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# Optimizing British Vocal Pedagogy Strategies Based on Learner Psychological Adjustment: An Inquiry

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the optimization of British vocal pedagogy through the systematic integration of learner psychological adjustment principles. While traditional training emphasizes technical proficiency, it often neglects learners' psychological states such as performance anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy. To address this gap, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, conducting case studies across three distinct pedagogical contexts: conservatoire classical training, performing arts college musical theatre, and private studio contemporary commercial music coaching. The findings demonstrate that psychologically-informed teaching strategies significantly enhance key outcomes, including anxiety reduction, increased learner autonomy, and improved technical and expressive performance. However, the implementation must be context-sensitive, adapting to specific cultural and structural settings. The study concludes by proposing an integrative psycho-pedagogical framework that equips vocal instructors with adaptable tools to support holistic singer development, thereby bridging the gap between technical rigor and psychological well-being in vocal education.

**Keywords:** British vocal pedagogy; psychological adjustment; learner centered teaching; vocal performance anxiety; teaching strategy optimization

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## 1. Introduction

The integration of psychological principles into specialized skill acquisition domains has become a significant interdisciplinary focus, with Psychological Adaptation Theory providing a foundational framework for understanding how individuals adjust internal processes to meet environmental and performance demands [1]. Within the specific realm of music education, and particularly British vocal pedagogy, this theoretical lens remains critically underexplored. Traditional pedagogical approaches have long prioritized the development of technical proficiency and stylistic authenticity, often overlooking the systematic integration of learners' psychological states. This gap is evident, as psychological adjustment encompassing factors such as motivation, anxiety management, and self-efficacy is a well-documented correlate of optimal performance and skill development in other high-demand fields [2].

British vocal training, renowned for its rigorous technical standards, presents a unique context for examining this integration. The pedagogical model, frequently involving intensive one-to-one instruction and high-stakes performance, inherently generates distinct psychological challenges and opportunities for learners. Recent advancements in adaptive educational technologies demonstrate the efficacy of dynamically tailored interventions based on learner feedback, highlighting the potential for similar responsive approaches in vocal instruction [3]. However, the application of such psychologically-informed, adaptive strategies within the structured tradition of vocal pedagogy is notably absent.

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The necessity for this integration is further underscored by research in performance oriented disciplines. Studies on athletes, for instance, establish a clear relationship between psychological adaptation, which includes stress regulation and focused attention, and the execution of complex motor skills [4]. This parallel suggests that vocalists, whose instrument is the self and whose performance is deeply psychophysiological, would similarly benefit from pedagogical strategies that explicitly address psychological adjustment. The consequences of neglecting this dimension extend beyond immediate performance, potentially impacting long term engagement and artistic sustainability, a concern mirrored in research on adjustment trajectories in other demanding life roles [5].

This study, therefore, aims to address this significant gap by investigating how British vocal pedagogy can be optimized through the deliberate incorporation of psychological adjustment principles. It seeks to move beyond acknowledging the importance of the learners internal state to proposing and examining a structured, integrative teaching framework. By exploring this integration, the research endeavors to enhance key outcomes including technical skill acquisition, performance resilience, and long term artistic engagement, ultimately contributing to a more holistic and effective model of vocal education.

## **2. Literature Review**

British vocal pedagogy is traditionally grounded in a strong technical foundation, emphasizing physiological alignment, breath management, and stylistic authenticity. This biomechanical and aesthetic focus has undoubtedly produced skilled performers. However, this emphasis often sidelines the systematic consideration of the learner's internal psychological state, which is a critical mediator in skill acquisition, motivation, and long-term artistic development [6]. This oversight is notable given that the core process of learning to sing involves continuous psychological adjustment to internal and external performance demands.

The concept of psychological adjustment, which encompasses coping mechanisms, stress regulation, and adaptive responses to challenge, is central to understanding optimal learning in demanding disciplines [7]. In educational contexts, factors like motivation and procrastination are deeply intertwined with a learner's overall academic and personal adjustment [8]. Vocal training, with its inherent pressures of solo performance, technical precision, and subjective evaluation, presents a unique set of adjustment challenges. Recent approaches in other fields demonstrate the efficacy of dynamic, adaptive frameworks that tailor challenges to the individual's current capacity to maintain engagement and optimize learning, a principle highly relevant to personalized vocal instruction [9].

A key dimension of positive adjustment in performance contexts is the sense of control. Research indicates that a balance between primary control (changing circumstances) and secondary control (adapting oneself to circumstances) is crucial for psychological well-being and sustained effort [10]. In vocal pedagogy, this translates to empowering students with techniques to control their instrument (primary) while also building cognitive and emotional strategies to adapt to performance anxiety or temporary setbacks (secondary). The development of a stable, positive self-concept within the learning environment, akin to a healthy racial identity's role in adjustment, is also fundamental for singers navigating the subjective world of artistic performance [11].

Technological advancements offer promising tools to support this integrative approach. Hybrid intellectual environments that blend structured guidance with opportunities for independent exploration can foster the research and self-reflection necessary for deep learning and personal adjustment [12]. Such environments could be leveraged in vocal pedagogy to create structured yet flexible spaces for technical practice and psychological skill-building. The impact of early and ongoing adversity on regulatory processes further underscores the need for pedagogy that supports emotional and

behavioral regulation, skills essential for managing the stressors of vocal training and performance [13].

Individual differences must be a central consideration, as psychological adjustment pathways are not uniform. Personality profiles, for instance, significantly influence how individuals cope with stress and achieve adjustment in challenging situations like illness, suggesting that vocal pedagogy strategies must be adaptable to diverse learner temperaments [14]. Ultimately, effective learning and adjustment occur within a co-regulatory system, where cultural norms, social interactions (especially with the teacher), and personal dispositions interact continuously to shape emotional adaptation and achievement [15]. British vocal pedagogy, often rooted in a specific cultural and master-apprentice tradition, must therefore evolve to consciously incorporate these psychological and social dimensions, fostering a teaching framework that supports not just technical mastery but holistic psychological adjustment for sustainable artistic growth.

### **3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

This chapter provides a comprehensive exposition of the theoretical underpinnings and methodological design employed to investigate the integration of psychological adjustment strategies into British vocal pedagogy. The study is grounded in a pragmatic research paradigm, utilizing a convergent parallel mixed methods approach. This design facilitates a thorough exploration of both the processes and outcomes associated with psychologically informed teaching, allowing qualitative depth and quantitative measurement to mutually inform the analysis. The methodology is meticulously structured to evaluate not only the feasibility and implementation of these strategies within existing pedagogical frameworks but also their tangible impact on a range of learner centered outcomes, including technical skill development, psychological well being, motivational dynamics, and overall engagement in the learning process.

#### *3.1. Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework constructed for this study is deliberately interdisciplinary, synthesizing core principles from vocal pedagogy, educational psychology, cognitive science, and performance studies. It operates on the foundational premise that vocal artistry emerges from the complex interplay between physiological technique and psychological state. Therefore, an effective pedagogical model must explicitly and systematically address this interplay, moving beyond the traditional model where psychological factors are often treated as external variables or remedial concerns. The framework proposes a transformative shift towards an integrated psycho pedagogical approach where the development of psychological skills is recognized as intrinsic to the development of vocal skills.

At the heart of this framework lies a holistic model of the learner. This model acknowledges the singer as a unified entity where the cognitive domain, the affective domain, and the psychomotor domain are in constant and reciprocal interaction. Disruptions or strengths in one domain invariably influence the others. For instance, performance anxiety as an affective factor can trigger physical tension that impairs breath support as a psychomotor skill, while a clear cognitive strategy for managing a difficult passage can enhance both technical execution and confidence.

To navigate this complexity, the framework incorporates specific psychological constructs as essential pillars. Self efficacy theory informs the understanding of how beliefs in one's capabilities influence goal setting, effort expenditure, and perseverance in the face of challenges. Self Determination Theory provides a robust lens for examining the quality of learner motivation, positing that environments supporting autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster more intrinsic and sustained engagement. Furthermore, the framework integrates models of emotion regulation and cognitive appraisal to address performance anxiety and stress, viewing them not as fixed traits but

as states that can be managed through specific psychological strategies such as cognitive restructuring, attentional focus training, and mindfulness.

The innovative contribution of this framework is its direct application to the specific conventions and values of British vocal pedagogy. It does not seek to replace the tradition's rigor or its emphasis on physiological truth and stylistic integrity. Instead, it seeks to expand and enrich its toolkit. The framework interrogates how standard pedagogical components from vocal exercises and repertoire selection to feedback mechanisms and performance preparation can be intentionally designed to simultaneously build technical proficiency and psychological capacity. It envisions a pedagogy where a breathing exercise also serves as an anxiety regulation tool, where repertoire analysis includes discussion of emotional and cognitive associations, and where reflective practice is structured to build metacognitive awareness alongside technical critique.

### *3.2. Methodology*

To empirically ground and test this theoretical framework, the research employs an embedded multiple case study design within the broader mixed methods strategy. This design is selected for its ability to provide rich, contextually detailed insights into the implementation of complex interventions within real world settings, while enabling cross case comparison to identify broader patterns and principles.

The research design is built around three in depth case studies, each representing a distinct but significant context within the ecosystem of British influenced vocal education. Case A focused on one to one classical singing tuition within a prestigious UK conservatoire environment, characterized by a strong master apprentice tradition. Case B examined group based musical theatre training in a performing arts college, emphasizing ensemble work and stylized performance. Case C investigated contemporary commercial music vocal coaching in an independent studio setting, with a focus on microphone technique and genre flexibility. In each case, a lead teacher was recruited based on their recognized teaching expertise and openness to pedagogical innovation. Subsequently, a purposive sample of three to four student participants per case was formed, representing a range of experience levels from late beginner to advanced.

Data collection was organized into three sequential phases over a sustained fourteen week period to capture both baseline conditions and developmental changes. The initial phase, termed Contextual Establishment and Baseline Measurement spanned the first two weeks. This phase aimed to establish a deep understanding of the existing teaching context. Methods included in depth semi structured interviews with teachers to explore their pedagogical philosophies and typical practices. All student participants completed validated baseline surveys measuring key psychological variables: performance anxiety, vocal self efficacy, and academic motivation for music. An initial non participant lesson observation was also conducted for each teacher to document the pre intervention teaching environment.

The second phase, Intervention Implementation and Process Documentation, covered ten weeks from week three to week twelve. Following a collaborative development workshop with the participating teachers, a tailored set of psychologically informed strategies was integrated into their regular teaching practice. Concurrent data collection during this period was intensive and multi modal. Longitudinal lesson observations involved four video recorded sessions per case study at regular intervals, generating rich data on interactions and strategy application. Student participants maintained weekly reflective journals, prompted to document their practice experiences, emotional states, and the linkage between psychological and technical processes. Teachers also completed structured implementation logs after observed lessons and weekly, noting strategy use, student responses, and personal reflections.

The final phase, Outcome Evaluation and Reflective Feedback, occupied weeks thirteen and fourteen. This phase focused on evaluating outcomes and gathering comprehensive reflective feedback. The post intervention surveys identical to the baseline measures were re administered to all students to quantify changes. Semi structured exit interviews were then conducted separately with each teacher and student to explore their holistic experiences, perceived benefits, encountered difficulties, and suggestions for refinement of the approach.

Data analysis followed a rigorous convergent parallel model, where qualitative and quantitative datasets were analyzed independently before being merged for integrated interpretation and conclusion drawing. Qualitative analysis involved a systematic thematic analysis of all textual and observational data, including interview transcripts, journal entries, observation notes, and teacher logs. Iterative coding used both a priori codes derived from the theoretical framework and emergent codes from the data itself, aided by software to manage data volume and identify patterns across cases. Quantitative analysis involved cleaning and statistically processing the survey data. Descriptive statistics summarized all measures, and paired samples t tests were conducted to compare pre test and post test scores for each psychological measure within each case study cohort, providing objective indicators of change associated with the intervention.

The final and most critical stage involved integration and interpretation. A side by side comparison was used to examine convergence, divergence, or complementarity between the narrative themes from the qualitative analysis and the statistical results from the quantitative analysis. This integrative process allowed for a nuanced, multi layered understanding of how and why the integrated pedagogy functioned as it did in different contexts. It enabled the research to move beyond simple cause and effect to explain the processes underlying the outcomes, ultimately leading to a refined theoretical model and practical, context sensitive recommendations.

### 3.3. Method Flowchart

The sequential and interconnected stages of the research methodology are summarized in the flowchart below (Figure 1).

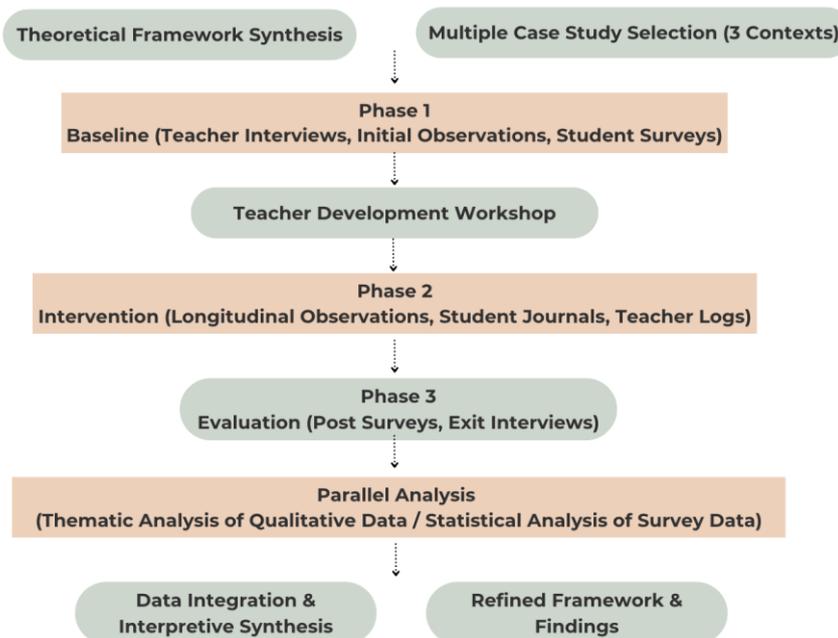


Figure 1. Sequential Mixed Methods Research Design for Pedagogical Optimization.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the empirical findings derived from the implementation of psychologically informed teaching strategies across three distinct case studies within British vocal pedagogy. The analysis is structured around the three core case contexts: conservatoire based classical training, performing arts college musical theatre instruction, and private studio contemporary commercial music coaching. The findings illuminate both the convergent benefits and the context specific challenges of integrating psychological adjustment into technical vocal pedagogy. The discussion interprets these results, examining their implications for pedagogical theory and practice.

##### 4.1. Case Study 1: Conservatoire Classical Training

The first case study examined the integration of psychological strategies within the intensive one to one classical singing lesson format. The teacher, an experienced vocal professor, incorporated techniques focused on cognitive reframing of performance anxiety and structured reflective practice into their teaching.

The results of the case study showed several important shifts in both student behavior and lesson outcomes. Table 1 presents key findings from the conservatoire case study, where one of the most notable results was the significant decrease in performance anxiety scores post-intervention. This finding highlights how psychological strategies directly address a major barrier in high-stakes performance training. Additionally, the data indicated an increase in learner agency, as students took more initiative in their lessons, demonstrating greater autonomy and metacognitive skill development. However, despite these positive changes, the integration of psychological strategies into the traditional lesson format encountered some resistance, as some students initially viewed the focus on psychological discussion as a departure from the expected technical rigor, as shown in the table's observations on pedagogical tension.

**Table 1.** Key Findings: Conservatoire Case Study.

Aspect	Primary Observation	Implication
Anxiety Reduction	Significant decrease in performance anxiety scores post intervention.	Psychological strategies directly address a major barrier in high stakes performance training.
Learner Agency	Increased student initiated dialogue and self assessment during lessons.	Integration fosters greater autonomy and metacognitive skill development.
Pedagogical Tension	Initial student preference for traditional technical focus perceived as "legitimate" work.	Highlights need for explicit rationale and gradual integration within established cultural norms.

##### 4.2. Case Study 2: Performing Arts College Musical Theatre

The second case involved a group musical theatre class where strategies emphasized collective psychological safety, motivation through relatedness, and emotion regulation for character embodiment.

Findings here underscored the role of the group dynamic. The intervention, which included group goal setting and peer feedback frameworks, strengthened ensemble cohesion. Student surveys reflected an increase in intrinsic motivation, linked by interviewees to a greater sense of shared purpose and supportive community. The use of psychological tools for character work, such as affective memory exercises adapted for anxiety management, was particularly successful. Teachers reported students accessed emotional expression with more technical control and less personal distress. A key limitation emerged in time management. The group setting made it difficult to address

individual psychological needs in depth, sometimes leading to a generalized approach that did not fully meet all learners' requirements (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Key Findings: Musical Theatre Case Study.

Aspect	Primary Observation	Implication
Motivation & Cohesion	Enhanced intrinsic motivation and stronger group rapport.	Psychological strategies can effectively build supportive learning communities essential for ensemble performance.
Emotion Regulation	Improved technical control during emotionally demanding repertoire.	Linking psychological technique to artistic expression provides dual benefit.
Individualization	Difficulty tailoring strategies to individual needs in group context.	Points to a need for hybrid models combining group and brief individual check-ins.

*4.3. Case Study 3: Private Studio Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM)*

The third case explored a private CCM coaching studio. Strategies were tailored to issues like stylistic identity, microphone anxiety, and self efficacy in improvisation.

This context demonstrated the highest degree of flexibility and personalization, as highlighted in Table 3. The teacher seamlessly incorporated psychological prompts into work on microphone technique and stylistic interpretation. Student logs indicated a rapid application of strategies, such as positive self-talk, into independent practice and live gigs. Quantitative data showed the most pronounced increase in vocal self-efficacy scores across all cases. The informal, student-led nature of much CCM (Contemporary Commercial Music) learning played a significant role in facilitating this integration. However, as noted in the table, a key challenge was the occasional overemphasis on subjective feeling, which could risk neglecting the objective technical foundation, requiring the teacher to consciously balance psychological and physiological feedback.

**Table 3.** Key Findings: CCM Studio Case Study.

Aspect	Primary Observation	Implication
Self Efficacy	Marked increase in confidence scores, especially in improvisation and performance.	Tailored psychological support powerfully boosts perceived competence in learner directed genres.
Contextual Flexibility	Strategies were adapted in real time to specific performance scenarios (e.g., mic fear).	Highlights the model's applicability to informal, real world learning environments.
Balance Maintenance	Risk of privileging psychological comfort over technical precision without mindful teaching.	Underscores the need for integrated assessment that values both artistic expression and technical skill.

*4.4. Cross Case Analysis and Discussion*

Synthesizing findings across the three cases reveals core themes about optimizing pedagogy through psychological adjustment. First, the integration consistently enhanced key learner outcomes: reducing debilitating anxiety, increasing self efficacy, and fostering more autonomous, reflective practice habits. These benefits held across diverse contexts, suggesting the universal relevance of addressing the psychological dimensions of performance learning.

Second, the mode of integration must be context sensitive. The successful implementation varied from the structured, reflective model in the conservatoire to the

agile, scenario based approach in the CCM studio. This indicates that a prescriptive, one size fits all model is less effective than a principled, adaptable toolkit from which teachers can draw based on their setting and students' needs.

Third, a central tension emerged between depth and feasibility. While individualized attention yielded profound results, constraints of time and format, especially in group teaching, posed significant challenges. This points to a critical area for future development: creating scalable, time efficient psychological pedagogical practices that maintain efficacy.

Finally, the study confirms that psychological adjustment is not a remedial activity but a foundational component of advanced skill acquisition. By making the internal processes of learning explicit and trainable, teachers can accelerate technical progress and build more resilient, self sustaining artists (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Synthesis of Pedagogical Insights Across Cases.

Pedagogical Principle	Conservatoire Context	Musical Theatre Context	CCM Context
Primary Focus	Anxiety reduction & metacognition	Group cohesion & emotional regulation	Self efficacy & contextual adaptation
Optimal Method	Structured reflection within lesson dialogue	Group exercises & shared goal setting	Real time, scenario based coaching
Key Challenge	Aligning with traditional cultural expectations	Addressing individual needs in group settings	Maintaining technical rigor alongside psychological focus
Measurable Outcome	Lower anxiety, increased learner agency	Higher intrinsic motivation, better ensemble trust	Greater performance confidence, adaptive skill use

The findings collectively advocate for a paradigm shift towards a consciously integrated psycho pedagogical framework in vocal training. This approach does not diminish the importance of traditional technical rigor but rather provides the necessary psychological tools for students to fully engage with and benefit from that rigor, thereby optimizing the holistic development of the singer.

### 5. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the optimization of British vocal pedagogy through the deliberate integration of learner psychological adjustment strategies. By employing a mixed methods approach across three distinct case studies conservatoire classical training, performing arts college musical theatre, and private studio contemporary commercial music coaching the research provides empirical evidence that a psychologically informed teaching framework significantly enhances key dimensions of the vocal learning process. The findings affirm that addressing psychological factors such as performance anxiety, self efficacy, motivation, and emotional regulation is not merely supplementary but fundamentally interconnected with the development of technical skill and artistic expression.

The research demonstrates that the benefits of this integrated approach are both measurable and multifaceted. Quantitatively, participants across cases showed notable improvements in standardized measures, particularly in reductions of performance anxiety and increases in vocal self efficacy. Qualitatively, the observed and reported outcomes revealed deeper pedagogical shifts: students exhibited greater autonomy and metacognitive awareness in their practice, lessons became more collaborative, and learning environments fostered higher levels of psychological safety and intrinsic motivation. These consistent findings across divergent teaching contexts underscore the universal relevance of the learner's psychological state in effective skill acquisition.

However, the study also illuminates the critical importance of contextual sensitivity. The successful implementation of psychological strategies did not follow a uniform template but required thoughtful adaptation to the specific cultural, structural, and relational norms of each pedagogical setting. The master apprentice model of the conservatoire necessitated a different integration strategy than the collective ensemble focus of musical theatre or the flexible, student led nature of CCM coaching. This variation highlights that optimization lies not in a prescriptive set of techniques but in equipping educators with a principled, adaptable framework they can tailor to their unique teaching ecosystem.

Several important limitations of the current study warrant acknowledgement and point to directions for future inquiry. The sample size, while sufficient for an in depth qualitative and case based analysis, limits the broad statistical generalizability of the quantitative findings. The intervention period, though substantial, captured medium term changes; longitudinal research tracking students over years is needed to understand the sustained impact on artistic development and career resilience. Furthermore, the study focused on the integration of broadly applicable psychological principles; future research could delve deeper into specific populations, such as students with pronounced anxiety disorders or professional singers navigating career transitions.

In conclusion, this study makes a substantive contribution to the field of vocal pedagogy by moving the discourse from recognizing the importance of psychology to providing a structured, evidence informed pathway for its practical integration. It posits that the optimal vocal pedagogue of the future is not only a technician and an artist but also a keen facilitator of psychological growth. The proposed psycho pedagogical framework offers a viable model for this evolution, suggesting that the true mastery of the vocal instrument is achieved not in spite of the performer's inner world, but precisely through its educated and supportive cultivation. The ultimate outcome is the fostering of more resilient, adaptive, and authentically expressive singers, equipped to meet the technical and psychological demands of a dynamic musical landscape.

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