

Instrumental and Vocal Teachers as Health Promotion Advocates

Objectives: Through appropriate education and support, many of the playing-related problems that musicians experience are preventable. Instrumental/vocal teachers are well situated to deliver health education, however to educate this group effectively it is necessary to understand them as learners and educators. The current study explored teachers' learning and teaching experiences, training, lifestyle, engagement with health, and views on responsibility and qualifications.

Design and Methods: 75 instrumental/vocal teachers (recruited through purposive and snowball sampling) took part in an online survey developed by the researcher; this design was used to ensure participants from across the UK were represented. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, group comparison and thematic analysis.

Results: Participants' lifestyles, activities and training varied. Whilst nearly all held a performance certificate, less than a third held a pedagogical qualification. All participants believed they were at least partially responsible for pupils' health. Although more than 50% reported having received health education (primarily delivered by musicians' or Alexander Technique teachers) this was generally a result of personal experience. Opinions were mixed regarding the need for discipline-specific qualifications, although all agreed on the importance of practical experience in developing competence.

Conclusions: Results suggest that in order to educate teachers as health promotion advocates educational platforms must be created, potentially by delivering pedagogical training and assessment during tertiary level education. Educational materials must be relevant, appropriate and applicable for different pupils, instruments and teachers. A follow up study addressing methodological limitations highlighted in this pilot study will take place with a larger sample.

Word Count: 250