- Not always obvious
- Continually assess importance

Uncertainty

- Great the uncertainty the greater the stress
- How long recovery might be from injury
- Life situations e.g. career, future, relocation, work, conflicts
- Have empathy towards others own uncertainty

Personal sources of stress

Self categorise situations as important or uncertain – viewed with varying degrees of anxiety.

Heightened state anxiety related to high trait anxiety, low self-esteem and social physique anxiety

Self Esteem

- Low self-esteem have less confidence and more state anxiety - Need strategies for enhancing self-confidence to reduce state anxiety

Trait anxiety

- Personality factor
- How view situation or social evaluation as threatening

High trait anxiety dancer perceives performance as more threatening and anxiety provoking

Social Physique Anxiety

- Personality disposition when others observe their physiques
- Nerves or apprehensive when body is being evaluated or observed How view situation or social evaluation as threatening
- Negative relationship between social physical anxiety and perceived physical ability
- Related to need satisfaction, physical activity motivation and behaviour

Social physical anxiety

Social Physique Anxiety

- Personality disposition when others observe their physiques
- Nerves or apprehensive when body is being evaluated or observed How view situation or social evaluation as threatening
- Negative relationship between social physical anxiety and perceived physical ability (Hausenblas, Brewer & Van Raalte, 2004)
- Related to need satisfaction, physical activity motivation and behaviour (Burnet & Sabiston, 2009)
- People with high social physical anxiety are more likely to avoid fitness/movement settings or struggle with motivation during participation because of fear how others view them
- Women in particular are susceptible to SPA so change clothes for example

The differences in arousal between sport and dance during/around performance

There has been much research and debate into arousal in sport

There is still limited research in dance

The differences in arousal between sport and dance during/around performance

Arousal and arousal management issues are described and experienced somewhat differently in the two domains.

Although optimal levels of arousal and tension management are central mental skills, athletes may vary in their attention to or concern about arousal.

In dance, even the language we use is different.

Performance anxiety generally is considered a routine element of performance.

For dancers, the issue is usually not *whether* one will experience performance anxiety but rather how much we get, how debilitating it is, and how we can handle it.

"Stage fright, the commonly used term, refers to that aspect of performance anxiety that is "a state of nervousness or apprehension concerning per-forming before an audience" (Clark, 1989, p. 30).

Stress creates physiological issues:

Increased arousal is caused by increased cortisol production which impacts the body in several ways

Muscle tension, fatigue and coordination

Tension in the body

Reduced flexibility

Coordination difficulties

Narrowing visual field

Attention, concentration and visual search changes

Narrows a performers attentional field – why is this bad for dancers

Low arousal becomes too broad and unfocused

Dancers need to be able to have broad external span and narrower external focus

Affects concentration, go on autopilot

Working memory resources impacted

Increased arousal and activation of sympathetic nervous system and stress response

When Stress Strikes

When stress strikes, the body goes on high alert. The sympathetic nervous system responds. The sympathetic nervous system is one of two parts of the body's autonomic nervous system. It is responsible for the fight-or-flight response through its nerve pathways, and it helps you deal with stressors. It gets the body ready to combat the stressor (fight), flee (flight), seek social support (befriending), or take care of someone (tending or nurturing).

Cortisol is the major stress hormone triggered under stressful conditions. It alerts the body of the need for more oxygen, blood sugar, and energy to cope with the stress. For example, the curtain call and the opening music cue the body to gear up and prepare for the beginning of the performance. The body gets into an action-ready state, addressing the demands placed on it by picking up cues from the familiar environment.

How to identify anxiety and stress through physical symptoms

Heart rate increase

Butterflies

Nerves

Muscles tension

Dry mouth

Irritability

Butterflies

Feeling sick

Headache

Need to urinate often

Negative self-talk

Difficulty sleeping

Inability to concentrate

These can then lead to injury which can then lead to more stress and anxiety

Causes of anxiety/stress on performance that are non-physical

Cognitive symptoms: worry, lack of patience, apprehension, sleep loss and disturbance, appetite, concentration, distractability

Symptoms will manifest themselves in unique ways and cause various impairments

Different theories about how/why arousal interferes with performance positive and negative (performance, confidence etc...

Anxious – mind filled with worries, distracting and debilitating

More concentration needed to do simple tasks when stressed – impact on ability to do choreography, feel free etc.

Choking – worst case phenomenon – regressing to early stages of learning

Excessively self-conscious – self critique

Exhausting

Stress is expected in dancer's life – nerves etc...

Stress is like a glass of water

If filled with stress to the top

Add stress of daily life or industry rejection

It will spill over

How can you keep levels of water low so it doesn't spill over?

TASK 1

Techniques/skills to manage stress and anxiety

Different symptoms need different techniques

Step 1. Identify how you experience stress – learn by observing and identify the cues

Step 2. Physical, emotional or cognitive

TASK 2

Dialectical behavioural therapy – ABC please

To manage own glass of stress

Help prepare us for the stresses in the future

A – Accumulating positive emotions

Schedule positive activities, pleasure, joy, pride (although we want them organically)

Be intentional about them happening/part of our routine

B – Building mastery

Doing these activities on a regular basis

What might support competence, self-confidence, self-control – what will not?

C – Coping ahead of time

Identify which situations will cause you stress

Create a plan ahead of time for how you will cope with them

Visualisation before, during and after the event

Schedule ways you can take care of yourself around the event

Please – Physical body

Out of balance body increases stress

Causes vulnerability to emotions

Balanced eating

Avoid mood altering substances

Balanced sleep and exercise

Treat physical illness quickly

ABC Please is proactive but not overwhelming way to begin to think intentionally about self care.

When might using ABC useful

Starting new job, move for work etc

Set up life well so you can face those stressors

In the studio and performance setting

At times when we get caught up in feeling anxious about feeling anxious and how it will limit us in some way

How can you implement ABC Please into your daily life?

Decrease the power
of anxiety by
reframing it

As with athletes (Williams & Andersen, 1998), it seems likely that artists' performance tension may be a precursor to injury. Improved self-monitoring, relaxation training, and reduction in performance anxiety all might be helpful preventatives (Clark, 1989).

Other typical components of psychological skills training for athletes—such as goal setting, concentration training, relaxation training, and imagery—are notable by their absence within many performing arts programs. Some experiential, cognitive, and psychodynamic approaches have been developed, however. Tim Gallwey's inner game method—detailed with golf, tennis, and other sports (e.g., Gallwey, 1997, 1998)—has been applied to music performance (Green & Gallwey, 1986). Cognitive methods also are used in helping performers, although the perspective often is reparative rather than preventive (Robin & Balter, 1995; Salmon & Meyer, 1992). In other instances, performance anxiety is understood to be a manifestation of deeper psychological issues regarding the presentation of self in public (Nagel, 1992).

Read

The Enhancement of Performance Excellence Among Performing Artists

Kate F. Hays , 30 Nov 2010.

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10413200290103572>

By next week

Read one of the following articles:

- **Dancers' perceptions of psychological skills training:** Stephanie J. Hanrahan
- **Stressors, Recovery Processes, and Manifestations of Training Distress in Dance:** J. Robert Grove, Ph.D., Luana C. Main, Ph.D., and Lucinda Sharp, M.Psych.
- **Stress, Emotions, and Motivational States Among Traditional Dancers in New Zealand and Japan:** Y. Kuroda, G. Geisler, P. C. H. Morel, J. Hapeta

Next week

Writing a literature review

Mental skills training – some tools

Self Sabotage