

Creation of an artefact to improve adolescent singers' self-confidence in preparation for their first performance

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COMPONENT 1 4813 words**Brief Description of Artefact**

Research shows that as many as 75% of students experience some form of music performance anxiety (Osborne, 2016; Britsch, 2005), which can reduce quality of performance and in extreme cases lower life satisfaction (Ryan and Andrews, 2009). Additionally, many adolescents regard singing negatively and therefore struggle to continue singing into adulthood (Sweet, 2018); but what causes this disengagement and how can it be rectified? Through this study I will aim to create an artefact that will serve as a workbook for adolescent singers to work towards their first public singing performance, aiming to reduce anxiety and increase confidence. My previous research has found that this age group's motivation to continue in the arts is strongly affected by peer relationships (Patrick, Ryan et al., 1999) and that the voice is so interconnected to the individual's sense of self that criticism can feel more personal than that of an instrumentalist (Jones, 2004).

Research for the artefact will draw on both vocal pedagogy and performance anxiety reducing techniques as evidenced in arts and sports performance to create a concise but comprehensive guide for amateur adolescent singers working towards their first performance. This workbook will be created to work alongside what they are already learning in lessons about their voice in order to instill confidence and create a positive experience for their first performance.

Rationale

As a private singing teacher of students aged 5-18, I have observed that many of the adolescents that I teach appear to lose confidence in their singing or will avoid singing in public, sometimes leading to them quitting singing altogether. Research has found that one of the key reasons that singers do not continue into adulthood due to the memory of an embarrassing experience singing in adolescence (Killian, 1997). It is therefore my aim for students to feel empowered to be able to perform in public whether they want to continue professionally or whether they sing for enjoyment. As such, this artefact will not be a musical guide but will instead consider physiological and psychological concepts from literature adapted into a clear, engaging and interesting way for adolescents. It is also my aim for this work to be scalable, having the potential to be adapted for younger children, mature beginners and professionals.

Through trying to search for a similar resource to the one that I wish to create, it is clear that there is a gap as there is nothing similar to be found. While a quick Google search brings up

articles about performance anxiety, anxiety disorders and recommendations for voice training through puberty, there is nothing concerning singer confidence and performance preparation that is intended to be worked through by the student themselves. With peer pressure being a commonly cited reason for singers to lose motivation in adolescence (Abril, 2007), it is clear there is a gap for a resource directed at adolescents to overcome some of this fear and be able to sing in front of others with confidence.

As the adolescent experience can be vast, I will use the most up-to-date literature available to also aim to include the most current and relatable issues for teenagers, such as trans and changing voice (Davies, Papp et al., 2015). I will also carefully consider the length of the document, language and colours used in order to be as inclusive as possible and consider students with SEN needs (Rello and Baeza-Yates, 2016). Spaces to write reflections will also be included, optional and unmarked to allow students to be free to write their personal thoughts and feelings without fear of being judged. Research will also include further reading and resources for students to access if they are facing larger issues, such as MPA that the artefact will not cover completely. The resource will consider the safeguarding and wellbeing of students, promoting safe and evidenced techniques based on the work of respected pedagogues.

Effective learning techniques for this age group will also be researched and evidenced, in order to create the most useful and teachable exercises. This will also include evidencing voice teaching techniques so that the voice teacher is able to incorporate the workbook into lessons. As well as contributing to the resource, this research will also be beneficial to my work as a private voice teacher to create a more informed and inclusive practice.

Theoretical Influences

Research shows that creating positive memories of singing during school is highly influential on having positive attitudes towards singing and music later in life (Abril, 2007; Richards, 1999; Apfelstadt, 1989). The role and responsibility of a teacher to foster this positive experience with music in students cannot be understated, with Corby (2008) finding that:

“a teacher is responsible for someone’s first public performance, but many singers don’t continue to sing and perform past their adolescence... Teachers have a small window to provide positive performance experiences in adolescence, as once a singer reaches adulthood they need a high level of motivation to continue singing.” (p.4).

Additionally, adolescents face barriers to singing more prevalent in this age group than others, such as embarrassment over voice change (Bizjak and Freer, 2015), sensitivity to judgement from others (Sweet, 2019) and the inherent belief that being a 'good' singer cannot be learned and therefore you are either a singer or a non-singer (Asmus, 1986; Abril, 2007, Palkki, 2021).

Elkind (1970) and Sweet (2019) describe the concept of adolescents feeling that they are constantly being watched by an imaginary audience, resulting in negative self-image which they believe they can take control of by self-condemning their performance before an audience can (Corby, 2008). Adolescents who have sung in front of their peers reported adapting their voice either by holding back or by feeling motivated to try harder (Orton and Pitts, 2019), and that physical feedback (such as the feeling of the voice shaking) that they may have not felt during practice can create the negative feeling of music performance anxiety (MPA) (Corby, 2008).

While these experiences may discourage adolescents from continuing to sing into adulthood, research shows that those who do benefit from increased quality of life and morale and decreased loneliness and depression when singing in a group setting (Daykin, Mansfield et al., 2018). Studies have also suggested that singing can increase life longevity and have positive effects on lung diseases, chronic illnesses and mood disorders (Kang, Scholp and Jiang, 2018). It is therefore suggested that adolescence is a pivotal time for educators to create a positive connection to singing, as overcoming issues that adolescent singing student face could lead to a lifelong enjoyment of singing that can improve their health and quality of life (Kreutz, Bongard et al., 2003).

There is also evidence that performance can enhance the function of both the left and right brain hemispheres, as singing involves both technical thought and skill and physical creative output (Emmons and Thomas, 1998). This is important as singing invigorates cognitive processes, leading to better attainment where musical skills and creative performance combine (Rucsanda, 2020; Haroutounian, 2000). To create a highly competent performance, the body and mind work together and preparing the mind should be as important as technical preparation for singing (Emmons and Thomas, 1998). As the vocal mechanisms cannot be felt directly, singing instruction often involves mental images so that students can visualise functions that are occurring in the larynx when they sing (Doganyigit and Yigit, 2023).

The use of mental rehearsal has also been found to be beneficial to create a sense of security in performance without being tiring (Clark, Williamon and Aksentijevic, 2012). The PETTLEP model can provide parameters for executing mental rehearsal; physical (movement),

environmental (location), task (process of performing), timing (imagining in real time), learning (maintaining the current performance level), emotion (controlling negative emotions) and perspective (external for improving posture and stage presence) (Holmes and Collins, 2001; Clark, Williamon and Aksentijevic, 2012). While most often tested in sport, the PETTTLEP model has been found to be beneficial in improving the performance of both beginners and the more experienced (Smith, Wright et al., 2007).

It has been my observation that adolescent singers lose the motivation to sing especially when faced with doing so in front of their peers at school. The loss of motivation to sing is often attributed to embarrassment caused by their changing voices, peer pressure and not feeling represented by the music they are being asked to sing (Turton and Durant, 2002). Freer (2015) identifies several existing theoretical frameworks for motivation and how these may reflect in the adolescent male singer. These include the theory of Possible Selves (whereby individuals have a concept of their own feared self, expected self and hoped-for self) (Freer 2015; Oyserman and James, 2010; Markus and Nurius, 1986) and Identity Based Motivation Theory (whereby an individual's identity is subjective, changeable and constructed in different situations) (Freer, 2015; Oyserman and James, 2010). This aligns with the constructivist paradigm underpinning the artefact which suggests that knowledge and understanding is subjective.

This also aligns with the concept of voice and its connection to an individual's identity. Freer (2015) argues that individuals are motivated by activities that are consistent with their identity and that the link between music and identity is developed during school. As the Identity Based Motivation Theory suggests that identity is subjective and ever changing (Oyserman and James, 2010), social constructivist theories too suggest that that individuals can have multiple self-reported identities (Hargreaves, Macdonald and Miell, 2014). Self-identity that changes over time – the narrative self – can create meaning in an individual's life and changes especially through learning experiences (O'Bryan, 2015; Creech et al., 2008; Ibarra, 1999). As a teacher, there is a responsibility to not only understand and develop a young person's voice but to champion them through their changing sense of identity and belonging (O'Bryan, 2015).

The research concerning motivation theories then led me to Self Determination Theory. This theory concerns how motivation can relate to a person's well-being and behaviour (Krause, North and Davidson, 2019). When used as a theoretical framework within music research, results concluded that social aspects of music making, as well as a feeling of competency, were key to positive well-being in relation to music (Krause, North and Davidson, 2019). This theory

contains the sub-theories Cognitive Evaluation Theory (intrinsic motivation; people are internally motivated to seek out challenging and satisfying behaviours) and Organismic Integration Theory (extrinsic motivation; people engaging in behaviours that are not inherently satisfying but are a method to achieve a separate outcome) (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec and Soenens, 2010). The effect of positive feedback and encouragement on intrinsic motivation is significant, suggesting the importance of an encouraging teacher in student's motivation to perform (Deci, 1971).

In sports research, a field which similarly involves the pressures of performing, the effect of constructive feedback on intrinsic motivation has been found to be most effective when the student's autonomy is considered (Carpentier & Mageau, 2013); it is suggested that to do this, the instructor should provide reason for the feedback, encourage the student's response to the feedback and give options towards a solution (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

Growth mindset, in relation to intrinsic motivation, is the idea that intelligence is not fixed but is instead adaptable through learning and effort (Ng, 2018). In the case of learning to sing, students who had a growth mindset were found to view their abilities more positively and have the intrinsic motivation to seek out more singing activities (Cogdill, 2013). It is suggested that teachers who challenge students' beliefs about their singing and help them to understand what may have influenced these beliefs can help to improve their students' singing confidence (Cogdill, 2013). Modelling this mindset through opportunities for all to sing (not selecting only the perceived "strongest" singers) and providing individualised feedback for goal setting can improve student autonomy, intrinsic motivation and foster their growth mindset (Cogdill, 2013).

Before these beliefs are developed, singers entering a performance environment may suffer from anxiety resulting from fear of the opinions of their peers or audience, inhibiting their ability to perform due to lapses of concentration caused by changes in the brain's normal functioning while this anxiety lasts (Stothert, 2012). It is therefore necessary for the voice teacher or choral instructor to consider their influence on their singers and the language they are using, especially when preparing students for performance (Bonshor, 2017). There is also a necessity to not only help students address issues with their voices, but to help them gain autonomy over their emotional state and anxiety when performing, as those who wish to pursue a career in the arts are often faced with continuous rejections, negative feedback or no feedback at all (Walker and Commander, 2017). This workbook will combine student autonomy with opportunities for feedback to be theoretically sound; it will be intended to work alongside the teacher as positive reinforcement, but not as a replacement for professional instruction.

In summary, the overarching themes of this theoretical research are the theories of motivation; influence of the teacher (or in this case the artefact) and creating intrinsic motivation through goal setting, feedback and developing the connection to identity as a singer. These will align with the constructivist underpinning of the artefact to create an artefact that is conducive to learning.

Best Practice Influences

For research to be considered best practice it must be grounded in a solid methodological approach where methodology and method are strongly connected (Maggs-Rapport, 2001). While it is difficult to find largely agreed upon methods for teaching and encouraging confidence in adolescent singers, there is existing research on the effect of embodied cognition on confidence; this is the theory that the mind, body and environment are interlinked (Kosmas and Zaphiris, 2018). This theory has been researched in education where it has been found that bodily movement enhances learning (Kosmas and Zaphiris, 2018).

In singing instruction, it is best practice for a teacher to use a combination of skills, concepts and physical adjustments and for teachers to model embodied actions and depict internal invisible inner mechanisms (Szczepeck Reed, 2021). Research also shows that holding the body in a confident way can improve thoughts about self, suggesting that this can improve confidence and self-efficacy (Francis and Beemer, 2019).

My previous research on adolescent singers' self-efficacy has led me to discover a link between embodied cognition and increased confidence. Additionally, there is a well-documented connection between singing and self-identity, and between high self-efficacy and motivation to sing (Xu, 2023). It is therefore necessary to include in the artefact not only a link to music education, but exercises that understand and aim to improve adolescent self-worth. Beyond singing, increased self-efficacy can mean improved educational performance, happiness and satisfaction (Morton and Montgomery, 2011). The adolescent population is also a crucial stage where rules and boundaries are tested, and habits are formed that can be lifelong (Mohajer and Earnest, 2009). Using singing as a tool that shows a clear link between general improvement of self-efficacy in adolescents could mean that this artefact has a wider scope of use in health and education.

It is also possible to find solutions in sports research, as both music and sports students can relate to the high demands and pressures of performance (Yoshie, Kudo et al., 2009). Osborne (2016) presents a diagram for the overarching contributions to positive music performance:

Figure 1: Diagram showing contributors to optimal music performance (Osborne, 2016, p.434)

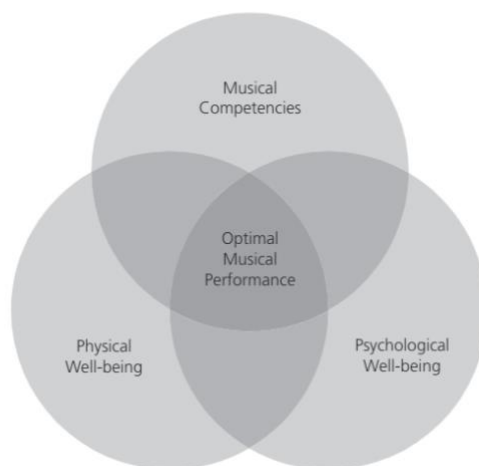


Fig. 23.3 Contributors to optimal music performance

This relates effectively to previous research I have undertaken on self-efficacy; musical competencies, or mastery, is the biggest indicator of self-efficacy in Bandura's (1997) theory; seeking challenging behaviours and then achieving in performance is also an influence on intrinsic motivation (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec and Soenens, 2010). Physical well-being can relate to cognition and posture related voice training, which in turn can have a positive effect on psychological well-being (Nair and Kaur, 2018). With this figure relating to research across music, education and psychology, it presents a suitable framework for best practice in this area.

Beyond achievement in singing itself, music has the power to engage adolescents in the wider community and improve their self-esteem (Barrett and Bond, 2015). Studies using the

theoretical framework of the 5 Cs (competence, confidence, connection, character and caring) found that when employed with music education, students were proud of their achievements in their developing musical competency and reported improved self-confidence in both music and social contexts (Barrett and Bond, 2015). The nature of music education, where skills become accomplishments and learning becomes proximally more difficult over time, can have a lasting effect on adolescent's self-beliefs over what they can work towards and achieve (Barrett and Bond, 2015). Using music as a direct tool for the development of young people's lasting self-esteem suggests that a workbook for singers can contribute to the best practice of pre-existing music in education research.

Use of literature

As much of the information in this field is newly emerging, grey literature will be used alongside white literature. Grey literature is that which is not commercially published or peer reviewed and includes dissertations and theses, blogs and press releases (Mering, 2018). Although this type of literature can be considered unreliable, it can also be effective to offer different perspectives than white literature where there is a reduced bias for the reporting of only positive findings and create a more comprehensive overview in a study (Kamei, Pinto et al., 2021).

When searching for relevant data to underpin the creation of the artefact, I will consider appropriate inclusion/exclusion criteria. This is to increase the validity of the resulting artefact. Inclusion criteria concern the characteristics of information selected for study, while exclusion criteria identify characteristics that are not relevant for study (Connelly, 2020). The search terms for research for the artefact will include "adolescent" and "teenage" interchangeably to cover the demographic of the workbook and relevant adult studies will also be considered if relevant to continuing motivation in singing beyond adolescence. Also included will be "confidence", "motivation" and "self-esteem", "singing" and "voice". These will be used across the main databases of Google Scholar and the UWTSD library. These terms will provide a launch point for continuing study. Studies outside of the fields of music, education and psychology (regarding confidence) will be excluded to keep the research relevant.

Research for the artefact will use a narrative literature review where relevant theories are evaluated in the existing literature (Baumeister and Leary, 1997). This type of literature review is developed to link different topics from different studies (Baumeister and Leary, 1997), in this case not to test a theory but to create a comprehensive and useable artefact for the appropriate demographic. By keeping in mind the structure of literature review and inclusion/exclusion

criteria, the rigour and validity of the artefact will continue to be considered.

Methodological Influences

As the research required to create my artefact concerns objective feelings towards singing performance, it aligns with the constructivist paradigm. This is the belief that “knowledge is constructed rather than received from an objective world or external reality” (Lowenthal and Muth, 2008, p.1). The constructivist paradigm also considers people’s prior experiences and background (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). Constructivism is used in the theory of learning whereby learning is complex and nonlinear (Fosnot and Perry, 1996). This way of learning empowers the learner to question their pre-existing or received knowledge and create and defend their own ideas developed through purposeful experience (Fosnot, 2013).

This is further supported by research into teaching and constructivism as within this paradigm “learning occurs only when the learner discovers the knowledge through the spirit of experimentation and doing” (Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah, 2016, p.2). This aligns purposefully with a document to help adolescent singers in their first performance as they will aim to put what they have learned through the artefact into practice. This will be achieved through a narrative literature review, where relevant sources are critically analysed through the categories of the models of Schon (1983) and Nelson (2022) and synthesised and reflected on through Kolb’s (1984) reflective model.

In terms of music education, the UK curriculum is constructivist in that both practical skills and understanding of musical ideas are developed and these skills are aimed to be integrated with each other (Garnett, 2013). In the constructivist paradigm, students do not just receive information from a teacher but instead build on their pre-existing ideas through experience and interaction with others (Glaserfeld, 1995a; Glaserfeld, 1995b; Garnett, 2013). Webster (2011), through a review of music education and constructivism, found these guiding principles present in the majority of the descriptions:

Figure 3: Guiding principles for music education (Webster 2011, p.2).

- Knowledge is formed as part of the learner's active interaction with the world.
- Knowledge exists less as abstract entities outside the learner that are absorbed by the learner; rather, it is constructed anew through action.
- Meaning is constructed with this knowledge.
- Learning is in large part a social activity. (36)

The artefact will aim to encompass these guiding principles, as it will encourage learning through experience and through audience feedback.

This work will also draw on the pragmatic paradigm. Pragmatism acknowledges the existence of both multiple and singular realities with subjective and objective layers and tries to focus on what is useful for the researcher instead of trying to understand and represent a certain reality (Feilzer, 2010). Asking not only how to carry out research but why it should be researched allows there to be more focus on research goals (Morgan, 2014). It is argued that constructivist research can lead to epistemological relativism (knowledge only being relative to the individual), whereas pragmatism represents knowledge more broadly (Kivinen and Ristela, 2003).

While feelings towards the experience of a singing performance are largely personal, this does not encompass what can be learned from other's experience and versions of reality. Both paradigms focus on learning through action, with pragmatism emphasising not only learning by doing but also through reaction and interaction within the learning environment (Kivinen and Ristela, 2003). This is relevant to the artefact as students will not only experience performing but learn to react and adapt when receiving audience feedback. Both paradigms are also relevant to the research that will be undertaken in creation of the artefact, as myriad of viewpoints and personal feelings are considered.

These methodological influences will provide the framework for the learning outcomes, where students are able to set appropriate goals for their performance, learn new skills to use in preparation for their performance, reflect on their preconceptions of their abilities before their performance and reflect on their performance after it has occurred to set new goals to continue learning cyclically.

Aims and Objectives**AIMS**

- To create a resource that enables beginner adolescent singers to develop confidence necessary to successfully prepare for their first public singing performance
- To use current literature to create a resource that is practical and effective for singing teachers to use with their adolescent students
- To comprehensively review and critically evaluate current music and educational resources and methods

OBJECTIVES

- To continue to develop my understanding of effective methods to improve and maintain adolescent singers' confidence when learning to sing by employing the most recent and relevant research available in the field
- To research, develop and employ effective methods from current and leading pedagogues in order to create a practice where all needs and abilities are encouraged and can improve their singing confidence and self-efficacy
- To create a resource where students aim to confidently perform a selected song in front of an audience, demonstrating proper techniques by researching and considering the needs of the target audience, accessibility and appropriate design

Success for meeting these objectives will be measured through reflection and analysis after creating the artefact, considering the synthesis of the range of literature examined as well as accessibility and the effectiveness of its design. This can also be measured through observations when using the artefact with students and their feedback.

Timescales and Review Dates

Task	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24
Agree topic						
Begin reading						
Begin component 1						
Create artefact						
Begin component 2						
Use artefact						
Draft submission						
Review and edit						
Final submission						

Ethics

As the intention for my artefact is for it to be used in practice with students, I need to consider the ethical implications of using the resource in lessons. The artefact will be developed to be used in one-to-one lessons where it can be challenging to be an outsider researcher (Birk and Schindldecker, 2020). Therefore it is a consideration that adolescents and students can be a vulnerable population and that they should not feel coerced to participate in research or use the artefact (Birk and Schindldecker, 2020).

In education, coercion can occur when students believe that they are part of research only for their personal development and not for the good of the research project (Birk and Schindldecker, 2020). Students may also feel pressured to take part due to the existing teacher-student relationship and may not be truthful about its effectiveness as they think this is what I want to hear (Fisher, 1993). To avoid this, I will make sure that students know that the artefact is being developed for the purpose of my studies and that using it is completely optional.

I will also be an insider researcher within this project and while this can represent a passion for the project, it can also lead to biases such as being more likely to overlook the confidentiality of sensitive information and being more likely to select information that serves the narrative of the research than an outsider researcher (Saidin, 2016). Additionally, any observations regarding the use of the artefact and its use by students should be anonymised, stored securely and used only for the purpose of this review (Birk and Schindldecker, 2020). While this is not a research project requiring the direct involvement of students, these ethical considerations are still important to maintain professionalism and uphold the purpose and rigour of the project.

Critical Review

Reflection is an important tool in learning as it allows the learner to reinforce knowledge and

acknowledge the journey of continued learning (Chang, 2019). In reflection of the preparation for creating the artefact, I will use Kolb's (1984) reflective model. This model is categorised into four sections: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). These categories will be used to critically analyse the methodologies chosen and the learning experience. This model is cyclical, as each category leads into the next to deepen learning and understanding (Kolb, 1984).

Concrete Experience

This subsection of Kolb's (1984) reflective model represents the existing knowledge and observations that have influenced methodology. Initially, before the discovery of the theories of learning and motivation, the artefact's creation was based much more on my own experiences and observations during teaching this age group. Previous research I have undertaken using Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, embodied cognition and trans voice were also important to in its inception and will still be important considerations throughout. As my research has developed through this process, I have moved away from the motivation being only to be able to achieve in singing but to foster self-belief in adolescents that can be applied into their adult lives. This not only makes the artefact more useful and accessible but makes it feel much more important in the fields of music and education.

Reflective Observation

This subcategory is intended to be a reflection after the experience, considering the outcomes and overall process. Through researching adolescents' changing cognition and confidence, it is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to encouraging adolescent learners. In this way, the adolescent experience and performing in the arts are similarly subjective (Nielsen, Studer et al., 2018). This eliminated the possibilities of using positivism or postmodernism as these paradigms both believe in an objective reality, instead leading me to the subjective paradigms of constructivism and pragmatism.

Abstract Conceptualisation

This stage concerns drawing conclusions about the process to create new theories or ideas. The aims of the creation of the artefact outline it as a practical educational resource. For this reason, learning theories and research into music education provided justification for the use of these paradigms; it is common in music education for learning to be collaborative and constructivist, with creativity being an essential component (in this case creating a performance) (Garnett, 2013). There is not just one single strategy informing music education and it is often a collaboration of creation and ideas (Pardas, 2018). This has suggested to me that the artefact

should pull on a multitude of fields of research and include various ways of presenting information.

Active Experimentation

This final stage is to apply the new knowledge formed, planning for future research and continuing the cycle of learning. The selected sources for the literature review will be from a range of sources from music education and adolescent confidence and cognition, using the search terms outlined previously and aiming to achieve the objective of “employing the most recent and relevant research available in the field” by aiming to only use resources from the 1990s-present day (the exception being sources that are significant and important theories). White and grey literature will be balanced using a range of books and journals alongside recent dissertations and theses concerning my chosen phenomena. The balance of grey and white literature can mean that the “variety, currency and utility of academic inquiry can be increased” (Adams, Smart and Huff, 2017, p.448) and continue to bridge the gap between practice and research (Adams, Smart and Huff, 2017).

COMPONENT 2 4533 words

Introduction

Context

The creation of this artefact aims to provide a guide for adolescent singers to build confidence before performing, as studies have found that Music Performance Anxiety increases during adolescence peaking at 15 years of age on average (Paul, Juncos and Winter, 2024; Patston and Osbourne, 2015) and adolescents who view singing negatively are unlikely to continue into adulthood (Sweet, 2018) resulting in people not receiving the positive health benefits that singing can provide (Kreutz, Bongard et al., 2003).

In my practice, many of the singing students I work with are adolescent. I have observed that some of these students, especially as beginners, are more reluctant than younger students to perform in front of others. There is a myriad of reasons for this, including embarrassment caused by voice change across all genders (Fisher, 2014), experiences from childhood manifesting in a fear of failure (McGregor and Elliot, 2005) and the brain's development during this period causing increased sensitivity to criticism (Hoxter, 2017). This artefact will aim to provide practical exercises for adolescent singers to overcome their fear of performing in front of their peers in order to create a concrete and positive first public performance experience for them.

The adolescent period is crucial as memories from the ages of 10-18 – and strong emotions attached to them – are etched into the brain (Gebhardt, 2016). It is also suggested that adolescence is a crucial time for the individual's development of their idea of success and failure (Schumann, 2014) and that adolescence is the most common time for an individual to identify themselves as a singer or non-singer (Stephens, 2012). Additionally, singers who do not have a strong understanding of the mechanics of their voice find it difficult to articulate why they think their singing is good or bad (Schumann, 2014).

There is also evidence that the singing voice is strongly connected to sense of self (Jones, 2004) and the adolescent period is an important time where the sense of self is being explored and developed (Erikson, 1974). Most commonly I have observed that adolescents are reluctant to sing in front of their peers for fear of their judgement. This artefact will draw on evidenced pedagogy for physical exercises, imagery techniques and vocal science to create a workbook for the adolescent singer preparing for their first public performance. As the influence of a teacher can be the difference between a positive or negative relationship to singing later in life, the artefact will also be created with the teacher in mind so that exercises can be worked through both in lesson time and independently. It is my aim to create a resource that not only benefits the singer, their technique and performance skills but also improves the confidence and self-efficacy of the student.

Justification

Adolescent singers face challenges to continued motivation in learning to sing that are unique to this population, including off-putting school experiences, peer pressure and voice change embarrassment (Orton and Pitts, 2019). Additionally, schoolteachers often feel insecure about their singing teaching abilities leading to a lack of enforcement of the cognitive skills needed to set goals, reflect and learn the skill of singing (Orton and Pitts, 2019). This artefact will therefore be a resource that uses teaching and learning theories as well as voice and embodied cognition theories to provide a workbook for adolescents to use and for teachers to support them.

To create the artefact, I will examine existing theories regarding lack of confidence or anxiety in adolescent singers, reasons for these and evidenced methods for improving this. Through working through the elements of Component 1, it was clear that the theories of motivation and relation to confidence and self-efficacy theories would be key in creating the artefact. In particular, the theories of Self-Determination (Krause, North and Davidson, 2019), Identity Based Motivation Theory (Freer, 2015; Oyserman and James, 2010) and growth mindset (Ng, 2018) seemed to clearly interlink with research on adolescents and their self-belief, sense of self and musical identity and the constructivist methodology underpinning this work. As the aim for this artefact is to be a tool to improve confidence in singing performance, these theories will be considered throughout its creation.

Aims

The aims as outlined in Component 1 are: to create a resource that enables beginner adolescent singers to develop confidence necessary to successfully prepare for their first public singing performance; to use current literature to create a resource that is practical and effective for singing teachers to use with their adolescent students and to comprehensively review and critically evaluate current music and educational resources and methods.

These aims will be achieved through this evaluative process, where I aim to achieve a strong foundation for the artefact, clearly defining categories that will make up the sections of my workbook. This process will evaluate the relevant literature in the fields of music and education, drawing on my previous research to develop ideas into tangible activities and exercises for the target audience (adolescent singers). I will also consider the design and creation of my artefact through this process, considering the overarching theories of motivation but also accessibility and intended use. I will do this by reviewing the most relevant literature, evaluating its usefulness and how this can be translated into my artefact.

Nelson's Model of Art Praxis

In this written assignment, I will be employing Nelson's (2022) epistemological praxis model for practice research. This model is divided into the sections "Know How", "Know What" and "Know That" (Nelson, 2022). These sections are developed from Schon's (1983) reflective model and expands upon the ideas of "Knowing in Action", "Reflection in Action" and "Reflection on Action" to create this model of being – knowing – doing (Nelson, 2022).

Figure 4: Nelson's Model of Art Praxis (Nelson, 2022)

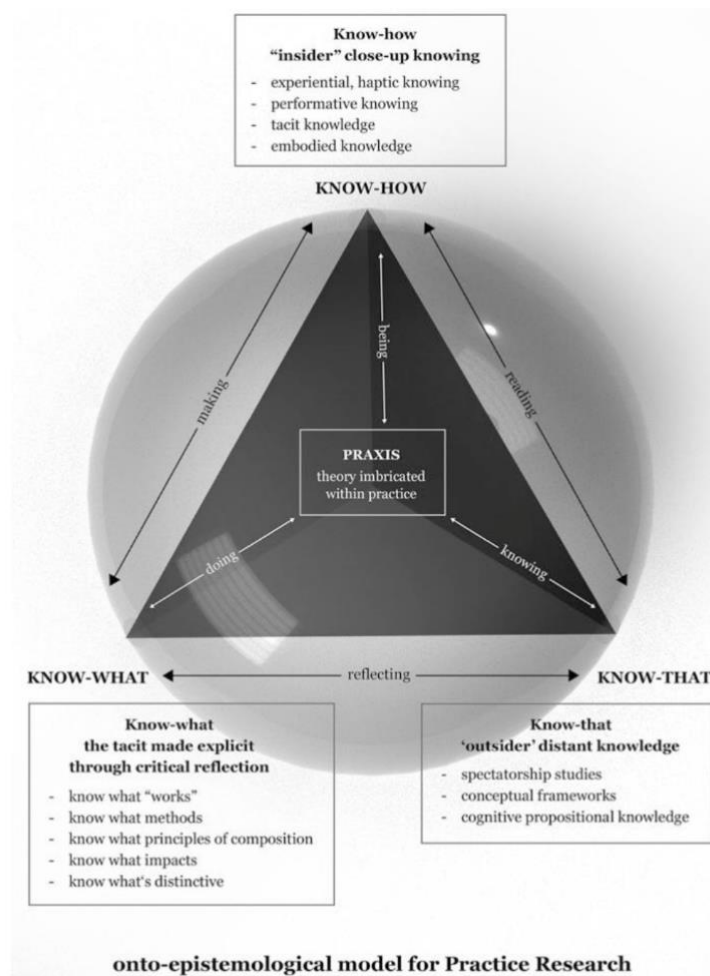


Fig. 3.2 Onto-epistemological model for Practice Research. (Graphics Leyao Xia)

Know That

This section concerns the theory and knowledge that underpins the creation of the artefact (Nelson, 2022). While beginning to research theoretical influences in Component 1, several key themes emerged that will guide the structure of my artefact. Firstly to give a logical and narrative

structure, I have explored some of the reasons why adolescents may lack confidence in their singing before including practical exercises for confidence building. These themes are explored here through “Know That”, representing my outsider knowledge and conceptual frameworks (Nelson, 2022) in the creation of the artefact:

Teacher Voice

It is well documented that male adolescent singers often discontinue singing when they reach this age and that those who do are unlikely to take up singing again in adulthood (Ashley, 2008; Freer, 2015). For those that continue to sing, self-expression and displaying their self-perceived talent to others are often cited as key motivators for adolescent singers (Sweet, 2010; Xu, 2023). In the private studio, research shows that students who were encouraged to select some of their own repertoire had increased intrinsic motivation to practice (Stephenson, 2018). The artefact therefore provides a space to write about their chosen song for performance.

Changing voice

My previous research has also led me to changing voice in adolescents. As this is one of the main reasons cited for adolescents to lose confidence in their singing, it is appropriate to include in this artefact (Sweet, 2018). Although much of the research concerns adolescent males, it is a common misconception that only males are affected by voice change; changes in the laryngeal cartilage cause weaknesses in the surrounding muscles and vocal folds grow in both sexes (Sweet, 2018). This artefact will also include reference to trans voice and transitioning, as although ethically it should not be intended as a guide to these issues, trans youth are becoming more visible as they disclose their identities at a younger age (Aguirre, 2018). This is therefore included in the artefact to increase inclusivity.

Imaginary Audience

Briefly included also as an example of a reason why the adolescent singer may feel unconfident in singing in front of others is the idea that adolescents feel the judgement of an imaginary audience (Elkind, 1970; Sweet, 2019). The theory of adolescent egocentrism can cause young people to feel self-conscious as they relate their sense of self to how they imagine they are being perceived by others, causing them to hide from public view (Ryan and Kuczkowski, 1994). This is included in the artefact as it is common for this age group to be more sensitive to criticism (Hoxter, 2017) and provides a link to recording feedback at the end of the artefact.

Embodied cognition

In my previous research, I investigated embodied cognition and its effect on adolescent singers’

confidence and self-efficacy; research shows that the mind and body are connected in communication of confidence, and that they strongly affect each other. This research included the findings that non-verbal communicators of confidence include strong eye contact and upright posture (Mori and Pell, 2019) and that holding the body in a confident stance can affect a person to feel more confident, less stressed and more powerful (Carney, Cuddy and Yap, 2010). I explored Chekhov's six directions exercise (2002) and concluded that adolescents using this physical exercise before singing improved physiological feelings towards their voices and feelings of nerves (although this study was limited by a small sample size) (Cleary, 2023). While I also concluded that more research was needed to corroborate my findings, a small section was created in this artefact explaining this exercise.

I also considered here my previous research on Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, as his ideas on improving self-belief can also be related to self-confidence. These categories – mastery experiences (repeated successes when learning a skill), vicarious experiences (watching others succeed), verbal persuasion (feedback from a teacher or peers) and physiological state (physical responses to stress or anxiety) (Bandura, 1997) - are briefly explained in the artefact to provide alternate viewpoints and techniques for improving confidence. Bandura (1997) proposed that mastery experience was the greatest indicator of self-efficacy and this relates to Self-Determination Theory as both theories suggest the benefit of succeeding at a challenging task (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec and Soenens, 2010). Second to mastery experience in Bandura's (1997) theory is verbal persuasion, and this is evidenced to increase intrinsic motivation. This connection highlights its relevance to the artefact.

Alexander Technique

F.M Alexander similarly believed in the voice and body's connection (and that emotional state can affect both). Part of Alexander Technique is developing understanding of where your body is in a certain space (proprioception), motor memory (sensory feedback automating actions) and body mapping (manipulating the brain's body maps for movement) (Sethson, 2021). For nervous singers, learning this technique can make it possible to recognise and alter habits that are causing tension; the inhibition technique concerns stopping the performance of the habit before it occurs (Walker and Commander, 2017). However, as this is an advanced method it is recommended that it is learned through an expert trainer and is extremely difficult to understand through reading alone (Walker and Commander, 2017).

As this is one of the most long standing and well-known methods in embodied cognition in performers, and with a strong connection to improving the connection to self (Rosenthal, 1989)

which is also prevalent for adolescents, the technique's connection to mind and body, and research evidencing its effect on stress release (Jones, 1965), a brief explanation is included in the artefact.

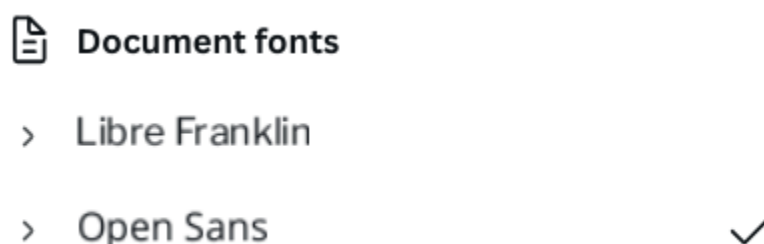
Imagery

The artefact then refers to the use of imagery in singing. Students preparing for a singing performance may benefit from an imagery exercise, where they imagine either from a first-person point of view or as an outsider the performance being a success and try to imagine in detail elements of the environment and experience of the performance (Walker and Commander, 2017). The PETTLEP model, originally developed for success in sports performance, breaks this down further by explaining each element in detail. The artefact uses this model to help to represent the idea of imagery for the adolescent singing student and how it can be applied to preparing for their performance.

Know How

These themes are developed in my artefact as evidenced through Know How; this section refers to procedural knowledge and practical skills in development of the artefact (Nelson, 2022). In beginning to design and create my artefact, I had to consider what would be engaging and suitable for my target audience of adolescents (and their teachers). With my target audience in mind, the creation of the resource must consider what is accessible and engaging for adolescent learners. Research into educational resources for accessibility found that sans serif and roman font types increase readability, and italics should be avoided (Rello and Baeza-Yates, 2016).

Figure 5: Fonts used in the artefact

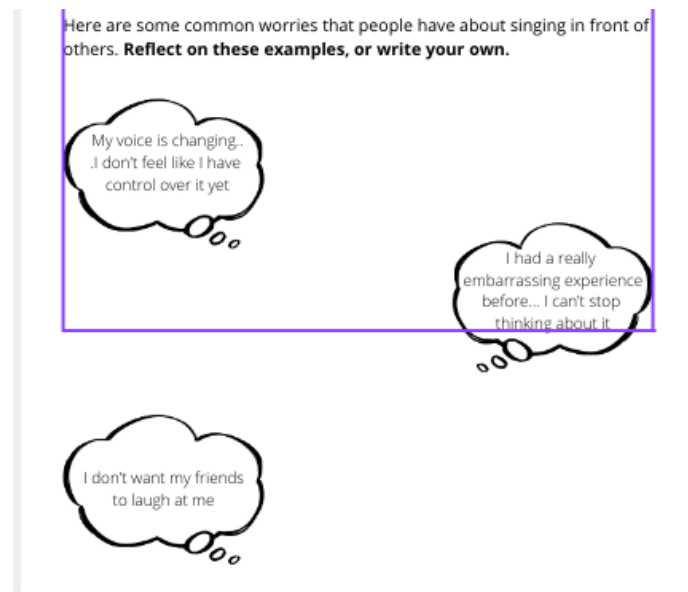


I then considered the role of motivation theories in the artefact's creation by attempting to define what would be the reward of engaging in a singing performance as an adolescent singing

student. Research shows that for adolescent students, a sense of achievement is created through opportunities match the level of challenge to the current skill level (Rosevear, 2008). This then increases the intrinsic motivation to apply more effort to that activity (Rosevear, 2008).

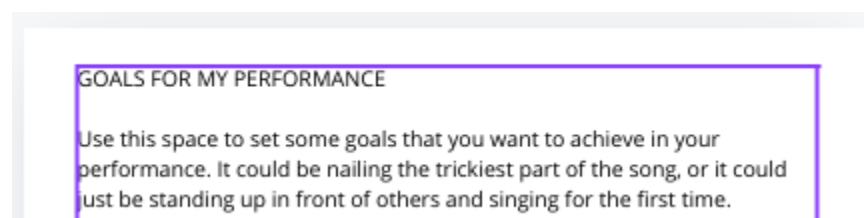
These theories of motivation have been employed in the artefact by suggesting some common reasons why students may have lost motivation to sing and offering a chance for them to reflect on their own reasons:

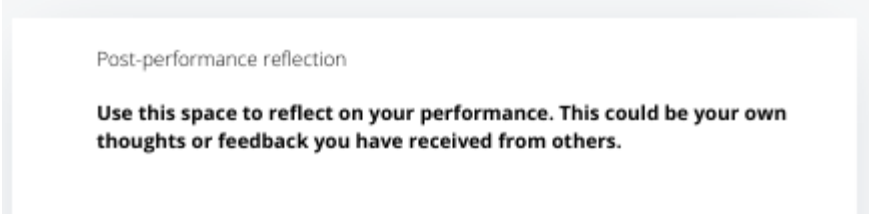
Figure 6: Example page from artefact



The artefact also offers space for the student to write their goals for singing and performance and what their chosen repertoire is at the start and a space for constructive feedback at the end:

Figure 7: Example page from artefact





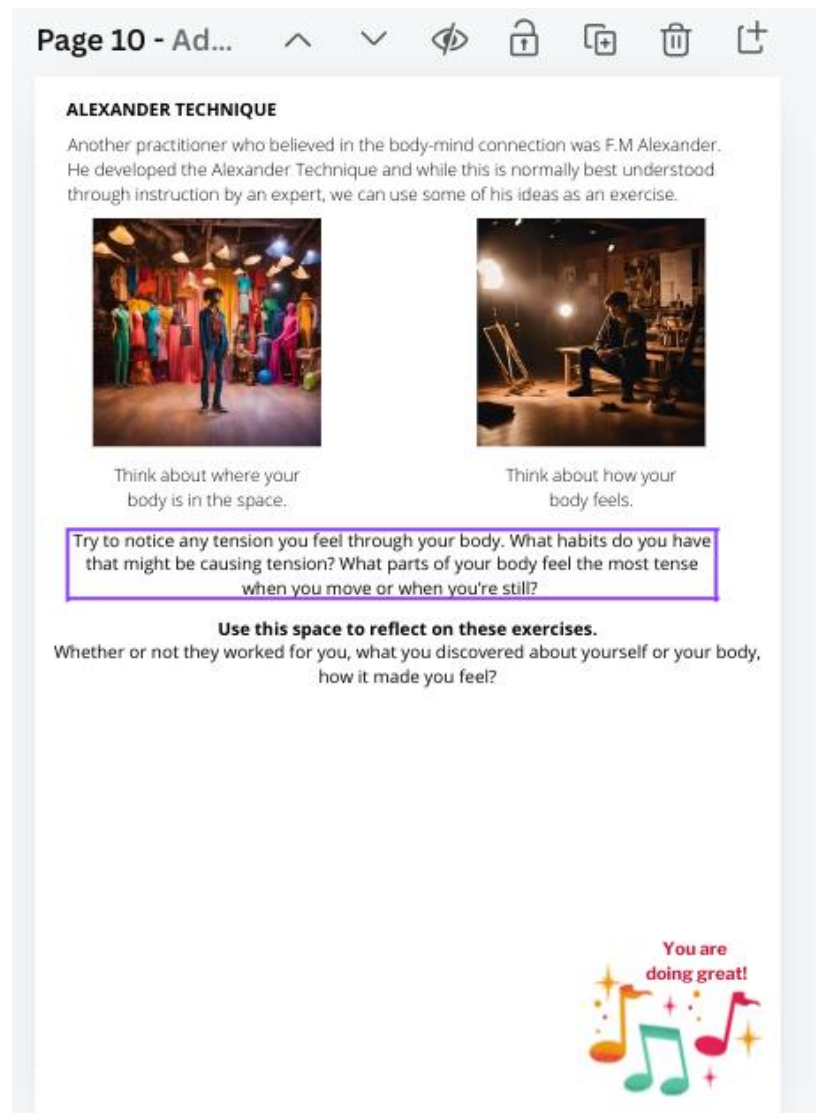
Post-performance reflection

Use this space to reflect on your performance. This could be your own thoughts or feedback you have received from others.

This is effective as it facilitates students to feel autonomous over their performance and contribute towards intrinsic motivation. As a prompt for goal setting, the artefact gives suggestions that relate to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The artefact has been developed largely to be used independently by the student also to improve feelings of autonomy over their performance.

To appeal to the target demographic of adolescent students, I considered the design by breaking content into smaller sections and varying content between text, images and opportunities for feedback (Johnson and Mayer, 2009; Hattie and Timperley, 2007). This is evidenced here where the Alexander Technique is explained:

Figure 8: Example page from artefact



Offering opportunities for reflection and feedback throughout the resource is effective to provide the best pathways to learning; prompts are given to make feedback “clear, purposeful, meaningful, and compatible with students’ prior knowledge” (Hattie and Timperley, 2007, p.104). The use of empowering messages and positive feedback is also included as this has been found to be highly influential on the self-belief of adolescents (Bandura, 1997).

Research on design for engaging adolescent students also commonly references designing teaching and learning around relevant innovations in technology (Laurillard, 2012). Adolescents today engage more with technology and video games which can improve skills in problem solving, roleplaying, design and application of information and are great examples of

frameworks for motivating learning (Gee, 2003). The artefact has been developed to have links to video examples of exercises and this could also be expanded to include interactive quizzes to record feedback and recall knowledge. This is evidenced here where a QR code is included to link to a video explanation of the Chekov (2002) exercise:

Figure 9: Example page from artefact



This also makes the artefact more appealing to different modes of learners, addressing the needs of visual, aural, reading and kinesthetic learners (VARK) (Fleming and Baume, 2006).

Using technology to model is also an effective advancement for the development of learning when using this resource. Other forms of modeling, such as expert modeling performed by a teacher, can be effective when visually represented to a student eventually reducing their input until the student is working independently; this form of reciprocal learning is used in the artefact through notes for the teacher to aid them to demonstrate the exercises to the student (Collins, Brown and Newman, 2018). This is also evidenced in Figure 9 as it recommends that the teacher demonstrates or tries the exercise with the student.

When creating an artefact to be used by adolescent learners and their teachers, research into music education has identified some central components for effective resource: “appropriate technology and pedagogy, organised content including creative tasks, and the opportunity for participant evaluation and interaction” (Seddon and Biassuti, 2009, p.547). These sections are related to the aforementioned motivation and learning theories, for example pedagogically evidenced exercises, access to the resource via paper or online and necessitating students

demonstrating their autonomy (for example to choose or develop their own repertoire for performance) and therefore increasing intrinsic motivation through learning.

Know What

This final section concerns theoretical knowledge and the justification for using the methods and elements employed in the artefact to convey the overall concept (Nelson, 2022).

Know What Works

The artefact is using a combination of evidenced techniques in physical exercises for confidence and educational research. The artefact is effectively constructivist in its design as its opportunities for the user to apply their knowledge by answering prompts or reflecting allow the user to construct their own ideas and knowledge, creating a collaborative learning experience between the artefact, teacher and student (Vygotsky, 1978). This works because the learning material is interpreted from a familiar structure, in this case a workbook, and students construct their own knowledge through active interaction between their ideas and the resource (Laal and Laal, 2012; Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1991).

The artefact also achieves its goal of accessibility by breaking information down into small and simple sections in order to create a lower cognitive load (Sweller, 1988). By starting the resource with an exercise in goal setting and ending with a reflection, the artefact also allows for the user to use the included exercises as part of their learning by considering whether or not they have been able to achieve their set goals. Beginning in this way and then working backwards to achieve the desired outcome makes goal setting clear throughout which is also conducive to learning. (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005).

While the artefact works in these ways, due to the practical nature of the exercises and the presentation of some abstract ideas, the workbook could benefit from more links to practical examples. This would also work to consider more learning styles (such as visual and aural learning) (Fleming and Baume, 2006) and help to consolidate learning and understanding through the exercises being demonstrated well.

Know What Methods

To create the artefact, I used Canva; this was chosen for its simple and free-to-use online interface and large choice of included design elements. It is also straightforward on this platform to create a design that is branded similarly throughout as colour and font choices are easy to

replicate; there are also options to save, publish or print the design from the platform making it easy to distribute and access.

As the physical exercises included have been researched and evidenced, they are included as exercises in the artefact; this is to create an educational resource that is of high quality that is accurate and considers learner needs (Al-Doub, Goodwin and Al-Hunaiyyan, 2008). The exercises are explained as simply as possible with visual representations to appeal to different modes of learner (Fleming and Baume, 2006). These methods achieve the objectives from Component 1, especially in “considering the needs of the target audience, accessibility and appropriate design” and “to create a practice where all needs and abilities are encouraged”. A point for further research may be exercises outside the physical and how these could also work to improve confidence or performance preparation.

Know What Principles of Composition

Using research in educational literature to create the resource, it follows a narrative structure whereby it begins with a goal setting, moves into problem solving through example exercises and finishes with reflection and feedback. This is similar to learning theories such as the Problem-Based Learning Theory where students follow this framework and use reflection to secure their understanding (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980). This also aligns with constructivism as it allows the user to create their own understanding; rather than setting out to learn something specific, students can use the reflection to make their own observations about themselves. This could be useful for their future learning as they develop their skills in singing, as students who become competent self-reflectors also become better at strategising and perform better (Lew and Schmidt, 2011).

Know What Impacts

The resource considers its ethical impact by including information and resources for students who are suffering from larger issues than lack of confidence, such as Music Performance Anxiety (MPA). As this artefact is not intended as a guide to vocal study and is instead intended to provide physical exercises to improve performance confidence, this is made clear as well as advising that exercises are worked through with a teacher. It is also made clear in the resource that it is not compulsory to use and not all the exercises have to be worked through, again promoting intrinsic motivation through student autonomy.

The artefact could have further reach by moving completely away from singing and being developed as a tool for adolescent students to find their voice, preparing for a speech or to help to build self-esteem. The concepts of Bandura's (1997) theory and adolescent egocentrism and the imaginary audience are relevant not just to performers but adolescents in general; additionally, the theory of self-determination has been useful in understanding how learning occurs and can best be encouraged. This could provide scope for other workbooks in education using these theories as a base and providing other practical exercises to improve adolescent learners' self-esteem.

Know What's Distinctive

Using up to date educational research to structure and present information to the target group means that it is hopefully useful for students to reflect on their pre-existing ideas, learn new skills and record feedback and uses a combination of written and practical skill learning to be an effective learning tool for them. Additionally, the design elements of the combination of simple text and images makes the resource simple to use and visually appealing.

To improve this further, the adoption of more technological influences such as making the resource useable across devices, interactive with quizzes or elements to make it more flexible for different learning needs could improve its appeal further (Bower, 2017; Johnson and Mayer, 2009). The resource could also improve its educational reach through further research into the music curriculum to address key skills that are being taught either in personal development or music lessons.

Reflective Conclusion

Reflection

Nelson (2022) describes reflection in arts practice research as not only possible through thought and research but through 'doing' in experience and experiment; much like the theories of cognition that underpinned this work, mind and body are not separate as theory and practice are not, and that praxis involves being-doing-thinking. As my previous modules have investigated embodied cognition and confidence in adolescents, I felt that my 'being' or previous experience was well grounded in research. However, the 'doing' of translating what I had researched into something and useful and practical was much more of a challenge. While at this point in my studies I felt confidence in my writing, creating and designing felt much more out of my depth and led to me feeling imposter syndrome throughout (defined as "the feeling of inadequacy that persists despite evident success") (Corkindale, 2008, p.).

Using Nelson's (2022) praxis means that my work has been reflexive as it has not only considered what is being achieved but where I am coming from as a researcher. Endeavoring to create this research has been largely informed by my work teaching private voice lessons to adolescents, and it has sometimes been difficult to consider the wide array of needs and perspectives that this age group have in relation to interacting with the artefact.

However, the biggest challenge during this study was time management. At times I found it difficult to juggle writing with creating the artefact and felt that the quality of the artefact suffered as a result. In future projects I would aim to start earlier in the planning and research phase so that there was more time to develop the artefact, especially as I had chosen to also consider effective design. Nelson (2022) suggests that to be a practitioner-researcher, after specifying the line of enquiry the researcher should "set a timeline for the overall project including the various activities involved in a multi-mode inquiry" (Nelson, 2022, p.55). I feel that the project did

include a multi-mode inquiry as it followed a timeline of both theory and creation, however I did not follow this timeline closely enough and did not leave enough time for the larger parts of the project.

Evaluation

Creating this work has been both process-driven and goal-oriented and these approaches have informed each other (Nelson, 2022). I set out “to create a resource that enables beginner adolescent singers to develop confidence necessary to successfully prepare for their first public singing performance” by employing research from the most relevant and recent theories and pedagogues. While I feel I have achieved this objective, I have found that research regarding learning theories has been more effective to inform my teaching than to create an effective resource. In particular, the theory of Self-Determination and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to practice or perform has been influential in my understanding of positive reinforcement for adolescent students.

I also aimed “to use current literature to create a resource that is practical and effective for singing teachers to use with their adolescent students”. The artefact may present some new ideas to teachers looking for exercises to try with their students, however I don’t feel that ultimately it is comprehensive enough to be an essential resource for voice teachers. I feel that it would be more effective to create a resource that was more focused on goal setting and recording progress and feedback, as I discovered as I continued researching that this was an effective tool in learning theories. Without practical demonstrations of the exercises, they can be difficult to learn. I do however feel that I have been able to achieve my aim of being able “to comprehensively review and critically evaluate current music and educational resources and methods” as the range of learning theories that I have discovered has been effective in informing my practice.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Research

In summary, the research undertaken for this project has been beneficial to inform my future practice and I have also learnt from the challenges I faced in creating an artefact which I will carry forward into my future study. Future research could build upon the artefact to be expanded for other disciplines within education to encourage self-esteem, however I feel that this would involve a lot more time in redesigning and developing the artefact and testing its effectiveness

within the target age group. Future projects could also have scope to create digital resources, such as specially designed video demonstrations and audio exercises. Overall, I feel that although that the research involved in creating the artefact has informed its creation effectively, it would need further development to be useable. The project has been most effective in informing my teaching methods in my private practice, as opposed to creating a resource that I feel would have widespread use.

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Appendix

ARTEFACT

THE TEEN SINGERS'
GUIDE
TO YOUR FIRST
PERFORMANCE

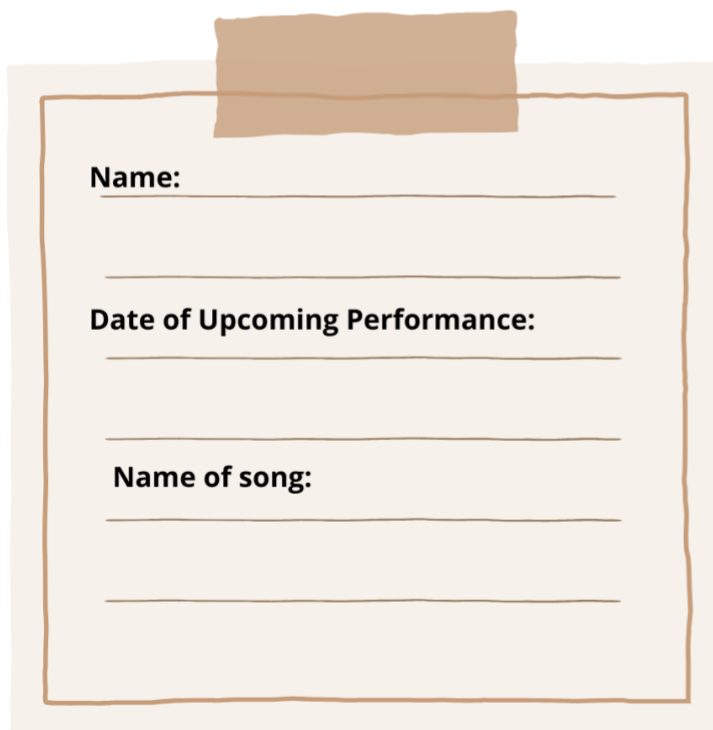


Why do you sing? It could be that you want to improve your confidence to sing in front of others, work towards exams, improve your musical skills, or simply for your enjoyment.

In any case, working towards a song for performance for the first time can be daunting.

By using this workbook alongside preparing your song, you will have a **toolkit** for confidently approaching your performance and having a great first experience.

Work through this book in lesson time, or independently, interacting it with as much or as little as you want to. Try to give all of the exercises a go!



Name: _____

Date of Upcoming Performance: _____

Name of song: _____

Remember... you are a singer!



NOTES FOR MY SONG

Use this space to write any notes you wish to remember for your song.

Name of song:

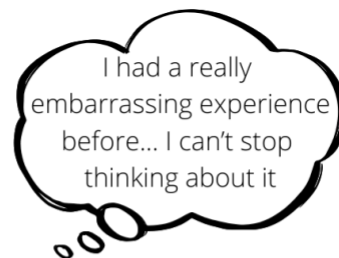
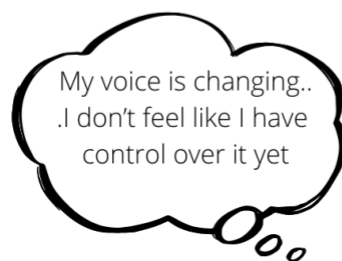
Why I chose this song:

It is common to feel anxious about performing in front of others.

For some young people, it can feel like they are constantly being watched and judged by an imaginary audience.

Some people also feel more nervous singing in front of others, as they feel a personal connection to their voice and they worry that if someone doesn't like the way that they sing, then it means that means that they don't like them.

Here are some common worries that people have about singing in front of others. **Reflect on these examples, or write your own.**



Next we will turn some of these challenges into goals.

GOALS FOR MY PERFORMANCE

Use this space to set some goals that you want to achieve in your performance. It could be nailing the trickiest part of the song, or it could just be standing up in front of others and singing for the first time.

Try to make these goals as small and achievable as possible.

EXAMPLES

or write your own

- to be able to stand up and perform in front of my peers
- to be proud and feel good about my performance
- to allow others to see my skills

CHALLENGES

Use this space to write about any challenges you face in your song or performance. In the space next to this, try and think of a solution to this challenge. Then, try and turn this challenge into a positive.

EXAMPLES

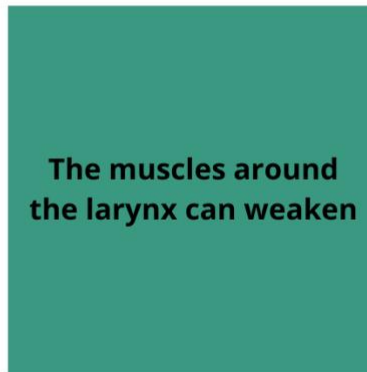
or write your own

- a difficult section of my song (give reasons) -> I can practice this section until I feel better about it -> I am challenging myself to learn more difficult material
- I will have to sing this in front of my peers -> I can work on some exercises to make myself feel more confident -> their reaction might be more positive than I think
- I might sing out of tune or have a voice crack -> I can rest my voice and then warm up properly before my performance -> no singer is perfect and I can let go of my mistakes.



VOICE CHANGE

Voice change can affect everyone, no matter what gender you are. It may make you feel like you have less control of your voice or that your voice is more unpredictable.



These effects are normal but can affect different people differently. It is safe to continue singing through voice change especially guided by a knowledgeable teacher. If you have concerns, consider talking to your teacher about changing the key of the song or for some warm up recommendations for your changing voice.

WHAT THE AUDIENCE THINKS



It can sometimes feel as if an imaginary audience is watching and judging you. This might make you feel self-conscious or make you want to avoid putting yourself out there in public. This is a really common feeling for young people.

Later in this resource we will use constructive feedback we receive from others to set future goals.

SELF-BELIEF

In this theory to develop self-belief (also known as self-efficacy) there are four predictors of this which can work together to give you more self-confidence.

MASTERY

This is the idea that you gain confidence from repeatedly feeling success in your singing. This could be when you achieve the goals you have set out for your performance.

**HOW?**

Next time you perform, set goals and write down feedback after your performance to track how much you are mastering performing over time.

VICARIOUS EXPERIENCE

You can also gain self-confidence from watching others succeed. Seeing people similar to you get up and sing can take some of the fear out of it.

HOW?

Before your performance try and see other events in school or your performance venue where young people are performing.

**VERBAL PERSUASION**

Listening to feedback from your teachers or peers can be amazing to help you learn.

**HOW?**

After you have performed, write down any feedback you were given (good and constructive) to help you improve for next time.

PHYSIOLOGICAL STATE

This is where you acknowledge how your body feels and learn to control nerves and how they are felt through your body.

HOW?

Try out some of the physical exercises from this booklet and take note of any changes in how you are feeling.



USING YOUR BODY to increase confidence

You may have been taught already how to stand with good posture for singing; but did you know that holding your body in a confident way can affect your mind to feel more confident?

INDICATING CONFIDENCE TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Eye contact



Strong stance



Practice standing in an upright posture and finding a focus point to look at as you perform. Standing in this way, otherwise known as **power posing**, can make you feel less stressed and more powerful.

CHEKHOV's SIX DIRECTIONS EXERCISE

Chekhov, an acting practitioner, believed in the mind and body connection you have as a performer. He developed this exercise that you can try before giving a performance.



Start by standing in an upright position. Move your body by taking a step and extending your arms into the six directions: forward, back, left, right, up and down. As you take your step, exhale. Try a couple of rounds of this slowly and then more quickly.

Ask your teacher to demonstrate or try this exercise with you.

ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

Another practitioner who believed in the body-mind connection was F.M Alexander. He developed the Alexander Technique and while this is normally best understood through instruction by an expert, we can use some of his ideas as an exercise.



Think about where your body is in the space.



Think about how your body feels.

Try to notice any tension you feel through your body. What habits do you have that might be causing tension? What parts of your body feel the most tense when you move or when you're still?

Use this space to reflect on these exercises.

Whether or not they worked for you, what you discovered about yourself or your body, how it made you feel?



Earlier we imagined all of the worries and ways that things have gone wrong - now let's use a model where we can imagine what would happen if the performance goes well.

PHYSICAL

Imagine the way that you are standing while you are singing. Try to imagine the sound that you are producing in your performance being exactly how you want it to sound. You may also benefit from holding a microphone if you know you are going to use one, and wearing the clothes that you plan to wear for your performance.

ENVIRONMENT

If possible, stand in the performance space. If this isn't possible, try to use your imagination of the performance in as similar a space as possible.

TASK

Imagine the thoughts, and feelings that you might feel during the performance. This will be personal to you. To help with this, your teacher could prompt you to describe thoughts and feelings you have from singing your song in lesson time.

TIMING

Imagine performing your song in real time, not too fast or slow. It may help to play a recording of your song or backing track while you do this.

LEARNING

Try this imagination exercise again as you continue to practice and work on your song. No two performances are the same, and as your skills grow your idea of your performance may also change.

EMOTION

First, try to tap into emotions you may be feeling before you sing, such as nerves or butterflies. Then, try to imagine yourself feeling confident before you perform.

PERSPECTIVE

Imagine yourself through a first person perspective; seeing the performance through your own eyes. Then, try and imagine yourself performing from a third person point of view. Find which one works better for you, or switch between the two.

Post-performance reflection

Use this space to reflect on your performance. This could be your own thoughts or feedback you have received from others.

Extra resources for additional help

If you are suffering from Music Performance Anxiety (MPA):

<https://musiciansunion.org.uk/news/how-to-overcome-performance-anxiety>



Overcoming Performance Anxiety in Musicians

With over 70% of UK musicians suffering from anxiety in their public-facing work, leading UK performance and speaking coach Jimmy Cannon talks about root causes, quick fixes and long-term solutions to the issue.

 wearethemu

Resource for trans voices:

https://transreads.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2024-03-15_65f4b45ce72cc_the_5_stages_of_transgender_voice_change_from_testosterone_t_8_.pdf

