Voice and Speech Review

ISSN: 2326-8263 (Print) 2326-8271 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rvsr20

Breath, tremoring, and performance anxiety: How can Fitzmaurice Voicework's Destructuring address performance anxiety in undergraduate acting training?

Melissa Kollwitz

To cite this article: Melissa Kollwitz (2016) Breath, tremoring, and performance anxiety: How can Fitzmaurice Voicework's Destructuring address performance anxiety in undergraduate acting training?, Voice and Speech Review, 10:2-3, 100-120, DOI: 10.1080/23268263.2016.1349726

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/23268263.2016.1349726

VOICE AND SPEECH REVIEW, 2016
VOL. 10, NOS. 2–3, 100–120
https://doi.org/10.1080/23268263.2016.1349726

Breath, tremoring, and performance anxiety: How can Fitzmaurice Voicework's Destructuring address performance anxiety in undergraduate acting training?

Melissa Kollwitz

Marymount Manhattan College, New York, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between the student experience of performance anxiety and Fitzmaurice Voicework's Destructuring in undergraduate actor training. While current voice texts primarily focus on reducing habitual tension through various exercises, the acute and detrimental experience of performance anxiety is not fully addressed. However, the problem does not solely exist in the lack of literature for voice pedagogy, but is threefold: 1) Systemic: there are no clear coping strategies for performance anxiety embedded in theatre or voice training; 2) Practical: voice teachers are not qualified to provide therapeutic support to students dealing with performance anxiety; and 3) Research: performance anxiety has a debilitating effect on vocal performance. Utilizing Grounded Theory as a methodology, four phases of data collection were triangulated. Three core themes emerged from the data: increased body awareness, parasympathetic activation, and self-care. From these themes, a theory was formed that Fitzmaurice Voicework's Destructuring work can be used as a self-regulation strategy for students with performance anxiety, and also promote autonomy and resilience. Ultimately, students can use Fitzmaurice Voicework as a practical way to self-regulate and increase awareness of their somatic experiences, as well as promote self-care in their training.

KEYWORDS

Voice; pedagogy; performance anxiety; stage fright; actor training; Fitzmaurice Voicework; Destructuring; breathing; tremor; resilience; self-regulation; relaxation

This research study seeks to explore the relationship between the student experience of performance anxiety and the effects of Fitzmaurice Voicework®'s (FV) Destructuring, which is an aspect of FV that consists of a series of positions which induce tremoring in order to liberate the muscles of the torso for spontaneous breathing. Sound is introduced into these positions which allows the "ensuing physical freedom to be reflected in the voice, not just the body, because this freedom also naturally affects resonance and laryngeal use" (Fitzmaurice 1998, 247). Anxiety sometimes arises for students because working with the voice can be deeply personal, often dealing with identity, and always dealing with expression of one's thoughts and feelings even if through the facility of dramatic text. Vulnerability in a young acting student can be both liberating and frightening, but "through self-reflexive contact

CONTACT Melissa Kollwitz mkollwitz@mmm.edu

with the autonomic nervous system (ANS) the actor acquires not only a more functional vocal instrument but also gains autonomy, authenticity, and authority" (Fitzmaurice 1998, 249). This is imperative to actors who deal with a great deal of rejection, and face the kind of "risk-fail-risk-again" concepts that Eugene O'Neill promoted to encourage actors to move out of their comfort zone in order to develop their craft.

Scientists are expected to use the data from their research to evaluate the veracity of their hypotheses, and where data does not align with their belief, change their beliefs. Those who believe only through faith, or in my case through experience, use data as a means to strengthen what they already believe. The very act of attempting to translate holistic experiences even into verbalizations about the experience is fraught with difficulty (Shapiro 2008); yet, in order to build efficacy for vocal pedagogy it is imperative that this endeavor be attempted.

This is paralleled with what actors must do onstage: be in the present moment and aware of themselves at the same time. The interchange and balance of this dichotomy challenges even seasoned actors. While one should be careful not to "equate conceptual knowledge with subjective experience," the experiential knowledge gained from practicing FV can help us develop more sophisticated, sensitive research hypotheses and methodologies for scientific study (Shapiro 2008, 6).

We have a problem

The research question initially emerged as: *Can Fitzmaurice Voicework's Destructuring address performance anxiety in undergraduate acting training?* I chose Grounded Theory as my methodology because it was unclear *how* FV could address it; FV had only served as a coping strategy for my own anxiety, and I wanted to gather data from my current students, with no prior knowledge of FV, and compare their experiences. I chose to narrow the focus from anxiety to performance anxiety.

Research efforts examining the best treatments for performance anxiety include pharmacological, cognitive behavioral therapy, holistic approaches like meditation and yoga, or a combination of these approaches. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America's website notes that people who receive treatment through medical professionals, psychologists, therapists, etc., have success, but only one-third of people suffering from anxiety receive treatment. There is a dearth of research on what we, as voice teachers, can do to arm our students with the skills necessary for coping. There are three problems that emerged as the areas of interest for this study: (1) We lack strategies that we are qualified to provide to students because (2) performance anxiety is not addressed in current undergraduate acting curriculums. (3) The research problem lies in the issue of how performance anxiety negatively affects vocal production and vocal performance of undergraduate acting students.

Practical problem

Students are reliant on treatment of performance anxiety from health professionals, who may have very little understanding of the needs, training, or process of an actor; however, their acting, voice, and movement teachers who are steeped in experience on these aspects are not able to address their performance anxiety in the classroom. If performance anxiety is so pervasive in the lives of acting students, then why does the actor training curricula leave

performance anxiety unaddressed? This area overlaps with psychology; I am not qualified to help my students with their therapeutic or cognitive psychological needs,[1] but what I *can* offer them is more insight into the somatic experience of performance anxiety. We spend a great deal of time teaching our students about their bodies: in breath, phonation, resonance, and alignment through experiential anatomy, in connecting movement and sound, in noticing and altering habits, and more. We are not often dealing with the perils of the mind, our language is of the body; therefore, the scope of this research is solely through the lens of the somatic.

Systemic problem

This is two pronged: it affects how vocal pedagogy in higher education is approached, and also seeks to consider the student holistically in an industry that does not. An important aspect of a student's collegiate training is gaining the skills to become an autonomous learner so that they can transition effectively into the real world. Attending college provides an important opportunity for students to take ownership of their learning *and* well-being. If strategies for self-regulation are embedded into their training then they will become more autonomous in their learning, and more self-directed in their ability to cope once their enter the field.

Research problem

Sataloff notes that performance anxiety is often dismissed as something that gets easier with time, but Caire remarks that "even highly skilled performers do not always experience lessening of performance anxiety over time" (as quoted in Sataloff 2006, 189). If the debilitating effects of performance anxiety are not guaranteed to diminish over time with experience and exposure, then there is a great need for young acting students to develop the skills necessary to cope. The stress on the mind and body can cause long term effects such as depression, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and/or can lead to more serious anxiety disorders that disturb a student's functionality in the real world (Sowislo and Orth 2013).

One of the human mechanisms most vulnerable to change is the voice because a multitude of factors can affect its ability to function effectively and with ease, which include, but are not limited to: environment/external conditions, thoughts, emotions, and perceptions.

> The whole tuning apparatus is subject to any inhibitory messages sent from the mind that tighten the body. If the breathing muscles tense, so does the muscles tissue lining the pharynx … Nuance is ironed out, and a variety of thought cannot find free play through a corresponding variety of resonating qualities. Content is distorted by the one resonating form available. (Linklater 2006, 23)

Shewell supports Linklater in her assertion that "emotions are physical body states [which] respond in posture, tension, breathing patterns, facial expression and vocal aspects" (2007, 216). Actors, by nature of their work, need to be emotionally vulnerable,[2] which in everyday life often leads to a lack of vocal control, but onstage actors need to be vulnerable and yet maintain vocal control. As actors, students are regularly asked to access emotional vulnerability, but have developed muscular armor for most of their lives that prevents them from feeling and expressing, or reacting and acting. Students, as well teachers, are

much less able to receive or perceive information with their bodies because they have conditioned those muscles to hold or block stimulus. Habitual tension is detrimental to vocal production (Lowen 1994); however, this tension is different from that which occurs during performance anxiety. Aspects like habitual neck/shoulder tension can have a negative effect on vocal production, but the fight-or-flight sympathetic nervous system (SNS) response is an immediate, severe impact to vocal and physical ease.

For both actors and teachers, physical relaxation and stress reduction are highly sought after, because bodies and voices need to be in a state of readiness in rehearsal, classroom, and onstage. Tension, both physical and mental, can prevent actors from moving and speaking with ease. Acting teachers Lee Strasberg and Konstantin Stanislavski both wrote about physical tension getting in the way of an actor's preparation and performance. Strasberg said, "Tension is the artist's greatest enemy," and Stanislavski went so far as to call it the actor's "occupational disease." (McGaw 2014, 24). More specifically, tension from performance anxiety can inhibit the vocal production and physical ease that are essential for acting and speaking; it is immediate and acute.

While the effects of performance anxiety are an exhaustive list of physical, cognitive, and emotional detriment, only the somatic effects will be discussed. When we become overwhelmed with emotion, because we are socialized to internalize emotions, we attempt to choke off the impulse to express what is socially unacceptable and, in doing so, choke off the breath. When anxiety is experienced before performance, the fight-or-flight response causes us to hold our breath as we assess the severity of the threat to our system. There are two branches of the ANS: the parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS) responsible for the rest-and-digest and relaxation, and the SNS responsible for fight, flight, or freeze (Goldstein and Smith 2016). Porges theorizes that the social engagement system (the ability to speak and engage with others) is hijacked by the SNS response (Porges 2011).

As voice teachers, we understand that the breath is the physical manifestation of impulse, so the impulse is stifled by holding the breath, and vice versa; repeated holding can lead to chronic tension that prevents expression (Baker 2000). A suit of muscular armor often manifests itself as neck, shoulder, and abdominal tension, which can affect both voice and physicality, causing limited resonance, breathing capacity and pitch range, as well as rigidity in movement (Baker 2000). This tension occurs when expressing oneself and inherently is tied to our socialization and emotional life. Linklater states that "blocked emotions are the fundamental obstacle to a free voice" (2006, 25). Yet, most voice teachers are not trained or qualified to help students therapeutically; this is both a practical and systemic problem, and there is a gap in the literature about how undergraduate actor training curricula can offer students ways to cope with performance anxiety within the scope of which we, as theatre educators, are qualified to do.

Habitual tension is named as the main cause of vocal misuse by the leading practitioners whose approaches are taught in American undergraduate actor training: Berry, Linklater, and Rodenburg (Berry 1973, 20–23; Rodenburg 1998, 121–129; Linklater 2006, 23–24). However, performance anxiety elicits a different kind of physical response than habitual tension; it elicits the fight-or-flight SNS response. As Dr. David Schlundt and Dr. Suzanne Bryce of Vanderbilt University note on their website beta blocker medications are prescribed to treat performance anxiety, however, the argument can be made that anxiety relief may not be worth the cost of the vocal and inhibitory respiratory side effects that beta blockers cause.

Significance and background of the study

The topic of anxiety, in a larger sense, affects students of ages 19–25 years old even in their ability to transition to college life. There are high stakes for acting students, as the job market is a daunting one; the median pay for an actor is $19.82/hour for jobs ranging from "1 day to a few months", as the 2015 Bureau of Labor Statistics website notes, which requires actors to hold other jobs in order to survive in cities like New York and Los Angeles, where the cost of living is exorbitant. *American Theatre* notes that actors "endure long periods of unemployment, intense competition for roles and frequent rejections in auditions." It is no surprise that students experience anxiety before auditions, assessments, and performances; yet, they are expected to address this debilitating phenomenon on their own.

Dr. Dan Jones, director of counseling and psychological services at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., stated that anxiety is now "emblematic of the current generation of college students" (Hoffman 2015). Jones reported that students having difficulty tolerating discomfort which he links to extreme parental oversight causing students to rely on their parents to take care of and guide them. Jones states that these students do not possess the ability to soothe themselves, thereby promoting dependency on others for relief or comfort, and preventing them from developing autonomy and resilience (Hoffman 2015). For performance students there is the added stress of auditions, evaluations, and performances in and outside of class, and later throughout their career. In an interview on May 5, 2016 with Saul Kotzubei, Master Teacher of FV and Director of the FV Institute, he stated that

> It is important to me to help students establish a sense, a felt sense, of comfort, and then a capacity to experience discomfort without getting hyper-fixated on it or needing to run away from it. This starts with, "Oh, this is what comfort actually feels like in my body." Lightly feeling the physical sensations of comfort in the body, and then going back outside. When they can do that, then they can give light attention to the feelings of discomfort, too.

This idea from Kotzubei is important because recognizing discomfort and comfort within oneself is essential to self-care and can lead students to autonomy and self-direction.

The background of this study investigates how the Music Performance Anxiety Inventory is typically used to analyze and assess anxiety disorders in musicians, yet there are several aspects of Barlow's research that provides perspective on the factors that may contribute to performance anxiety in a larger sense. Barlow found that "social evaluation", the judgement from others, may be accompanied by somatic sensations "that become associated with a perceived increase in threat or danger" (Kenny and Osborne 2006, 104). This is of particular interest to this study because the next time the student feels these sensations they may be better able to anticipate escalation of anxiety by addressing the symptoms sooner. For this study only the somatic sensations and self-perception of those sensations will be considered.

"Just Relax!"

Many acting and voice exercises looking to address relaxation focus on habitual tension rather than the fight-or-flight response. Focusing on habitual tension is a great way for students to gain awareness and notice where they hold tension in their musculature, but there is a gap in the literature on nerves and performance anxiety, or anxiety at large, beyond the problematic approach of, "Just relax" which is both vague and unhelpful for those with anxiety, as it makes them hyper-focused on controlling their experiences.

An example of the ambiguity of these exercises can be found in *An Actor Prepares*, in which Stanislavski describes his trouble with learning relaxation exercises (Stanislavski 1946, 110–111). Rather than grounding and focusing, the exercises confused and disconnected him from his body by making him hyper-aware of his somatic sensations without concrete feedback about how release and tension might be useful to him.

Students are expected to cope with performance anxiety, or anxiety at large, on their own. When first exposed to FV I practiced Destructuring daily because it provided the space and safety to loosen my grips on my need to control my experience; the tendency to control my experience stemmed from years of hearing platitudes of "Calm down," and "Just relax!" Beyond that, in prior voice training I was encouraged to "aim to place the breath as deeply into the body as possible," which felt like pushing and controlling the breath (Rodenburg 1998, 58). But in studying FV I could allow the tremor to soften my muscular gripping in certain areas, which gave me permission to release both physically and mentally, and a "deeper" breath happened as a by-product. FV provided the landscape for emotional life to live without censorship from the Central Nervous System (CNS), which is how we control and stifle our impulses. I learned to allow for uninhibited changes in breathing so that I was present with the ebbing and flowing without censoring or shutting emotional life down. The awareness of my breath and the opportunity to allow for responsive changes enabled me to experience flow. I gained confidence in FV by developing the ability to be present with "what is"[3]; rather than bracing against my experiences. I took ownership of my work, and consequently my life.

I do not believe it is our job as voice teachers to uncover the psychological cause of our tension or physical response to stimuli, but rather to bring awareness to it and give students a somatic experience that permits them to either address the root of their emotional or physical tension, or not. The best voice teachers that I have worked with gave me permission to do that. I advocate for students to gain awareness about what they feel in their bodies while we work, and to notice any changes. They continue to surprise me with the depth of insight they gain about their bodies and voices through this work.

This is my call to arms for higher education theatre training to include self-regulation strategies in their curriculum, especially ones that can be directly embedded, like FV, because its benefits are twofold: students gain the skills they need about breath and body for voice which is in line with the learning goals and outcomes for the curriculum, and simultaneously take part in self-care that fosters autonomy, so that when they graduate and enter the workforce they are more resilient in the face of the challenges that await them.

I will now define key terms and introduce Grounded Theory as the methodology for this study with the triangulation of data collection and literature review. Then I will describe the findings, provide analysis, and conclude with the proposal of Fitzmaurice's Destructuring as a strategy for self-regulation in dealing with performance anxiety based on Grounded Theory.

Key terms

Fitzmaurice Voicework

While FV is best understood through experiential learning, it is necessary to illuminate some of its key aspects. FV is used primarily in actor training programs as a comprehensive

approach to voice training which has two phases. The first is Destructuring: a series of adapted yoga positions where the limbs are extended to a point where an involuntary shaking occurs, which Fitzmaurice calls "tremoring". These positions utilize tremoring in the limbs only, leaving the muscles of the torso unengaged so that the body can respond with any spontaneous changes in breath patterns that occur, while "at the same time, a great deal of unaccustomed energy, waves of tremor, and, ultimately, relaxation, flow throughout the body, sensitizing it to vibration, and increasing feeling and awareness" (Hampton 1997, 247–252). The second component, detailed on the FV website, is a breath support technique called Restructuring which will not be addressed in this study.

Destructuring/tremoring

As stated above, the focus of this study is on Destructuring, so on November 4, 2014, I conducted an interview with Jeff Morrison, Associate Professor of Theatre at Marymount Manhattan College (MMC) and Associate Teacher of FV. He theorizes that tremoring is an "executing of a voluntary physical action to trigger an involuntary reflex" called the Golgi tendon organ reflex which is a function of the peripheral nervous system. There are afferent nerve endings called Golgi tendon organs, where muscles and tendons join together, which have receptors that work as a negative feedback system to regulate muscle tension, meaning that these receptors sense where there is too much tension on the tendon, inhibiting motor neurons from the spinal cord, causing the muscle involved to relax in order to prevent tendon damage from over-stretching. The other side of that muscle releasing is that the stretch reflex is then activated. If the stretch is sustained, the muscle spindles are reactivated, causing a cycle of alternating contractions and relaxations: tremoring.

Anxiety

The origin of the word "anxious" comes from the Latin "ango" meaning to choke and compress, and can be traced to its German origin "angst" which means "a choking in the narrows" (Lewis 1963; Lowen 1994, 125). This is not surprising because anxiety is linked to a physical tightening in the chest, compression in the thorax, and constriction in the pharynx in which the air, in my experiences, feels choked and unable to flow (Parnabas, Mahamood, and Parnabas 2013).

Although these definitions all refer to a physical, corporeal reaction, American existentialist psychologist, Rollo May, espoused that anxiety is "apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a self" (May 1977, 72). Sigmund Freud believed that threats to our self-esteem cause more anxiety, in modern society, than physical threats to our corporeal body. If vocal expression is inhibited in anticipation of negative reactions from others, then "the muscles of the neck and throat [contract] to constrict the opening and block the impulse" (Lowen 1994, 132). Therefore it is necessary to promote healthy vocal production through bodywork that reduces tensions existing around the vocal apparatus (Lowen 1994.)

In addition to Freud's notion of threats to our self-esteem, Wilhelm Reich's theorizes that people experience physical tension regardless of whether the threat is to their physical or mental/emotional life (Reich 1983, 26). By Reich's theory, one can assume that the student's perception of threat to their self-esteem or mental/emotional life will result in physical

tension causing unhealthy vocal production in performance. Performance anxiety causes excitation tension that is, in most cases, unreleased, and will stay in our musculature; if it is not released it will manifest as muscular holding (Reich 1983; Porges 2011). This is the habitual tension[4] that many voice practitioners seek to reduce in their students, which has built up over time by not finding a physical release for that excitation tension.

The neurophysiological reality of how our body copes with perceived danger is found in Dr. Stephen Porges's Polyvagal Theory where he describes how throughout evolution humans have developed a hierarchy of mechanisms in the nervous system, which serve to address threats and regulate the system. The most primal mechanism located at the brainstem is "freeze," as in, for example, when a reptile becomes immobile when in danger. The second mechanism, and most important for this study, is known as fight-or-flight, in which the SNS is activated to bring in oxygen and blood flow to the muscles needed for fighting the threat or running away from it. The third mechanism is the social engagement system, which links the heart to facial recognition and vocal capabilities. This is the most recent mechanism, in evolutionary terms, by which people use language and facial expressions in a social context to keep themselves safe, for example during an argument where someone can de-escalate a situation through discussion and body language (Porges 2011).

Certain events trigger your body to react, so if the first mechanism (social engagement) does not make you feel safe, you revert to the second (fight-or-flight). If that does not work, you revert to the third (freeze). When either the second or third mechanisms are triggered then the social engagement system is hijacked, making communication nearly impossible (Porges 2011). Aligning with the earlier definition of anxiety, "choked off", the ability to speak becomes inhibited because of the SNS activation. Adrenaline not only activates the SNS, but also is a focusing hormone that forces us to concentrate on any potential danger at the expense of anything else (Porges 2011). This could mean that actors, feeling anxious before an audition, could get up in front of a panel of agents and directors and not only feel the physical responses of fight, flight, or even freeze of their voices being "choked off", but also get tunnel vision and lose their lines.

Performance anxiety

While they are often used interchangeably, for the purposes of this research performance anxiety will be used, rather than the synonymous stage fright. The commonality, regarding either term, is the debilitating effect it has on performers (Powell 2004). Kaplan writes about a phenomenon he calls "blocking" which is

> the momentary experience of complete loss of perception and rehearsed function [which] erases all sense of control and aims at a total extinction of impulse by disconnecting the self from all avenues of functioning, including speech and movement. (Kaplan 1969, 65)

Kaplan's description of blocking or disconnecting from communication meets similar criteria of Porges' "freeze mechanism".

Certain level of adrenaline may fuel performance or could carry a lackluster final dress rehearsal into an energetic opening night (Gabbard 1983, 435). Staal (2004) debates "optimal arousal" theories where, in athletes, a certain degree of SNS arousal is needed, but an increase past a certain point becomes detrimental to performance. The onset of performance anxiety due to too much adrenaline can impair performance.

The physiological element of performance anxiety is the *somatic* which is related to the arousal of the SNS, a branch of the ANS. Literature on performance anxiety and stage fright led me to read about "somatic anxiety" specifically, which detailed the physiological effects of nervous system arousal, which "can cause shakiness due to adrenaline, high blood pressure, dry throat, muscular tension, increased heart rate, sweaty hands and 'butterflies in the stomach'" (Parnabas, Mahamood, and Parnabas 2013).

In relation to vocal performance students with somatic symptoms of performance anxiety, such as dry mouth and throat constriction, often described as a lump in the throat, will likely experience "a direct negative effect on the execution of their craft," as this symptom could affect both breath flow and resonance (Marshall 1994). Fitzmaurice explains in a 2004 interview with Eugene Douglas that, "[a]n inspiration is an idea and a breath. So when the breathing itself is compromised, inhibited, or interrupted in any way, you don't get expression flowing." Tension that interferes with respiration will distort the quality of the voice because there is either too much breath pressure, which can cause a flat, pressed sound, or not enough which can equate to vocal fry.

Resonance is limited by narrowing the pharynx, which could cause extremes of nasality, head, or chest resonance without balance or nuances between them (Lowen 1994; Linklater 2006; Rodenburg 1998). The absence of vibration denotes stress or holding, whether in the body or the voice, so someone who lacks vibrancy in their sound, meaning adequate breath support or output vibration, could have flatness in delivery (Lowen 1994). The somatic effects of performance anxiety summarized above illuminate how detrimental it can be to healthy vocal use and expressive vocal performance.

Methodology: Grounded Theory

With the foundation of key terms used in this study established, the methodology chosen for this study can be outlined. Grounded Theory (GT) was the most appropriate methodology for this study because it is typically used when there is a lack of existing research in an area. There is research on performance anxiety in athletes, musicians, and singers which promote visualizations/imagery, relaxation, and affirmations/self talk as primary coping mechanisms (Humara 1999; Spielman 2009; Parnabas, Mahamood, and Parnabas 2013). However, I found very little information on performance anxiety in actors and the effects of it on their voices, so this study might help to explain how performance anxiety could be addressed in undergraduate acting students, especially in relationship to vocal performance.

Four phases of data collection were triangulated in this study. The method for Phase 1 and 3 of data collection consisted of a modified Music Performance Anxiety Inventory, which was administered to undergraduate BA Theatre Performance and BFA Acting majors who were enrolled in my Voice & Speech for the Actor class at MMC; forty-four sophomores, seven juniors, and two seniors. Participants' exposure to FV at the time of the first survey was sixteen weeks, with no prior experience of FV. They attended the class two times a week for eighty minutes. Prior to the survey, an application was submitted for MMC's IRB to approve the study, document of consent, and protocol.

The first steps of analysis are several stages of coding, where transcripts of qualitative data are examined line by line to identify features of the data such as themes, thoughts, feelings, actions, or issues which are coded or named, and then categories are created (O'Connor 2013). Most of the initial coding was taken directly from the data, also known as "*in vivo*"

coding (O'Connor 2013). Once I defined the categories or "themes" from the initial coding, I began to hypothesize how they might be integrated into a theory (Glaser 1978, 72).

A key aspect of the Constructionist GT methodology is theoretical sampling which elicits further data collection in relation to a particular theme and is used "to explore problems, refine ideas and clarify emerging themes" (O'Connor 2013). Halfway through coding the first round of surveys, based on the amount of repeated responses, I determined the need to employ purposive sampling, a non-probability approach, where a group of subjectively selected subjects are used for further research. I asked for ten volunteers from the initial sample group, as this specific group could "enable exploration of a particular aspect of behavior relevant to the research" (Mays and Pope 1995, 12–13). I chose homogenous sampling because it is used to "understand and describe at a particular group in depth" (Cohen and Crabtree 2008), which in this case were the students who identified as having performance anxiety. Theoretical saturation was achieved in Phase 3, where no new categories emerged in the student responses, but rather continued to support the other phases' data, and solidify themes.

Phase 1: Dr. Kira Jumet, Co-Principal Investigator, administered the survey, for which I was not present. The survey is a modified version of the Music Performance Anxiety Inventory, where participants respond to statements about their self-reported anxiety levels, (e.g. "Just before I perform I feel nervous") by indicating the extent to which each statement accurately represented their own experiences, from 0 (None of the time) to 6 (All of the time). Of the eleven questions on the survey, eight questions were related to Somatic and Cognitive Features, and the remaining three were related to Performance Evaluation. The survey was administered prior to their performance evaluation at the end of the first semester. They had this class for only two semesters, and if they were a BFA student they needed to pass with a C- or higher to move on to Acting III.

Phase 2: Ten interviews were conducted with students who had taken the survey and who identified themselves as having performance anxiety. Students were asked a series of questions and audiorecorded, then the audio files were transcribed and analyzed using *in vivo* coding and then categories were created. This data was triangulated with the qualitative results of the first survey from Phase 1.

Phase 3: Students took the same survey again from Phase 1 at the end of their second semester, but the qualitative questions were altered to address what changes the students may have experienced over the course of the school year. SPSS Statistics software was used to compare the data from both surveys. Dr. Jumet also administered this survey on the day of their final performance evaluations.

Phase 4: Interviews were conducted with two prominent FV practitioners, Saul Kotzubei and Jeff Morrison, who are both familiar with my experiences of anxiety and research interests regarding performance anxiety and tremoring.

Due to the research design and nature of the data collection for this study, triangulation was used "to overcome the weakness[es] or intrinsic biases, and the problems that come from single method, single-observer, single-theory studies" such as measurement bias, sampling bias, or procedural bias (Yeasmin and Rahman 2012). Internal reliability and validity is attained through the use of a tested and published inventory called the Music Performance Anxiety Inventory which used to test social anxiety in musicians, both adult and adolescent. A Performance Anxiety Inventory for actors does not yet exist, so a modification was made to the existing one, where questions directly addressing the playing of

instruments were omitted. The Cronbach Alpha for this study was .81 which indicates a good internal reliability consistency.

Thematic analysis

Several repeated *in vivo*[5] codes were found in the data in response to the question: "What do you feel physically after tremoring?" that helped me to form themes that were common amongst the qualitative answers, interviews, and literature on psychology, yoga-based practice research, and voice studies. The first theme was an increase in body awareness through responses that included *in vivo* codes: *grounded*, *centered*, *aware*, and *in touch*. The second theme, parasympathetic activation cropped up in responses that included words like *release*, *relaxation, free, ease*, and *calm*. The third theme was self-care which showed up in responses that included words such as *capable*, *ready*, *pulled together, in control* and *prepared*.

Increased body awareness

Developmentally, humans already have an aptitude for understanding how their physical responses to stimuli relate to their emotional life, as is noted in Piaget's Theory of Development, but it diminishes with age and as they are socialized to suppress emotions (Cook-Cottone 2015). Limited interoception is associated with an increased risk of a lost or false sense of self (Cook-Cottone 2015), which may further disconnect them and make it more difficulty to develop resiliency and autonomy. In my experiences, students who lack body awareness are often stuck in their heads rather than connected to their bodies; these students are often unable to take cues from their body based on their physiological needs. Cook-Cottone describes that feelings are anchored within the physical self, and that increased body awareness leads to a greater likelihood that they will effectively self-regulate (Cook-Cottone 2015, 68).

Destructuring helps students to detect subtle bodily cues; this is a skill that is beneficial for both health and self-regulation (Schmalzl, Powers, and Blom 2015). FV was developed from adapted yoga positions combined with bioenergetics, and like other yoga based practices "enhanced body awareness reflects an increased ability to observe bodily signals as such without getting caught up in them" (Schmalzl, Powers, and Blom 2015). Once a student can interpret these signals, it will give them a sense of ownership to identify sympathetic arousal.

Lowen describes the energy level required to endure anxiety as one that creates chronic fatigue, while raising the energy risks provoking anxiety which requires some therapeutic support in "the form of helping the person understand his anxiety and helping him discharge the excitation through the expression of feeling" (Lowen 1994, 131–132). Learning how to safely discharge sympathetic excitation physically and vocally is essential. Facilitating the awareness of the somatic effects of sympathetic arousal helps students to move through activation and into discharge/deactivation.

> In this way an individual learns that what goes up (gets activated) can, and will, come down. Clients learn to trust that moderate activation unwinds on its own when one doesn't avoid and recoil from it: that is, when one doesn't interfere with the natural course of one's sensations of arousal. (Levine and Maté 2010, 114)

This could mean that students develop their somatic awareness through FV and understand the physical shifts and "prodromal"[6] symptoms of anxiety. Kotzubei supports this

in his 2016 interview, stating that a healthy nervous system is one that oscillates between comfort and discomfort:

Where it gets disregulated is when it gets hyperfocused on discomfort or hyperfocused on not having discomfort. It's nice to start with comfort and then begin to attend to aspects of discomfort and have some sense of fluidity … starting with gentler explorations of release and then beginning to add greater levels of stimulation and realizing I can still breathe, I can still be present with these greater levels of stimulation, which is exactly what's going to happen when I'm in performance.

Additionally, Lowen notes that helping clients find tremor positions that vibrate the legs, "increases sensation and feeling … [yet] one has to work with them regularly to achieve and maintain the feeling of security and sense of being rooted …" (Lowen 1994, 195). While he explains that there is no definitive knowledge about the energetic connection between the feet and the ground, what he claims is that

> the more a person can feel his contact with the ground, the more he can hold his ground, the more charge he can tolerate and the more feeling he can handle … [which] makes grounding a prime objective in bioenergetic work. (Lowen 1994, 196)

Kotzubei's definition of grounded is in line with Lowen's in that you "have the sense that the ground is supporting you so that you can release what can be released comfortably into the support of the ground, and move from the springboard of the ground" (2016).

The sensitization to involuntary movements may increase a student's perception of breath and the experience of release in the musculature while tremoring which, in Lowen's opinion, are the most meaningful whether it is laughter, crying, or trembling "because these are spontaneous, unwilled or involuntary actions, they *move* us in a deep, meaningful way" (244). Involuntary actions in respiration puts students in touch with their instincts, which is essential to actors, as they need to respond impulsively to what is happening in front of them onstage. In voice practice and pedagogy, if the breath is reflexive it is in response to stimulus, and then a student will be able to use their voice from a place of impulse and connection to their partner.

This is an important distinction from other holistic methods of relaxation, or western vocal pedagogies' approaches to release because instead of using the conscious control of the Central Nervous System (CNS) to manually engage and then release musculature, or to take a deep inhale and sustained exhale as in some deep breathing techniques, the tremor positions activate the involuntary reflex which is "what connects the actor with the instinctive self and gives vocal expression its authenticity" (Morgan 2008, 33).

In an interview with Morrison on November 4, 2014, he explained his theory about tremoring, "[S]ignals bounce back and forth between your spinal cord and your limbs involved, and [they] don't get processed by the higher order centers of your brain." Morrison explained that in tremoring, you are executing a voluntary action that feels like a reflex action, and does not involve the sensory cortex: "essentially using a completely different part of the CNS, one that isn't connected to where all of your habits exist." In that way, you can allow the body to breathe as it needs to, reflexively, and in response to the tremoring. The release in the abdominal muscles and freedom in the intercostal muscles allows for the diaphragm to move without resistance, allowing for new breathing patterns to emerge.

Research by Timmons et al. (1972) notes that diaphragmatic breathing, as opposed to thoracic breathing, is most highly correlated with a relaxed state as it was associated with EEG alpha (Shapiro 2008, 126, 225). Rodenburg supports the release of abdominals stating

> A professional speaker who simply must develop deep relaxing breath capacity to meet the rigorous vocal demands must head eventually in this direction, taking the voyage down past the ribcage and into the abdominal area; the one place that normally remains sealed off. (Rodenburg 1998, 87–88)

However, this diaphragmatic breathing is sought after through exercises using conscious control, like stretching, panting, and instructions for controlled practice like: "a fast breath can and should be taken low into the body as follows: count one and recover low; one, two and recover low …" are often given, but Rodenburg states this supports a "very athletic way of speaking" (201). In the third theme I will discuss the athletic approach to FV and how it relates to self-care.

Additionally, the Golgi Tendon organs (GTO) that are responsible for the reflex that happens in tremoring were initially believed to respond to slow stretching, like that of Hatha Yoga[7] postures and in many voice practices,[8] by reducing the firing rate of alpha motor neurons via the spinal cord, meaning they would soften related muscle fibers (Schleip 2013; Brown and Cottingham 1989). But later research shows that the GTO are not stimulated through passive stretching, but only when the muscle fibers are actively contracting (Jami 1992). This means that in order to soften the muscle fibers, it is not sufficient to slowly and passively stretch; the afferent sensory fibers of the GTO activate motor neurons in the antagonistic muscle, causing it to contract. The action involved in extending the leg dynamically, for example, to provide the effort and resistance required to stimulate the GTO may be the key in understanding how the muscles are softened through tremoring. In a response to how they felt after tremoring, one student wrote that it felt, *"deeper than a lack of tension that would be obtained by a simple stretch*," which cued me to read further into the literature on GTO, and what constitutes parasympathetic activation and sympathetic deactivation.

Parasympathetic activation

The next theme, parasympathetic activation, overlaps with the previous theme of body awareness: Shapiro (2008) discusses relaxation as a shift from SNS activation to PSNS activation that results in balancing the ANS. In terms of this study, and the considerations for voice training, it is important to explore how the shift from SNS to PSNS might be possible.

During fight-or-flight muscles are energized to prepare for action. When the action is not performed, that potential energy becomes "'stored' or 'filed' as an unfinished procedure within the implicit memory of the sensorimotor system" (Levine and Maté 2010, 93). When, for example, an actor walks into an audition and their SNS is triggered, and "a conscious or unconscious association is activated through a general or specific stimulus, all of the original hormonal and chemical warriors re-energize the muscles as if the original threat were still operating" (Levine and Maté 2010, 93). Most importantly, Levine states that the potential energy that is stored "can be released as trembling and vibration" (93). While it is my understanding that Levine is noting the post-trauma ANS release of shaking/trembling that one experiences without conscious control, for example, after a near-fatal car crash; FV is self-induced tremoring that is sought out by the individual to produce the ANS reflexive state. Nevertheless, the principle remains intact: the importance of discharging the energy that was created in preparation for fight-or-flight or else it will "lie dormant as potential energy" (Levine and Maté 2010, 93). Unless that energy is discharged then the body will

continue to store these experiences as muscular tension, reinforcing and eliciting the physical response the next time similar circumstances occur.

If the actor continually experiences performance anxiety as noted earlier, then they will store these somatic experiences and create a cyclical reinforcement of the tension that inhibits healthy vocal production. This argument is supported in Dr. David Berceli's book, *The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process*, which explains how tremors

> aid recovery because they don't cause us to relive the experience and thereby compound the trauma … .[T]hey extinguish the trauma by helping us turn off our fight, flight, or freeze mechanism [by] discharg[ing] the excess energy from an aborted fight-or-flight response. (Berceli and Scaer 2008, 46)

These tremors are what Berceli calls "neurogenic tremors," meaning they arise in and are caused by the nervous system. These tremors are induced, as in FV, by putting one's body in a position that will stimulate trembling in the extremities (Berceli and Scaer 2008, 47). By releasing the stored energy through tremoring, whether it is from an extreme experience, like trauma, or less extreme like performance anxiety, one can experience the feeling of relief as the nervous system is rebalanced. Tremoring in the wild is a healthy response to balance the nervous system, like when an animal narrowly escapes an attacker then, when they are safe, begins to tremor the excitation tension out; animals exemplify nature that is in balance (Levine and Frederick 2007). Tremoring can be used to create energy, but also to release it if there is an excess, much like the idiom to "let off steam" when you need to safely release pent-up energy.

Tremoring is explored in Lowen's Bioenergetics, Reichian Bodywork, Berceli's Trauma Release Exercises, and FV because it seeks to regulate the different states of nervous system activation. While anxiety can "develop when a stronger feeling attempts to get through and is choked off in panic … Progress in [bioenergetic] therapy is marked by more feeling, more anxiety, and finally more pleasure" (Lowen 1994, 129). This is supported in the Polyvagal Theory where the action potential has to heighten slightly before PSNS becomes activated, and SNS is deactivated. The moment this happens experientially is what Fitzmaurice refers to as a "surprise breath". Kotzubei discussed the surprise breath in the 2016 interview noting:

> I get a slight peak of energy during a large spontaneous inhalation, and then during the spontaneous exhalation that follows a down regulation starts to happen and I get a greater level of relaxation, a less heightened sense of inner feeling … less activated. It seems to me that this moment is a crucial indicator … of deactivation of the nervous system.

Performance anxiety, and perhaps anxiety in general, creates stored potential energy, but does not discharge it. This may be why actors feel "keyed up" before a performance and why a certain degree of this potential energy fuels their performance. But when too much energy is stored it is like repeatedly coiling up a spring tighter and tighter. Discharging that stored potential energy is the very basis of Bioenergetics and Reichian Bodywork, so it is not a surprise that Fitzmaurice and these students found relaxation as a beneficial byproduct of tremoring.

The statistics from the initial survey showed that fifty-seven percent of students after one semester of FV described their experiences as: *relax(ed), ease, release(d)* and words such as *free, flexible, stretched,* or *loose* were included in twenty-three percent of the responses. Nine percent of the responses specifically mentioned the word *calm* or *slower heart rate*. In an interview one student reported, "After tremoring, I feel relaxed, more open — open minded, in my body open." Another student said, "It's making your body work to a point

of relaxation, not to a point of sweating and 'I'm tired now' … you feel good, you feel refreshed." One student mentioned the calming effect gained from Destructuring: "I feel a release throughout my whole body. It's amazing that something you do with one part of your body is able to emotionally or mentally calm you."

It is important to consider the change in respiration, with specific emphasis on how the change does not happen because of controlling the breath, but rather allowing it to be reflexive, which facilitates the PSNS activation that enables recovery from the fight-or-flight SNS response. In a study comparing yoga based practices "slow, rhythmic breathing … promote[s] a shift to parasympathetic dominance via vagal afferent stimulation with consequent stress reduction" while more forceful breathing in yoga based practices may exacerbate the fight-or-flight response (Beauchaine 2001).

There are several studies on the PSNS activation and shift from SNS activity in yoga, and most of these attribute the shift to change in breath (Brown and Gerbarg 2005). These studies look at controlled breathing, like *ujjayi*, or slow, rhythmic techniques where the inhale and exhale are the same length, but it would be especially useful to consider if the benefits of slow breathing could be achieved as result of Destructuring. There are several studies that look at yogic breath practices that have controlled inhaling and exhaling, and these reports show that the PNS is activated, reducing SNS activity, and promoting vagal tone. If controlled slow breathing can be avoided, but slow breathing achieved reflexively, then I theorize that students might avoid potential triggers of panic. In an interview one student stated that after tremoring, "My breath isn't forced at all. It's happening in the way it's supposed to without my having to think about it." Another student stated, "I'm not controlling it. It is much more in my body, like it's a part of me and not just this new technique." A student commented on how they noticed a change in their breathing, but that it was not forced or controlled: "I feel like it's changed my breathing pattern to the point where it's making it more … well, it's giving it a sense of ease. It's allowing it to be what it is. For me to be what I am." Students perceived a change in their breathing rate, and positively correlate the fact that it is not forced or controlled with relaxation.

In my experiences, managing the breath, without phonation, was only replicating the "feeling" of release, rather than an actual experience of release. Like many western voice practitioners, the CNS focused breath exercises are not changing habits from the inside out but rather from the outside in, yet they purport that the "calmer, deeper and more regular the breath, the more chance we have of stayed centered and in contact with our feelings and thoughts" (Rodenburg 1998, 143). Levine and Maté (2010) purport that

> breathing that is full and free with a complete expiration, and a delicate pause before the next inhalation, indicates relaxation and settling into equilibrium. This type of spontaneous and restorative breath can be easily distinguished from a person who is "trying" to take a deep breath. Often this kind of voluntary forced deep breath can actually increase imbalance in the nervous system, and at the very least, gives only temporary relief. (Levine and Maté 2010, 91)

It has been theorized the controlled yogic ujjayi breath may stimulate SNS activity, which has additional effort in the exhale because of the increase in intrathoracic pressure, and the results of these studies showed that ujjayi breath can "reduce the effect of parasympathetic stimulation induced by slow breathing alone" (Mason et al. 2013). Qualitative responses from the surveys and interviews led me to believe that my experiences of relaxation and release through FV, beyond what I could achieve in controlling my breath in other practices,

were not anomalies, but common experiences of others. In a 2005 interview Fitzmaurice stated

> [A] yoga breath, a breath that is controlled … is not an actor's breath. An actor has to be a little more raw, more available, more spontaneous. And the stretches and tremors I use work specifically in physical areas that are impacted by breathing in order to develop that spontaneity.

The exercises that deal primarily with the body, with the aim "to remove unnecessary habitual tensions so that muscles are free to respond to impulse without short-circuiting created by habit" may be missing the key to truly changing the habit (Linklater 2006, 41). If the neuromuscular habits are not changed using the ANS, to enable the breathing to happen reflexively, then how can they be expected not to reappear when someone is overcome with performance anxiety?

The autonomic response produced in tremoring results in a responsive breath, permitting "[a] breakthrough [that] involves the mobilization of the body from holding pattern to flowing energy with a shift in perception that yields insight" (Morgan 2008, 31). That shift in perception may be to areas of holding or tension, or the awareness of the somatic experience as a whole (breath movement, sensations of weight, etc.). Tremoring will change the patterns of breathing without using force, but rather independently or autonomously. The word autonomic refers to physiologic spontaneity, where breath that happens spontaneously is reflexive and responsive.

Self-care

While tremoring can help students access emotions that are held in the body, often the way that FV is taught is through the lens of self-care, which is defined as "the daily process of being aware and attending to one's basic physiological and emotional needs," (Norcross and Guy 2007 as quoted in Cook-Cottone 2015, 297). I remind my students that every time they tremor they are asking their body what it needs that day, and more specifically, in that moment. Their experience of tremoring today will be different from the last time they tremored. In this way students are able to take care of themselves, as this definition of self-care suggests.

Despite using different terminology, Reich, Levine, and Berceli all write about the same concept: how excess energy stored in the body needs to be discharged, released, or dissolved in order to regulate the nervous system. For actors with performance anxiety, for whom the regulation of the nervous system is difficult and the fight-or-flight or freeze system is easily triggered, the need for a reliable coping strategy becomes imperative, as their performance relies on their ability to work with a sense of ease while confidently communicating their actions both vocally and physically.

My goal is to help students develop their awareness in order to recognize the early somatic symptoms of performance anxiety. These symptoms manifest as increased heart rate, difficulty or shallow breathing, the adrenaline rush of shaking hands or wobbly knees, tightness in the chest, holding their breath, and/or clenching their jaw. The next step is to give them the tools to discharge this energy in a safe way: through a range of tremor positions, with a developed awareness, so that they can self-regulate their tremoring experience to seek what feels soothing to them in order to better prepare themselves for their performance. Tremoring prior to these symptoms can create more awareness of sensations in the body because

> bodywork can be used specifically to enhance sensory awareness of our bodies as a whole [and] if the releasing of local tensions … can induce a calmer state of mind, then an important mechanism of control can be established [meaning that if a student can] learn to unwind the exacerbating reactions to anxiety … then he [or she] is not helpless in the face of them [because they are] not only forewarned, but forearmed as well. (Juhan 1991, 318)

This experience of relief and release through concrete sensory feedback may be more than temporary, because it "can be built upon to create more self-awareness, more self-control, [and] more productive responses to stress" (Juhan 1991, 318). For students, the information that comes from sensory feedback is the foundation for autonomy and resilience.

There are several real world applications for empowering students to develop autonomous vocal practice, one of the most vital being that they will be more prepared to leave the safe environment of their undergraduate program and venture into the job market of their chosen vocation. Resilience and self-care need to be explored in college which can protect students from the onset of mental health symptoms, bring balance to their lives, which can prevent burning out, and even aid in productivity (Duckworth and Carlson 2013).

In a 2005 interview with Catherine Fitzmaurice, she advocates for students to take care of themselves in the work, and asserts that the focus is not on pushing yourself to your limits. As a teacher and a student of FV, I advocate for this self-care approach. When the Destructuring work is approached from a place of self-soothing and awareness, rather than overstimulation and athleticism, it can be very useful for students dealing with anxiety. It can lead students to become more self-directed and self-regulated, and that independence can be empowering.

Theory

The three prominent themes that were triangulated from the data: increased body awareness, parasympathetic activation and self-care helped to form the theory that FV's Destructuring work could be used as a self-regulation strategy for undergraduate acting students to deal with performance anxiety in order to promote autonomy and resilience. While FV's Destructuring may not be unique as a self-regulation strategy, as it has parallels and similar benefits of other strategies, it is unique for actor training because it can be embedded into voice curriculum, which presents a potential solution for the systemic problem. It is specifically geared towards healthier vocal usage, unlike other relaxation techniques; yet it provides the opportunity to both teach students about their voices and bodies, *as well as* empower them to feel better equipped to share their gifts in their chosen vocation.

Autonomy is built into this voice practice because once students understand the basics of what a tremor is and how to find it, then they become self-led in their practice and throughout the year I monitor students less and less as they become more self-directed. Different tremor positions have different benefits and students choose what they need each day, reinforcing self-awareness and autonomy. They choose which position to do, how long to stay in it, the level of intensity they pursue, and how long to rest. Students feeling emotional on that day may choose a position that is more soothing and less intense or physically taxing, and then spend more time in a resting position afterwards. Through this approach students learn how to self-soothe, which Duckworth and Carlson explain is a tool that effectively regulates emotions; this includes "relaxation techniques, deep breathing, and pursuit of stimuli or activities that are calming and relaxing" (2013).

The American Psychological Association notes on its website that giving students choices allows them to take ownership over their learning and thereby develops responsibility and

motivation (2016). Once students learn how to tremor, they garner the skills necessary to become self-directed. Destructuring is not a one-size-fits-all approach; it meets the unique needs of each student, who may suffer from differing severities of performance anxiety. Most importantly, this study can teach us that we, as theatre educators, can view our students as human beings, who are not fully formed adults, who need support as they find themselves and their voices through their work.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken with the intent of exploring the experience of performance anxiety in undergraduate acting students and its relationship to FV's tremoring and what it might bring to the student as a coping strategy. The competitive environment students enter upon graduation is a daunting one, yet young actors do not possess the necessary resilience or autonomy to engage in self-care so they suffer from the debilitating effects of performance anxiety, causing vocal misuse and rigidity in the body. This study shows through increased body awareness, parasympathetic activation, and self-care that FV's Destructuring work can be embedded into a voice curriculum to provide self-regulation strategies to help students deal with performance anxiety and thereby improve both their performance and experience of performing. Regardless of whether students become working actors once they leave their training, they can be more resilient and autonomous young people who can cope with greater ease, which is ultimately the greater take-away from this study.

There were a few limitations to this study due to time constraints; in an ideal situation a control group of students who did not study FV could provide more comprehensive quantitative data. Hopefully the results from this study show there is merit to studying a larger population, with various levels of experience, and comparatively with other vocal pedagogies. While this was a study focused on acting students, it could be used with dance students as well, as they may experience a disconnect from their bodies in fight-or-flight too (Lussier 2009).

The benefits of Destructuring extend beyond warm-ups and vocal work for theatre training, and a study focused on the more widespread benefits of this work could be incredibly beneficial to an audience wider than voice pedagogy. Students noted that they tremor before they go to sleep, when they first wake up, or when they need to decompress at the end of a long day. These students are using Destructuring to self-regulate their emotional and physiological needs without the prompt of a classroom setting. As a reflective practitioner, it is my hope that I will continue to investigate the effects of tremoring and how it may serve students holistically as well as practically in their voicework. In giving voice to this topic of anxiety, which had felt like a silent burden for many years, I feel empowered to continue finding ways, as a voice practitioner, to help students find the courage to give voice to it as well.

Notes

1. For some students, releasing chronic tension stirs up memories of traumatic experiences, fears, or insecurities. I acknowledge dealing with these experiences is outside of the scope of what I am qualified to handle and guide them to our Counseling and Wellness Center.
2. The term vulnerable differs in this case to mean capable of allowing emotional responses to occur involuntarily that are both visible to the audience to serve the dramatic intention, but also, paradoxically, on some level real to the actor.

3. "What is" is a phrase used in FV, and one that I use in my classroom to address the idea of being present and in-the-moment to deal with the internal and external experience rather than pre-planning, anticipating, or stifling impulses.
4. Habitual tension is discussed in the major texts of Berry, Linklater, and Rodenburg (Berry 1973; Rodenburg 1998; Linklater 2006).
5. In vivo quotes will be shown here in italics.
6. "Prodromal" is often used in medical terms as describing the early symptoms that indicate an onset of something more serious or severe.
7. It is important to note that controlled slow breathing, also known as pranayama, is associated with Hatha Yoga.
8. Voice texts consulted that included slow stretching were: Berry, Linklater, and Rodenburg (Berry 1973; Rodenburg 1998; Linklater 2006).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Melissa Kollwitz is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Theatre Department where she teaches Voice & Speech. She received her MFA in Voice Studies from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and her BA in Theatre Performance from Marymount Manhattan College. She is a certified Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework (FV). She has taught at New World School of the Arts, New York Conservatory for the Dramatic Arts, New York Film Academy, and has interned at the Yale School of Drama. She has coached here in NYC both privately and for the New Light Theater Project, for the Young Vic (Off West End) in London, and in Miami during her time at NWSA.

References

Baker, Elsworth F. 2000. *Man in the Trap*. Princeton, NJ: American College of Orgonomy Press.

Beauchaine, T. 2001. "Vagal Tone, Development, and Gray's Motivational Theory: Toward an Integrated Model of Autonomic Nervous System Functioning in Psychopathology." *Development and Psychopathology* 13: 183–214.

Berceli, D., and R. Scaer. 2008. *The Revolutionary Trauma Release Process: Transcend Your Toughest times*. Vancouver: Namaste.

Berry, Cicely. 1973. *Voice and the Actor*. New York: Collier Books Macmillan.

Brown, M., and J. T. Cottingham. 1989. *Healing through Touch: A History and a Review of the Physiological Evidence*. Boulder, CO: Rolf Institute.

Brown, R. P., and P. L. Gerbarg. 2005. "Sudarshan Kriya Yogic Breathing in the Treatment of Stress, Anxiety, and Depression. Part II – Clinical Applications and Guidelines." *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 11 (4): 711–717. doi:10.1089/acm.2005.11.711.

Cohen, D., and B. Crabtree. 2008. "Qualitative Research Guidelines Project." *RWJF*. Accessed March 12, 2016. https://www.qualres.org/HomeHomo-3804.html

Cook-Cottone, C. 2015. *Mindfulness and Yoga for Self-Regulation*. New York: Springer.

Duckworth, A. L., and S. M. Carlson. 2013. "Self-Regulation and School Success." In *Self-Regulation and Autonomy: Social and Developmental Dimensions of Human Conduct*, edited by B. W. Sokol, F. M. E. Grouzet, and U. Müller, 208–230. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fitzmaurice, Catherine. 1998. "Breathing is Meaning." In *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*, edited by M. Hampton and B. Acker, 247–252. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers.

Gabbard, G. O. 1983. "Further Contributions to the Understanding of Stage Fright: Narcissistic Issues." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association.* 31 (2): 423–441. doi:10.1177/000306518303100203.
Glaser, Barney G. 1978. *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. 1st ed. Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press.
Goldstein, David S., and Linda J. Smith. 2016. "The NDRF Patient Handbook." Accessed June 10. https://www.ndrf.org/NDRF%20Patient%20Handbook/SecA_pp17-58.PDF
Hampton, D. M., ed. 1997. *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors*. New York: Applause Theatre Book Publishers.
Hoffman, J. 2015. *Anxious Students Strain College Mental Health Centers*. Appalachian State University. https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/05/27/anxious-students-strain-college-mental-health-centers/?_r=0.
Humara, M. 1999. "The Relationship between Anxiety and Performance: A Cognitive-Behavioral Perspective." *Athletic Insight.* https://www.athleticinsight.com/Vol1Iss2/CognitivePDF.pdf.
Jami, Léna. 1992. "Golgi Tendon Organs in Mammalian Skeletal Muscle: Functional Properties and Central Actions." *American Physiological Society* 72: 623–666. http://physrev.physiology.org/content/72/3/623.full-text.pdf+html
Juhan, D. 1991. *Job's Body: A Handbook for Bodywork*. New ed. Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press.
Kaplan, D. M. 1969. "On Stage Fright." *The Drama Review: TDR.* 14 (1): 60–83. doi:10.2307/1144506.
Kenny, Diana T., and Margaret S. Osborne. 2006. "Music Performance Anxiety: New Insights from Young Musicians." *Advances in Cognitive Psychology.* 2 (2): 103–112. doi:10.2478/v10053-008-0049-5.
Levine, P. A., and A. Frederick. 2007. *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma – the Innate Capacity to Transform Overwhelming Experiences*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
Levine, Peter A., and G. Maté. 2010. *In an Unspoken Voice: How the Body Releases Trauma and Restores Goodness*. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.
Lewis, Charlton T. 1963. *Elementary Latin Dictionary*. 1st ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
Linklater, Kristin. 2006. *Freeing the Natural Voice*. New York: Quite Specific Media Group.
Lowen, Alexander. 1994. *Bioenergetics: The Revolutionary Therapy That Uses the Language of the Body to Heal the Problems of the Mind*. New York: Penguin/Arkana.
Lussier, C. 2009. "Stage Fright and Performance Anxiety: Dancing with the Butterflies." *Physical & Health Education Journal* 75 (3): 14–15.
Marshall, J. 1994. "Social Phobia: From Shyness to Stage Fright." *Choice Reviews Online.* 32 (04): 32–2421. doi:10.5860/choice.32-2421.
Mason, H., M. Vandoni, G. de Barbieri, E. Codrons, V. Ugargol, and L. Bernardi. 2013. "Cardiovascular and Respiratory Effect of Yogic Slow Breathing in the Yoga Beginner: What is the Best Approach?" *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 1–7. doi:10.1155/2013/743504.
May, Rollo. 1977. *The Meaning of Anxiety*. Rev ed. New York: W. W. Norton.
Mays, N., and C. Pope. 1995. "Qualitative Research: Observational Methods in Health Care Settings." *BMJ* 311 (6998): 12–13. doi:10.1136/bmj.311.6998.182.
McGaw, Charles. 2014. *Acting is Believing: A Basic Method for Beginners*. Reprint. Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books.
Morgan, Michael. 2008. *Constructing the Holistic Actor: Fitzmaurice Voicework*. Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag Dr Muller Aktiengesellschaft .
O'Connor, Erna. 2013. "Constructivist Grounded Theory." Accessed February 2, 2016. https:// www.iasw.ie/attachments/Constructivist_Grounded_Theory.pdf
Parnabas, Vincent A., Yahaya Mahamood, and Julinamary Parnabas. 2013. "The Relationship between Cognitive and Somatic Anxiety on Performance of Student-Athletes of Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UNIMAP)." *Sport and Art* 1 (3): 61–66. doi:10.13189/saj.2013.010301.
Porges, Stephen W. 2011. *The Polyvagal Theory: Neurophysiological Foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, and Self-regulation*. 1st ed. New York: Norton, W. W..
Powell, Douglas H. 2004. "Treating Individuals with Debilitating Performance Anxiety: An Introduction." *Journal of Clinical Psychology.* 60 (8): 801–808. doi:10.1002/jclp.20038.

Reich, Wilhelm. 1983. *The Bioelectrical Investigation of Sexuality and Anxiety*. Translated by Marion Farber, Derek and Inge Jordan. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Rodenburg, P. 1998. *The Actor Speaks: Voice and the Performer*. London: Methuen Drama.
Sataloff, Robert Thayer. 2006. *Vocal Health and Pedagogy*. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. San Diego, CA: Plural.
Schleip, R. 2013. "Fascial Plasticity—A New Neurobiological Explanation Part 2." *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*. 7 (2): 104–116. doi:10.1016/s1360-8592(02)00076-1.
Schmalzl, L., C. Powers, and E. H. Blom. 2015. "Neurophysiological and Neurocognitive Mechanisms Underlying the Effects of Yoga-based Practices: Towards a Comprehensive Theoretical Framework." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. doi:10.3389/fnhum.2015.00235.
Shapiro, D. H. 2008. *Meditation: Self-regulation Strategy and Altered States of Consciousness*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
Shewell, Christina. 2007. *Voice Work: The Art and Science of Changing Voices*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
Sowislo, Julia Friederike, and Ulrich Orth. 2013. "Does Low Self-esteem Predict Depression and Anxiety? A Meta-analysis of Longitudinal Studies." *Psychological Bulletin*. 139: 213–240. doi:10.1037/a0028931.
Spielman, Helen. 2009. "Conquering Performance Anxiety." *The Pan Flute Magazine*. https://www.wcsu.edu/music/conquering-performance-anxiety.pdf.
Staal, Mark. 2004. *Stress, Cognition, and Human Performance: A Literature Review and Conceptual Framework*. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. https://human-factors.arc.nasa.gov/flightcognition/Publications/IH_054_Staal.pdf.
Stanislavski, Konstantin. 1946. *An Actor Prepares*. New York: Theatre Arts.
Timmons, B., J. Salamy, J. Kamiya, and D. Girton. 1972. "Abdominal-thoracic Respiratory Movements and Levels of Arousal." *Psychonomic Science*. 27 (3): 173–175. doi:10.3758/bf03328929.1972.
Yeasmin, Sabina, and Khan Ferdousour Rahman. 2012. *Triangulation Research Method as the Tool of Social Science Research*. Accessed January 2, 2016. https://www.bup.edu.bd/journal/154-163.pdf