

**Introducing multi-sited focused ethnography for researching one-to-one (singing voice)
pedagogy in higher education**

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Abstract

One-to-one lessons based on the master-apprentice model are recognised in research and practice as an indispensable foundation for the training of professional musicians including singers. Given its primary importance to musician training, it is essential that researchers of this pedagogical model adopt methodologies and methods well-suited to illuminating the unique nature of one-to-one pedagogy. This article on methodology introduces multi-sited ethnography (MSFE) for one-to-one pedagogy research, exemplified through its use in a research project focused on one-to-one musical theatre singing voice pedagogy. MSFE is presented as “Big Q” qualitative research approach which cohesively engages with epistemological, ontological, and methodological considerations facilitating the use of research methods which are well-suited to the private and ephemeral nature of the one-to-one lesson. MSFE is positioned as a research methodology which extends on and can address the challenges of extant research approaches in one-to-one pedagogy. MSFE is of particular use when researching participants across a broad cultural group (for example, studio teachers of a particular instrument or voice at multiple educational sites). We conclude with a discussion of the limitations of MSFE and make recommendations for further research.

Keywords: one-to-one pedagogy, singing voice pedagogy, multi-sited focused ethnography, higher music education

Introduction

One-to-one teaching and learning in music higher education is central to the training and development of future professional musicians including singers (Gaunt 2008, 2010, 2011; Carey and Grant 2015; King and Nix 2019; O'Bryan and Harrison 2014). In an era of growing accountability for the efficacy and efficiency of pedagogical practices (Carey et al. 2013; Carey and Grant 2015), one-to-one instrumental and singing studios have become the site of considerable research and evaluation activity since the early 2000s (e.g. Burwell 2006; Burwell 2016; Burwell 2021; Carey et al. 2013; Carey and Grant, 2015; Creech 2012; Gaunt, 2010; Gaunt, 2011; Gaunt et al. 2012; Mills 2002; Nerland 2007; Rakena et al. 2016). This increase in one-to-one research reflects the significance of the ongoing institutional support of this model to music performance researchers, educators, practitioners, and students alike.

This article presents a novel methodology for one-to-one pedagogy research, namely, “multi-sited focused ethnography” (MSFE). By way of background, the aim of the original qualitative study was to discover how musical theatre singing voice teachers in select institutions in the United States taught the many different styles which fall under the Contemporary and Commercial Music (CCM) umbrella of singing styles (for example, pop, rock, R&B, country, folk, etc.). These styles now predominate musical theatre productions (Green et al. 2014). The first author was interested in both how *and* why teachers might teach these styles in the way they did, and so was interested not only in teacher practices, but in background and training of participant teachers. Research into existing practices of singing voice pedagogy within higher education is of relevance to the industry for quality assurance purposes to assess the teaching of stylistic accuracy for graduate employment outcomes. Further, the increasing numbers both in CCM and musical theatre programs (Baldwin et al. 2017; Edwards 2018) and singing voice pedagogy programs in higher education which

include or focus on CCM (Cox 2020; De Silva 2016) indicate that universities are taking a greater interest in not only contemporary forms of singing but also in quality teacher training.

This article begins by outlining some of the methodological challenges presented to any researcher of one-to-one pedagogy. These include issues of studio access, considerations of the researcher's insider or outsider status, and the impact of researcher presence in the studio on data collection. The article will then examine how MSFE was used in the original qualitative study to examine one-to-one singing voice pedagogy. The original research study design is presented as an example of cohesion between epistemological and ontological positions, research design, research questions, analytical framework, and the conduct of the research. To conclude, we summarise the advantages and limitations of MFSE and make recommendations for future research.

We conceptualise MSFE as “Big Q” qualitative research (Kidder and Fine 1987), and as such, as a methodology which lends itself to addressing some of the common methodological challenges within one-to-one pedagogy research more broadly. Big Q qualitative research involves ethnography, field work and participant observation. It is inductive and unstructured research where “...researchers begin their data collection with a hunch” (Kidder and Fine 1987, 60) to generate a hypothesis, rather than testing hypotheses. Also known as “fully qualitative” research (Braun and Clarke 2022, 283), Big Q qualitative research describes a type of research which emphasises “both qualitative techniques and philosophy” (Braun and Clarke 2022, 283).

Big Q research therefore occurs within a qualitative paradigm in which the norms, values, assumptions, and beliefs of the qualitative researcher are clearly articulated, underpinning a “qualitative sensibility” which values researcher subjectivity and considers meaning to be contextual and situated (Braun and Clarke 2022, 293). In contrast, “small q” qualitative research involves the gathering of qualitative data within a positivist or

postpositivist paradigm with a set research design structure which uses the analysis process to test an initial hypothesis (Braun and Clarke 2022). Researcher orientation and philosophical assumptions may often be left unstated in “small q” qualitative studies. We contend that many of the common methodological challenges in one-to-one pedagogy research can usefully be addressed by adopting a Big Q approach to the research design and process.

Methodological challenges of one-to-one pedagogy research

By its very nature, the one-to-one singing or instrumental teaching studio poses certain methodological challenges for researchers. A common threshold challenge for researchers is gaining access these “private” sites (Carey and Grant 2015), building trust, and overcoming the reluctance of teacher-participants (Carey and Grant 2015; Gaunt 2008, 2011). Related to issues of access and trust is the status of the researcher as being either inside or outside of the one-to-one pedagogy or conservatoire tradition—both insider and outsider status can prove to be a barrier to entry or gaining trust (L’Hommedieu 1992; Persson 1994; cf. Gaunt 2008, 2010, 2011). Moreover, if a researcher can gain access for research purposes, the presence of the researcher (and their status as insider or outsider) may influence participant observation, and participant behaviour (e.g., L’Hommedieu 1992; Persson 1994, 1996). These issues have implications for the researcher’s approach to data collection and analysis.

Gaining studio access and the insider/outside status of the researcher

Within the one-to-one studio, learning and teaching occurs “behind closed doors” (Carey and Grant 2015, 6). As a result, there is a sense that one-to-one pedagogy is shrouded in “secrecy” (Davidson and Jordan 2007, 730), inherently isolated (Burwell 2005), and performed in a “secret space” (O’Bryan and Harrison 2014, 7) where what happens is “magical, and important” (Davidson and Jordan 2007, 730). The cloistered tradition of the one-to-one teaching studio makes access for research purposes difficult. For example, the researcher as observer might be considered an intruder into this private space. L’Hommedieu (1992)

reported difficulties in scheduling and participant attrition which resulted in only one full data set from one participating teacher. Because participant teachers would not allow the recording of lessons, Persson (1994, 1996) resorted to observing three weeks of lessons using handwritten notes, and not all participants validated the observational notes prior to analysis “due to the sensitive nature of the findings” (Persson 1994, 82).

Related to gaining access to the research site, the status of researcher as someone who is inside or outside of the conservatoire/one-to-one tradition is also germane to the research endeavour. There is a long tradition in western music studies of high-level performers becoming singing teachers (Schindler 2010; O’Bryan and Harrison 2014) who often enter the profession without any kind of formal educational qualification or certification (Rollings 2019). Participant teachers may also be reproducing the type of instruction they experienced as learners themselves (Daniel and Parkes 2017). Such practices may mean that performer/teachers may be anxious about their teaching being researched by those outside the field with little understanding or lived experience of the conservatoire tradition. Early research into one-to-one pedagogy by a musician and “psychological scientist” (Persson 1994, 36) concluded that an excellent performer may not be an excellent teacher as the two roles require different skills sets. Persson’s observations were confirmed by another outsider-driven study comparing the pedagogies of medicine and music which found that musical students preferred dedicated pedagogues to high level performers as teachers (Watling et al., 2013). Persson found that the fields of art and music are often unchallenged by researchers external to the field. Noting the distrust of studio teachers to researchers from outside the music field, Persson (1994, 89) concludes that further research should involve objective, science-based educational researchers, commenting that the rigid traditions of musical study and biases meant that participants viewed this research as “a potential threat”.

Despite Persson's calls for researchers from outside of the music field to conduct further research, one-to-one pedagogy research has largely been performed by insiders to the higher music education field. Gaunt's (2008, 2010, 2011) pioneering studies on the perceptions of students and teachers of one-to-one pedagogy at a specific site are an example of insider research. With a background as a performer, teacher, and employee of the institution used as the research location, Gaunt notes both the benefits and disadvantages of insider research. Benefits include access to participants, trust, and connecting the research to professional development, while disadvantages include bias, and participant fear of judgement, criticism, negative outcomes, and the potential negative impact on existing professional relationships with colleagues. In this example of Big Q research, Gaunt (2008; 2010) transparently explains that researcher sensitivity was required, noting that the data collection process has the potential to negatively affect the relationship between teacher and student, and teacher and researcher. Addressing this concern, Gaunt chose to use informant-style interviews with teachers to encourage rapport between participant and interviewer. Further, Gaunt used her interviewer role as a facilitator to follow "[participants'] own interests and ideas within the broad areas for discussion" (217). The focus on participants' words and experiences, consideration of the researcher's role in the research, and accounting for researcher positionality as an insider all exemplify a Big Q qualitative approach to this research.

Researcher presence in the one-to-one studio

The private nature of the one-to one studio means that a researcher's presence might be intrusive, thereby changing the dynamic of the teaching space and impacting the integrity of the data collected. To overcome this issue, some researchers have used data collection methods which remove the researcher from the moment of teaching. Such data collection methods have included video recording of lessons (e.g. Burwell 2006; O'Bryan 2014),

surveys (e.g. Daniel and Parkes 2017), focus groups with students (Carey and Grant 2015) and interviews with teachers (Benson 2020; Blades-Zeller 2002; Carey and Grant 2015; Gaunt 2008, 2010; Naismith 2019).

Notably, these research methods are usually enacted outside of the moment of the lesson. Benefits to this type of data collection include minimal intrusion on the moment of teaching, although the presence of a video camera recording lessons may still result in adjusted behaviours. Disadvantages include the researcher being distant from the moment of teaching and thus unable to hear in real time the acoustic affordances of live performance practice. When observing video material, it may also be challenging for the researcher to pick up on subtle interpersonal cues between participants which can be better sensed when in the same room. The ethnographic methods of Big Q research such as participant observation of a cultural group (such as one-to-one teachers and/or students) are specifically intended to capture these interpersonal nuances through researcher presence in the moment of participant interaction (Gray 2011). Further, when considering interview and survey data, behaviours “are more stable over time than attitudes and opinions” (Silverman 2016, 115) and there is often a “gap between what we say and what we do, between what people think and feel and what they do, between behaviour and attitude, between sentiments and acts” (Gobo 2008, 6). The act of participant reflection or commentary on their own experiences captured in interviews, surveys, and focus groups is a step removed from direct participant observation by the researcher during studio lessons.

Many of the studies using interview, focus groups and video data collection methods are “small q” qualitative research in that they do not explicitly address the researcher/s philosophical assumptions or theoretical frameworks and employ qualitative methods within what is ostensibly a postpositivist paradigm. Within such research, the insider status of the researcher (if the researchers are themselves from a conservatoire background) is not

explicitly leveraged as a resource, as would be the case in Big Q research. Rather, the preference is for the researcher to remain at “arm’s length” from the research site and to adopt postpositivist approaches to analysis such as content analysis, quantification of time spent on tasks, and triangulation of data sources (see, e.g., Burwell 2021).

As will be discussed in more detail below, both the “focused” and “multi-sited” nature of MFSE allow researchers of one-to-one music pedagogy to address some of the common challenges outlined above. A *focused* ethnography homes in on a specific, contextually bound group which is often operating within a private space (e.g., nurses in a hospital ward, the domestic life of a particular family) where longer-term fieldwork poses ethical and privacy challenges (Wall 2015). The focused nature of the ethnography draws on the insider status of the researcher to quickly build trust with research participants and uses insider status and knowledge of the specific cultural group as an analytic resource to obtain insights more expeditiously than would otherwise be possible. The *ethnographic* nature of MFSE requires to researcher to be embedded at multiple research site. To date, one-to-one pedagogy research has generally tended to focus on a single site (e.g., a particular conservatoire) which can only yield contextually specific findings, which, while potentially transferable to other one-to-one contexts, are not indicative of broader cultural norms or practices. Using a focused ethnographic approach across multiple example sites “scales up” the research endeavour, allowing for connections, commonalities, and differences to be identified across multiple examples of the same (yet highly specific) cultural group. For example, in the case of the MSFE conducted for the original qualitative study, the focused ethnography across multiple sites uncovered hidden or implicit ways of being within the one-to-one studio, identifying the larger cultural forces which frame much one-to-one studio practice in musical theatre singing voice pedagogy (Cox, 2020).

Introducing MSFE for one-to-one pedagogy research

MSFE—Philosophical assumptions

Considering the methodological challenges discussed above, this article presents MSFE as a Big Q qualitative methodology (Kidder and Fine 1987) well-suited to research in the one-to-one pedagogical space in higher education. In accordance with the principles of the requirements of Big Q research cohesion, the philosophy underpinning the original study requires explanation here for transparency and quality assurance purposes. The MSFE research into one-to-one musical theatre singing pedagogy was based on a relativist ontology, meaning that realities may be considered as “multiple, intangible, mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature” (Guba and Lincoln 1994, 110). Reality was conceived as different for different people in different contexts, both for researcher and participant teachers. Fundamental to this project was the researcher’s assumption that singing voice pedagogy and what constitutes knowledge in the field of singing voice pedagogy is complex, nuanced, multiple in nature and therefore cannot be reduced to a singular viewpoint. Epistemologically, the researcher assumed a constructionist approach to knowledge. Constructionism assumes that knowledge is “created in interaction among investigator and respondents” (Crotty 1998, 111). Constructionism emphasises that “meaning” is a mental construct which can be multiple in nature, based on individual experiences and history, and created through human social interaction and engagement (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Lincoln et al. 2018). Accordingly, the researcher’s position was that knowledge is a social phenomenon located in specific time and space (Crotty 1998) which shapes practice (Guba and Lincoln 2005). The researcher assumed that meaning in the field of singing voice pedagogy is constructed or created by the teachers through their experiences and history in musical theatre training, performance, and teaching, mediated through and by exchanges with their own social network of teachers, colleagues, and students.

In accordance with a cohesive Big Q qualitative approach, these philosophical assumptions led to the idea that a multiple-sited focused ethnographic study of teachers working in similar situations would be appropriate to answer the research questions. It was anticipated that a MSFE would generate data which would create a complex, nuanced understanding of how different participants in different places practice teaching, mediated by teachers' own history, experiences, and social engagement. While the participants were spatially separate, they belonged to the same cultural group—musical theatre singing voice teachers employed in higher education in the United States. The use of MSFE allowed for multiple locations to be used as research sites generating a wide-ranging data set to for analysis.

MSFE—Components

Ethnography traditionally refers to long-term fieldwork where the researcher spends a up to a year in the field observing behaviours, actions, and interactions between members of a cultural group in a specific place and time (Creswell 2014; Silverman 2016). Ethnography uses participant observation, allowing the researcher to “get closer to other people’s experiences” (Pink and Morgan 2013). Being present in the moment means that the researcher can more deeply understand the researched environment, notice the implicit, unspoken, every day, practical activities, attitudes, and behaviours which “emerge as research knowledge” (Pink and Morgan 2013).

Focused ethnography (FE) has been used in in problem-focused and contextually bound situations to answer specific questions in highly fragmented and specialised fields of study (Higginbottom et al. 2013). This approach focuses on specific events, activities, and interactions in and between participants in differentiated, specific groups at specific times, for example, in work-related activities (Knoblauch 2005). FE is also useful in situations where

longer-term field visits are not practical and would be considered intrusive or violate ethical considerations (Wall 2015). Examples of the use of FE include research involving private spaces, e.g., in everyday home life (Pink and Morgan 2013), and nursing (Wall 2015). Data collection in FE relies heavily on “first hand involvement of the ethnographer” (Pink and Morgan 2013) using observation, supported by technology such as audio-visual and audio recordings (Knoblauch 2005). FE also relies heavily on an analytic framework—the ethnography develops in dialogue with and is scaffolded by theory throughout the data collection and analysis process (Pink and Morgan 2013).

Multi-sited ethnography (MSE) breaks with the traditional single-sited conventions of ethnography. In MSE, participants may follow one cultural group as they relocate to other sites or observe a specific cultural process across multiple sites (Falzon 2009; Marcus 1995). Linking MSE with FE, Wall comments that FE can be used to analyse multiple sites of the same cultural group consisting of different members, in “highly fragmented and specialised fields of study [where] participants may not know each other” (Wall 2015, para. 7).

Significantly, unlike traditional long-term ethnography, when conducting MSFE the researcher is not a stranger to the field of study upon entry, but acknowledges subjectivity and engages in “alterity”, reflexively noting the commonalities and the differences between the researcher and communities under study. Central to MSFE is the rapid establishment of insider status through the researcher having “vast implicit and explicit background knowledge of any field they are studying” (Knoblauch 2005, para. 6). In addition to the researcher being a field insider, like traditional ethnography MSFE requires participants to become habituated to the researcher’s presence during everyday activities. In ethnography it is essential for the researcher to develop trust through relationships with participants to gain access to information about participants and their lives (Gray 2011). The establishment of trust between

researcher and participants requires sensitivity, listening, and where possible, sharing of experiences to establish rapport and commonalities of experiences (Handwerker 2001). Due to the shortened duration of time spent in the field, when conducting MSFE the establishment of insider status (via the habituation and establishment of trust between researcher and participant) must happen quickly.

Navigating the challenges of one-to-one pedagogy research using MSFE

Gaining studio access and the insider/outside status of the researcher

MSFE has been used for research in traditionally private spaces (Pink and Morgan 2013; Wall 2015) and conducted by researchers with existing knowledge of the subject under examination (Knoblauch 2005). As identified above, access to the private space of the one-to-one studio, gaining the trust of the participant teacher, and the status of the researcher as insider or outsider are all key challenges of one-to-one pedagogy research. Further complicating this insider/outsider question, in participant observation ethnography the researcher does not just observe from the outside but engages in the life of the culture they are observing, while at the same time maintaining “sufficient cognitive distance” (Gobo 2008, 6) to gather data with attention to the theoretical and conceptual framework of the project. In accordance with MSFE requirements, participant observation in this MSFE, namely observing one-to-one pedagogy within a higher education setting, required the researcher to have considerable existing knowledge of the discipline.

Previous studies into one-to-one pedagogy benefit from the researcher being employed and therefore an existing insider to the higher education institution under study. As a form of ethnography which presumes insider knowledge and expertise, one of the challenges of MSFE was the need for the researcher to be credible in the field despite not being employed at the research sites. Establishing researcher “insider” credentials was essential for “respectful, on-

going relationships with ... interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views” (Heyl 2001, 369). Further, in this specific research field, credibility as a pedagogue was a requirement for the researcher to be granted access and trusted by participants and other stakeholders across multiple universities in a foreign country where the researcher was not employed.

There were practical reasons for choosing the United States as a location for study—the number of musical theatre programs in higher education was considerably more than the researcher’s country of residence, assisting with both considerations of choice and anonymity of participants. The researcher visited six programs in various locations in the United States over one academic year. While some programs were housed in specific performance-based conservatoires attached to larger universities, other programs were housed in fine arts colleges within a liberal arts university setting. The singing teachers taught as part of both BA in Musical Theatre and BFA in Musical Theatre programs. The institutions were located in a variety of larger, city-based programs and smaller, regional institutions. The choice of United States undergraduate programs as the locations for research sites created potential access difficulty—as noted previous studies into one-to-one teaching have been conducted by inside employees. Despite being an insider as a fellow musical theatre singing voice pedagogue, in this case the researcher was also an outsider in other ways. This outsider status was embodied by the researcher’s foreign nationality, their position as a researcher, and by being predominately self-employed in a private home-based singing studio. The challenge of gaining insider status was initially established through communication of the of researcher’s credentials as a musical theatre and CCM singing voice teacher and performer, with many years of experience and a graduate degree focused on CCM singing voice pedagogy. Many of the participant teachers also belonged to similar industry associations as the researcher or had attended the same professional development and conference events within this highly

specialised field. Thus, the researcher was personally known to many of the research participants through professional activities, helping to mitigate somewhat the researcher's "outsider-ness".

Establishing researcher credibility to gain site access was not a straightforward, "one size fits all" process. The researcher required an adaptive approach to identity to ease the access process depending on the type of musical theatre program. For example, at a very prestigious institution, a participating teacher required the researcher to write a letter to the head of school specifically mentioning the researcher's students who were "successful". This success was measured by professional employment in the professional musical theatre industry. In contrast, a smaller university with a lower profile was excited at the prospect of an international researcher's interest in their program. Participation in the research by the teachers at this institution was used to boost their program's credibility within the student population. Here the researcher was invited to provide a masterclass and pedagogical perspectives on student progress and teaching methodology. This adaptive approach to researcher identity meant that at some sites the researcher was considered an expert, while at others the researcher was deemed to be the novice learning from the instructors of the distinguished institution. This adaptive approach to identity and credibility allowed for entry at multiple sites into the traditionally private and expert space of one-to-one singing lessons in higher education.

To research the pedagogical culture and background of teachers in the one-to-one singing studio setting it was imperative that the researcher already be a singing teacher. This was important so that time was not used to *explain* what was happening in lessons, because the researcher already possessed the "implicit and explicit background" (Knoblauch 2005, para.6) required for conducting a MSFE. In practice this knowledge was also an asset which

allowed the researcher to be able to spend a shorter period in the field (two weeks each at six sites) instead of the usual longer period (a year or more) required of more traditional ethnographies. Further, this insider status and the existing expertise of the researcher in the discipline aligned with a Big Q approach. Existing expertise became a strong analytic asset (Braun and Clarke 2022) during the data analysis allowing for examination of the greater relationship between specific pedagogical practices and the positioning of CCM voice pedagogy within the social structure of voice pedagogy in higher education. The researcher's insider knowledge, bias, or subjectivity were not "problems" to be accounted for or managed, but valuable analytic resources used to generate new knowledge (Braun and Clarke 2021).

Data collection

Reflexivity was used to consider the influence of the researcher's presence in the studio on the data collection. This reflexivity required cultivating constant awareness of the dynamics between the researcher and participants, constant consideration of the potential impact of the researcher's presence, and an explicit discussion and consideration of the researcher's position throughout the conduct of the research (Gobo 2008, 43). Reflexivity was demonstrated throughout the research process—in the planning, during data collection, and in the writing up stage—using journaling. For the MFSE, the researcher was interested in being present in the moment of the lesson, as well as being in relationship with the participant teachers during the period of data collection. In line with a Big Q approach to the research, the researcher had a "hunch" (Kidder and Fine 1987) that being in the moment of the lessons over time might yield interesting insights. This hunch extended to the idea that trust and relationships would be established through the researcher's interest, and financial and time commitment to visit in person. It was hoped that this approach, combined with participant

anonymity, might yield information not easily revealed otherwise regarding background and training of participants.

Data collection in the MSFE consisted of written observations, video of lessons, and audio recorded semi-structured interviews. Considerations surrounding the researcher's presence in the moment of data collection raised concerns regarding the researcher's impact on data collection, particularly the written observations. In MSFE using participant observation the researcher is the main instrument of data collection. This means that subjectivity is unavoidable, however, in Big Q research, subjectivity is considered as an asset (Braun and Clarke 2021). Anticipating potential participant sensitivity to the researcher's presence, the action of note taking was considered during the planning stages of data collection. Initially the researcher expected not to be note taking during the conduct of the lessons, writing up notes afterwards. However, in practice, the researcher found that participants *expected* the researcher to be taking notes during lessons, which is not necessarily usual in ethnography. In traditional ethnography a researcher might observe participants doing or saying something of interest, and then retreats to make observations in private. The positive response to researcher note-taking in the moment of the lesson may have been due to the nature of the research sites being educational institutions where note-taking is a usual practice. Because the researcher had considerable expertise and insider knowledge, in instances where students appeared to be sensitive to the researcher's note-taking in the moment of instruction, the notebook and pen were withdrawn. On two occasions during the 193 observed lessons, the participant teacher and researcher discussed a student's anxious response to the researcher's presence in a previously observed lesson. In both cases the researcher sat out of the lesson.

The potential difficulty of access due to participant sensitivity, or even participant distrust as experienced by Persson (1994), played a role when considering the initial research focus. This resulted in a deliberate decision to concentrate on “mapping the field” rather than assessing the effectiveness of teaching practices. The communication of the focus of the research on practice, content and structure was also helpful to ease participant concerns during observational note taking. Rather than focussing on judging effectiveness, i.e., “did that work”, the data collection within the lesson observations focussed was on what was being done, when, and how. As an insider, the researcher also considered that teaching singing occurs over a long period of time often with small incremental improvements, so measuring “effectiveness” of teaching would be problematic within a two-week period. Further, effectiveness itself as a concept in singing pedagogy is highly subjective, and often judged by successful student employment years after singing lessons, as evidenced by the request from the institution regarding researcher credentials via communication of successful student employment outcomes.

Consideration of participant habituation to the researchers’ presence was central to the decision to stay for longer than a day or two at each site. Two weeks was thought to be enough time to gather data, but also to create a relationship of trust between researcher and participant teachers and students. It was anticipated that initially participant teachers might not teach in the usual manner for a day or two while acclimatising into the researcher’s presence in the moment of the lesson. However, it was hoped that as the participating teacher became habituated to the researcher’s presence, they would revert to usual teaching practices. Accordingly, participant teachers were asked to reflect on their experiences of the research both during and after the research period.

Explicit discussion with research participants about the study's focus not being associated with judging teacher effectiveness assisted with participation. However, despite this research focus, and the personal relationships established with participants, initially teachers described an anticipated and reasonable concern at being observed. Member checking occurred throughout each visit regarding participant comfort levels with being observed, and responses were journaled and transcribed as part of the data collection process. One participant verbally shared their experiences of the first day of observation with the researcher:

AQ told me he felt fine teaching the first lesson, then after that he felt very self-conscious, that my presence made him feel or recognise all the things he DIDN'T know. He felt that he was on show and that he was in some way lacking ... (Later) I chatted with AQ and he is feeling much more comfortable about me observing today. His anxiety about my presence has gone away.

(Reflexive journal notes, University Q).

Another participant, responding to a question regarding whether being observed had altered their usual teaching practice, commented that they felt "on display" but that the research focus on what was occurring in the lesson rather than effectiveness of teaching "disarmed the situation" (Interview transcription, University X). In a reflection on the experience written after the site visit was completed, this teacher commented:

As we shared our theories of learning, specifics about discrete voice challenges, and meeting the needs and interests of individual students, I longed for more continuous dialogue, and truly missed (the researcher's) contributions to my studio after she departed.

(Participant reflection, University X)

Interestingly, the above comments reflect the isolation experienced by one-to-one practitioners (Bautista et al. 2021). While participants may have initially experienced unease or discomfort at being observed in the moment of teaching, clear explanations of the research

focus combined with researcher sensitivity and adaptability resulted in the experience proving to be a rich exchange of pedagogical philosophies and practices.

Data analysis and conceptual framework cohesion

MSFE relies heavily on an analytic framework where the research develops in dialogue with and is scaffolded by theory throughout the data collection and analysis process (Pink and Morgan 2013). In the MSFE, analysis proceeded using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) (Braun and Clarke 2006; 2021; 2022). The selection of reflexive thematic analysis, where “meaning and knowledge are understood as situated and contextual, and researcher subjectivity is conceptualised as a *resource* for knowledge production, which inevitably sculpts the knowledge produced” (Braun and Clarke 2021, 334-335, emphasis in original), was consistent with the ontological and epistemological considerations underpinning the research. Further, RTA insists on engaging with theory, data, and interpretation throughout the analytic process in reflexive and explicit manner (Braun and Clarke 2021).

The conceptual framework through which the data analysis was generated initially used Shulman’s (2005) concepts of signature pedagogies. In this framework, Shulman discusses the surface, deep and implicit structures of a pedagogy to understand how a pedagogical approach develops, as well as identifying what might be missing from a specific pedagogical approach. While this provided significant utility to the analytic process, Shulman’s concepts did not provide a framework for understanding why a pedagogy develops in the ways it does, and why specific omissions might be occurring. This led to further investigation into other existing “Small(er) Theory” (Braun and Clarke 2022, 189). Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, practice, capitals, and the ways in which these interact to explain the social structure of a field provided a framework to consider why the pedagogical practices observed in the ethnography might have developed in the way that they did. A

conceptual framework which combined both Shulman's pedagogical structures and Bourdieu's social field structure was developed and used in the analytic process.

The analysis procedure had six stages: familiarisation, generation of codes, constructing themes, revising themes, devising themes, followed by producing the report of the analysis (Braun et al., 2019). This process was organic and recursive, both deductive and inductive and involved "immersion in the data, reading, reflecting, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating, returning" (Braun and Clarke 2021, 332) and was "neither a quick nor an easy process" (Braun and Clarke 2021, 332). The construction, revision, and devising of themes were generated within the analytical framework of Shulman's signature pedagogies and Bourdieu's concepts of practice, habitus, capitals. These concepts informed an understanding of the practices of teachers, as well as their background and training. The conceptual framework allowed for considerations of *why* a teacher might work in the ways that they did. Through considerations of practices, background and training a hypothesis regarding the field of voice pedagogy and the relationships between different types of singing teachers within the field was produced.

In summary, the MSFE found that despite the predominance of CCM singing styles in professional musical theatre productions and the industry-driven need to teach these styles in musical theatre university programs, the field of classical singing voice pedagogy continues to exert "undue influence" on musical theatre singing voice pedagogy. Musical theatre singing voice pedagogues are required to teach CCM singing styles to prepare students for industry. The American Academy of Teachers of Singing (2008) acknowledges these styles have specialised pedagogical requirements. Despite this, the musical theatre singing voice pedagogues in the research study experienced largely classical voice pedagogy during their performance careers and extensive academic training. This has impacted on both the practice

of voice pedagogy in academia and the reproduction and positioning of voice teachers within the voice pedagogy field itself (for a comprehensive report of the study's findings, see Cox, (2020)). Obtaining these key insights about the field of singing voice pedagogy was made possible by a number of factors stemming from the use of MSFE: the study of *multiple* (six in total) sites of musical theatre singing voice pedagogy delivery in the United States; the *focused* nature of the ethnography which limited fieldwork to a short but intense time period at each site, and involved a highly specific cultural group with specialist skills, knowledge, and practices; and *researcher adaptivity* to the liminality of their insider/outsider status which rapidly built strong relationships of trust with participant musical theatre singing voice pedagogues at multiple sites.

Conclusion

Research into one-to-one pedagogy plays a vital role in understanding and improving practice. It also provides an evidence base for why institutions should continue to invest in what is an expensive pedagogical model; within musical theatre programs, for example, this investment is necessary to produce graduates with the requisite singing skills and experience to be employable in today's highly competitive industry.

Studies in one-to-one pedagogy research commonly adopt a "small q" approach, using qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups to gain an understanding of teachers' and students' experiences of the one-to-one studio. While also commonly conducted by insiders to the research environment, it is rare for these studies to explicitly acknowledge philosophical assumptions and consider the insider's status to be a considerable advantage to the conduct of the research. Moreover, it is uncommon for one-to-one pedagogy research to be conducted over multiple sites for extended periods. The most obvious reason for this is the expense and time required to attend multiple sites for a period long enough to enable the

collection of sufficient and meaningful data. Adopting a Big Q qualitative research approach to one-to-one pedagogy research such as MSFE enables the researcher to build relationships and trust with research participants, and for participants to leverage the research as a professional development opportunity and mutually beneficial sharing of practice. Most importantly, the design cohesion of Big Q research enables the discovery of hidden or implicit ways of being within the one-to-one studio, including the larger cultural forces which frame much one-to-one studio practice. In the case of musical theatre programs teaching CCM singing styles, these cultural forces were identified and reported on in the original study (Cox, 2020). Such findings are possible when a researcher has trusted insider status and a deep knowledge of the field, and these characteristics are fully leveraged in data collection and analysis. Therefore, to achieve an even deeper understanding of the importance of one-to-one pedagogy to the training of professional musicians, one-to-one pedagogy research could benefit from more studies which adopt a Big Q approach—time and resources permitting.

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