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The *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing* is a publication of the American Choral Directors Association. This journal welcomes studies that apply rigorous, systematically-grounded methodologies, either quantitative or qualitative, to investigate phenomena of potential interest to all who sing in, work with, or are otherwise interested in choral ensembles. The IJRCS was founded in 2002 by editor James Daugherty and an international interest group composed of choral conductor-teachers and voice scientists, each of whom was an established researcher and an active choral musician. The Journal publishes one volume annually, with articles added as they are accepted throughout the year. The editorial board welcomes manuscripts that reflect well executed research employing quantitative, philosophical, historical, or qualitative methodologies. Reviews of empirical research, meta-analyses, etc. will also be considered for publication. Score studies, choral literature reviews, composer biographies, or purely anecdotal speculations will not be considered. View submission guidelines and the full archives at acda.org/ijrcs. For more information or to submit an article, email ijrcs@acda.org. ACDA thanks Patrick Freer for his years of service. Bryan E. Nichols began his term as IJRCS editor as of January 2025.

Making space for inclusive approaches: A review of adolescent gender identity in high school choirs

Anthony Young and Jason Goopy

Volume 12, pages 1-22

Gender identity has received significant attention in choral music education, perhaps more than any other field of music education research. Issues concerning gender in choirs continue to prove challenging for adolescents and secondary school teachers. This article synthesizes a narrative literature review on gender identity research in high school choirs, offers suggestions for inclusive choral practices, and raises possibilities for future research. Gender research in Western cultural school choral contexts over the last century focused on a preoccupation with the shortage of male singers. Female participation in choir was considered commonplace and taken for granted, resulting in females being neglected in research until recently. Early material on male adolescent choral involvement tended to make very broad generalizations situated in hegemonic masculinity. By the 1990s, writers such as Koza were noting that these approaches to the issue had been unsuccessful, and recent writers have exposed the rich personal and contextual aspects of singers and their approaches to singing. Research in the past decade has attempted

to demystify and empower transgender singers, though there is still much to learn in this area. Common inclusive approaches for diverse gender identities emerged from the literature. These include gender inclusive language, a welcoming environment and supportive mentors, considered and contextualized repertoire choices, and whole group vocal pedagogy sensitive to individual needs. Future research is recommended to investigate the evolving relationship of contemporary gender identities with other components of the self, how multiple gender identities can be supported and positively co-exist, and the possible contributions of choral music education to gender identity development in a greater range of contexts, cultures, and traditions.

Women Conductors of College Men's Choirs – Redefining the “Brotherhood”

Meg Stohlmann

Volume 12, pages 23-42

Collegiate men's choirs have unique and storied traditions dating back to the Civil War and the founding of many prominent colleges in the United States (Albinder & Jones, 2008). Historically, these ensembles created a place for fraternity, brotherhood, and social outlets for young men (Jones, 2010). Consequently, there are few documented instances of women conducting collegiate men's choirs (VanWeelden, 2003). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women conductors of college men's choirs. This research was guided by the following questions: 1. How did women choral conductors describe their motivations for working with college men's choirs? 2. How did these conductors describe the rehearsal environment in their college men's choir? 3. And finally, how did these conductors define the challenges of working with male singers? The following areas provided focus for themes that emerged from the conductor interviews: their motivations, the rehearsal environment, and the challenges associated with a lack of opportunity and quality literature.

Embodying the Music: A Survey of Choral Music Educators on Conducting Injury and Wellness Techniques

Ryan W. Sullivan, Colleen McNickle,

Brianne Wehner, and Stephanie Li

Volume 12, pages 43-67

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify the most common choral conducting-related injuries, and determine the ways conductors completing the survey have adapted their physical gesture to accommodate or avoid pain and discomfort. Utilizing a researcher-designed online survey, we asked choral music educators to identify and describe musculoskeletal and vocal injuries sustained throughout their careers, and the effects of these injuries on their conducting and teaching practices. Results from respondents (N = 75) indicated a high prevalence of upper-body repetitive stress injuries amongst participants caused by classroom ergonomics, misuse and overuse, poor technique, and tension. In response to their injury or injuries, participants reported altering alignment, change of technique, rest, and avoidance. Preventative responses included classroom modifications and therapy and/or treatment. We discussed the workplace culture of the typical American choir conductor, the state of wellness education in pre-service teacher training, and considerations for future research. Such findings could help inform conductors, teachers of conducting, and medical providers to understand more about injury prevention and management for conductors.

Scoping the Literature of Transgender Singing: Experiences and Pedagogical Insights in Choral Contexts

Naomi Cooper, Nadine Manion, and Scott Harrison

Volume 12, pages 68-87

Choral conductors have expressed interest in working with transgender singers more effectively, however, opportunities for professional development and resources in this area have been limited. This article reports a scoping review designed to explore the experi-

ences of transgender singers in choral settings. Results offer insights for choral conductors seeking to enhance their support for this group. In this study we reviewed literature from 2013 to 2022. Of the 221 relevant studies included in the scoping review, 15 studies discussed choral contexts. These studies stressed the importance of (a) creating gender-inclusive and culturally responsive choral environments, (b) addressing concerns such as gendered language, concert attire, and voice part labeling, and (c) the impact of gender dysphoria on choral singing experiences. The search returned limited research on non-binary singers. Few studies disclosed the involvement of transgender researchers. Environmental factors such as gendered norms in choirs and the role of choral conductors functioned as both barriers and facilitators for transgender singers in choral contexts. Choral conductors can play a pivotal role in creating trans-inclusive environments by using gender-neutral language and fostering allyship for transgender individuals. The studies reviewed also addressed the vocal effects of gender-affirming hormone therapy, vocal exercises, binding practices, and vocal health while emphasizing the psychological and emotional aspects of voice and gender identity. While progress has been made in recognizing and accommodating transgender singers in choral settings, further research is needed to address the pedagogical implications of trans-specific vocal considerations, including gender-affirming hormone therapy and surgical interventions.

Validating and Piloting a Choral Educator Questionnaire: The Use of Culture Bearers and Pedagogical Implications of Singing in Multiple Timbres

Andrew P. Schmidt

Volume 12, pages 88-110

Many educators strive to enact culturally relevant practices by introducing repertoire of various cultures and genres. One major barrier to this implementation includes the variety of vocal sounds inherent in traditions outside those generally presented in choral environments within the United States of America. In this

study, I validated and piloted a choral educator questionnaire. I designed the survey to solicit information about the use of vocal pedagogy in the ensemble classroom. In the survey, I also asked about educators' use of vocal pedagogy as related to issues of vocal health and teaching non-Classical repertoire. After reviewing methodologies used in prior choral education survey studies, I chose to validate the questionnaire through a cognitive interview process. This process yielded a revised questionnaire that a small sample of choral educators piloted. Results of these two phases culminated in a final questionnaire for use with a larger sample.

Music Teachers' Perceptions of Nonverbal Conducting Technique Items in Teaching Choir in the Classroom

Ji-Eun Kim

Volume 12, pages 111-131

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine music teachers' perceptions of nonverbal conducting technique items based on their classroom choral teaching experiences. One hundred and fifty classroom choral music educators ($N = 150$) participated in this study. I employed two procedures. First, using a seven-point Likert-type scale, participants rated 15 nonverbal conducting technique items in their importance to directing choral ensembles. I then arranged participants' mean ratings of the 15 items in order of importance. The three most participant-rated important items were providing right-hand indications for tempo changes, providing left-hand indications for crescendos and diminuendos, and providing right-hand indications for attacks and releases. Then, participants selected their three most important nonverbal conducting technique items using the same 15 items. There was a tie for the rank of the third most important item, resulting in four items as most important. The four most participant-selected important items were providing right-hand indications for tempo changes, providing facial/body indications for style emphases and changes (legato, staccato, etc.), providing left-hand indications for crescendos and diminuendos, and providing left-hand

indications for attacks and releases. The choir teachers' responses gathered in this study can be beneficial in understanding which specific conducting technique components are viewed as important when developing successful conducting techniques to be used in choral classroom teaching.

“Sing, sit, and leave”: Engagement and Disillusionment in a High School Chorus

Frank Martignetti

Volume 12, pages 132-152


This study provides insight into why students leave voluntary school choral experiences, through an analysis of interviews with four high school students at a single New York City high school who left, or were considering leaving, their high school choral program. This study provides a voice often unheard in the research literature, since many research subjects are people who have had positive feelings about their ensemble experience. Analysis through a lens of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and student engagement theory (Deakin Crick, 2012; Reeve & Tseng, 2011) revealed strong feelings of engagement and disillusionment, providing insight into individuals' choices and motives. Principal themes included the perceived quality of the subject's relationship with the teacher/conductor and with other students; subject's perceptions regarding the focus and commitment level of the other students; and subjects' perceptions of rigor and the value gained from participation. These align with two of the elements of self-determination theory: belonging and competence. Implications for practitioners and for future research are suggested.

Self-Efficacy and Achievement among Secondary School Vocalists: An Exploratory Study

Thomas J. Rinn

Volume 12, pages 153-169

The purpose of this study was to investigate music performance self-efficacy and achievement among secondary school choral music students. I specifically

examined the relationships between the four sources of self-efficacy (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological and affective state) and the composite construct, as well as years of private lessons and practice time. In addition, I compared self-efficacy beliefs by grade, school, voice part, camp attendance, and voice lessons. Participants (N = 42) completed the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (Zelenak, 2011), provided demographic data, and reported average weekly practice time in preparation for a competitive choral event. Results indicated a significant negative correlation between Verbal/social persuasion and competitive ranking ($r_s = -.36, p = .02$). Those with higher scores on the verbal/social persuasion subscale were ranked higher (received a lower number ranking) than those with lower scores. I found no significant differences in composite self-efficacy beliefs among voice parts, grade levels, or those engaged in private vocal instruction. The results contribute to the literature linking musical self-efficacy and achievement and replicate previous findings of the relationship between the verbal/social persuasion factor of musical self-efficacy and achievement. 

Read all the articles in the IJRCS archive online at acda.org/ijrcs. Selected titles from Volume 11 (published in 2023):

Barbershop Harmony Society Judge Perceptions of Expressive Performances and Contest Adjudication
by Christopher S. Loftin

Disrupting the Choral Class System: A Journey of One High School Choral Program by Marci L. Major and Elizabeth Cassidy Parker