

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH: HOW PEDAGOGUES OF SINGING AND  
THEIR STUDENTS NAVIGATE THE SOLO AND CHORAL REALMS

by

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Date May 22, 2019

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in  
Teachers College, Columbia University

2019

## ABSTRACT

### A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH: HOW PEDAGOGUES OF SINGING AND THEIR STUDENTS NAVIGATE THE SOLO AND CHORAL REALMS

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This qualitative case study approach was designed to examine choral and applied voice pedagogue's similarities and differences of teaching healthy singing in the choral rehearsal and applied studio lesson while observing how their students respond and interpret the techniques used. The participants included six pedagogues (three choral, three applied voice) at the university level and one student of each pedagogue. Data were collected through pedagogue and student interviews. To support the interviews, demographic surveys, and observations of the choral rehearsal and applied studio lessons were completed. Data were coded and organized based on the four research questions. Analysis and findings were organized based on the four categories found in the study's conceptual framework: (a) how they develop; (b) conceptualization and strategies of healthy singing; (c) other factors; and (d) student's perspective.

This research revealed that while both choral and applied voice pedagogues' methods may vary there is consistency among the description of *healthy singing and strategies* that are appropriate for both settings. The study also shows that the

pedagogue's *background and training* play a major role in the way that they currently teach. Additionally, pedagogues should remain thoughtful of the *student's abilities*, *repertoire* choices, the *rapport* between them and the student, and the *structure of the lesson/rehearsal*. Recommendations are offered for choral and applied voice pedagogues, their students, and for future research in the field of healthy singing.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the participants in this study for allowing me to observe their rehearsals and lessons. Without your commitment, this research would not have been possible. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee Dr. Goffi-Fynn, Dr. Parkes, Dr. Dean, and Dr. Hansen for your support. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my sponsor Dr. Goffi-Fynn and Dr. Parkes for guiding me through this process and the dedication to my research.

I would like to thank my Team 4 friends and colleagues, Drew Coles, Alex Fung, Meagan Dissinger, Lillie Manis, and Michael Mohammad, for not only their support but for their time reading and providing feedback on this document. Thank you to my colleagues, coworkers, friends, and church family who have supported and lifted me during this process. I am extremely grateful to my family, with special gratitude to my mother and stepfather Bernice and Donald, my father Henry, my sister Cindy, and nephews TJ and Zach for their love and support. I love you.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to two angels, my grandmother Helen Estelle Thompson known as “Mooa” (1936-2010) and my aunt Doris Thompson (1960-2008) who always believed in me.

D.L.T.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

In many university voice departments, there are two generally accepted points of contact for the singing student: the choral conductor and the voice instructor. With a vast range of perceptions, choral and vocal pedagogues appear to share the common goal to promote healthy singing, develop vocal musicianship, and maintain the integrity of the voice while performing a range of musical styles (Apfelstadt, Robinson & Taylor, 2003). However, the training and teaching styles of vocal music in the same department can vary. It has been noted that “misunderstandings can occur when the singer’s understanding of specific terms or phrases do not match the voice instructors or choral conductor’s concept” (Apfelstadt, Robinson, & Taylor, 2003, p. 30). As pedagogy evolves, choral conductors and voice instructor’s misunderstandings and lack of collaboration keep teachers of vocal music from moving forward (Felipe & Hoover, 2017). Therefore, the researcher set out to determine which approaches choral and applied voice pedagogues considered useful in building healthy young singers and how the singer responds to them.

Swan (1973) describes beautiful singing as:

A beautiful tone that is not breathy, is sung to the center of a pitch, possesses some degree of intensity, accompanies a sound which is normal in pronunciation and is comfortably sustained. (Swan, 1973, p. 8)

Authors of *The Singing Book* note that there are three principles of healthy singing: good physical balance, breathing that is accomplished easily and deeply, and

staying present are considered the beginning stages (Dayme & Vaughn, 2014). In a more recent study by Ferrell (2010), the following elements were considered common healthy vocal techniques found in both choral and solo singing by all participants: proper breathing technique, a release of tension, proper body alignment while seated or standing, utilizing a healthy resonance, proper vowel formation, and an engaged mind (Ferrell, 2010, p. 28). Emmons and Chase (2006) provide five characteristics of a beautiful tone: 1) true, unjust intonation; 2) a “spin” in the tone (a balanced vibrato); 3) ease of emission: 4) core, focus, clarity, carrying power: and 5) a warm, full tone quality (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p. 97). Fenton and Johnson (1990) consider the healthy voice to be a:

Singer who has diligently worked at perfecting a good tone quality, agility, dynamic control, controlled deep breathing and the ability to sing in all registers is well on the way to vocal health. (Fenton & Johnson, 1990, pp. 34-35)

Based on my knowledge and review of previous literature, the term healthy has been chosen to determine what current pedagogues would consider the appropriate approaches in developing young singers. Though the term healthy may be viewed differently among some pedagogues of singing, I believed that the participants would be able to have a better understanding of the study based on this word choice. As for the word young, this term is often used concerning the age of an individual. In this study, the term young is used meaning that the singer has little experience or knowledge of the singing voice (Young, n.d.) and its capabilities, as the vocal tract is not fully developed until the age of 20 or 21 (Sataloff, 2006, p. 18). For this study, healthy singing has been defined as the ability to produce musical sounds with the voice that incorporate the use of correct posture, proper breath support, full tone quality, evenness moving between vocal registers, and solid intonation combined with the singer’s natural talent.

## Narrative

Vocal music has always been something I have enjoyed. As a child, my father would take me to hear gospel choirs and soloist perform almost every Friday night at a small local school in Lynchburg, Virginia. For me, hearing gospel music in the church was my first experience of a choral sound. As a child, I would sit on the back pew of the church and clap and sing along with the choir every Sunday morning. It was not until one night during revival around the age of seven that I leaned over to my mother and told her, “One day I am going to sing with that choir.” However, during my seventh-grade year, I joined the middle school chorus and did not enjoy it. Thinking back on my time in the chorus I am not exactly sure why I disliked it so much. It could have been because I was the only male student at the time and often called on for male solos or the lack of interest in the repertoire chosen for the choir to perform. While looking back over my middle school teaching experience, having boys in the choir has always been an issue in the area where I teach and grew up. It was not until tenth grade that I returned to the chorus and fell in love with it. At the age of fifteen, I began singing in the church choir, by sixteen I was playing piano, and seventeen directing the choir. I knew then that this was the path that I wanted to take.

Attending Lynchburg College, my experience as an undergraduate vocal music education major was life changing. Being part of a small liberal arts music department brought along many opportunities for growth as a musician and educator that I do not believe I would have received elsewhere. When I began my journey at college, I was assigned to the studio of the director of choral and vocal activities at the time. According

to many students who had been in the program for some time, this was a big deal as he only took the students whom he thought would push to become future music educators and performers. Besides teaching applied voice, he was also the choral director for the three choral ensembles at the college.

While working hard to become a solo vocal performer and choral conductor, I took the advice of my professor seriously as I knew he would help me to become both of those things. Being part of a small institution allowed me more opportunities to work with my professor closely as his choral assistant and librarian, introducing me to many of the behind-the-scenes aspects of a choral conductor and planning applied voice lessons. After graduating with my bachelor's degree, it was not until I began my coursework at a new institution for my master's degree that I noticed the difference in choral singing and solo singing. Working with two different instructors, one choral and one applied, I realized several approaches such as the thinking of control or flow of breath, the differences in vowel formation, ease of production, flexibility, and even stylistic opinions for various repertoire as a singer could all be based on the setting in which you were performing. Coming from an institution where the applied voice instructor focused on building a choral sound instead of an individual singer prohibited me from finding my solo voice. Through my master's degree study, I began to learn more about vocal pedagogy and the balance between solo and choral singing.

As I continue to teach students in both the choral and applied studio setting, I have noticed that areas such as posture, breath support, intonation, and vocalization are areas of debate. Discussions between myself and other teachers of vocal music have led me to believe that the approaches I would take to cover one of these topics may differ

based on reasons such as the repertoire being performed or just the individual or group of students being taught. Given these experiences as a student and teacher in the choral classroom and applied voice studio settings, I was intrigued to find out what approaches choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues considered to be useful in becoming healthy singers in their respective area.

### **Problem Statement**

Undergraduate students majoring in vocal performance or vocal music education are required to take applied voice instruction and a choral ensemble as part of their studies. With terminology and methods of teaching changing in the field, choral conductors and applied voice teachers adapt their teaching strategies based on the students learning styles, training background, context and artistic ability. However, little is known about what approaches choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues employ and which they perceive are useful in developing healthy young singers. Therefore, this study intends to illuminate practices used by pedagogues of vocal music while also gathering the student's perceptions.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to study and analyze with three choral pedagogues, three applied voice pedagogues, and their students the methods and strategies used in developing young, healthy singers.

## **Research Questions**

In order to shed light on the purpose of this study, the following research questions were asked:

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?
2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students?
4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework developed for this study helped to focus and shape the research process, informing the methodological design and influencing the data-collection instruments to be used. The conceptual framework also became the repository for the data that will be collected, providing the basis for and informing various iterations of a coding scheme (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

The conceptual framework seen in Figure 1 was designed and created based on the review of the literature, combined with the researcher's own experience and insights. The four categories of the conceptual framework were directly derived from the study's research questions and from the limited literature available on how the field defines healthy singing. The first research question is intended to uncover how choral



pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues gain the knowledge and ability to teach the methods and strategies used during their applied studio lessons and choral rehearsals. Hence, the category “How They Develop.” The second research question seeks to determine how choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues define and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer based on the responsiveness and flexibility of their instrument. Therefore, the conceptual category to capture responses to this question would be “Conceptualization and Strategies of Healthy Singing.”

The third research question seeks to determine what other factors (such as the structure of rehearsals/lessons, repertoire, and rapport) choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students. The category entitled “Other Factors,” is deemed most appropriate. Research question four is intended to determine what strategies students in both the choral and applied voice studio settings consider beneficial in becoming better singers. Therefore, the category “Student Perception,” is an appropriate category. For this study, the term healthy singer can be considered as one who uses their skilled talent to produce a sound that is free and supported while using appropriate vocal techniques, which is derived from the previous literature (Dayme & Vaughn, 2014; Ferrell, 2010; Swan, 1973) and the researchers own thoughts.

The conceptual framework that supports the purpose of this study is provided in a graphic form, seen in Figure 1:

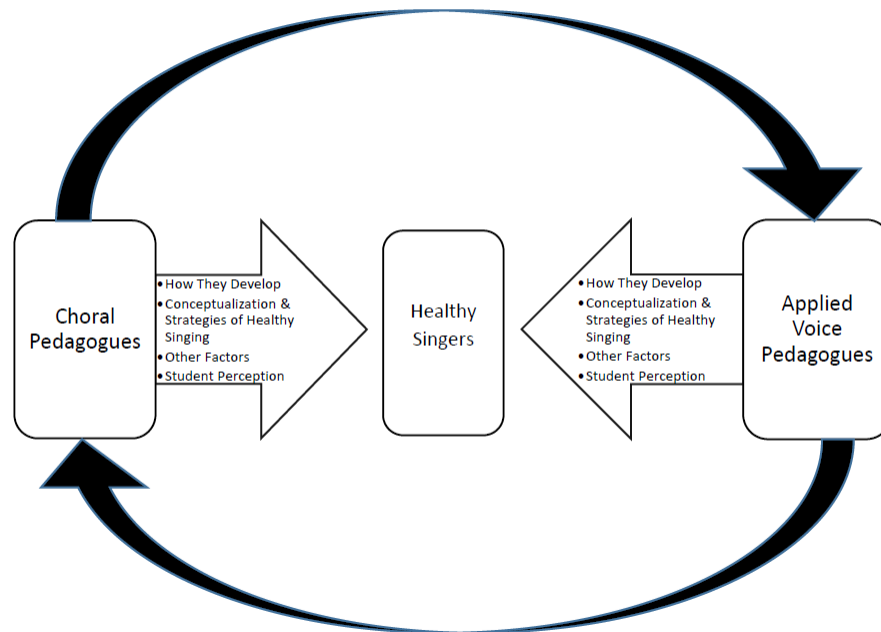


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Developing Healthy Singers

### **Plan of Research**

The research plan was to conduct a qualitative study. Triangulation of data between surveys, interviews of pedagogues and students, and researcher observations were used to determine what pedagogues and their students perceived, as appropriate approaches used in the choral and applied studio settings in producing healthy sustainable singers.

### **Research Methodology Overview**

To discover the strategies in which applied voice pedagogues and choral pedagogues employ to produce healthy singers, qualitative methods were chosen for the study. A qualitative methods research design, according to Wiersma and Jurs (2009), is a study that focuses on underlying structures, relationships among entities, influencing

factors, and even the “meaning,” of events and experiences (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009, p. 241). A qualitative approach was most suitable for this research due to the array of experiences, viewpoints, and methods of the participants, which were shown through interviews and observations.

Participants for this study were selected from a purposeful sample of choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues. The research took place with instructors who are considered pedagogues at the university level from selected institutions. Each participants level of training was recorded in hopes that a graduate level of education was part of the selection criteria. Interviews served as the primary source of data collection. Triangulation was achieved through observations of choral and studio instruction, along with student interviews. The methodology implemented is described in detail in Chapter Three.

### **Definitions**

**Applied voice instructor:** someone who teaches an individual student in becoming better with pronunciation, phrasing, and performance practices of the voice.

**Applied voice pedagogue:** someone who helps to improve the technical usage of the voice to an individual student.

**Choral conductor:** someone who directs a group of students in becoming better with the expressive aspects of the voice.

**Choral pedagogue:** someone who directs a group of students helping them to improve the technical usage of the voice.

**Healthy singer:** one who uses their skilled talent to produce a sound that is free and supported while using the appropriate vocal techniques suggested for healthy singing (Dayme & Vaughn, 2014; Ferrell, 2010; Swan, 1973).

**Healthy singing:** the ability to produce musical sounds with the voice that incorporate the use of correct posture, proper breath support, full tone quality, evenness moving between vocal registers, and solid intonation combined with the singer's natural talent.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

This chapter of the dissertation looks at the current literature based around the three main areas of a university voice department: the pedagogue as a choral conductor, the pedagogue as an applied voice instructor, and the choral and voice student. After looking at educating the young singer, the two following sections (choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues), look at the content and pedagogy of both pedagogues (what and how they teach), how they are trained and the settings in which they teach. The choral and voice student section of this related literature looks at the requirements needed to be in a vocal music program, their repertoire choices and how they must collaborate between the choral and vocal realms.

#### **Educating Young Singers**

During a student's freshman year, many choral and vocal pedagogues find themselves starting with the bare basics of vocal technique in helping to develop young singers. In a 2002 study, researchers set out to determine the vocal problems in young choral singers. It was determined that vocal difficulty such as hoarseness, change in voice, breathiness, and "over singing," was common among young choral singers. The behaviors examined did not relate to vocal difficulty, and the occurrence was similar to those who had or had not taken voice lessons. The study also showed that participating in voice lessons did not ensure good vocal practice but did not appear to be related to a

decreased risk of vocal difficulties in the population of young, amateur choral singers. The study suggested that good voice training is helpful in not only improving vocal performance capabilities but also in avoiding vocal injuries (Tepe, Deutsch, Sampson, Lawless, Reilly, & Sataloff, 2002, p. 250).

Regardless of the developing young singers voice, Boardman and Alt (1992) remind us that these singers have three things in common: 1) they are young, and it will take years for their voices to mature completely; 2) many have little vocal technique, and 3) both boys and girls often experience a part of the voice that is weaker than the rest. As these students enter voice programs with a lack of vocal technique, it is essential that their instructors consider repertoire that focuses on breath management, range and tessitura, energy, subject matter, language, and advanced vocal techniques (Boardman & Alt, 1992, p. 45). To accomplish the areas mentioned by Boardman and Alt (1992), Barefield (2006) believes that instructors “must provide advice that will help students achieve the desired results,” and believes this can be done when students can analyze their singing (Barefield, 2006, p. 50).

### **Overview of the Voice**

Sound is created when a vibrating body produces vibrations. In order for sound to exist there are four elements needed: 1) a vibrating object [the vocal folds], 2) a power source to make the object vibrate [the breath], 3) a medium through which the vibrations are transmitted [cavities within the head - the mouth], and 4) an apparatus to receive the vibrations (McKinney, 2005). Sounds can be divided into two categories: noise – a sound which does not have a recognizable patter because of its irregularity and lack of order, or

musical tone – one in which the sound wave pattern repeats itself regularly. Musical tone has five characteristic properties:

- duration – how long a musical tone lasts;
- intensity – the amount of energy in the sound;
- pitch – the frequency of vibration of a musical tone as expressed in the number of vibrations per second;
- sonance – the pattern of change in timbre, pitch, intensity, or admixture of noise in a given tone; and
- timbre – the characteristic tone quality of a sound as determined by the presence and relative strength of its component partials (McKinney, 2005).

Four physical processes produce vocal sound: respiration – the process of moving air in and out of the body also known as inhalation and exhalation; phonation – the process of producing vocal sound by the vibration of the vocal cords which takes place in the larynx (voice box); resonance – the process by which the basic product of phonation is enhanced in timbre and/or intensity by the air-filled cavities through which it passes on its way to the outside air; and articulation – the process by which the joint product of the vibrator and the resonators are shaped into recognizable speech sounds through the muscular adjustments and movements of the speech organs (McKinney, 2005).

Just as sounds are divided into two categories, vocal sounds are also divided into two categories – vowels (musical tones) and consonants (noises). The vowel is a speech sound that:

- is an unrestricted speech sound;
- is capable of being sustained;

- is a voiced (phonated) sound;
- is the basic building material of a vocal tone – the vowel carries the tone; and
- has a definite shape or form – molded by the articulators.

The consonant is a speech sound that:

- is more or less a restricted speech sound;
- contains more or less conspicuous noise elements due to the degree of restriction present;
- is subordinate to vowels in sonority;
- does not form the center of syllables, but define the borders of them; and
- functions as sound interrupters or sound stoppers and separates the vocal tone into recognizable units which can communicate meaning (McKinney, 2005).

### **Choral Pedagogues**

A conductor is:

One who practices the art of rehearsing and directing a performing group of musicians. Through knowledge and experience of history and literature and a solid theoretical foundation of musicianship, the conductor will usually possess a mental image of what he or she wants from the group. A conductor will also have an understanding of the developmental aspects of student/adult music learners. (Collins & Lindeman, 2013, p. 67)

Durrant (2003) states that:

Conductors need to have specific attributes and characteristics in order to maintain healthy and effective singing. Bad conductors can damage voices, demotivate, foster poor self-esteem in singers, and make mediocre music. (Durrant, 2003, p. 59)

According to Lawrence (1989), a good choral conductor is one that knows the physiology of the child's voice, the changing voice, and the adult voice. Choral



conductors are normally a highly skilled vocal performer or keyboard performer, who can analyze the musical components of a choral composition, have a mental concept of good choral tone, and familiar with a variety of choral music from all periods and in all styles (Lawrence, 1989). Durrant (2003) reminds the reader that, “what conductors do that makes them successful at conducting in one context may not be valid and appropriate in another.” (Durrant, 2003, p. 81)

### **Choral Rehearsal Setting**

For many choral ensembles, a majority of their time is not spent on stages performing but spent in the choral rehearsal room. During these rehearsals, students are engaged in a laboratory environment filled with musical awareness, sensitivity, and learning to help build musicianship skills. The learning process can range from learning notes, rhythms, and the technique necessary to reproduce them on demand; training the ear; determining the intentions of the composer; and seeking to shape the performance with a sense of style appropriate to the cultural and historical aspects of the work (Brunner, 1996, p. 37).

To have a successful rehearsal Brunner (1996) states that each rehearsal must:

- be planned;
- be organized;
- follow a synthesis-analysis-synthesis model;
- call for “doing;”
- teach musical skills;
- be positive;
- stress the individual and corporate importance of the singer;

- be challenging;
- be unpredictable; and
- be sequential and build upon each other (Brunner, 1996, pp. 38-39).

Cox (1989) states that “an efficient choral rehearsal involves productive use of time, sequential activities, supportive director behaviors, and the creation of an appropriate rehearsal climate,” (p.201). Before Cox (1989), researchers such as Bessom, Tatarunis, and Forcucci (1980), Garretson (1966), Roe (1983), and Sunderman (1952) organized their rehearsals by placing faster-paced activities, such as singing through familiar and enjoyable music, at the beginning and end of a rehearsal. The remainder of the rehearsal is devoted to slower-paced activities, such as a detailed, analytical study of works in the developmental stages. Decker and Herford (1973), Lamb (1979), and Robinson and Winold (1976) organized their rehearsals by alternating familiar music with new music, and easy with difficult compositions. Rehearsals designed in this sequence allows minimum time spent on each activity, and frequent changes of pace within the rehearsal structure (Cox, 1989).

Manfredo (2006) also believes that pacing is one of the most significant factors that affect rehearsal success. He believes that “ensemble directors should strive for a learning environment characterized by a consistent level of positive effort and concentration from students, with a proper balance of time allocated for teacher actions (feedback) and student actions (performance of music),” (p. 42). In making sure that the rehearsal process moves as smoothly as possible Manfredo believes that the director should carefully consider the types of activities or content commonly found in the rehearsal setting. These activities include setup for teacher and students, tuning, warming

up, rehearsal of performance literature, sight-reading and other comprehensive musicianship activities, announcements, and ending or teardown of class (Manfredo, 2006, p. 42). In Table 1, Manfredo shows how much time is frequently spent on each rehearsal activity during a fifty-minute class period.

Table 1: *Rehearsal Content* (“Effective Time Management in Ensemble Rehearsals,” by Joseph Manfredo. *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 93, No. 2)

<b>Rehearsal Activity</b>	<b>Time Allotment</b>	<b>Total Time</b>
Setup	:02	:02
Tuning	:03	:05
Warm-up	:06	:11
Rehearsal of performance literature	:30	:41
Sight-reading	:04	:45
Announcements	:03	:48
Ending rehearsal	:02	:50

Smith and Sataloff (2014), believe that the rehearsal should begin with a warm-up period. During this time, the warm-ups should focus on adjusting the voice from speaking to singing; aligning the body and freeing the breathing mechanism for the act of singing; to create physical awareness of the vocal mechanism being used correctly; and to stretch and exercise the skeletal muscles used in phonation (Smith & Sataloff, 2014, p. 22). Once the chorus has completed the warm-up period, they may then move on to rehearsing repertoire. Towards the end of the rehearsal period, the researchers also believe that a cool-down period should take place. This cool-down period allows the singer to transition from their singing voice back to their speaking voice (Smith & Sataloff, 2014).

### **Content and Pedagogy: What and How Choral Pedagogues Teach**

“Choral directors are in the business of shaping and building vocal instruments by the very way in which they give instruction,” (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p. 17). In

Corbin's (1986) widely acknowledged article, "Practical Applications of Vocal Pedagogy for Choral Ensembles," the researcher documented methods and practices that were found useful in six areas of a choral rehearsal: posture, breathing, tone quality, blend, intonation, and vocalizing. Corbin encourages erect and energetic posture. The head position should be moderately high with the chin in a normal position, and the crown slightly higher than the forehead. Shoulders should be down and back with hands at the sides, while hips and shoulders should be aligned with legs flexible at the knees, and feet slightly apart for balance and comfort. The following illustration is given to achieve proper posture:

1. Have the singers flop over at the waist and dangle their arms. Slowly come to the standing position, one vertebra at a time, bringing the shoulders up by the ears, and finally putting them down as the head comes up.
2. Have the singers lift the rib cage from the sternum by means of imaginary strings.
3. Have the singers raise their arms straight over their heads to feel the expansion potential of the spine, and while maintaining this raised feeling, allow the arms to descend to the sides in a controlled manner (Corbin, 1986, p. 5).

In Corbin's study, breathing was found to be one of the most challenging aspects to teach. The most common phrases heard by students while teaching the breath were "breathe from the diaphragm," or "support," but through further investigation, the researcher found that the students knew very little of what the phrases meant. Corbin

determined that to attain proper breathing, students should learn to breathe low in their bodies. To help accomplish this task, Corbin suggests using the following exercises:

1. Have the singers imagine a flat tire around their waist. Their job is to fill it up all the way around.
2. Panting like a tired or hot dog, tongue out and all will achieve contact with the diaphragm and may develop the connection sensation as well as train the muscles to respond to demand.
3. Use a real or imaginary straw and a sipping inhalation activity. This almost guarantees a low “belly,” breath.
4. Touching their own midriffs, backs, and ribs to check themselves (Corbin, 1986, p. 5)

To have a controlled exhalation, which is also part of the breathing process, Corbin provides a few game-like activities to consider.

1. Challenge the students to sing a familiar, reasonably short, song in one breath. Gradually the management skills will increase as all try to “win.”
2. Sustain a soft “hiss,” until it begins to wobble.
3. Sustain a strong hiss preceded by four short bursts, exhale the rest of the air, and wait (2-3) seconds. The body’s need for air should put the next breath exactly where you want it.
4. Blow out increasing numbers of distant candles, one at a time, with one breath (Corbin, 1986, p. 6).

When performing as a group, students come with various perceptions of beautiful tone quality. As choral conductors, it is essential to discuss and present concepts of ideal

sounds to students, whether through our voice or recordings of other choirs. Choral conductors should describe the tone needed when working on their repertoire and when an undesirable sound is produced, the conductor should discuss why the sound was unacceptable and how the sound can be improved (Corbin, 1986). When teaching blend in a choral rehearsal, it is helpful to find ways in which the students can hear the choir as a whole and their section as a part of the overall sound. The following suggestions are given to help understand blend:

1. Move the singers around. Try new configurations: quartet groupings, a big circle, singing while walking, or turning slowly in one spot.
2. Have them sustain the “bad,” vowel and gradually change it until they find the “right,” vowel and the immediate change in tone color and blend.
3. Ignore the text and substitute an appropriate syllable. Rather than ask for a brighter or rounder vowel, supply the means by which the singers can attain the goal.
4. Modify the vowel for range considerations in each section. Work for a unified vowel and present the model. Insist that the “dark,” voice produce a forward placement and that the thin, shallow voice use a deep and pharyngeal placement (Corbin, 1986, p. 7).

The fifth area observed during Corbin's study was intonation. To achieve good intonation students must have a firm foundation and understand the importance of proper breathing, free of tension, and vowel formation. To help students sing in tune, choral pedagogues can do the following activities to help with the situations mentioned:

1. An overly bright vowel may cause sharpening or lackluster tone. Singers producing such a sound may need to allow more pharyngeal and mouth space to diminish the effects of the teeth and misplaced resonance. Present a model of the desired vowel to initiate the desired change. Use flexibility vocalizes that incorporate jaw action promoting space and relaxation. Work on supplying more breath power to the tone.
2. Dark vowels may cause flattening as the high partials are muted and the sound is “swallowed.” A more forward sensation must be developed in these singers by altering their production. Humming, the yawn-sigh, or sustaining forward consonants (z, n, m, th) before a vowel will encourage these sensations.
3. Encourage individual identification with the text. Let the words be reflected in the faces as the meaning is internalized (Corbin, 1986, pp. 7-8).

Corbin finds that the most effective tool for the choral conductor is vocalizing. This time should be used to allow the singer to concentrate on their voices, posture, breathe and other parts of the choral rehearsal. Choral conductors should also use vocal warm-ups to help solve vocal issues that arise within the student's repertoire to help eliminate problem spots (Corbin, 1986).

More recently, Edwards (2003) presents vocal modeling as one of four ways of teaching students how to have an efficient vocal technique. By demonstrating a confident, well-supported sound, the choral conductor serves as a guide to help students broaden their sense of what well-balanced singing sounds like. For choral conductors who are not vocal performers or maybe a keyboardist, the use of excellent student examples from singers in the choir and well-chosen recordings and live performances could also serve as

tools in demonstrating vocal technique (Edwards, 2003). Farrell's (2010) article, "An Iconic Approach to Vocal Technique for the Teenage Chorister," presents exercises and thoughts to help choral pedagogues incorporate characteristics of proper vocal technique into the choral rehearsal. The five areas of focus in this article include posture, breathing, onsets, vowel shapes, and legato singing (Farrell, 2010).

Before warming up the voice, Farrell reminds the singer of the importance of warming up the body as the whole body is involved in singing. Two exercises for warming up the body are the massage train and chopping sequence. During the massage train, all students turn toward the right and massage the person in front of them, focusing on the student's shoulders and neck, as a majority of tension is held in those two areas. With increasing, blood flow to these muscles tension is released. Following the massage train, a chopping action is used. To make sure everyone, is included in the process, the students then turn to the other direction and repeat the massage and chop sequence (Farrell, 2010).

The next area of focus in Farrell's choral rehearsal is posture. Students are guided to have their feet hip length apart at a forty-five-degree angle firmly planted on the ground while making sure that their knees are not locked. Making sure to mention the idea of alignment is also crucial when discussing posture. To avoid creating tension in the body, Farrell stays away from using the phrase, "Stand up straight!" However, he does have his students think of hips being in line with the ankles and shoulders being in line with the hips. The idea of creating a noble posture by raising the sternum also gives the singer a sense of openness when singing. This can be produced by having the students raise their arms over their heads and gradually have them put their arms down. The arms



should be extended as they are being lowered. Through this exercise, students should experience a sense of a lift in the upper torso without having to push their chests out (Farrell, 2010). Concerning the rest of the body, “the head should be held neither high nor low but remain in the communicative position of normal speech,” (Miller, 2004, p. 45).

The next step to developing well-rounded singers in Farrell's process is understanding the four stages of the breathing cycle: inhalation, suspension, phonation/exhalation, and renewal/recovery. Farrell begins the inhalation process by addressing the feeling of expansion by asking them to hug themselves, making sure that their fingers are planted just beneath the base of their rib cages (Farrell, 2010).

Expansion is felt at the base of the rib cage, at the front and sides of the torso, between the tenth rib and the upper crest of the upper surface of the hipbone, and in the back at the eleventh and twelfth ribs. (Miller, 2004, p. 2)

For students who are unable to feel the expansion standing, should sit in their chairs, bending over, and placing their hands underneath their rib cage to feel the expansion as they inhale. Another option that seems to be the most successful given by Farrell is to have students lay on the floor, placing a book on their abdomens and ask them to try to raise the book as they breathe. A healthy breath intake should be silent, relatively quick and taken without shoulders being raised (Farrell, 2010).

The second stage of the breathing cycle, suspension, is when the diaphragm reaches its apex and then begins its descent. For a visual, Farrell uses a sheet and have the students raise the sheet as if they were sitting it down. For a short period, the sheet reaches its peak and then falls. As this process ends, the third stage phonation/exhalation begins. This is the process where the sound is being produced. Once the student has been singing for a while, they must refuel, which is the fourth step of the breathing cycle –

renewal or recovery. The fourth stage becomes the first stage of the breathing cycle and should not resemble the breath taken when blowing out a candle but relatively quick.

In any choral setting, Farrell believes that choral pedagogues should search for uniformity of vowel sounds. Farrell also considers *legato* singing in the chorus to be one of the most important concepts and illustrates this through analogies.

1. The first analogy is a telephone pole. The vowels in the telephone visual would be represented by the wires and consonants are represented by the telephone poles.
2. The second analogy could be a baton in a relay race. Athletes are trained to give quick handoffs to the next runner, much like consonants should be quickly handed off to the next vowel.

Mention of voiced and unvoiced consonants should also be mentioned, as voiced consonants can help with *legato* sound (Farrell, 2010, p. 46).

Weary (2011) states, “that teaching your choir the four basics (posture or body position, respiration, phonation, and resonance) can solve most problems found in a given choral rehearsal,” (Weary, 2011, p. 21). Incorrect posture can cause poor breath support which can cause phonation issues. To help students recognize proper posture in the choral student, Weary suggests that students check both their own and a “buddy’s,” posture or try placing mirrors in the front of the classroom to check their posture. Often, students will mirror what they see, so it is essential for the choral conductor also to demonstrate proper posture. Like Corbin (1986), Weary considers respiration (breathing) to be one of the most difficult to teach. An easy way to fix breathing issues is by making sure that the choral conductor is leading the group by example in good breathing habits. One exercise

Weary uses to create healthy breathing habits, is similar to Farrell (2010), which is having the students lie on the floor and placing a book on their stomach, moving it up and down. This exercise is seen to be beneficial as it does not require the student to fight gravity lying on the floor and they are learning to control their stomach muscles independently (Weary, 2011).

Teaching students to produce proper phonation should include the basic anatomy, which includes the power source (the vocal folds); the oscillator (the breath); and the resonator (the cavities within the head). Weary believes that students should also know that the lips, the jaw, and tongue are what determine the vowel sounds. Opening the mouth and having a relaxed jaw that is dropped will help the singer's phonation. In a group setting, Weary considers resonance to be the most challenging task to teach. Having a poor sound or lack of projection can be caused by poorly adjusted resonators. The main objective of resonance is for space to be created, allowing the sound to be amplified through the cavities (the mouth, the throat, and the nasopharynx) within the head. Weary suggests that humming is a basic starting point for most resonance exercises, along with sighing and yawning (Weary, 2011, p. 23).

Emmons and Chase (2006) provide in their text *Prescriptions for Choral Excellence: Tone, Text, Dynamic Leadership*, that it is the choral conductor's knowledge of vocal solutions to solving technical problems and that the director of young amateur singers must think for their singers (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p. 20). The two researchers first look at breath management in improving a singer's technical skills. Problems of pitch, tone quality, *legato*, onset, *melisma*, extreme ranges, and dynamics are each helped by good breath management. To help improve breath management, Emmons and Chase

believe that some part of the rehearsal should be reserved for teaching singers to manage their breath for singing and aims at maintaining or redeveloping the *appoggio* along with technique review ensures habitual use (Emmons & Chase, 2006, pp. 25-26).

The two also look at the difference between acoustical vowels and speech vowels noting that many issues come from their students being told to sing as they talk.

Acoustical vowels are harmonic with a specific pitch and encourage the vibrations of the vocal folds, unlike the information on the uniformity of vowels located in Farrell's (2010) literature. Emmons and Chase (2006) believe that using "pure," vowels can only result in vocal problems that weaken the singing of the choir. "Those who really understand the vowel issue...consider a pure vowel to be the one that delivers beauty, stable vibrato, resonance, and ease on that particular pitch," (Emmons & Chase, 2006). Based on the related literature, most of these studies rely on imagery. In vocal music, the use of imagery has often been used to replace technical terminology. Imagery works because the mind controls muscle movement and allows our body to respond to the signals they receive from the brain. When imagery is used in place of technical terminology, it is vital for choral conductors and voice teachers to know what happens as a result of the imagery, to be a useful tool. In contrast, imagery can also be ineffective, if it is not clearly understood by everyone (Apfelstadt, Robinson, & Taylor, 2003).

### **Choral Pedagogue's Preparation and Development**

In a study by Durrant (1994, 2003), the definition of an effective conductor was explored. The attributes of an effective choral conductor were narrowed down to three areas of focus: philosophical and pedagogical awareness, musical and technical skills, and interpersonal and leadership skills. Philosophical and pedagogical awareness

consisted of principles related to knowledge and understanding of how the voice works; knowledge of choral sound; awareness of the stages of children's and adolescents' vocal development; and awareness of the social, psychological and physical effects of choral participation on the individual. Musical and technical skills included good gestural vocabulary; good posture, and good aural and error detection skills. Interpersonal and leadership skills consisted of non-verbal communication (through vocal modeling and eye contact); encouragement/motivation; quality feedback; clear communication goals; enthusiasm; ability to work well with people and effective rehearsal pacing and planning (Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011).

Two studies conducted by Gumm (2004, 2007) showed that the choral conducting profession needs to establish a better match between teaching behaviors, teaching styles, and the standards in music within the choral classroom. In Gumm's 2007 study, the findings suggested that college students appreciated supporting teaching behaviors such as praise and positive feedback but also preferred not just to be told what to do but asked for their insights into the ensemble experience (Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011).

In a choral rehearsal, the choral conductor's job is to shape and build the students vocal instrument through their teaching. It is important for choral conductors to understand the vocal technique for the sound they wish their choirs to produce. Since the choral conductor's instrument is the chorus, conductors should also understand the functioning, capabilities, and weaknesses of the human voice in order to shape the raw material into something of beauty (Emmons & Chase, 2006).

Brunner (1996) provides fourteen characteristics of a dynamic choral conductor:

- is a thoroughly trained musician, possessing excellent musicianship;
- has developed the ability to hear;
- understands the workings of the voice and can model healthy vocal technique;
- is versed in style, historical and cultural perspectives, and performance practice;
- knows the score thoroughly;
- speaks clearly, precisely, imaginatively and inspirationally;
- knows how people learn and asks for specific tasks and measurable skills;
- reinforces a positive response from students;
- is physically coordinated;
- conducts clearly and expressively;
- plays the piano comfortably and confidently;
- is organized;
- possesses a musical imagination; and
- has a sincere enthusiasm for music, children, and teaching (Brunner, 1996, p. 37).

Jones (2008) believes that choral conductors should do the following in order to become more aware of the voice and to provide the knowledge necessary for choral students to grow:

- Study voice.
- Ask successful colleagues for help.
- Observe rehearsals of those who have great-sounding choirs.
- Sing in a great choir ourselves.

- Attend conferences and conventions that teach technique.
- Watch a skilled and experienced conductor build a choir's tone.
- Encourage members of the choir to study voice privately.
- Organize a voice class for the choir.
- Read the appropriate material in professional journals (Jones, 2008, p. 11).

### **Applied Voice Pedagogues**

In many smaller university settings, the choral pedagogue could also serve as an applied voice pedagogue. Hoch (2014) defines a voice pedagogue as:

A teacher of singing and that the most influential voice pedagogues are known to the international pedagogy community through presentations of their research and ideas via publications, conferences, and workshops. (Hoch, 2014, p. 193)

At the university level, a vocal pedagogue could serve as an applied voice instructor teaching one-on-one voice lessons, voice class, and other related voice courses. Like most choral conductors, voice instructors should also be a highly skilled vocal performer who is familiar with a variety of solo vocal repertoire, the ability to teach vocal refinement and technique, and knowledgeable in vocal pedagogy.

### **Applied Studio Setting**

Many music students, whether entering the field as a teacher, educator, or performer spend a significant amount of their time in the applied studio. For the applied studio, performing serves as the content area and all music students are required to have proficiency in this area (Parkes, 2010). In higher education, applied music instruction is often seen as the heart of the performance-based curriculum (Abeles, 2011). Hoch (2014)

defines a lesson as a one-on-one private session with a voice teacher, usually focusing on one or more aspects of vocal technique (Hoch, 2014, p. 100).

In Abeles (1975) study, the Applied Faculty Student Evaluation Scale identified three factors as instructional approaches in the applied studio: instructional skill, instructional systemization, and musical knowledge. Based on the scale, instructional skill consisted of the instructor's explanations were clear and concise, able to correct technical difficulties, and instruction beginning at the student's level of proficiency. Instructional systemization consisted of giving explicit directions regarding what to practice, choosing music that strengthens the student's weaknesses, and analysis as part of the approach to a new piece. Musical knowledge consists of knowledge of the repertoire, knowledge of different musical styles and performance practices, and knowledge of good performing editions of music in their field (Abeles, 1975, p. 150). In Duke and Simmons (2006) study, three nationally recognized artist-teachers were observed. Through this study, the researchers identified elements to consider goals and expectations, effecting change, and conveying information in the applied studio. In order to have an effective studio lesson, the following descriptors were provided as teaching behaviors:

- The repertoire assigned to students are well within students' technical capabilities; no student is struggling with the notes of the piece.
- Teachers have a clear auditory image of the piece that guides their judgments about the music.
- The teachers demand a consistent standard of sound quality from their students.



- The teachers select lesson targets that are technically or musically important.
- Lesson targets are positioned at a level of difficulty that is close enough to the student's current skill level that the targets are achievable in the short term and change is audible to the student at the moment.
- The teachers clearly remember students' work in past lessons and frequently draw comparisons between present and past, pointing out both positive and negative differences (Duke & Simmons, 2006, pp. 11-12).

Goffi (1996) also completed a study to “define factors or areas of teaching effectiveness as perceived by voice students,” (p. 96). While students begin their college careers with no or limited previous study (LeFevre-Milholin, 1992) two conditions were present during Goffi's observations: 1) limited ability to evaluate their [the student's] teachers due to little or no personal experience, and 2) an exaggerated concentration on vocal pedagogy. Because of these circumstances, Goffi (1996) was able to determine the limited number of student responses on their instructor's musicianship and musicality to the student's lack of experience and knowledge.

While researchers such as Abeles (1975), Goffi (1996), and Duke and Simmons (2006), look at the instructional behaviors of applied instructors, Miller (2011) looks at the successful singing teacher. By providing the following five principles, Miller ensures success in teaching the art of singing:

1. Teacher and student rapport – the instructor can convince the student that there is something of merit in what he or she does.
2. Diagnosis and prescription – the instructor, is able to suggest and justify to a student there is a better way of doing things than what is currently being used.

3. Specificity of language – the instructor can describe through precise language.
4. Efficient use of time – the instructor can communicate the specifics of vocal technique within the allotted time.
5. Measurable results – the instructor can develop a pedagogy that speaks to the student's needs (Miller, 2011, pp. 6-9).

Abeles (1975) study along with Abeles, Goffi, and Levasseur (1992) study both show that rapport in the applied studio is a significant factor when evaluating applied instructors. Rapport can be seen as 1) encouraging the student to express him/herself; 2) showing a genuine interest in the student outside the lesson; and 3) being patient and understanding (Abeles, 1975, p. 150; Abeles, Goffi, Levasseur, 1992).

Gaunt (2009) completed a study to determine the perceptions of twenty students in a conservatoire in the United Kingdom about one-to-one tuition. Students had various experiences in the applied studio setting ranging from having more frequent or longer lessons than others to having more than one voice teacher at the time. Students with more than one teacher recognized the importance this had on being in charge of their learning. Students with one teacher emphasized the level of trust found in their teacher. Based on the instructor's rapport with these students, evidence from the study showed that students invested a significant amount of time because they thought of the learning environment as being comfortable (Gaunt, 2009).

Kennell recognizes that the applied studio offers an opportunity to study the process of interaction between the teacher and student with little distraction. Because the instructor acts as a researcher during instruction, it allows them to collaborate with the

student and develop potential research questions in developing both the student and instructor, such as:

1. What is the best composition to assign to this student?
2. When is the best time to teach?
3. What is the best pace to deliver instruction?
4. What is the best way to teach this specific student?
5. Is the student's progress satisfactory?
6. How much responsibility should I allow the student?
7. What can I do to help facilitate learning? (Colwell & Richardson, 2014, p. 252)

### **Content and Pedagogy: What and How Applied Voice Pedagogues Teach**

A voice instructor's primary responsibility is to help singers build a solid and sustainable vocal technique that will serve as a basis for a lifetime of healthy, efficient, expressive, and beautiful singing. The voice instructor tends to address the most damaging habits early in studio teaching and becoming the guardian of the student's voice (Felipe & Hoover, 2007). The general practice of teachers of singing has been to teach by a trial and error method using imagery, without having any scientific basis for the method being used (White, 1961). White (1961) believes there are four fundamentals a teacher of singing should be able to teach in the voice studio: nasal resonance; open vowel production; registration; and deep breathing and breath support.

Miller (2000) believes that every singer's instrument should consist of a thirty-minute exercise daily. Though a singer may not cover most areas of technical skill within their repertoire daily, a series of vocal exercises should include onset, breath

management, agility, vowel definition, consonant articulation, *sostenuto*, voice registration and vowel modification, resonance balancing, range extension, and dynamic control as areas of focus. Once the singer has completed these exercises, then they can choose specific areas of technique to single out (Miller, 2000, p. 214).

When working with students in the applied voice studio, Chapman (2011) believes that pedagogues should use exercises that “contain strategies for voice development as well as correction of vocal faults,” (p. 243). For Chapman (2011), she has found it “useful for singers to have an exercise paradigm which does not initially involve vocalization,” (p. 244) but connects to the flow of breath and tidal belly wall movements. By using breathy tones and fricative consonants such as /s/, /z/, and /v/ rhythmically helps in drawing the connection to the belly wall movement (Chapman, 2011).

Another exercise designed by Chapman (2011) is the puffy cheeks exercise. While many singing teachers use semiocluded (partially closed) vocal tract exercises such as lip trills, the rolled “r,” and voiced fricative consonants such as /v/ and /z/, Chapman (2011) developed an exercise that uses a small /w/ shaped lip opening with the puffy cheeks which helps lift the soft palate and widen the pharynx. To produce this:

- gently inflate the cheeks and form a small /w/ opening;
- blow air gently through the opening maintaining air in the cheeks and in front of the teeth; and
- vocalize while maintaining this gentle airflow (Chapman, 2011, p. 250).

Including the puffy cheeks also allows for increased vocal fold contact, improved thyroid tilt, and improved breath management (Chapman, 2011). While these are just two examples of exercises used by Chapman (2011) she also encourages the use of *legato*

exercises as it helps to maintain both vowel clarity and *legato* between two notes; *staccato* exercises to find an ideal effort level for the upper ranges in all voice types; and yodeling to help female singers in accessing a very easy phonatory effort level in the middle registers (Chapman, 2011).

In Blades-Zeller's (1993) research study, a group of sixteen teachers was interviewed to investigate the vocal training of professional American classical singers. Based on Blades-Zeller's research questions, the vocal concepts that were considered to be important were: posture, breathe, tone, registration, diction, vowels, and tension. For each concept, the interviewees provided the researcher with strategies for teaching each vocal concept in their responses (Blades-Zeller, 1993).

Based on the data collected the following were considered common strategies agreed upon the participants:

- Proper posture is essential to good breathing and the first thing taught to students is a good singing stance (Blades-Zeller, 1993, p. 30).
- Encourage coordination for breath management (p. 37).
- Encourage the production of a free, resonant tone (p. 42).
- To establish evenness through the range, use certain vowels to aid the process or range extension exercises (p. 50).

Based on the responses of Blades-Zeller's (1993) participants, proper posture is demonstrated by having: 1) a stance that is buoyant and elastic; 2) the body feeling tall and elongated; 3) the body feeling centered and solidly rooted; 4) the torso not slumped or collapsed; 5) the ribcage feeling open and expanded; 6) the body alignment involving the spine, neck, and shoulders, with weight distributed to the feet; and the stance being

noble (p. 30). As for breath management, the participants in the study determined that: 1) breath management is a dynamic balance using air flow and a low base of “support”; and 2) breath management requires pacing the breath to the demands of the phrase (p. 34). In order to encourage coordination for breath management, it is suggested that the singer complete “*staccato* exercises primarily as breathing exercises to get the feeling and the coordination of the breath apparatus working,” (Blades-Zeller, 1993, p. 37). Also, completing voiced consonant exercises such as a sustained /v/ helps in recognizing breath management as it requires the “feeling of support,” (Blades-Zeller, 1003, p. 37).

Through Blades-Zeller’s (1993) study, tonal preferences were taught based on the vocal pedagogue’s likings. Some common concepts of tone included that: 1) tone is sensation-based; 2) tonal “core,” gives uniformity of sound and projection throughout the range; 3) tone results form good coordination of breath management, vibration, and resonance. Breath is utilized in tone, and resonance responds to a balance of breath and phonation; and 5) beautiful tone results from proper adjustment between the vibrators (sound source – vocal folds) and vowels (the resonance adjustment) (Blades-Zeller, 1993, p. 39). To accomplish the final strategy, establishing evenness through the range on Blades-Zeller’s list, it was noted how this concept interconnected with tonal resonance and registration adjustment. In order to address this concept, the following three points were made: 1) unification of sound results from equilibrium among such factors as the balance of breath pressure with intensity, laryngeal stability and resonance adjustment; and 2) a unified vocal sound seeks a blend or even “mix,” throughout the range of the voice (Blades-Zeller, 1993, p. 49).

In Bauer's (2013) book, *The Essentials of Beautiful Singing: A Three-Step Kinesthetic Approach*, the author provides a kinesthetic perspective that helps the singer learn how to fine-tune their singing based on terminology closely related to the language and sensations of the body (p. 15). Before approaching the three-steps to beautiful singing, Bauer includes a chapter on the importance of posture and how this element should be considered a precondition of fine singing. Often students are told to raise their chest and pull back the shoulders in order to have good posture. Though these two areas of the body may need attention when looking at the appropriate body alignment, it does not address the whole body (Bauer, 2013).

The alignment and balance of the skull are essential to good posture. To demonstrate proper posture, Bauer considers having the student stand against a wall. When standing against the wall the back of the head, upper back, and buttocks should all touch the wall. The ears, shoulders, hip bones, and knees line up as if a straight vertical line was drawn through them (Bauer, 2013, pp. 21-23). Once good posture has been identified Bauer (2013) moves into her first step which is Open Body and breath management.

By using the term "Open Body," it serves as a focal point for developing the kinesthetic experience of respiration for singing (p. 27). Unlike Farrell (2010), Bauer (2013) suggest that there are only two stages in the process of respiration: inhalation and exhalation. During the process of inhalation, the diaphragm and ribs are essential structures. When singing, singers often experience the lowering diaphragm and expanding ribs being "pushed," down and out (Bauer, 2013, p. 30). To be more aware of inhalation, Bauer provides the following exercise:

- Stand tall with a singer's posture.
- Loosely drop the jaw, as if beginning a yawn, so that your inhalation will flow smoothly through the open mouth and throat.
- Take a breath, beginning with a slight bulge of the upper abdomen, the outward manifestation of the diaphragm lowering.
- Almost simultaneous to the abdominal bulge, focus on the ribs. They should be lifting and expanding. Place both hands on the lower ribs at the sides as you breathe.
- Fill the lungs, the receptacles of the air, feeling the depth of the descending diaphragm and the width of the expanding rib cage (p. 31).

Controlling the release of air, exhalation, requires much of the same muscular efforts as in the inhalation process. To sustain long musical phrases, the diaphragm and rib muscles must maintain the actively contracted muscles longer. In order to sharpen the singer's awareness of the balance needed for maintaining body expansion and flow of breath, Bauer (2013) suggests to:

- Take a yawning breath while focusing on the Open Body. After the body is comfortably full, maintain the expansion of the body for several seconds while making a mental note of what you are doing to accomplish this. Maintain the efforts of inhalation – the downward thrust of the diaphragm and outward pull on the ribs – with no new muscular effort introduced. You will be holding your breath with an expanded body in a suspended, buoyant state.
- While maintaining the expanded and buoyant thorax, focus on what you are doing to maintain this position. Repeat the process several times, paying



attention to the sensations in the body when maintaining expansion after inhalation. These sensations should continue during singing and contribute to the kinesthetic experience of good breath management (Bauer, 2013, p. 33).

The second step in Bauer's (2013) process is identified as Open Throat and resonance. Although the pharynx, mouth, and nose are considered part of the resonators the author uses Open Throat to focus primarily on the pharynx. A proper inhalation is important to creating the Open Throat as well as the Open Body. The yawning breath is often suggested in voice studios because it encourages a comfortably dropped larynx, contributing to freedom in the vocal tract. To make sure the Open Throat is accomplished with inhalation, Bauer (2013) divides the exercises into five parts for this step: 1) posture; 2) inhalation; 3) consciousness-raising – observing the body at the peak of inhalation; 4) phonating/resonating on spoken tones while maintaining the openness in the body and the throat; and 5) phonating/resonating on sung tones (Bauer, 2013). To accomplish the fourth step – resonating on spoken tones, Bauer provides the following exercise:

- With a loosely dropped jaw, take the complete breath, creating both the Open Body and Open Throat. Hold it for a second or two for consciousness raising to establish the sensations of postural alignment and expansion.
- Next, without disturbing the open position of body and throat and using a sustained tone, speak “aw,” “ay,” “ee,” “oh,” and “oo,” on one flow of the breath.
- Though no particular pitch is used, think of the tone as being one continuous tone. The vowels should not stop or hinder the flow of the tone (Bauer, 2013, pp. 49-50).

To phonate and resonate sung tones on a sustained pitch:

- Make the preparations for the kinesthetic experience of good resonance (parts 1 through 3).
- Spend a moment on the singer's expanded position remembering to not let it falter when phonation begins.
- Sing "aw," "ay," "ee," "oh," and "oo," on one continuous pitch of choice in the middle range. Sing these notes as a single tone on which the five vowel sounds are not separated.
- Be sure that the tongue movements are as far forward as possible and that they do not impose on the throat space.
- Use a slow tempo to allow time to mentally observe the body and throat.
- Move the exercise up and down a few steps once some success has been achieved on the starting pitch, but still staying in the middle range of the voice (Bauer, 2013, pp. 51-52).

The final step of Bauer's Three-Step is Forward Articulation and Enunciation.

Being mindful of forward articulation reminds the singer to place vowels and consonants as forward possible to not hinder the resonance of the Open Throat and the flow of the breath (Bauer, 2013, p. 81). A tongue that often pulls back can interfere with forward articulation and resonance. To help with this Bauer suggest adding the consonant [l] before the vowel to help loosen the tongue. Quick and deliberate tongue movements can help relax undesired tension. Forward articulation can also be encouraged by placing a [p] before each syllable (Bauer, 2013, p. 73).

McKinney (2005) notes four areas of importance, for the singing student, in his text *The Diagnosis and Correction of Vocal Faults: A Manual for Teachers of Singing & for Choir Directors*. These four areas of focus are posture, breathing and support, registration, and resonance. When it comes to posture, McKinney (2005) states, “that good posture and good singing are strongly interrelated,” and this must occur before good breathing techniques (p. 33). In order to achieve “good posture,” McKinney (2005) believes that the singer should first “visualize the following descriptive adjectives in relation to your [the singers] own posture: buoyant, expansive, erect, alert, free-to-move, vibrant, flexible, poised, tall, loose, free, happy, balanced,” (p. 35).

Providing a detailed description of what good posture looks like, McKinney (2005) offers the following:

- The Feet. The weight should be evenly distributed between the feet, with the toe of one foot slightly in front of the other (p. 37).
- The Legs and Knees. The ideal feeling is that your legs and knees are freely flexible and ready to move at all times. The legs, trunk, and head should conform as nearly as possible to a vertical line from...heels up to the top of your head (p. 37).
- The Hips and Buttocks. The hips and buttocks should conform closely to the vertical line from your feet to your head. Neither hip should stick out, and the buttocks should be tucked under and forward (p. 37)
- The Abdomen. The lower abdomen is important to good posture, and the upper abdomen is important to good breathing. The lower abdomen should

feel as if it is being pulled in gently, while the upper abdomen feels free to move at all times (p. 38).

- The Back. When standing as tall as you can, there is a spinal lift or stretching sensation which is vital of good posture (p. 38).
- The Chest. The chest should be comfortably high at all times (p. 38).
- The Shoulders. The shoulders should be rolled or pulled back gently and then allowed to drop down until they feel as if they have settled into a socket (p. 38).
- The Arms and Hands. Your arms will hang freely and naturally at your sides (p. 39).
- The Head. The head should be directly in line with the body and centered on the shoulders (p. 39).

While these nine components are viewed individually, for good posture, they must come together and be the main part of the singer's daily routine. The second area focuses on breathing and support. McKinney (2005) notes that natural breathing has three stages: a breathing-in period, a breathing-out period, and a resting or recovery period. For singing, there are four stages: 1) a breathing-in period (inhalation), 2) a setting-up-controls period (suspension), 3) a controlled-exhalation period (phonation), and 4) a recovery period. While the inhalation period is the quickest stage during the breathing process during singing, the quantity of air inhaled is greater, and the breath goes deeper into the lungs than in natural breathing. When possible, the singer should breathe through the nose, so that it may complete its cleaning, warming, and moisturizing function. In

cases where the music does not allow enough time to breathe through the nose, the singer should breathe through the mouth and nose simultaneously (McKinney, 2005, p. 48).

While the suspension stage is not found in natural breathing, this stage is important for the singing breath as it prepares the breath support mechanism for the phonation which follows. When the suspension is done properly, it “insures an almost effortless inception of vocal tone without any major readjustments of the mechanism involved,” (McKinney, 2005, p. 50). The controlled-exhalation stage works in coordination with the vocal cords producing phonation. The length of this stage is determined on the musical phrase. When singing, the “breath should be conserved and released quite slowly, as the diaphragm gradually releases its tension and returns toward its original position,” (McKinney, 2005, p. 51). The final stage, recovery, takes place at the end of each breath allowing the muscles time to relax, before completing the process again (McKinney, 2005).

McKinney (2005) considers registration or registers to be a confusing topic as the terms describe many different things, ranging from: a particular part of the vocal range (upper, middle, or lower register); a resonance area (chest or head); a phonatory process; a certain timbre; and a region of the voice which is defined by vocal breaks (McKinney, 2005, p. 93). Based on these elements, McKinney (2005) defines register as:

A register in the human voice is a particular series of tones, produced in the same manner (by the same vibratory pattern of the vocal folds), and having the same basic quality. (McKinney, 2005, p. 93)

As all registers originate in laryngeal function, McKinney (2005) believes that “it is meaningless to speak of registers being produced in the chest or the head” (p. 94). Vocal registers are determined based on the vibratory pattern produced by the vocal cords.

McKinney (2005) recommends the vibratory form, modal voice which is the normal register for speaking and singing.

The final area of importance to be mentioned by McKinney (2005) is resonation.

McKinney (2005) defines resonation as:

The process by which the basic product of phonation is enhanced in timbre and/or intensity by the air-filled cavities through which it passes on its way to the outside air [with a result of making] a better sound. (McKinney, 2005, p. 120)

Two types of resonance presented by McKinney (2005) is sympathetic (free resonance) and conductive (forced resonance). In sympathetic resonance, there is no physical contact between the two vibrating bodies (vocal folds). In conductive resonance, the resonator starts vibrating because it is in physical contact with a vibrating body. When singing, McKinney (2005) notes that much of the vibration felt is the result of conductive resonance, as the vibrations created by the vocal folds travel along the bones, cartilages, and muscles of the neck, head, and upper chest causing them to vibrate (McKinney, 2005, p. 120). While these vibrations are being forced, McKinney (2005) considers these to be “good sensation guides for singers,” (p. 121), as they provide evidence that the vocal folds are forming strong primary vibrations.

### **Applied Voice Pedagogue’s Preparation and Development**

The term voice instructor and vocal pedagogue are often used interchangeably. For many, voice instructors can be viewed as those who help students in becoming better with pronunciation, phrasing, and performance practice. Vocal pedagogues can be seen as those who help to improve the technical usage of their student’s voices. As vocal music evolves, and composers begin to introduce music that requires different techniques and approaches it is essential for voice instructors to continue to expand their knowledge.

Doscher (1992) states that “an effective teacher of voice must know how the instrument we teach functions,” (Doscher, 1992, p. 61). As training opportunities for singing voice rehabilitation specialists continue to grow, Gerhard (2016) has provided a review of available university training programs, private training programs and mentorships, clinical fellowships, professional organizations, and conferences that are available to enhance the knowledge of teachers of singing.

In Blakes-Zeller’s (1993) study, the participants identified the following as ways of continuing their training outside of schooling:

- involvement in NATS, the Voice Foundation;
- attend conferences, master classes, musical performances;
- listen to recordings;
- read singing journals, vocal literature, current research; and
- teaching opportunities (Blakes-Zeller, 1993, pp. 76-77).

## **The Choral and Applied Voice Student**

### **Vocal Music Requirements**

Most university vocal music departments whether focusing on teacher education or performance require some work in the applied voice studio or choral setting during a student’s undergraduate studies (White, 1976). For example, many well-known vocal and choral institutions<sup>1</sup> require that their vocal performance and choral music education

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<sup>1</sup> such as Butler University (<https://www.butler.edu/>), Florida State University (<http://www.fsu.edu/>), Liberty University (<http://www.liberty.edu/>), The Julliard School (<https://www.juilliard.edu/school>), and University of North Carolina Greensboro (<http://www.uncg.edu/>)

students participate in applied voice lessons and a choral ensemble each semester until degree requirements are fulfilled.

## **Repertoire**

Whether performing in a choral ensemble or as a soloist, instructors of vocal music choose repertoire that will serve as a tool in helping the student grow musically. These choices could range from learning about vocal technique such as breath management (controlling the air being released from the lungs), phonation (sound being produced), and diction to reading notation or stylistic approaches. Brunner (1992) states that “the literature provides the foundation for a musical experience of substance and quality,” (Brunner, 1992, p. 29).

**Choices in the choral classroom.** Choral conductors select repertoire that meets the needs of a larger group; forms a reasonable program each semester; and provides a balance of opportunities such as style, language, or accompaniment for the members (Felipe & Hoover, 2007). Smith and Sataloff (2003) highlight that, in the choral setting, a group of singers come together with various levels of musical skills. Many may be able to read their repertoire at sight, while others depend upon imitation to learning their part. Therefore, choral singers who read music quickly tend to lead those with less skill. This habit causes the weaker singers to avoid the chance of training their ear and recognizing the desired pitch and vowel combinations and may also strain the more trained singer who may sing too loud to “lead,” the section.

In a study by Dean (2011), breath control, tone quality, intonation, rhythmic integrity, diction, and music literacy, were identified as criteria of pedagogical merit as the most fundamental characteristics of the choral music experience. The most essential



technique needed for artistic choral singing is an actively engaged breath. When selecting repertoire that will facilitate the advancement of vocal technique related to breath control, choral conductors should be reminded that efficient airflow, breath support, and breath management will provide support for beautiful singing. A unique characteristic of choral music is the various range of sounds created by choral ensembles. In every choral work studied, tone quality can and should be addressed. Resonance sensation, vowel formation, and imagination are the three elements considered essential to the development of tone quality (Dean, 2011).

Selecting repertoire that provides development of intonation in a choral ensemble can be difficult, as it is commonly considered the cause of musical problems. Developing intonation through audiation requires selecting repertoire that will build on previous musical experiences of the ensemble. Rhythmic integrity is an essential step towards quality choral singing when selecting repertoire. In choral singing, rhythmic integrity is primarily concerned with the ability to produce the same sounds at precisely the same time, rather than rhythmic complexity. The vitality of the rhythm significantly impacts the music-making process, including intonation, tone quality, blend, and diction (Dean, 2011).

The use of diction not only improves the delivery of text in a song but also improves the tone quality, rhythmic integrity, musical phrasing and overall musicianship of the choral ensemble. When selecting repertoire, it is important to consider how the work will assist in the development of vocal color through pronunciation, enunciation, and expressive intent of the text. Musical literacy should also be considered while studying the work. For an ensemble, development of comprehensive musicianship is

critical and can be achieved through a variety of choral techniques in the repertoire chosen (Dean, 2011).

Brunner (1992), provides three areas of focus when selecting repertoire for the choral singers: 1) know your singers; 2) know your objectives, and 3) know yourself. To plan repertoire that will be meaningful and challenging while also accessible and successful, being aware of the singers' ability, training, and experience is needed. The repertoire chosen should always help singers acquire specific skills, understandings, and appreciation during the learning process; and the conductor's lack of musical training or preference should not impact or limit the selection of repertoire (Brunner, 1992).

**Choices in the applied voice studio.** Voice teachers select repertoire that is intended to address the specific technical or artistic needs of an individual singer (Felipe & Hoover, 2007). Repertoire choice has a significant impact on the education of the student. For voice instructors, Nix (2002) provides four categories for selecting repertoire: physical limitations, voice classification, expressive/emotional factors, and musicianship skills. Physical limitations look at the age of the student, the length of time the student has been studying, and the individual technical problems the student is experiencing. These three factors are important as the voice instructor must know what state the singer's instrument is in developmentally, how long the student has been training his or her muscles for the act of singing, and what techniques the student has covered over the time of their studies.

Voice classification takes into factor the pitch location of register bridges in the singer's voice, the tessitura of the voice, the timbre of the voice, and its range. When selecting repertoire, the voice instructor must have accurate information about the

location of each student's register bridges. Assigning repertoire that requires the student to work through the bridge can be more effective choices as the muscular stability and endurance increases. Vocal timbre is often important in determining sub-classifications within a voice category. When assigning repertoire, voice instructors should not assume that a darker timbre is a lower voice type or that a bigger voice is necessarily a heavier voice. When looking at the range, the voice student should not only be able to sing all the notes in the piece but should also be able to approach the notes in the manner in which the composer intended (Nix, 2002).

Expressive and emotional factors look at the emotional maturity of the singer, the singer's temperament or personality, and the singer's personal preferences as to styles of music and poetry. At the age of eighteen, a student may not be able to draw upon life experiences adequate to understand and fully appreciate repertoire that a fifty-year-old singer would. However, an eighteen-year-old and a fifty-year-old may find a set of love songs equally enjoyable, although offering very different perspectives on poetry. Through observation, a voice instructor can identify repertoire that matches the student's maturity, personality, and personal likes and dislikes. Musicianship skills look at the ability of the singer to convey the composer's instructions precisely and to deliver the text clearly. For a beginning voice student, repertoire with a predictable melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, and articulation may be best (Nix, 2002).

### **Joining Together: The Applied Voice Studio and Choral Classroom**

It is agreed that many choral conductors and voice instructors share a common goal of wanting students to become better vocal musicians. Although the applied studio

and the choral rehearsal do not operate in the same manner as the other, they both include paths to a shared goal (Felipe & Hoover, 2017). As soon as applied music departments became part of colleges and universities, instructors found that choral conductors lacked the knowledge of vocal pedagogy than voice instructors (Emmons & Chase, 2006, p. 18). By building a collaborative future, choral conductors and voice instructors can build a strong connection in the service of their singers. Elements of a new collaboration can include providing an honest appraisal of professional and amateur vocal opportunities; modeling openness to the role of strong applied and ensemble study in singer's lives; committing to best practices in the studio and choral rehearsal; and practicing sensitivity in our interpersonal, workplace relationships (Felipe & Hoover, 2017).

The goal for any choral conductor and voice instructor is to build a rapport that will allow both to do their best work as a team. Building a good relationship can begin by merely relating on a personal level. Felipe and Hoover (2017) provide the example of stopping by a colleague's office when a spare moment allows, without any specific agenda or to seek guidance on a vocal issue as a great way to open the door for communication. Also, relating to a professional level by recognizing a colleague's identity as an artist or scholar also sends an important message of support and worth. Making an effort and developing an awareness of a colleague's work helps demonstrate important behaviors for other colleagues and students (Felipe & Hoover, 2017).

One practical way of demonstrating communication and collaboration among choral conductors and voice instructors is by inviting colleagues into each other's rehearsals or lessons. Choral conductors are encouraged to invite voice instructors to the choral rehearsal by asking them to lead vocal exercises, coaching the choir from a vocal

perspective while the choral conductor continues to conduct, rehearsing the choir from the podium themselves, coaching soloists, or covering rehearsals on special occasions. Though inviting the voice instructor to be featured on a concert is common, this is always a positive effort towards teamwork. Voice teachers may also consider inviting the conductor to the applied studio as a coach in repertoire that involves ensembles. Choral conductors can also share their perspectives on things such as music learning, interpretive process, ensemble singing in opera, and performance practice (Felipe & Hoover, 2017).

Choral conductors, voice instructors, and singer's cooperation are essential for all involved. Conductors are in a position to refer choral singers to appropriate voice teachers by developing a relationship with their voice teachers, seeking advice, and being open to their insights about the vocal health or development of their students. Voice teachers should establish a conversation with choral conductors whom their students sing or might sing with (NATS Visits AATS, 2005). Smith and Sataloff (2003), propose that:

Every singing teacher in an ideal world would be affiliated with a choral organization, acting as a consultant on vocal matters whenever possible. To advise students wisely, singing teachers should be acquainted personally with the choral conductors within their department. Voice instructors and choral conductors must work together to assure the vocal health of students of singing. (Smith & Sataloff, 2003, p. 238)

When students are part of the collaborative process, they often find themselves investing more energy. Apfelstadt, Robinson, and Taylor (2003) suggest that:

By communicating among ourselves about voice part assignments, about repertoire, and specific trouble spots; having students take a particularly challenging spot to the applied studio; having the voice instructor work on a problematic spot, or simply being flexible and open to discussion with our colleagues leads us all towards the right direction of communication and collaboration. (Apfelstadt, Robinson, & Taylor, 2003, p. 33)

## Summary

Based on the literature provided in this chapter, previous research shows that there is some disagreement still among choral and vocal pedagogues about vocal and rehearsal knowledge. This literature also shows that researchers have been investigating topics of how instructors of singing teach, the content covered, and the instructional process of choral and applied studio settings for over sixty years. One of the first issues recognized in the choral literature is the separation of rehearsal structure and pedagogy.

While discussing the choral rehearsal setting, researchers Brunner (1996), Cox (1989), and Manfredo (2006) all provided detailed explanations of how a choral rehearsal should run. What was lacking from their description is the mention of vocal technique. The researchers provided no details on the training and development that should occur during the learning process. Researchers such as Corbin (1986), Farrell (2010), Weary (2011), and Emmons and Chase (2006) were reviewed to determine where choral pedagogues stand regarding their teaching methods. Although each of these researchers considered posture, breath support, and resonance to be just a few important factors of making beautiful “healthy,” singing possible, each researcher detailed different approaches on how they taught these skills to their students.

For example, Corbin (1986) mentions the use of isolated breathing exercises during her teaching. Though Corbin (1986) is a dated source, many still use and consider this approach to teaching breath support a good source. When working on breathing to activate the valving of the vocal folds completing isolated breathing exercises like those mentioned by Corbin (1986) are not as helpful as making sounds. This can be observed as the singing breath may require more intake and release of air than normal speech when

vibrating the vocal folds. Corbin (1986) also goes along to provide four methods of teaching blend in the choral setting. In the four exercises provided, it is assumed that the singer is already adept at using their voice. As choral pedagogues, many conductors recognize that they will not always have well-trained singers in their choir. The exercises provided by Corbin (1986) are exercises that many young singers are probably not able to do.

In the research provided, we also find that there can be agreements among pedagogues but when the pedagogues describe in detail what they expect it is incorrect. For example, researchers Farrell (2010) and Weary (2011) both agreed that the exercise which called for the students to lie on the floor and place a book on their stomach, moving it up and down helped to control their stomach muscles was beneficial during the learning process for breath management (Farrell, 2010; Weary, 2011). Because a person can move the stomach without breath, others may disagree that this exercise would help recognize the flow of breath.

Whether a choral conductor chooses to use the illustrations by those mentioned in this literature review or their own, the research informs instructors of choral singing that many approaches are being used to achieve the same goal, but also many approaches misused. While the literature on applied voice pedagogue's methods and approaches seem slim, this could be because teaching in the applied voice studio is too individualized to put into a textbook. By reviewing the study completed by Duke and Simmons (2006), the three elements: goals and expectations, effecting change, and conveying information in the applied studio can be viewed differently based on the voice instructor and the student that they may be working with at the time. Due to misconceptions like those

mentioned here, it is crucial for choral and applied voice pedagogues to recognize and be aware of the teaching strategies of others in helping to develop healthier singers.



## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore with a sample of participants their perceptions of how vocal students adjusted to the choral and applied voice studio settings during their undergraduate studies. The researcher believed that a better understanding of this subject matter would allow educators to proceed from a more informed perspective in terms of choral and applied voice studio teaching and build on to the literature already published. In seeking to understand this area of focus, the study addressed four research questions:

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?
2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize a healthy singer?
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students?
4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?

As seen in Chapter II, a considerable amount of literature can be found on the pedagogue's approach in a choral setting than in the applied studio. Very little specific information can be found on how choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues define and work towards producing what they consider a healthy singer. In order to

determine how choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize healthy singing and work towards developing these students, a qualitative method approach was utilized. Qualitative research is suited to promoting a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, pp. 7-8).

This chapter describes the study's research methodology and includes discussions around the participants and setting, procedures, pilot study, instrumentation, research plan, plan of analysis, and data collection.

### **Participants and Setting**

Participants for this study were selected from a purposeful sample of choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues who are active in the field of vocal music education and music performance. To approach the question from the perspective of helping choral and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and develop teaching strategies for healthy singing, it was expected that participants meet the following criteria: (1) completed a graduate level degree, (2) taught at least five years in their respective field (choral, applied studio, or both), (3) teach higher education in music, and (4) considered as nationally recognized choral pedagogues or applied voice pedagogues by organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). It was determined that a minimum of six participants (three choral pedagogues and three applied voice pedagogues) would be chosen from a larger pool of approximately 30 voice pedagogues. To answer research question four, one undergraduate student from each pedagogue's choral ensemble or

applied studio was chosen based on the recommendation of their teacher. Students selected must have more than one-year experience with their respective instructor, in their sophomore to senior year of studies, and participated in a choral ensemble, applied voice lesson or both at the university. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants.

The setting of the research for this study occurred at universities in the United States, which are described only by location and a pseudonym. The institutions selected are located in Washington, DC, North Carolina, and Virginia. All pedagogue interviews and observations took place in person, in the rehearsal or lesson space of the participants' institution. Student interviews took place once each pedagogues interview and observation were completed in person or through Skype based on the student's availability.

### **Procedures**

Succeeding the review of the literature regarding choral conductors and applied voice instructors' settings, content and pedagogy, and training, the research design was produced to assure a truthful qualitative study. Following a successfully advanced dissertation hearing, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from Teachers College, Columbia University was sought. Potential participants were then contacted by email (seen in Appendix A and C). Those participants willing to participate as part of the study were given an Informed Consent form (seen in Appendix B and D) to be signed and returned to the researcher before any data collection.

The first step in collecting data consisted of the pedagogues completing a participant survey (see Appendix E) which included questions related to gender, age,

race, and education. The second step included individual interviews of choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes, providing 6 – 10 hours of interview data, and held at the pedagogue's institution. Once the interview was completed, the researcher then observed each pedagogue's choral rehearsal or applied studio lesson to gain further data. Each choral rehearsal or applied studio lesson lasted one to two hours, allowing 6 – 10 hours of observations to be recorded and documented. The final step included individual interviews with selected students. Student interviews lasted no longer than 60 minutes in length.

### **Pilot**

A pilot study was conducted to determine if the research questions supported the purpose of the study. Research and interview questions were created during the course, Interview Data and Analysis (A&HM 5199), at Teachers College, Columbia University. At the time of the pilot study, the following three research questions were tested:

1. What do choral directors and applied voice instructors consider appropriate technique when teaching vocal pedagogy and the vocal mechanism to students?
2. What do choral directors and applied voice instructors define as appropriate technical voice terminology in their teaching?
3. How can communication between choral directors and applied voice instructors enhance their teaching and the student learning environment?

Two university choral conductors, with experience in both the choral ensemble setting and applied voice studio setting, agreed to participate in an in-depth interview that included the following interview questions:

#### Research Question 1

- Tell me about your educational background and training.
- What percentage of time do you find yourself working with individual voices?
- What are some tools you find useful for students as they discover their voice?

#### Research Question 2

- What are the most important vocal issues you deal with as a choral conductor/applied voice instructor?
  - Can you define those for me?
  - How do you refer to those when speaking with a student?
- What are some tools you find useful for students as they discover their voice?
- What do you believe makes up a good vocal sound?
  - How does that “good vocal sound,” change if you were singing in a choir compared to solo?

#### Research Question 3

- What do you believe is your role as a choral conductor/applied voice teacher?
- In the applied studio, how much time do you spend addressing choral technique?
  - Alternatively, the differences between choral and solo singing?
- What percentage of time do you find yourself working with individual students in a choral rehearsal?

- What do you believe we as voice faculty could do to improve communication amongst our voice colleagues?
- What factors play a part in the lack of communication between both choral conductors and voice instructors?
- How would you describe the communication between the voice faculty within your institution?

Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes and was audio recorded. A transcript of both interviews was returned to the participants for review. Based on the data provided, three major areas were developed for review regarding the research questions for this study: methods of teaching, communication among colleagues, and thoughts of choral and solo vocal music.

By completing the pilot study, the data showed that even though both participants use different methods in their teaching approach, they agreed that teaching and improving vocal technique is a process. For voice instructors to align their process of teaching, the participants also noted the importance of communicating and sharing information on vocal techniques used, student progress of mutual students, and other resources among their colleagues. The pilot study also shed light on the observed disservice to students when voice instructors are not knowledgeable of choral and vocal pedagogy.

Based on the data provided, the pilot study suggested that there were some areas of revision needed to improve the main study. During the time of the pilot, the problem statement suggested that due to the lack of proper technical terminology used in vocal teaching, students were hindered from knowing how the voice functions. With the structure of this purpose statement, it showed the perception of the researcher, instead of

explaining how instructors have adapted their teaching strategies based on the student's needs. Also, during the pilot study, no applied voice pedagogues were used during the interview process. Though both participants taught in the applied studio setting, they are considered choral directors or pedagogues as a majority of their training and teaching experience is in the choral setting. This showed bias to applied voice pedagogues, causing the researcher to include both choral and applied voice pedagogues in the main study.

The interview questions used in the pilot also provided broad answers from the participants. The questions could be refined and directly to the heart of the purpose of the study to help receive the data needed. With minor revisions of the purpose statement, research and interview questions, and the inclusion of both applied voice and choral pedagogues the pilot study supported the direction of the study and methodological choices.

### **Research Plan and Instrumentation**

Over two months, three forms of data were collected. These forms included surveys, semi-structured interviews, and observations. Surveys consisted of questions related to the participant's gender, age, race, and education. Interviews with both pedagogues and students lasted approximately 45 to 90 minutes and followed a semi-structured format allowing the participants to give their perceptions of the topic being discussed willingly. Using Trint, an online tool, interviews were then transcribed and edited for accuracy. Each participant had the opportunity to read the transcription and notify the researcher of any deletions or mistakes to withdraw from the study's final

findings. The researcher then sat in and observed both the choral rehearsal and applied studio lesson of each participant lasting one to two hours each. Video recordings also took place to allow the researcher to review and give detailed notes of each setting.

With these three sources of data collection, it was possible to witness through observations that: 1) choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues are not doing what they say they do in their respective setting; 2) the researcher may find there is more in common than realized between the pedagogues; or 3) a new perspective may be learned from the student's perceptions of their training. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), completing qualitative interviews allows the researcher to: 1) understand the meaning of the central themes of the subjects' lived world; 2) seek knowledge as expressed in normal language; 3) encourage the subjects to describe as precisely as possible what they experience and feel and how they act; 4) exhibit openness to new and unexpected phenomena; 5) focus on particular themes; and 6) observe whether the subjects change their descriptions of, and attitudes toward a theme (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, pp. 32-34).

### **Plan of Analysis & Data Collection**

The purpose of this study was to explore the teaching strategies choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues employ to developing healthier singers.

Therefore, the following research questions were examined:

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?



To focus the research on this research question, the following points were covered:

- education and training,
- and performance experience.

Data for this research question was collected through pedagogue interviews and surveys. Interview and survey questions were comprised of:

- Tell me about your education/training.
- Describe your learning experiences as a voice or choral teacher.
- What experiences outside of the classroom have helped you develop as an instructor of vocal music?

2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?

To focus the research on this research question, the following points were covered:

- posture,
- breath support,
- tone quality,
- registration,
- and resonance.

Data for this research question were collected through observations and interviews. Interview questions consisting of the following helped to enhance observation video data:

- How would you describe a healthy singer?

- What characteristics make up a healthy singer?
  - Tell me about the vocal abilities of your students.
  - What exercises do you find useful in developing healthy singers in your rehearsals or lessons?
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students?

To focus the research on this research question, the following points were covered:

- Organization and structure,
- planning and goals,
- and communication and rapport.

Data for this research questions were collected through the following interview questions:

- Talk me through a voice lesson/choral rehearsal. How is it structured?
  - What portion of the rehearsal/lesson do you spend more time?
  - How did you develop the pacing of your rehearsal/lesson?
  - How do you choose the repertoire for your students?
  - Describe the rapport between you and your students.
4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?

To focus the research on this research question, the following points were covered:

- Characteristics,
- learning experiences,
- and teaching methods.

Data for this research question were collected through student interviews and observations. Interview questions consisted of the following:

- Tell me about your musical background.
- How long have you studied with your choral/applied studio professor?
- Describe your learning experiences as a choral/vocal student.
- How would you describe your singing?
- What characteristics make up a healthy singer?
- What teaching methods do you find useful from your instructors (choral and vocal) in becoming a healthier singer?

The research questions will be addressed through a triangulation of pedagogue's interviews, student interviews, and observations of choral rehearsals and applied voice lessons and shown through the form of a multi-case study. Case studies were chosen as the design of this qualitative research as case studies include a detailed examination which will be done through the choral and applied voice pedagogue's conceptualization and strategies used in developing healthy singers in their teaching. Gillham (2000) defines a case study as:

One which investigates [an individual, a group, or community] to answer specific research questions and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, evidence which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers to the research questions. (Gillham, 2000, pp. 1-2)

Researchers in a variety of professional and practical domains use case studies as a way of conducting and disseminating research to impact upon practice, and to

refine the ways in which practice is theorized. Case study methodologists stress that teachers are always teaching some subject matter [healthy singing], with some particular learners [the students], in particular, places [choral rehearsals and applied voice lessons] and under conditions that significantly shape and temper teaching and learning practices. (Freebody, 2003, p. 84)

With the literature of case studies in mind, it seems most appropriate to use case studies as the method of choice. According to Wiersma and Jurs (2009), the purpose of multi-case studies is for comparative reasons, so that the results can be compared and contrasted which will be done with the six cases shown in Chapters IV and V. Table 2 shows how the researcher plans to seek answers to the study's research questions. Interview responses and notes of observations were analyzed and compared to determine the similarities and differences of each pedagogues teaching methods and perceptions of healthy singing. The data was then coded into categories allowing major themes to emerge.

Table 2: *Research Questions, Data Collection Instrumentation, and Analysis*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Data Collection Instrumentation</b>	<b>Data Analysis</b>
How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedagogue Survey</li> <li>• Pedagogue Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribed</li> <li>• Coded</li> </ul>
How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedagogue Interview</li> <li>• Rehearsal/Lesson Observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribed</li> <li>• Coded</li> <li>• Field Notes</li> </ul>
What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues when teaching students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedagogue Interview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribed</li> <li>• Coded</li> </ul>
What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in producing healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Interview</li> <li>• Rehearsal/Lesson Observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribed</li> <li>• Coded</li> <li>• Field Notes</li> </ul>

### **Ethical Considerations**

As researcher of this study, it is the sole responsibility of the investigator to be concerned with producing an ethical research design. Due to the material that would be presented through the form of interviews and observations, the researcher has considered and taken heed of the issues involved (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In order to gain the participants, trust, following approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the participants voluntarily agreed to participate by signing the Informed Consent and Participant's Rights forms before interviews and observations. While committed to keeping confidentiality of the participants involved pseudonyms were used for all. The data received was stored on the researcher's password protected personal computer, and not available for access by any other individual.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

In this study, issues of trustworthiness with regards to credibility (or validity), dependability (or reliability), and transferability were considered. In order to increase the study's credibility, member checks of the participant's interview transcriptions and case studies were completed. Dependability of the study was strengthened by presenting the data in a thorough manner through individual case studies of each participant pair.

While the study provides a precise illustration of the experiences of the six pedagogues and their students, the participant size does not represent the choral and applied voice population. However, transferability may be shown if the reader determines that the findings are relevant to their own context through the thorough accounts of the

strategies, steps, and knowledge of the participants in this study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

### **Limitations and De-limitations of the Study**

Qualitative research allows the researcher to present a deeper understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participant while emphasizing exploration, discovery, and description (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). By using a case study method, the reader is provided with a detailed description of a setting [choral classroom or applied voice studio] and its participants [choral pedagogues, applied voice pedagogues, and students], that was created by an analysis of the data for themes, patterns, and issues (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1995). Although pedagogues who teach in both a contemporary and traditional style, in both the choral classroom and applied voice studio, were recommended to participate, this study does not provide an analysis of the different types of choral and applied voice pedagogues that may be found at the university level.

Data for this study were collected during a fixed time, allowing the researcher to obtain a brief account of not only the student's vocal abilities but also the pedagogues teaching strategies and approaches used in the choral classroom or applied voice studio setting. While the student's musical abilities and pedagogues teaching strategies may be appropriate for the period of the study observed, it may not represent the pedagogues teaching abilities or students vocal abilities throughout their university training or teaching. While the data collected may be transferable, this study does not provide a

complete evaluation of the teaching strategies for all pedagogues of singing or vocal abilities for all singers.

Finally, while the researcher intends to portray the practices of choral and applied voice pedagogues and their students understanding, the researcher acknowledges his own bias of choral and applied voice teaching. Through his background and training, the researcher can understand the participant's experiences that have been collected through interview data. While interviews are used to help gain a deeper understanding of the participant's knowledge of teaching choral and applied voice repertoire, the researcher acknowledges that interview questions can produce a different response based merely on the delivery of the question.

## Chapter IV

### CASE STUDIES OF CHORAL PEDAGOGUES

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to study and analyze the strategies and methods used in the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio that may help in developing young, healthy singers with three choral pedagogues, three applied voice pedagogues, and their students. While the choral rehearsal focuses on group vocal techniques and the applied voice studio on individual techniques, the researcher believed that a better understanding of the methods used in both settings would allow pedagogues of vocal music to examine their teachings and help design methods that could be used in both settings to encourage healthy singing for their students. In order to shed light on the purpose of this study, the following research questions were asked:

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?
2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students?
4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?

This chapter provides detailed portraits of each case of the three choral pedagogues interviews and their students, as well as from observations made by the



researcher during their choral rehearsals. The choral participants in this study consisted of three choral pedagogues at the university level and one student from each choral ensemble from institutions located in Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. The pedagogues were selected based on their level of education, years of teaching experience in the field, currently teaching in higher education, and considered as recognized pedagogues by organizations similar to ACDA and NATS. Their students were selected based on recommendations from their instructor. All names are pseudonyms.

### **Case Study 1: Emily and Kaitlyn**

#### **Pedagogue Description**

Emily is a full-time faculty member and director of choral activities at a southern public university with a student population of nearly 31,000. Emily's position entails conducting the university chorus and directing the symphony chorus with the local orchestra. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, a Master of Music in Choral Conducting, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting. Emily is a well-respected choral director as her university chorus has performed at the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Conference as well as Carnegie Hall.

#### **Pedagogue Background**

Before her current position, Emily held several jobs both in and out of the educational system such as director of orchestras in Massachusetts, Maryland, Georgia, and Illinois, a university conducting professor at several institutions, and a choir and drama teacher at an independent college preparatory school in her hometown. The music

program where Emily currently teaches provides four choral ensemble experiences: 1) a small auditioned soprano and alto treble voice ensemble; 2) a small auditioned mixed voice ensemble; 3) a large mixed ensemble open to all students, and 4) a large auditioned mixed voice ensemble. Music majors and non-majors may audition to participate in one of the select ensembles of the university. The small auditioned mixed voice ensembles are student-led and coached by Emily weekly.

The symphony chorus is open to students and people around the community, ranging from the age of 15 to 82, all of whom contribute to a combination of strengths from vocal and rhythmic strengths to positive energy. Emily finds ways of making individuals feel valued by reminding them that they are a “collection of strengths, so that [the] 30-year-old doesn’t get frustrated by the 82-year-old but understands that the 82-year-old has been there since the first day of the chorus.”

Emily describes her education as being “steeped in the Robert Shaw tradition of singing,” as she began singing with him at a very young age and one of her former instructors served as an assistant to Shaw. Though her undergraduate training in vocal performance did not follow Shaw’s pedagogy, it aspired “towards excellence with an academic bent and a focus on large choral-orchestral works.” According to Shaw, his tradition during the choral rehearsal is to, “save the human voice,” by avoiding “wear,” on the voice “when learning notes.” Shaw encourages teachers of choral singing to develop an approach that teaches pitch, rhythm, and text with minimal use of vocal effort. Shaw also insists on using a method that “makes it impossible not to hear, recognize and correct errors of pitch, rhythm, and text such as count singing or use of nonsense syllables,” during the rehearsal (Rehearsal techniques, 1978).

Besides her educational training, teaching experiences, and participation in professional development workshops, Emily has other non-musical opportunities that have made an impact on her method of teaching. Since Emily had been “really good at music for a really long time,” she searched for something different that would challenge her, taking on martial arts. With this athletic undertaking being out of her norm, she found that martial arts taught her it was okay to fail, as she had never done anything athletic before and reminds her students that failing is not a bad word. She also believes that attending professional development is an excellent opportunity for music educators to go out and learn information, as “we [choral pedagogues] must feed our own souls.”

### **Rehearsal Observation and Interview**

Now in her choral rehearsals, Emily sets out to help her students find ways of learning the “inside,” of a piece of music through the way she structures the rehearsal. For example, when learning a piece of music Emily says, “We don’t just plunk notes. We build it up,” which Emily describes as:

I do soprano II and tenor II because they have some similar parts together or they’re in thirds. Then I can point out things to them, and that way I also don’t end up having to talk a lot and everyone is involved somehow. So, I like pieces that somehow will give them the opportunity if they so choose to dive into a bigger work and to learn about a different composer. So, if they want, they can find out a little bit more about that. It is not just a random octavo.

Emily experiences her own vocal issues, specifically a cyst on her vocal cords that have never been treated. When she is tired or does not treat her voice well the cyst swells not allowing her vocal cords to close completely. This personal experience contributed to her definition of a healthy singer, which is:

Someone who takes care of their body. Someone who is mindful of how they use their voice outside of class. I think a lot of the problems that the students have,

have nothing to do with the amount of singing they're doing. It has everything to do with the amount of not singing that they're doing. A healthy singer is someone who is smart. For example, I have to tell my first sopranos to sing down the octave a lot. You can't do that if you aren't thinking. And so, they have to be smart enough to look ahead to know how to sing something down the octave. To know what a low B-flat sounds like and a high B-flat. And so, that's smart.

Emily also believes that a healthy singer is led by someone who allows the students to sing.

To ensure that healthy singing is being produced in Emily's choral rehearsals, she considers the warm-up to be one of the most critical periods of the day. Doing warm-ups that she believes are "nice, easy, *legato* exercises," provides the students with the "opportunity to focus on the vocalism as opposed to just trying to scream out some notes," and "helps the intonation of the sound later on." As seen in Appendix I (Emily's Basic Warm-Ups), she does not have a wide variety of warm-ups, as the "focus should be on the technique and not having to learn something new." However, she shares taking a warm-up that has been used and varying it slightly can often help accomplish a task that needs to be covered.

Emily's seventy-five-minute chorus rehearsal takes place in the recital hall which is found on the second floor of the music building. Formerly a church, the music building has been renovated and designed to support the needs of the music faculty and students. Upon entering the recital hall, the chorus students pick up their chairs and set up the stage for rehearsal, which includes moving the black grand piano, conductor's podium, and music stand into place. Sitting in the shape of a giant horseshoe the choir sits from left to right: sopranos, basses, tenors, then altos with the shiny black grand piano in the middle.

During the warm-up, Emily spends a little time discussing how students should distribute the weight between their feet and will include some form of stretching to help

recognize body alignment. On this particular day, the rehearsal began with Emily leading the students through a forty-five-second stretching exercise. The exercise included hands over the head leaning left to right to stretch the body, left arm across the chest followed by the right arm, stretching the upper half of the body from the waist up by twisting left to right, and ending with rotating the head from the left to right shoulder and back to the front.

Asking the students to face forward, Emily then moves into breathing exercises. To help students become aware of their breath, she uses her hands moving them from the front of her stomach to her side to represent breathing in and pushing them forward to show the release of air. Doing this a few times, Emily then moves into a hissing exercise which requires her giving the students a certain number of beats to indicate how long the hiss should last. Conducting the students to begin hissing, Emily holds up her fingers to represent the number of beats left. Doing this on five, ten and thirteen beats, she ends with seeing how long the students could sustain the hiss without breathing.

Rather than just talking about breath support, providing students with exercises and opportunities to practice and apply breath support is important to Emily. Occasionally, Emily will bring straws to rehearsal and have the students do straw phonation exercises. She will also have the students take in a breath while holding their ribs to see if the ribcage will stay out while singing to create an awareness of the breath. Another exercise, not used during the observed rehearsal, is having the students pair up, facing each other. The students then grab the hands of their partner, take in a breath, and during the release of the breath they pull away from each other still holding hands. The sensation from the pull allows the students to recognize the amount of air being used

during the hiss. For Emily, she has found that exercises like this have helped many of the students who have issues with breath support.

The warm-up plays a significant role in Emily's rehearsal, especially when discussing tone quality to her students, as this is done during that time, including:

You're going to sense a pattern. I try to do stuff in the warm-up that encourages good tone quality. That encourages learning how to breathe for the high note when starting on a low note. Learning how to narrow the vowel as you get higher. Learning how to match your vowel. Learning how to form your vowels.

Moving into vocal exercises, Emily begins with the exercise seen in Figure 2, reminding the students beforehand that she would like a steady stream of air throughout the entire exercise. Beginning on A major, Emily moves the exercise by half steps ending on F major.



Figure 2: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

Getting an F major chord from the accompanist, Emily sings a lip trill moving from the dominant to the tonic demonstrating how she would like the exercise to be sung. Before having the students sing, she reminds the students to have more support around the diaphragm and less tension around the neck and jaw. The exercise descends to A major. Using exercises to help build and recognize tone quality, Emily has the students sing moving from vowel to vowel on a sustained pitch based on the hand signals learned. This helps to recognize the position of the tongue or mouth and its relation to the tone

being produced. Emily has the choir hum the first pitch, which is D4 for the upper voices and D3 for the lower voices. While still humming, she then holds up her hand showing hand signs indicating the choir to switch to a long /oo/, /oa/, and /aw/. While focusing on vowel matching, intonation, and listening to each other, the exercise ascends to F5 for the upper voices and F4 for the lower voices. During this particular visit, the music building had issues with its cooling system. To help keep the choir's energy up, Emily altered her next vocal exercise, seen in Figure 3, to help the choir not think of the heat in the room and to help their intonation. To keep the energy going, the students also moved their hands in a circular motion in front of their stomach with their hands moving in an up and downward motion with the /z + o/ at the end.



Figure 3: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

After ascending by half steps for the fourth time, Emily switches the /z + o/ to /z + oa/ and back to /z + o/ two more times.

The next exercise, seen in Figure 4, begins on A major and ascends by half steps with Emily ending an octave higher. Occasionally providing hand signs for the vowels, she would have the students change the ending vowel from /o/ to either an /oa/ or an /e/.



Figure 4: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 3*

For just a short period, approximately thirty seconds, Emily takes the students through a quick solfege exercise in which the students sing the pitch while she provides the corresponding hand signals. The final vocal warm-up involves the students working on half steps, whole steps, minor thirds, and tritones. Given the beginning pitch of an F#4 with the lower voices singing an octave below, the students sing through the exercise seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 4*

After ten minutes of vocal warm-ups, Emily moves into rehearsing the choir's repertoire. Reminding the students that their job is to obsess and keep her from obsessing, she would like the students to focus in on areas where she would typically spend much time cleaning up. Based on the academic year, Emily often chooses the repertoire for her choruses, but the repertoire can also be chosen for her when the ensembles are



participating in a collaborative project with another chorus, the local symphony, or the ballet company. When planning the chorus' university performances, the repertoire can be based on either a theme or an objective that Emily feels the students should work toward or need to accomplish. Emily makes sure to introduce them to four categories: a major symphony work, repertoire based on social justice, *a cappella* works, and medieval repertoire, particularly for students who participate in the chorus for several years. While it is easy to choose repertoire that she enjoys, Emily realizes that she cannot do that. The repertoire must be something that the students can learn from and are capable of performing.

Beginning their first piece of the rehearsal, "Let All the People Rejoice," by Handel, Emily asks that the choir speak the rhythm while having the accompanist play the piano accompaniment along with them. After completing that section of the piece, Emily has the choir sit, except for the basses. Taking the tempo slower, the basses sing through the section focusing on the accuracy of pitch and dynamics. Having the basses sit, she asks for the basses to obsess on the text and how they will approach the high E's throughout that section.

After, Emily has the tenors stand and sing through the same section of music. Stopping over halfway through, she comments about the tenor's approach to a C#4, reminding them to make sure they are prepared for the note ahead of time. Emily tells her students that it is okay to sing in their head and chest voice every once in a while, especially when approaching notes such as those that the tenors are singing, saying:

I think that's the phase, using the warm-up for that. Trying to encourage women that it's OK to sing in your chest voice every once in a while. How to teach the guys to access their head voice. If there's a piece that we're going to work on that has a lot of that, and when we get past the note-learning stage, we do a lot of F

major for the whole chorus. The guys up in the lady's register and then go down, and they get to practice seeing how it breaks. And then they get to practice figuring out how to access that later. So, again, it's all in the warm-up.

After going back through that section of the music, they sit, and Emily tells them to “obsess,” over crisp dotted eighth and sixteenth notes. She then moves to the lower female voices, which she calls “bottom ladies,” and has them sing through their part while the remaining choir hums along. Arriving at the end of the section, she has the lower voices focus on going from their upper range to the low D called for in the piece. Moving on to the “middle ladies,” Emily has them sing their part. No corrections or areas to focus on were given to this particular group. For the “top ladies,” Emily reminds them to breathe before their high F# as the sound was not as “warm” as it could have been demonstrating what she would like to hear. Having the entire group stand, they sing through the entire section. Providing them with feedback, she asks that the group have more confidence on the bottom of page five, reminding them that if they are confident only one of two things can happen, success or delay. One student makes a remark and the group along with Emily, bust out in laughter, as she makes a joke about failure.

Although Emily describes herself as being different from her other choral colleagues, this shows that there is a good sense of rapport among her and the students in the choir. “Coming from the Shaw tradition where you show up, you work, you're done, and you go home,” Emily believes this makes her different from other choral conductors as she does not talk much. In the few years, she has been at the university; she has discovered that this was a big transition for many of the students, especially those coming right in from high school.

I'm not one where people come in and cry and tell me their problems. I'm their professor. I'm not a therapist. I'm not their mother or their best friend. And I think

particularly with females and with choral leaders, people get attached to them because the music makes them attached to them. And because they see me as someone helping them to learn this great music, I'm someone who feeds their soul, but it's not me who feeds their soul. And so, I'm probably looser than others, but I think they respect that.

After singing through the section rehearsed and the remainder of the piece, Emily gives the group thirty seconds to sit and write in their music whatever they need to work on and "obsess," about, while she walks around and provides individual and group comments to students. Moving to their next piece composed by Elgar, Emily has the students stand in a circle formation to rehearse this piece. After giving their first note, she tells the choir to sing on solfege, as she moves to the middle of the circle to conduct. Singing through the entire piece, Emily has the group take a second to fan themselves with the music due to the heat and begins to break down the repertoire into sections of importance.

Beginning with soprano II's, Emily reminds the remaining sections to make sure they have the correct rhythms and solfege. After correcting one measure for pitch accuracy Emily adds the soprano I's, letting them know that it is okay to take the B-flat down an octave for now. Once singing through the section with all sopranos together, Emily gives a note to the soprano I's to either sing a section of the music down the octave or in the range notated, singing the section as an example for the ladies to hear.

Moving to alto I's, they sing through a small section of their part on solfege, adding tenor I's. Stopping the two sections partway through, Emily tells the group that she would like to review the first page and have the tenors come together more for support as they sing through the section again, this time with all the altos. She provides feedback for the altos to stress the rhythms, especially during the learning phase. Adding

tenor II's, Emily has all the altos and tenors sing through the section of music. Not making it to the end of the section, Emily stops them and has the tenor II's work on the accuracy of pitches.

Once that has been done, Emily has the altos sit while she has the tenor II's and bass I's sing through together, eventually adding bass II's, and finally everyone again. Getting approximately two measures into the section, Emily stops the choir and lets them know to ignore dynamics and *legato* so that the group can focus in on where each section has significant changes or come together. Having the choir sing through the section rehearsed with the guidance of the piano, Emily asks the group to sing through one more time without any help from the accompanist.

Continuing to learn the four following pages of music, Emily has the bass II's remain standing while the other voice parts sit to work on their part on solfege. Adding bass I's, Emily asks the other sections to begin humming their part to make sure they know it, eventually adding all tenors and basses to sing through together. Once Emily has finished working with the gentleman, she begins working on the same section with the female voices beginning with alto II's. After going through with the alto II's for the first time, Emily makes sure that all altos are aware of the rhythms in one of the measures asking alto I's to follow along closely while she continues to work with the alto II's.

Solidifying four consecutive pitches with the alto II's, Emily asks the alto I's to stand and join them, and the remainder of the group take a second to fan themselves with their music due to the hot temperature in the room. Continuing, the altos are asked to sing through their section together while the sopranos speak the solfege softly along, eventually adding the sopranos combining all female voices. While going through a

smaller section of the music with the sopranos, Emily stops to correct pitch issues that are occurring with a B-double-flat, describing it to the singers as an “upper blue note neighbor,” to the A-flat, having the entire choir sing the exercise seen in Figure 6, to understand better and sing those pitches.

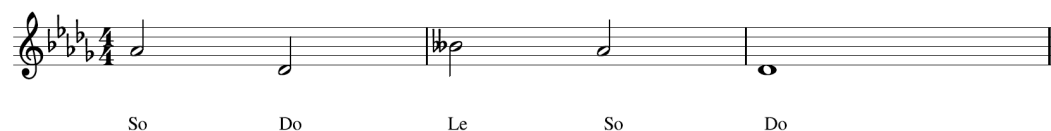


Figure 6: *Recognizing the Pitch Exercise (Emily)*

Once the sopranos can sing the pitches without being hesitant, Emily continues having all the ladies sing with solfege while the gentlemen hum their part. After the ladies have sung together, Emily mixes up the voice parts and has the entire choir sing from page eight to the end of the piece with the guidance of the piano. Mixing up the group one more time, Emily then has the choir sing the entire piece *a cappella*, swinging side to side to keep the beat. To finish up rehearsal on the piece, the students gather together in their sections to discuss what they need to work on as a group, while Emily checks in to see what each group has discussed.

To bring the groups back together, Emily does a hand clapping exercise where the students clap back the rhythm heard and build to it. To finish up the rehearsal, the students stand and sing the “National Anthem,” that they will perform for an upcoming event. Emily gives details about the event and what music to look over before the next rehearsal. The students stack their chairs, move the piano and the conductor’s podium to the side of the stage, and the rehearsal ends.

## Student Interview

Kaitlyn is a junior Vocal Music Education major at the university and sings in the choir with Emily. Before her education at the university, Kaitlyn's music experience started as a violinist. It was not until her sophomore year of high school that she joined the chorus and began singing making her a part of the choir, marching band, and orchestra, "basically doing everything to be a part of music." As Kaitlyn began applying for universities, she then decided that she would study voice. Since her freshman year at the university, Kaitlyn believes her studies have helped her grow into the competent musician she is today. "I've certainly grown a lot. I've learned a lot about how my voice works and how to use it as an instrument because I never really realized how much goes into doing it until I got here," Kaitlyn says. While working on her studies at the university, Kaitlyn not only sings with the choir but takes applied voice lessons and often serves as a substitute singer for churches in the area.

For Kaitlyn, it is posture that "sets you up so that you're able to keep your ribs open and it helps the breath move efficiently." When the body is collapsed during singing, Kaitlyn believes that "you can't support your breath or your singing." By participating in the choir with Emily, Kaitlyn recalls times where Emily will ask them to sit on their "sitz bones." By using the analogy of the "sitz bones," or what Emily considers "alternate feet," when sitting serves as a sign for the students to remain tall. Kaitlyn also remembers times where Emily will "stand up like Wonder Woman," on her feet which reminds the students that their feet should be beneath their hips.

When a singer lacks breath support, Kaitlyn thinks that the tone begins to collapse. While the singer may be producing sounds, she believes that it is inefficient and

loses the musical ideas of the composer “having to breathe every two measures.” For Kaitlyn, it is during the warm-ups that Emily tends to discuss breath support. One of the exercises that Kaitlyn loves, which was also described by Emily, is where the students pretend like they are tugging, similar to a tug-of-war with her, having the students pull an imaginary rope one way and the director pulling the other direction. Not knowing exactly how this works, Kaitlyn believes that “it really engages the breath.”

Continuing to show how one technique hinders another, Kaitlyn mentions how breath support impacts tone. When looking at tone quality, “if you don’t have the right tone quality it’s not going to sound like your singing,” according to Kaitlyn. “If you aren’t using your breath efficiently and you let air escape in your tone, you have unfocalized air, and that’s not the tone quality you want.” Connecting tone quality with vowels, Kaitlyn thinks about how Emily, will put both hands together in the shape of an O and close them into a fist. This hand gesture is used to suggest that Emily wants the tone darker. When it comes to the tone of the sound “it really just depends on what we’re singing, and she’ll [Emily] tell us exactly what she wants.”

Reminded of a recent choral rehearsal, Kaitlyn describes a connection to vocal registration stating:

We were singing, and the altos were trying to not use so much of our chest voice just because of the way the line was going. But she was like don’t be afraid to use chest there, and she says, “Oh, give it power.”

Noticing that Emily likes to relate vocal techniques to something that the students can relate to, Kaitlyn remembers how Emily will use Dove chocolates as an example. When Emily wants the sound to be rich, she will use the Dove chocolates as a comparison to the sound, even though “she’s talking about the chest [voice].”

When singing with others in a choral setting, Kaitlyn feels that “you need to let your resonance be known so you can voice a choir,” as each singer has different resonance and different timbres. “If you’re not resonant, no one is really going to hear you.” Kaitlyn can recall Emily telling the choir that they are “a choir of singers,” meaning that while Emily may want the choir to sing together, instead of thinking of the word blend, which Emily hates according to Kaitlyn, she wants the overall chorus to sing with their solo voice.

For Kaitlyn, much credit is given to Emily for her healthy singing habits, considering that:

A healthy singer uses proper technique. All of these components: posture, breath support, all of that. Knowing when to mix and knowing when to use chest. They take care of their bodies, so, they’re just a healthy person which means they eat like you’re supposed to eat, and they get enough sleep and drink enough water because that’s part of singing too is just being healthy and taking care of yourself. Also, knowing when to not sing, which is really difficult for singers.

## **Case Study 2: Ryan and Kimberly**

### **Pedagogue Description**

Ryan is a full-time professor at a private university in the south with a student population of roughly 15,000. Teaching choral conducting and the university’s Chorale, Ryan holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Music, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting. Ryan, who has been awarded for his contribution to the field of choral music, also serves as the founder and director of a highly acclaimed select choir of the community which has performed for the ACDA national convention.

The university’s Chorale serves as the main group of the music department, composed of 50 singers who are primarily non-music majors. While considering himself



blessed this year, for having “a group that seems to sing as a group with really good intonation,” he acknowledges that his ensembles will never have the sound of a choir like St. Olaf’s but, “they sing with a lot of heart,” and “with a lot of understanding of the music.” Making sure that his students are aware that although he wants the music to be correct, he does not want it to be boring, he has found this to be achievable. Once students can “engage their imagination, their hearts, their souls” to the music, they are then able to “offer engaging, honest, human red-blooded music that touches people.”

### **Pedagogue Background**

Ryan, who is seen as a sought-after choral conductor, does not consider his conducting courses as the most meaningful part of his educational studies. Instead, he describes his educational training as “life in the choral rehearsal,” watching other conductors, and participating in other choirs such as those of William Steinberg, Eugene Ormandy, Sergio Lozano, and Leonard Bernstein, as the most influential part of his learning.

Studying with the same instructor for his Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctorate, Ryan gives much of his knowledge on choral conducting to this one gentleman, whom he considers legendary. While working on his Doctorate, Ryan became good friends with a music history professor at the university who spoke with him and informally taught him things such as how to look at music, how to imagine music, and how to search for the composer’s intent. These conversations offered Ryan “insight and a curiosity and a hunger for probing deeper and deeper into music.” Although many of Ryan’s students may not be interested, this is what he instills in the students participating in his choirs.

### **Rehearsal Observation and Interview.**

While Ryan considers himself “slow at choosing repertoire,” he makes sure that his students have some fair historical picture of what is offered in the world of choral repertoire, which consists of both sacred and secular music ranging from Renaissance to contemporary. While trying not to program performances with one piece after another, he looks for textual themes and connections in his repertoire that will push his singers.

Determined to challenge his students, Ryan must also think about ways of continuing to teach healthy singing in his choral rehearsals.

I tell the choir in various ways that what I’m hoping for from them is as little tension as possible. Now, you can talk about tension so much that it just creates more. But I think the sound I’m looking for is quite open. With my undergraduates, one of the challenges is to get them to sing with enough depth, enough openness, and enough breath support to have a lively sound that’s got depth and richness and openness without forcing it.

For Ryan to accomplish his definition of healthy singing in his choral rehearsals, he may ask his students to change something, such as the shape of the vowel or complete vocal exercises such as panting, yawning, sighing, or sirens to help achieve the desired sound or improve a vocal technique.

Though Ryan considers himself not the best singer, a good amount of the work comes through “emulation of sound and having the students produce as close as possible the desired sound.” Using vowels such as /ee/ and /e/. Ryan believes that keeping the “roof of the mouth arched up, tongue down and out of the way, and back of the throat open, then allows the energy to be generated from the diaphragm.” With this in mind, “and a little modeling gets us pretty close,” Ryan describes.

Ryan’s two-hour rehearsal takes place on the lower level of the music building in one of the recital halls. With raised floors, Ryan can stand in the front of the room and

see the entire choir evenly as they sit from left to right: sopranos, altos, tenors, then basses. On this particular day of observing Ryan's rehearsal, he begins by introducing his newest student of the choir. Realizing that not everyone has met, he has each student stand and introduces themselves to the class, ten at a time. As an exercise, after each group of ten has said their name, he has the whole class go back and repeat the names to see if they can remember them. Once everyone has been introduced, Ryan introduces the accompanist of the choir and informs the students that because he does have a difficult last name, it is okay for them to call him by his first name, although he does not encourage it.

Following introductions, the choir stands and begins with back rubs for approximately sixty seconds, splitting the time with their neighbors. After students engage in stretching which consists of the arms, shoulders, and neck, the choir completes humming and siren exercises on their own, and eventually move into group raspberries when instructed. This hum, which is completed during the time of stretching, is used to have the chorus focus on the flow of air being used while adding pitch into the exercise. Occasionally, Ryan will change the hum to a sustained /s/ or /z/ sound, or even a long /oo/ or /ah/ while still having the students focus on connecting the breath to that small, steady stream of air. While Ryan may not take much time out of the rehearsal to discuss posture with his students, he does make sure that his students are aware of their posture. Identifying areas of tension and working on releasing as much tension as possible is done during this time. If issues with posture arise throughout the rehearsal, Ryan makes sure not to call out individual names, especially towards the beginning of the year, but will

make comments such as, “shoulders back and down,” or “put your chin down and don’t hunch forward,” or just a general “check your posture.”

While moving the focus of the rehearsal to the breath, Ryan has the group do a hissing exercise, asking the group to take a breath when needed. Having the hiss represent the “volume of the sea,” dynamics moving from *piano* to *forte* and back to *piano*, similar to *messa di voce* (the gradual swelling and diminishing of the vocal tone) are used (Elson, 1909). Ryan continues the breathing exercises by moving into panting for a short period. While not trying to come out and say that he wants to work on breath support, Ryan will make sure that the exercises, such as the sustained /s/ are used to engage the breath. Often mentioning that he wants to work on the breath will cause students to take their focus away from something else.

Moving into vocal exercises, Ryan asks the group to sing an A. Not given the pitch from the piano; the students sing the A on an /o/ matching the note given later. Asked to sing with a deeper and more open /o/ sound the choir sings it again. Moving into the next exercise, Ryan demonstrates the exercise shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7: Ryan’s Warm-Up Exercise 1

As the warm-up continues to ascend by half steps, Ryan stops the group and ask them to let the /oa/ enclose the shape of the /o/ so that the openness will align between the two vowels. Continuing with the exercise, Ryan reminds the students to use the /oa/ as the

model and to sing softer, going up eight half steps and back down exchanging the /b + o/ for /b + ee/ and /b + e/.

The next warm-up exercise involved the students singing “1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1,” on the corresponding pitch of the given scale degree. Given a B-flat, the choir begins the exercise. Stopping the choir after the second time through, Ryan mentions that there are certain vowels that we speak in English but do not sing in classical music, speaking about the /u/ when pronouncing one. Demonstrating how he would like the sound to be, Ryan has the group begin again paying more attention to their use of vowels. The final warm-up exercise is seen in Figure 8. Stopping the choir after the first attempt, Ryan reminds the group to keep the lower pitch light, similar to the top as the vowel is too dark, demonstrating the sound he wants. After ascending a few half steps, he has the students add in hand movements in a bouncing motion to represent the buoyancy and lightness.

Do mi so do so mi do. Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah.

Do mi so do so mi do. Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah.

Figure 8: *Ryan's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

Preparing to rehearse their first piece of music, “Grace Before Sleep,” by Susan LaBarr, Ryan reminds the choir of how the voice parts will split: soprano I’s and tenors on the top note, soprano II’s, and baritones on the middle note, and altos and basses on the bottom note. Ready to start singing, the choir stands, the first note is given, and Ryan brings them in. After singing through the entire piece with guidance from the piano, Ryan

asks the question, “Who sings the third on the final chord?” Answering tenor II’s, Ryan makes the point that the remaining sections must balance with the tenor II’s so that the pitch can be heard.

Having the students sit, Ryan begins the discussion of how the choir can become better singers through this particular piece of music based on listening to them sing. Ryan mentions first that “you mustn’t break breath the first time before you sing,” encouraging the students to breathe in a rhythmic manner designed to fit the phrase that they are singing. Secondly, Ryan mentions that because the melody consists of several leaps the choir should work hard on having an even color across all those notes, demonstrating how it should not sound. Thirdly, he asks that the choir anticipate the next note being more obvious with the breath so that the audience can feel the connection of the text being presented. Finally, Ryan stresses the importance of cutoffs and consonants making sure that they are together in time and pitch. Based on what Ryan has offered to the group, he asks that the choir stand and try singing through again.

Ryan is “very interested in different kinds of tone for different musical styles.” While he may not use actual words to get his point across in the type of tone he desires, he attempts to show this through his body language and demonstration. Often, he will label bright as one, dark as ten, and say things such as, “give me your brightest nastiest high school sound,” labeling that as a one. He will then say, “now give me a really dark swallowed sound,” labeling that as a ten, and assigning a number for the sound that he wants in a particular piece of music or section of music. Ryan will also use non-vocal descriptors such as “feel like the winds blowing through that,” or “seem like you’re terrified,” to help the choir focus in on tone color.

When it comes to vocal registration, Ryan likes to have “a smooth transition and to keep the color as consistent as you can from top to bottom.” To help keep this smooth transition, Ryan uses exercises such as sirens as mentioned during the beginning phase of the warm-up period. For the men, this allows them to move through their *falsetto* and feel where the shift takes place. When going into a higher register, Ryan will tell the men to “move into head voice or a mixed voice,” but making sure that if it is something they cannot sing or too high to not sing it.

Having the sopranos and altos begin the piece, Ryan listens closely. Getting to the section of the piece where the tenors and basses join in, Ryan stops the ladies and reminds them to watch for cutoffs as the /t/ at the end of the word was not together and that two of the vowels, /ee/ and /e/, were not sung as well during the piece as they were during warm-ups. Highlighting those two things, Ryan asks the ladies to sing again continuing this time. Making it partway through the piece, Ryan stops the group again to look at their dynamic choices and what the composer has asked for in the piece. Continuing, Ryan periodically stops to make the students aware of not breathing between words or to discuss how the overall choir can make the piece more beautiful, with one student mentioning phrasing.

After achieving the phrasing and stress of the section being rehearsed, Ryan moves into rehearsing another smaller section with the soprano I's, alto I's, and tenor I's. Stopping the students to make them aware of dynamic markings, Ryan has the group start the section again complementing them on their excellent work so far. Continuing to stress dynamics, Ryan jokes with the choir about not having a *diminuendo* in his music, as the volume gradually got softer with the lower pitches, saying that “the challenge is coming

down in your voice higher to keep the volume full as you go down.” Reminding those upper voices that they are the melody that matters, he adds the remaining sections.

During Ryan’s explanation of healthy singing, he mentions keeping the mouth arched open, tongue out of the way, and back of the throat open which helps in allowing space inside the mouth and opportunities of shaping the vowels to produce the desired sound. When it comes to resonance, this is what Ryan is talking about. Demonstrating and naming what he wants from his singers helps, as well as saying things such as, “put a little more focus into that,” or “I hear you do this /o/ (darker sounding) and I’d like to hear /o/ (with more brilliance to the sound).”

After singing the section with the entire choir, Ryan then asks the choir why the composer wrote the longer notes in the upper voices. Stating that there are no right answers, students give their reasoning, one mentioning the line and another mentioning the opening and warm sound of the vowels. With one student asking exactly how the /o/ vowel in the section should be sung, Ryan demonstrates and has the choir perform the section again continuing. Stopping occasionally to mention cutoffs and to ask for more warmth in the lower voices the choir makes it to the end of the piece. Rehearsing the final cutoff of the word *night*, Ryan reminds them to watch and demonstrates how he will conduct the cutoff. Joking with the students he does exactly what he says he would not do, and the room bursts out in laughter.

Answering a few questions from students with areas of concerns, Ryan works out those sections and then asks the students to get into their mixed group formation to sing through the piece in its entirety. Having to stop for some wrong notes, Ryan mentions the importance of looking ahead and knowing what is coming and later stopping to discuss



the metric stress as the basses are accenting the /f/ in the word *grateful* that Ryan does not want to be accented. Making it to the end of the piece Ryan compliments the choir on their excellent work of the piece.

About 70 minutes into the rehearsal, Ryan gives the students a break where his student assistant comes up to give information on the choir retreat and talent show that is coming up along with fitting ladies for their dresses. Based on the discussion of the retreat and talent show, it shows that Ryan is one who enjoys seeing his singers having fun and not failing to see the humor when something does not turn out the way it should have. “I’m a great believer in humor as a way of bringing out the little child in us,” Ryan says. Whether Ryan has students who are taking the class for credit or no credit, he wants to send students away from the school who sees the choir as a “microcosm of life.”

That means knowing how to get along with other people, how to compromise, how to share, how to find common goals, how to work together towards something that you couldn’t begin to do alone. Self-sacrifice. Discipline. Just on and on and on.

After the 10-minute break, Ryan moves into the second piece that he will spend the last 40 minutes of rehearsal time: Josquin’s “Ave Maria.”

### **Student Interview**

Kimberly is a junior at the university who sings in the Chorale with Ryan while pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering, a certificate in Aerospace Engineering and hoping to receive a Minor in Music. She began taking private voice lessons in sixth grade and continued through her twelfth-grade year. In her hometown of Connecticut, Kimberly also participated in a local children’s choir for nine years, the middle school choir, and the high school choir and an *a cappella* group. After graduating from high school and

beginning her studies at the university, Kimberly chose to stop taking voice lessons due to time and expenses. With joining the University Chorale and working with Ryan, Kimberly feels that this experience would help her to keep up with her technique in terms of vocal health and choral singing. Kimberly now serves as the conductor of a student-run *a cappella* chorus on campus.

Kimberly feels that she has significantly grown as a singer:

There have been times where I go from a two-hour chorale rehearsal to a two-hour *a cappella* rehearsal which can be draining on my voice. But doing this sort of longer rehearsals have helped me to learn how to better manage my voice and taught me how to use breath control and volume control to better be able to withstand longer periods of singing.

For Kimberly, it is through Ryan's warm-up practices that healthy singing evolves helping "inform how I sing during those rehearsals and has helped me to think more conscientiously about how I'm singing in all of my rehearsals." It is the incorporation of movement, diverseness, and approach of different syllables and articulation of the warm-ups that Kimberly finds beneficial in warming-up in a more full-bodied manner.

Considering posture to be an essential aspect of singing, Kimberly is reminded that when students are sitting during choir rehearsal, Ryan has them sit on the edge of the chair. A majority of the time the choir stands "which in turn helps with having a good posture that can sometimes become a little lazy when sitting." Ryan also shows great use of modeling as he models the "good posture," that he is expecting from his students by having lifted shoulders and not slouching. When the posture begins to fail, Ryan "kindly points out whether groups of people are slouching to enforce good posture," according to Kimberly.

Kimberly also notices that breath support is usually mentioned and worked on during the warm-up period of the rehearsal. In order to warm-up the diaphragm:

He often demonstrates proper breath support by breathing deeply moving his hands down to kind of help visualize what a deep breath versus a shallow breath would look like.

Two exercises that Kimberly recalls from Ryan's rehearsals to help with breath support are panting and occasionally yawns.

With only being a couple of months into the school year, the first few choral rehearsals were more about sight-reading than learning music. Now that the chorale has a better understanding of their repertoire they are "really getting into fine-tuning their blend and talking more about matching tones with each other," as the first concert was quickly approaching. For Kimberly, tone quality is introduced in the rehearsal by having:

Us sing really like back in our throat or really dark. And then he has us, essentially, go through the spectrum all the way to really nasally and bright and explore the different tones the group can produce. And when we're singing our repertoire, he remarks whether it should be brighter or a bit darker.

Kimberly says that there is one exercise in particular that Ryan uses during his warm-ups that have helped her when singing on her break which is sirens. Given specific instructions "to make sure that the siren goes smoothly in between the breaks in our voices," which is done by sliding up and down through the break imitating the sound of a police siren is what Kimberly remembers the most about working on the transition of the voice. When a person or section seems to be pushing or voice cracks on a certain line, Ryan will then inform the singers to "switch to head or chest voice."

Though Kimberly believes that Ryan talks a lot about resonance in the choral rehearsal only two approaches are mentioned in how he makes sure that the students are aware of this aspect. Specifically, resonance is highlighted "in terms of syllables that we

sing like this /ah/, for example, should be very resonant.” Though the anatomy of the voice is hardly talked about in the rehearsal space, “he talks a lot about opening the soft palate and really accessing the space in our heads to make the sound more resonant.”

While Kimberly credits Ryan for much of what she has learned as a choral singer, continuing to demonstrate healthy singing in her singing and in the choir, she includes the following description:

I think that there’s a lot of different facets to healthy singing. But I think at its core I’ve learned, for myself, healthy singing is having breath support and making sure to have my soft palate lifted and really just not pushing on my vocal cords. I think that having really good posture, a good foundation starting from planting my feet to extending my ribcage to allow for a deep breath and then singing without strain or what constitutes for me being able to sing healthily. And I think just really being able to apply breath support and to remember to practice those healthy singing techniques is really important for me as a true testament to whether or not you practice good vocal health.

### **Case Study 3: Tommy and Leslie**

#### **Pedagogue Description**

Tommy serves as the director of choral activities and sacred music at a private university in the mid-Atlantic with a student population of approximately 6,000. Describing his student’s vocal abilities in the choir as “pretty good,” and later calling them “special voices,” he may not be able to form a quartet for a Mozart mass, but he may be able to source a few good soloists. Based on previous years, the student’s talents have changed, but there are benefits such as his sopranos being a lot lighter and clear. While any director would want the best voices in their choir, Tommy believes:

The great thing about choral music is that the combination of a number of mediocre or bad voices can actually produce a fairly acceptable choral sound. That does not mean that we don’t want beautiful voices in our choir and that we shouldn’t try to build or better the tone.

Tommy teaches courses in basic, intermediate, and graduate conducting, choral literature, choral development, sacred music, and directs the university's chamber choir. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Music Composition, a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting. While Tommy's choral contributions have won great acclaim on both the regional and national level, he is also an active composer and arranger of choral-orchestral works.

### **Pedagogue Background**

Though Tommy's education is in composition and conducting, his respect to vocal health and the approach to the voice comes from his undergraduate and graduate studies in the applied voice studio, describing his undergraduate training as "a good balanced health-oriented instruction." One of the greatest joys of working with his undergraduate voice instructor was the responsiveness she had to the voice as "she didn't take the approach of building voices so much as guiding voices to a better more efficient level of production."

### **Rehearsal Observation and Interview**

When completing voice auditions at the university, the first thing Tommy and the faculty listen for is "relative vocal health," followed by proper posture. By listening to the student's audition, Tommy can listen and notice if there is "anything going on with the voice," and by looking at the students capable of determining where tension is held. When a student walks in with a healthy sound and free of tension, a "free vocal sound," is produced, and that is what Tommy considers to be one part of a healthy singer. Tommy

also considers a healthy singer as “someone who understands where their core sound is, sings there, and then builds the vocal expansion from there.”

In order for students to understand where their core sound comes from, Tommy also believes that the third thing to a healthy singer is “understanding the instrument,” which goes for both the student and the instructor. Tommy finds that tone and vowel production are deeply connected, and he tries to emphasize the basic set up of vowels to build tone. In terms of creating a better and more beautiful tone in the choir, Tommy continues to remind his students that “there shouldn’t be a terribly radical change between vowels,” which is the difference between singing and speaking and creating good space which will have more resonance for the desired tone.

Tommy’s sixty-minute choral rehearsal takes place in the chapel on the university’s campus. Upon entering the chapel, students pick up a wooden foldable chair and set them up in the shape of a U in front of the altar, sitting from left to right: sopranos, altos, tenors, and then basses. Ready to begin warm-ups, Tommy asks the group to stand as he walks over to the piano to lead them.

While nothing related to posture was mentioned during the warm-up period or entirety of the choral rehearsal, Tommy finds that he uses the same approach as he does in his basic conducting course, as the stance should be very similar. While one strategy of teaching proper posture includes him modeling it through his conducting posture, he may also describe it to his students as:

Our skeleton is built in such a way that when it’s balanced, it is at rest, even when standing. There is a way to stand at rest where your skeleton is optimally positioned. Basically, shoulders down and hanging, not pushed down but relatively back. Your feet are under your shoulders, more or less. Alternatively, you could have one foot in front of the other.

Tommy also believes that by having the shoulders relaxed and back, and expanding the back of the head upward, helps straighten out your posture making you taller, which also helps with the breath.

While posture may help with the breath, Tommy describes breath support as “the trickiest thing,” as this is where Tommy notices many singing teachers having “all kinds of crazy ideas.” With *bel canto* singers, such as Tetrizzini and Caruso, Tommy encourages singers and teachers of singing to “look at pictures of these people when they’re singing. The men especially appear to be somewhat barrel-chested when they sing, and they’re not puffing out their stomachs when they take a breath.” Drawing the connection of *bel canto singers* breathing to that of a sleeping breathe, Tommy believes:

I think sleeping breath is an excellent starting place. The fact is that we do need to expand the rib cage because the lungs, unfortunately, are not in your abdomen. So, what’s actually going to give them the most control because when you expand the lungs, and you have the breath in the lungs, the intercostal muscles of the ribs are what’s going to pull back in and help for controlled escape of that air. And the way you do that really is to make sure that you have a sense of expansion in the rib cage, not in the chest.

Through his observation, Tommy has noticed that many singing teachers are having their students feel the sense of expansion in the chest area resulting in a “hyper pushy production,” which may work in some operatic context. By having the correct posture noted by Tommy earlier, then “that stance is very much ideal because if your arms are low from your shoulders, the expansion, the arms feel like they’re being pushed out slightly, almost like water wings.”

The first warm-up exercise consists of the choir singing *messa di voce* on a sustained pitch beginning with an /n/ and opening to /z + oo/. Ascending by half steps,

Tommy stops occasionally having students focus the vowel, while also mentioning to the choir to use the /n/ to help find the proper placement.

Presenting the next warm-up, seen in Figure 9, Tommy asks that the choir keep the sound light as they ascend into their upper range. Stopping to demonstrate the desired vowel, Tommy asks that even though the notes are fast-paced, make sure that the vowel is unified among the entire group, continuing the exercise.



Figure 9: *Tommy's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

The next warm-up consists of building the ear by giving the choir an initial tone and having the choir sing “whole tones,” (or in tune intervals) having the men and women move in half steps in the opposite direction, eventually arriving at an octave apart on a long /oo/. The final warm-up also used to help with the ear and intonation, seen in Figure 10, consists of giving the choir an anchor pitch (noted in the piano part) and having the choir sing module triads using solfege but alternating the vowel to /oo/ and /ee/ slowly and quietly.



The image displays two systems of musical notation for a warm-up exercise. The first system is labeled 'Voice' and 'Piano'. The voice part is in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'Du mi su mi du ri fu lu fu ri mi su tu su mu fu su du lu fu'. The piano part consists of a single line of music with a treble clef, one sharp, and 4/4 time, featuring a series of half notes with a slur underneath. The second system is labeled 'Vo.' and 'Pno.'. The voice part continues with the lyrics: 'su tu ri tu su lu du mi du lu tu ri fu ri tu du mi su mi du.'. The piano part continues with a similar pattern of half notes and a slur.

Figure 10: *Tommy's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

While Tommy considers the vowels to be an essential part of resonance as seen in Figure 10, this is why he does not have his students begin learning a piece with text as the resonance is often lost. Because the vowels are usually moving around a lot, Tommy has his students think of each vowel as a different instrument, saying things like “this [vowel] is a French horn, that’s an oboe. You have to be very careful when you’re changing vowels; it’s like you’re becoming another instrument.” Being mindful of the space and knowing how to negotiate and manage that along with the breath helps in making sure that the resonance is not lost.

Once completing warm-ups, Tommy introduces the new student accompanist. The students respond excitedly, “hello,” and Tommy asks the students to pull out their first piece of the rehearsal, “Virga Jesse,” by Bruckner. After having the students sing on a neutral vowel what they had learned from a previous rehearsal, Tommy has the sopranos and tenors sing together, followed by the altos and basses. During this time Tommy stops and corrects pitches, along with a few rhythm issues. Combining the four

sections again, Tommy has the choir speak the text in rhythm and sings through the section again, this time with words.

Moving to the next piece, “Ave Maria,” by Harold Boatrite, Tommy follows a similar outline as the previous piece beginning with the students singing through what they had rehearsed in prior rehearsals on a neutral vowel. Realizing that students are having trouble with the rhythm, Tommy has the students speak the rhythm for their part beginning with sopranos and adding altos, tenors, and basses one at a time. Attempting to sing through the section of music again, Tommy asks the students to tap the steady beat to help line up the area where students are having rhythmic troubles. Making it to the end of the section rehearsed, Tommy acknowledges the choir on their improvements of the piece.

Before ending the rehearsal, Tommy decides to listen to the tenors and basses, so that he can seat them for the remainder of the year. Having the ladies gather to review their parts in groups, Tommy has the gentlemen stand in one line. In groups of three, the students sing a section of a song learned during the first rehearsal that covers a wide range for the male voice. Switching the men around based on their voices, Tommy has the tenors and basses sing through the section of music at their new seats.

When approaching vocal registration or areas of transition in the voice as seen with working with the gentlemen, often, it is during the repertoire where Tommy will encounter issues as there is nothing in his warm-ups that addresses this. One approach to correcting vocal registration issues is by having the choir think of themselves as a vocal orchestra saying things like, “the sound that I want here is a bass pretending to be a tenor.” Another way of approaching vocal registration in Tommy’s rehearsals are

frequently working with the vowels, as the vowels will help with the *passagio* and *falsetto* with the tenors. To accomplish this, Tommy will have the choir start on C5 for the ladies and C4 for the gentlemen with a descending five-note scale by half steps, with a beautiful, clear, light *falsetto*. Releasing the students, the rehearsal comes to an end.

While the two pieces rehearsed during this observation were both sacred, choosing repertoire for Tommy's choral ensemble is "mitigated on what we have in our very old fashion library." While some performances are required such as Vespers and a winter performance for the cable network, the Spring performance gives him a little more flexibility in the repertoire that he chooses. Tommy is also careful in making sure that he provides his students with as much of the "broad-based classical music experience," as possible, as choral music in the schools have changed considerably. While it is great to perform repertoire by composers such as Whitacre, he continues to share that:

I think it's really important for us to stay connected to the cannon and in while we do cluster music by Whitacre. Some of that choral music that's just interesting to choral people is great for your ear but does it connect us to the wider world of music. Those are the kinds of things that I think we have to worry about a little bit more.

While an ensemble performance culture is not the main priority within the university, Tommy has "a delicate balance," between him and his students. Although a majority of his students in the choir are musical theater students who have great music smarts, he may also consider them the weakest students as they are not as knowledgeable of music reading. To keep the positivity of the group, Tommy is careful about the way he programs and schedules to not push away students as many of the student's focus is elsewhere even though they still enjoy being a part of the choir and enjoy his approach to the class.

### **Student Interview**

Leslie is a sophomore who sings in the Chamber Choir with Tommy while pursuing a degree in Musical Theater and Minor in Music Composition. Growing up in a household where both parents were musicians, Leslie began playing the piano at six years old, has sung as long as she can remember, and completed studio recording for commercials and a popular children's television show. Before college, Leslie participated in the high school choir, the church choir, played percussion in the high school band, and took a few lessons from her mother who teaches private voice lessons. Though Leslie is now in her sophomore year, this is her first year participating in the chamber choir with Tommy as she participated in the University Singers, a larger choral ensemble during her first year at the institution. She is also taking her second consecutive year of applied voice lessons at the university.

Since her start at the university, Leslie feels that she has grown significantly in her singing abilities.

Not having a whole lot of formal training, coming here and singing pretty much every day really changed my voice a lot. So, I would say that I am capable of singing healthfully.

During her short period in Tommy's choir, she also feels like she has learned how to "manipulate," tone and color and create a tone that blends with the people around her. Along with this, she has become "much more aware of how we as vocalists need to constantly think about sustaining a pitch and not letting it go flat or starting sharp." She contributes much of this musical growth to being in a smaller choral ensemble setting.

Due to the size of the two different ensembles at the university, Leslie thinks that the approach Tommy has in his choral rehearsals is very different compared to the

director of the larger ensemble. In Tommy's rehearsals, Leslie considers the warm-up period to be approximately half of the time of the larger group and that he does not entirely focus as much on unifying the sound as the larger group, as that ensemble had a lot more voices that needed to be unified. For Leslie, even in the larger ensemble, not much time was spent on unifying the sound because there were not as strong musicians in that choir as:

A lot of our time was focused on learning the melodies, and the rhythms were as most of the students in the chamber choir are very good musicians who can sight-sing very well. We're able to spend a lot more time on fine tuning in chamber choir because we are past the point of learning the melody and learning the rhythms and we can just read it and start adjusting our sound immediately.

While there are some similarities and differences among the choral faculty at Leslie's university, similarities or differences between Tommy and Leslie's applied voice teacher are also present. Leslie finds that Tommy's approach to manipulating the sound is much more metaphorical compared to her voice teacher who focuses heavily on the anatomy of the voice and using imagery to adjust the sound.

It kind of contradicts what I'm getting in my private lessons a little bit because I'm used to thinking lower the larynx, lower your soft palate — that kind of terminology. And Tommy does not necessarily use that because not everyone is a vocalist there. Some of them are instrumentalists, so they're obviously not as knowledgeable as to what that anatomy is. But sometimes that anatomy can be confusing, and so I find similarities in what Tommy is asking of us and what I'm asked of in my private lessons. So sometimes having the combination of those techniques clarifies a concept for me and then I can understand it better in the choral setting and also in my private studio setting.

For Leslie, the chairs used in the choral rehearsal space are "awful," as they automatically cause the singer to slouch when sitting down. Because of this, Leslie finds that Tommy is constantly reminding students to sit in a "standing position," at the edge of their chairs. While Tommy mentions posture often according to Leslie, she feels that

many of the students do not take the advice given due to laziness. One solution to resolving posture issues when sitting is having the students on their feet frequently which Leslie believes leads to good breathing and supporting the sound properly.

While Leslie believes that correct posture leads to proper breath support, she finds that Tommy “doesn’t exactly explain breath support,” during the choral rehearsal. In her own opinion, she feels that Tommy assumes that everyone knows how to properly use their breath and when he sees that they are not using their breath correctly he will tell them to change it not explaining how. While he may have discussed this in the past with the choir, Emily notes that it has not been since she has been a member of the ensemble.

Agreeing with Tommy, Leslie acknowledges that a majority of the choral ensemble members are musical theater majors, adding that they are used to singing with a very bright sound. Due to this, she considers one of Tommy’s favorite analogies when discussing tone quality is the “surprised German voice,” which asks for a darker warmer tone. Leslie also finds that Tommy will often model a particular word or vowel that the choir is having trouble with and have them repeat it which generally “does the trick.” Though Tommy does not explain what is happening anatomically when changing tone quality, Leslie believes that:

Through my personal studies I know that there’s something, I don’t fully understand, but something with our tongue position and shape of our mouth. I’m just kind of stabbing in the dark, I hope this is right, but that’s kind of how he approaches manipulating, getting us all to have the same tone quality.

When it comes to vocal registration, Leslie believes that Tommy does not talk a lot about this in the choral rehearsal which may be because “most of the time we’re all staying in the same register,” and “there’s not a whole lot of range within the vocal part.” One thing that Tommy does is “recognize that the sopranos oftentimes being in the

second *passagio*, if we're learning a piece and we're singing it on "do," with an "oo," vowel he recognizes that sopranos you're in your second *passagio*, that's going to be kind of hard, open up to "da."

Relating some of her musical knowledge and training to musical theater, when Leslie hears the term resonance, she thinks of the saying "put it in your mask," which she considers "a musical theater thing." When it comes to Tommy's choral rehearsals, he uses the analogy of barbershop singing which calls for a "pure, very, very filtered sound," that's "clear and focused," according to Leslie.

For Leslie, she believes that the five areas of vocal technique covered in this study have helped her improve as it "culminates into a very different style of singing," than what she is used to.

On a regular basis as a musical theater student, it's not asked of me to sing with a choral sound. So, I think that being able to feel the difference and manipulate my voice, and know how to manipulate my voice to sound the way that he's [Tommy] asking us to sound is probably the biggest way that posture, tone quality, resonance, register, all of that, kind of help maybe because it is very different from popular contemporary musical theater style singing.

While studying repertoire in the choral classroom, applied voice studio, and musical theater setting, Leslie believes that each of these areas has helped her in becoming a healthier singer.

I believe that a healthy singer should be able to sing in multiple styles and create many different sounds while still feeling relaxed and not strained. As well as the sound not sounding strained. And I think that the breath is very important and breathing properly is extremely important to healthy singing because it's the source of the sound. I also think that posture and how you hold your body, where you hold your tension is very important because that will reflect the sound that then comes out. If you're holding tension in your shoulders that travels up into your neck and that's tensing up your vocal cords. So, I think those for me personally are two of the most important things that I focus on. If you have those two things, I think it becomes much easier to manipulate everything else. So, I

think that as long as you have that foundation that's really the core of what a healthy singer needs to be.

### **Conclusion**

The cases presented in this chapter provide a detailed look at the steps choral pedagogues take in integrating healthy singing habits in the choral rehearsal. The intent of this chapter was to 1) illustrate how choral pedagogues describe their approach to healthy singing – pedagogue interviews; 2) describe/portray the actual steps that were taken during the rehearsal to make students more aware of healthy singing habits – observations; and 3) describe if students are aware of the steps their instructors use to build healthy singers – student interviews. The next chapter will examine the three applied voice pedagogues and their students.



## Chapter V

### CASE STUDIES OF APPLIED VOICE PEDAGOGUES

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is a continuation of Chapter IV providing a detailed portrait of each case of the three applied voice pedagogues from interviews with them and their students, as well as from observations of the applied voice pedagogues during each of their applied studio lessons. Similar to the choral pedagogues, the applied voice participants in this study consisted of three applied voice pedagogues at the university level and one student from each applied studio selected from institutions located in Virginia and North Carolina. The applied voice pedagogues were selected based on the same criteria as the choral pedagogues: their level of education, years of teaching experience in the field, currently teaching in higher education and considered as recognized pedagogues by organizations similar to ACDA and NATS. Their students were selected based on recommendations from their instructor. All names in this chapter are pseudonyms.

#### **Case Study 4: David and Skylar**

##### **Pedagogue Description**

David is a bass-baritone vocalist who serves as a professor of voice at a public university in the south with a student population of nearly 20,000. Teaching applied voice lessons and a repertoire class, David holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance, a Master of Music in Vocal Performance, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal

Performance. Performing in more than 135 operatic performances and taking on over 70 different roles David has performed on opera stages worldwide.

The music program where David teaches provides applied voice lessons to both music majors and non-majors. Students have the opportunity to take a half-hour or hour-long lesson with one of the six voice faculty on the campus along with signing up for the required repertoire class for their assigned voice studio that serves as a workshop class where pedagogy of the performance and repertoire is coached and discussed.

Undergraduate students who decide to major in vocal music can obtain a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. Students who are interested in teaching vocal music can obtain a Bachelor of Music in Choral Music Education which also requires students to take applied voice lessons during their studies.

Unlike many of his colleagues, David prefers to teach undergraduate students as it allows him the opportunity to “build them.” While they may not be the best singers, David believes the university has some strong singers. In his studio, “I have some pretty damn good kids, and I love working with them because I want to build on what they know. I want to teach someone to succeed.” With the remaining seniors graduating during the last school year, David currently has freshman, sophomores, and juniors with some “remarkably talented performance majors.”

### **Pedagogue Background**

When David began his undergraduate studies, it was his goal to become a high school choral director. He spent his junior high and high school years accompanying choirs in the area. Around his junior year, he realized that he was not going to be a piano performer but wanted to focus on performance, changing his degree program and

accompanying a lot for singers. It was in 1974 that David saw Leontyne Price in a recital which pushed him even more into becoming an accompanist.

While working on his Masters, a baritone voice faculty member asked David to accompany for a few of his voice students, and in exchange, he would give him a half-hour voice lesson every two weeks. Making his way up to the final recital for his Master's in Piano Performance, David took on a six-week assignment as an accompanist for a music institute. While there he sang for an instructor of the institute who told him he was wasting his time playing the piano and should strongly consider voice. Taking an hour voice lesson, five days a week with this instructor, David noticed how his voice had changed. From there, David took on a job singing in Germany. After his stint in Germany, David returned to the United States, switched his degree plan, and completed his Master's in Vocal Performance. While taking on a full-time teaching position, David then continued to receive his Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance and now teaches where he completed both his master's and Doctorate.

### **Lesson Observation and Interview**

While David suggests that it can be one of the hardest things to do, he considers proper breath alignment with proper postural alignment and breath support essential elements of healthy singing, especially when this can look different from person to person. During his vocal training, people would tell David “you need to support the sound,” or “use your breath support.” Not knowing what they were talking about, he realized that “it’s not a switch that you turn on and off, but it is. You just have to figure it out. Everybody’s muscles are different, and everybody’s body is different.” Considering healthy singing to be “a nice free tone with vibrato,” as singing with a straight tone

causes you to grab, David believes “you have to straighten it [tone] out somehow with these muscles that you’re controlling by grabbing.”

David’s applied studio lessons take place in his office located on the third floor of the music building. Walking in David’s room, you find the walls covered with pictures from opera performances that he has participated in. In David’s studio, there is a desk, two bookshelves full of music, a mirror and a smaller desk with audio equipment on the left wall. On the right wall, he has two chairs that include a small end table between them and a black grand piano sitting in the corner taking up the remainder of that wall. Looking ahead when walking into the studio, there is a stool that sits in front of another bookshelf with music books and a large window where the piano sits in front of.

During this observation, David is working with Skylar, a soprano, who is the student being interviewed as part of the study. Upon entering the room, David asks Skylar how her day has been and how her voice is feeling. Saying good to both they immediately jump into vocal warm-ups, beginning with the exercise seen in Figure 11.

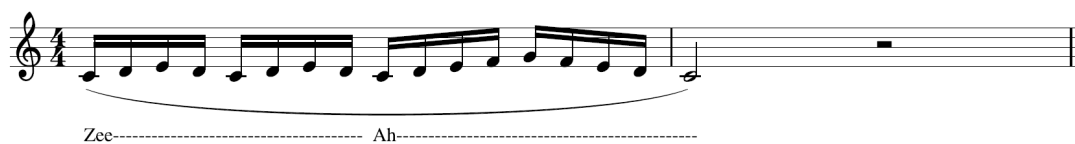


Figure 11: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

Throughout the warm-up, David is continuously giving Skylar positive encouragement about her singing moving into the next warm-up, seen in Figure 12.

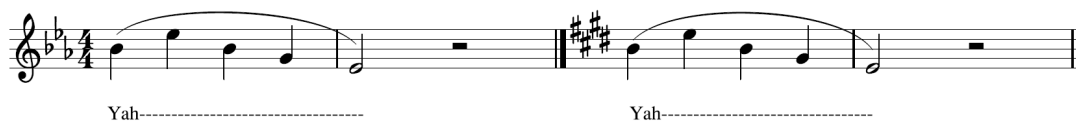


Figure 12: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

Singing the first two notes of the exercise, David stops Skylar and ask that she slides up to the top note, keeping the notes connected and the vibrato spinning. Continuing, David hears the sound that he is looking for continuing to give positive feedback. As the exercise ascends, David reminds Skylar to “keep it easy.” Reaching to a high G, the vocal line is not as even as previous attempts, as David informs her that her “larynx has popped up,” and she is “spreading the sound,” asking her to take her fingers and put them behind her upper teeth to force the jaw down. Though it may feel awkward, David has her attempt to feel how the sound is more in her head, singing through the exercise up and back down.

Moving into the final warm-up, seen in Figure 13, David demonstrates and has Skylar begin reminding her to “yah,” through her belly.



Figure 13: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 3*

While David believes that he dwells on posture with his students and considers his own to be horrible, there was no mention of posture during this lesson. Attempting to

take an approach that does not cause stiffness, David thinks about alignment from “nose to chin to sternum to belly button,” while also reminding his students that the back of the head should be aligned with the spine. Using this analogy, David believes that:

The practice is to remind students to maintain a straight line from their head to the abdomen. Most of us have terrible posture in the first place: shoulders are collapsed, the head is sometimes tilted to either the right or the left, we slouch from one knee to the other. This “top to bottom,” “straight line,” or alignment reduces the tendency to lock the body with tension. That, coupled with the practice of reminding the student of aligning the back of the head to the spine, hinders the tendency of lifting the chin, which bunches the back of the nape creating tension around the larynx, and/or over tucking the chin downward, which constricts and chokes laryngeal movement. This “back of the head to the spine,” line also enables the singer to maintain their head over their shoulders without the head jutting forward over the torso.

Preparing to begin repertoire, David asks Skylar what she would like to work on, replying “Von Ewiger Liebe,” by Brahms. Finding his copy of the music, David begins by having Skylar speak the text fixing the pronunciation to a few words. Once Skylar has completed speaking the text, David begins playing the accompaniment having Skylar sing. Adding an accent to words of the text, such as *dunkel* while singing, David stops and explains that the accent given is causing Skylar to mispronounce them, making her aware of the schwa [ə] needed. After fixing the pronunciation, David has Skylar begin the piece again encouraging her of her great work as he is cautious about his accompanying. Occasionally, David stops to suggest places to breathe and to fix pitches and rhythms. Getting to the end of the piece David tells Skylar that she is doing great and that the only problem she is having is spreading the high F-sharp too much, remembering more vertical and less horizontal.

When it comes to breath support, David is big on expansion and not pulling in the diaphragm, believing that “sometimes when you initiate the sound you might pull in to

initiate, but you got to push back out.” Through his teaching and observation, David has noticed that it is harder to convince women to expand than men.

Men don't mind doing it. The women can't stand it, and they don't. A women's ribcage will collapse a lot instead of keeping it out but if you went up to an opera singer who's been singing for quite some time, they all have a barrel chest mainly, women in particular, and they're just rock solid. So, it's about the breathing and almost about breathing down full and expanding and trying to maintain that as much as you can and not pull in.

To help students recognize this, David will have his students lay on the floor and say, “just breath naturally.” When student's breath naturally they can notice that the ribcage does not move at all and the bones stay up causing the belly to go up and down during inhalation and exhalation. David reminds his students that when singing the breath should be the same as that of natural breathing similar to someone who is sleeping. To help learn the steady flow of breath, David will also have his students sing a sustained pitch with an /s/ or /z/ and an /ee/ vowel, such as “zee.”

Preparing to start the piece again, David plays the first note asking Skylar to sing the note in her full chest voice, reminding her that even though the line is going up to keep the sound dark, representing the text *dunkel*. Making it halfway through the piece, David stops and ask Skylar to get rid of the straight tones (keeping a steady pitch and loudness, without vibrato), keeping the tone spinning and demonstrating what he would like to hear. In a later spot, David mentions again about keeping the sound more vertical and less horizontal. Having Skylar stand in the mirror and sing two pitches of a perfect fourth in her upper range to see how the mouth is being shaped, she is reminded that she must allow the breath to help her with that sound and keeping that tension out by pushing out on the belly, demonstrating what he is talking about.

While David admits that he has his own bias on the sound he likes to hear, he is “not one to talk about forward placement or put it in the mask.” While areas of tone quality and resonance overlap for David, he believes that “in a choral sound you have to learn how to modify the vowels a lot to blend the sound and that’s hard,” believing:

That’s why I think a lot of choral people go for a straight tone sound because they think it’s easier to blend a straight tone. I’m not a choral director, but I don’t think it’s easier to blend with a straight tone. The vibrato is what makes a sound. That’s what you can blend with. That’s how you manipulate the vowels, and it’s really what you do with the vowels more than anything.

David supposes that resonance comes mainly from breath which helps make a freer sound, instead of where the sound is placed. While he may tell his students to “feel it up in your head,” he does not want the students to “pinch,” the sound there. David also believes that resonance changes from vowel to vowel. While some voice instructors will ask their students to find one vowel and place everything else in that spot, David says he lets “a person sound be their own sound.”

Before continuing, David tells Skylar to “always sing through your voice consonants,” informing her that many German singers will sing with straight tone and for him an excellent German singer will *portamento* (carrying or gliding of the tone from one note to the next, but so rapidly that the intermediate notes are not defined) (Elson, 1909) on voice consonants, not on the vowel. Instead, Italians will *portamento* on the vowel, not on the consonant, encouraging her to listen to some German lieder singers. After giving more details, Skylar achieves what David is looking for. Performing through the final section of the piece again, David asks Skylar if she has any questions, replying no. David reminds her not to back away from her chest voice and to not spread at the top but



commending her on her excellent work. Not realizing how quickly the time has passed, Skylar is surprised that the lesson is over.

Although David would also describe his rapport with his students as good as seen between him and Skylar, frustration arises from time to time which can come from the lack of preparation from the students. Occasionally, David has asked students to leave the studio and go to a practice room and work when they are not prepared, especially on pieces' students have been working on previously.

While serving as an accompanist during his undergraduate and graduate years, David learned a lot of the repertoire that he now uses in his studio, such as those with Skylar. Once determining where the student's voice is, David will typically have students purchase the G. Schirmer edition of *Twenty-Four Italian Songs and Arias of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* or one of the other beginning solo books used by many voice instructors, especially for a freshman. While trying not to stretch the voice too high, David chooses repertoire that stays in the middle range of the voice. Typically, first-year students will work on repertoire of the Italian and English language while incorporating composers such as Schubert during the freshman and sophomore years. As students move into their junior and senior years and their vocal abilities approve, David will include French and German repertoire with composers such as Faure, Beethoven, and Schumann.

### **Student Interview**

Skylar is a junior General Music and Arts Administration double major who takes an hour applied voice lesson with David weekly and participates in one of the university's choral ensembles. As a child, she participated in the elementary, middle, and

high school choir. Around Skylar's eighth-grade-year she began taking private voice lessons studying art songs but did not enjoy the lessons as she felt she should be studying more musical theater repertoire. During her high school years, she decided to switch to musical theater. Throughout this time Skylar spent a summer attending a governor's school program and eventually went back to classical music. In her third year at the university, she spent her first year and a half studying applied voice with a graduate student and now works with David for her second consecutive year.

Skylar describes singing in the choir at the university as "fun." Starting her choral experience at the institution, she began with the University Singers. During her sophomore year, she began singing in the chamber choir. It is the challenge of preparing demanding repertoire and the high expectations of the choral director that pushes her drive and excitement in the course. During her time in David's applied voice studio, Skylar describes her singing abilities as growing "surprisingly quickly." Through the repertoire provided, she has come to love her middle range which could play a part in her musical growth.

Unlike any previous teacher of Skylar's, David has stressed the use of vibrato which she has found to help her.

He likes to use it with his students that are still learning and says you can always cut that out later on, but it forces you to connect to the breath all the time. And that was something that helped me out a lot. And I think it's not something to fall back on in a sense, but it's something that I find when I'm connected with vibrato, my breath is better, and the quality of the tone is better.

Skylar admits that her posture is not the best as she tends to slouch forward a lot. During her lessons, David reminds her to keep her shoulders back which helps to align the upper portion of the body. Another area of posture that Skylar has a difficult time

with is the head area as she tends to push her head forward in an attempt to keep tall. While David has continued to work with Skylar on breaking those bad habits, she has learned that keeping the head at eye level placement is healthier and not pushing the shoulders too far back to eliminate slouching. While continuously becoming aware of the body, Skylar has noticed that when she runs out of breath or try's to preserve it, it comes from the bad posture or produces a sense of bad posture. By working with David in the applied studio, Skylar draws the connection of vibrato to the breath as mentioned previously.

When singing, especially in her higher range, Skylar always believed that her mouth had to be open wide to achieve the appropriate tone quality needed. Through her studies, she has now come to realize that finding a more forward space and the appropriate shaping helps to create the sounds needed for a particular vowel. Beginning new operatic repertoire with faster moving melodic lines, Skylar is reminded to keep the tone aligned, by keeping “the same vowel space and not have to move your jaw so often with every individual note but shaping the line as a phrase makes it whole.”

While currently transitioning from soprano to mezzo-soprano in her applied lessons, Skylar has come to realize that her upper range is not as present as she would like it to be and her “sweet spot,” is an E or F. To work on this transition of voice, David may find repertoire in different keys to allow her to find what works and is suitable for her voice. Being able to experiment more with the voice in the applied studio, Skylar acknowledges that many of the concepts, such as posture and breath support, go hand in hand in both the applied studio and choral setting. Skylar does believe that in the choral rehearsal there is more of a straight tone singing that she does not use in her applied voice

lessons and realizes that at times, she may not have to be so dark in quality or “push,” as much as she would when singing with David in the studio.

Based on the comparison of Skylar’s applied studio lessons and choral rehearsals, developments of a healthy singer could be seen as:

Someone who doesn’t push [him or herself] too hard or listens. They focus on how they physically feel when they’re singing a piece, and they are able to articulate that. I would say that a healthy singer takes good care of their voice and does not strain or push themselves past their personal limits. A healthy singer drinks a lot of water, takes good care of their body in general, and has good control over their breathing techniques.

### **Case Study 5: Lucinda and Abigail**

#### **Pedagogue Description**

Lucinda is a soprano vocalist and professor of voice at a public university in the south with a student population of roughly 5,000. Teaching courses such as diction for singers, vocal technique, applied voice lessons, and performance observations, Lucinda holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, a Master of Music in Vocal Performance, and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Vocal Performance. Her career has allowed her the opportunity to present concerts, lectures and master classes worldwide, even having the opportunity to perform for a recent president of the United States.

The department of music where Lucinda teaches offers applied voice lessons to both majors and non-majors for a half-hour or a full hour. Being in a smaller institution, Lucinda serves as one of the two voice professors on the faculty in the music department. Undergraduate students who decide to major in vocal music have the option to obtain a Bachelor of Arts with a Vocal Concentration that focuses on the development of musical skills through courses in applied music, music theory, aural skills, music history and

ensemble participation or a Bachelor of Music with a Vocal Performance Concentration that builds musical development through courses in performing, pedagogy, and literature. While voice may not be the central focus students may also take applied lessons while pursuing a Bachelor of Music with a Music Education Concentration.

While Lucinda describes the students in her studio as “very talented,” she has found that many are not curious enough to want to explore how far their voice will go, just doing enough to get the assignment or performance completed. As many students come in from localities with little music exposure, Lucinda believes the music department does an excellent job of training students by the time they leave. Lucinda has also cut back on having her students participate in competitions such as the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS), as many of the students are not as polished coming in due to the lack of experience and preparation as Lucinda believes, “we try to give them that here,” referencing the universities music department.

### **Pedagogue Background**

Looking back at her education, Lucinda believes that it was primarily her applied voice lessons and the ability to study with a vocal coach that has made her the instructor she is today. Courses such as those related to art songs, song literature, and vocal pedagogy are other classes that she has found to be interesting and has impacted her teaching. Participating in a course similar to a studio class, Lucinda’s professor would work with individual students allowing students to comment and discuss things concerning the voice, pedagogy, and the approach. Developing her studio class in a similar style, “it was great cause once a week we would get together and then we would discuss. She would discuss or work with the singer, and we would all share comments.”

Reflecting on her teaching and the methods she currently uses, Lucinda loves “the fact that you just kind of find your way and share the things that you’ve learned, and how it was explained to you, and what you’ve kind of evolved into thinking,” concluding with “I think most of us still, if it was good, most of us are still using it.”

### **Lesson Observation and Interview.**

Lucinda believes that one of the first indicators of a healthy singer is one that does not have tension. While every voice instructor has their taste on the sound they like, she prefers the sound to be “clear and warm.” Lucinda also believes that a healthy singer has, “a healthy tone, free of tension, and free of nasality.”

Lucinda’s applied studio lessons take place in her office which is located on the main level of the music building. With a large rectangular shaped room, the room includes large double doors. Directly ahead, there is a large window that takes up the right half of the wall, and the piano sits in the corner of the left side of the wall. Lucinda’s large desk and a bookshelf with music books take up the right wall and bookshelves with repertoire, and two filing cabinets are on the left wall. Additional chairs for seating sit near the entrance of the studio.

During this observation, Lucinda’s student Abigail was observed. Lucinda begins the lesson by complementing Abigail on her studio class performance the prior week, asking what she thought of the performance. Recalling that she was sick, Abigail agrees that the performance went reasonably well, with Lucinda informing her that she still needs to work on the diction. Gathering Abigail’s folder for the lesson, Lucinda asks, “Who did you listen to this week,” as her students are required to listen to a different vocal performer each week. With Abigail replying first with Virginia Zeani, Lucinda

mentions that she does not know much about this particular vocalist and asks Abigail to tell her about what she listened to.

While mispronouncing the title of the song, “Vissi D’arte,” from Puccini’s *Tosca*, Lucinda asks Abigail to try again helping her identify that there is no /i/ after the /d/ in *d’arte*. Asking who the second vocalist was, Abigail says, “Elisabeth Schwarzkopf.” Mispronouncing the last name, Lucinda gets on Abigail for “butchering” the German, seeing that her father is German. Asked to share about the voices, Abigail says that, “Zeani was very dramatic, light, warm and powerful,” while “Elisabeth was less light than Zeani and controlled.”

Moving into what will be rehearsed during the lesson, Lucinda asks Abigail what she will be working on, replying “Domine Deus,” from Vivaldi’s *Gloria* from memory. Asking if Abigail had warmed-up yet, she says, “no,” with Lucinda replying, “what things were you to do in the *Liebling*,” the vocal exercise book that she requires her students to buy. Not remembering as she missed her previous lesson, Lucinda is reminded to reschedule Abigail’s make-up lesson for the upcoming Friday. Returning to the *Liebling*, Lucinda assigns two exercises for Abigail to learn over the coming week.

Preparing to warm-up the voice, Lucinda reminds Abigail to stand straight, look in the mirror, shoulders back, and neck back. When it comes to posture, Lucinda finds that many students “just want to stand,” speaking of a casual stance. When describing proper posture to her students, Lucinda begins with having the feet about a foot apart and grounded to the floor to provide balance. To help the students stay engaged, Lucinda will use words like “lengthen the spine.” Lucinda will also have the students think of proper

posture by imagining themselves as a book with a nice lengthen spine down the middle, and the shoulders are back similar to the pages of a book.

Beginning the first warm-up seen in Figure 14 (altered due to copyright purposes), Lucinda asks Abigail to sing the exercise very *legato*, keeping the tone centered and lean.



Figure 14: *Lucinda's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

Having trouble focusing the /ai/ Lucinda stops to make Abigail aware that when she sings the closed /ee/, there is no extra tongue tension and refined. When it is open make sure to use all of the space, providing examples of what she would like to hear. Continuing, Abigail makes progress of shaping the vowels to Lucinda's standards, still needing some work on the final /oo/.



Figure 15: *Lucinda's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

Moving to the next vocal warm-up, seen in Figure 15 (altered due to copyright purposes), Abigail is immediately stopped and reminded to always breathe in on the



vowel, establishing it ahead of time so that the only thing that should be moving is where the air is going. While trying to avoid the mechanics of breath support, Lucinda believes that talking about this area of the voice can be tricky, especially for beginning students as they can become overwhelmed with a lot of the physiology. Teaching it similarly as her professor, by having the breath and resonance as one, she encourages that you “begin singing with the breath.” By providing an exercise that helps the students feel the ribcage and the function of the diaphragm during the breathing process, Lucinda stresses the point that there is “nothing you can do to the diaphragm to keep it constantly out.” Using the “slow leak in the tire,” exercise, students are to sustain a hiss while trying to not release too quickly with the air moving.

While Lucinda considers herself spending a significant amount of time discussing the breath with her students, she also considers that much time is spent on resonance as it is all connected in some way. In her studio, Lucinda has found that many of her students are afraid to open their mouths and release the jaw that helps with shaping and discovering that resonant sound. When describing vowel resonance to her students, she asks that the sound stays “lean and pointed,” with the back of the throat open, when the back of the throat is open that helps to create more space instead of having space towards the front of the mouth.

Continuing to sing through the exercise, Lucinda yells out to “stop bouncing,” as Abigail begins to move up and down on her feet and to “shape,” focusing on the vowel. Encouraging Abigail that she’s doing a good job, Lucinda reminds her what Liebling is asking for in the warm-up, which is to sing each group of eight syllables with a perfectly steady tone, as if singing on one long note, reminded that when establishing *legato* and

keeping the breath flowing there should be no interruption. While continuing the warm-up Abigail begins to understand the sound and clean up the technical issues.

Continuing to warm-up the voice, Lucinda tells Abigail to work on the *staccato* and agility exercises from the book, moving into the next exercise seen in Figure 16 (altered due to copyright purposes). Stopping to focus the /o/ vowel and to ask for less accent of the /h/, Lucinda starts the warm-up again. As the exercise gets higher, Abigail tends to produce a nasal sound, being reminded of “no nasality.” After completing the warm-up, Lucinda tells Abigail, “in order for you to get rid of the nasality, you have to ask for what you want,” reminded to be mindful and keep thinking of what you want.



Figure 16: *Lucinda's Warm-Up Exercise 3*

When it comes to tone, “I like it to be warm. I do not like it to be thin,” Lucinda describes naming singers such as Leontyne Price, Anna Moffo, and Kiri Te Kanawa as examples. By seeking the roundness and space for each vowel, Lucinda allows her students to explore what a “warm,” tone sounds like. One exercise that she uses comes from *The Estelle Libeling Vocal Course* book where the student sings /ee/ and moves to /oa/ on a single pitch. By focusing and rounding the /ee/ to match the position of the /oa/ allows a sense of warmth due to the vowel and the shaping.

After talking about how Abigail should be prepared with the vowel before the song or warm-up even begins, Lucinda relates it to the “Domine Deus,” that they are

preparing to work on, saying to breathe in the /oa/ of the *domine*. Given a measure before, Lucinda begins to play the accompaniment, and Abigail begins to sing. Making it through the first section of the piece, Lucinda stops and ask that Abigail stops swaying and to “have more sense of shaping,” so that the notes will not sound equal, demonstrating how she would shape the phrase. Starting the phrase again, Abigail continues to make progress but begins to sway again. Immediately noticing the swaying, Lucinda stops to tell Abigail that she cannot sway as it “messes up the apparatus, changing the alignment.”

Continuing to work on the piece, Lucinda stops occasionally to work on incorrect pitches, reminding Abigail to be mindful of the notes, dynamics, and more importantly *crescendos*, which she describes as “budding into the phrase,” and occasionally having Abigail conduct to keep the beat and help solidify the rhythmic pattern of the *melismas*. Making it to the end of the piece, Lucinda asks Abigail what hinders her from singing many of the correct pitches when the accompaniment is played, encouraging Abigail not to let it mess her up and keep in context the importance of the accompaniment.

Ready to move to the next piece, Lucinda asks Abigail if she would like to go over something else or work on the language of one her pieces, with Abigail requesting to work on the language of one of her German pieces. Speaking through the language, Lucinda spends a good amount of time correcting the language by pronouncing it and having Abigail repeat it back, making sure that the consonants are crisp and that the vowels are pronounced correctly, ending the lesson.

Though Lucinda’s professor was determined to have her perform different repertoire, she believes that some pieces are a must such as the “Domine Deus,” that

Abigail is working on, which is one reason why she picks her students music. Knowing that she will never perform or teach all of the music she has for her students; Lucinda finds it helpful when she has performed or worked on the repertoire herself and capable of integrating approaches or techniques from her own experience with the repertoire.

### **Student Interview**

Abigail is a sophomore Vocal Music Education major who takes an hour of applied voice lessons in Lucinda's studio and also participates in the university's choir. She began singing as a little girl and remembers singing in the elementary choir that would put on a play with some form of music every Friday in a small chapel program. During her middle and high school years, she participated in the choir excluding her sixth-grade year as she was unaware that she could pick her elective ending up in woodshop. It was not until college that Abigail began one-on-one vocal instruction making this her second year with continuous lessons.

Excited about the growth in her singing abilities, Abigail believes that:

The progress is astounding. I have recordings of being in chapel programs in elementary school and some of the concerts that I was in for high school and then, of course, singing departmental recitals in college now, and I've just been able to see how much I've grown. And no, I was not the best singer as a child, I thought I was OK, but I can say I'm pretty happy with my voice, but I'm happy that it's constantly growing and just being shaped more into a professional sound.

While Abigail realizes that she has learned a lot, she knows that it may not seem that way in her lessons. By working with Lucinda in the applied studio, Abigail has learned more about support and an understanding of where certain things are happening in her body. It is also in the applied studio where Abigail has learned to recognize and become aware of

the feelings when she is doing something wrong or how to feel where a vowel is placed in the mouth.

While not only taking applied voice lessons with Lucinda, Abigail also sings in one of the university choral ensembles where she believes some methods may be more effective in the studio than in the choir, as in the choir a blend of voices is needed explaining her thoughts as:

It's not that they want to hide your voice. Absolutely not. It's just the cacophony of voices. You can't have one person standing out like a sore thumb whenever they're just more forward sounding. So, in voice lessons, I'll be taught a lot more about leaner or have more space. And you don't want to make something too bright either. And some in choir they'll just ask for something that's not really what a soloist would do, but it sounds great when it's a bunch of people cause it all blends together.

According to Abigail "posture definitely helps with support and breathing."

Thinking of her posture, Abigail remembers how she used to shrug her shoulders due to wearing a backpack which eventually caused her trouble carrying out a phrase when singing. With guidance from Lucinda, she now realizes that avoiding slouching and having the body straightened and tall, and the sternum raised and lifted the sound is better and not as flat and easier to breathe. In her lesson, Lucinda will remind Abigail to have the shoulders back and relaxed or to make sure that the way she is standing supports good posture in order not to hinder the voice.

When Abigail first began taking applied voice lessons, she always thought that breathing low meant more in the chest cavity as that is where the lungs are. Through her lessons, she has discovered where the diaphragm is and that when Lucinda says a low breath, she can feel it expand around the middle of her torso, explaining it as:

I felt that it was more than just sticking my stomach out or just raising my ribcage as high as I could. But there's much more attention, and that's what she would

mean by support. I know that would help and with breath, it would also be about controlling how much I let out or not having to take in too much. I would often be too heavy on notes, and she would tell me to breathe in as much air as I can and then breath it all out and then start singing. Typically, I could hold out almost an entire phrase and so I would actually need a lot less breath than I thought I needed. So, she really helped me understand that.

Based on Lucinda's taste, Abigail recalls how her applied voice instructor reminds her of wanting a "much warmer sound," but not dark and can be altered based on the space in the mouth. Over the past two semesters, Abigail had trouble with this due to tensing up the jaw. With removing her wisdom teeth, Abigail feels as if this has helped solve some of the issues as it allowed for more space in the mouth. Realizing that tone quality is more about where the sound is directed and how the mouth is shaped causes Abigail to become more analytical in her practice to not just aim for pitch but quality. To ensure that Abigail stays aware of her tone quality, Lucinda will ask questions such as, did you like that sound or what was it that you did not like about the sound?

During one voice lesson, Lucinda shared an article with Abigail that encouraged singers to think of vocal registration as one register as it can cause a hindrance moving through the voice when thought of as multiple registers. Agreeing with her voice instructor and the article, Abigail feels that:

If we treat it like multiple registers, it is actually hindering us from being able to change easily. I felt that because if you're still singing with the same color in your voice, she mentions thinking of the pitch, and if you think of the pitch, our mouth will produce it. As long as everything else is right, the space in your mouth and lean sound. And I notice that my range has expanded much more because I'm not thinking I have to switch to head voice, or I have to try and sing as far in my chest voice as I possibly can.

When thinking of the move from head voice to chest voice, Abigail notes the importance of how the switch should not feel "strange," to the singer. In her singing, Abigail has noticed that by keeping her vowels in the same place for a lower pitch as if it were a

higher pitch does not feel as much of a change in her register, as she tends not to overthink, is she moving from one voice register to the other.

To have a resonant sound, Abigail believes that “you want the space and you would want it to be forward, but you don’t have to have your mouth open really wide to let that resonant sound come out.”

You can even have a resonant sound on your lips being shaped as small as an “oo” vowel. And I think it’s more because it’s not about the space that your mouth has at the front but what it has in the back. That’s why there’s still resonance even when you’re singing nasal vowels in French because the soft palate is slightly lowered, but there’s still a lot of space in the back. So, I feel like you can hear the difference between the two.

With this in mind, Abigail feels that the techniques covered in this study help with resonance as it requires you to breathe in the space to create a good resonant sound.

Based on Abigail’s personal experience at the university she believes that a healthy singer consists of:

Honestly, all of this is so important, but I know breath support because if you’re constantly dying out and then you’re trying to push that sound out it’s not good. It’s straining your vocal cords. Not having the space is really bad because sometimes you just try to squeal. Typically, if you’re not doing a technique like the five techniques that we were discussing it will strain on your throat and your vocal cords. And so that will typically be why people lose their voice. I know singing in the back of my throat isn’t necessarily unhealthy, but it doesn’t make the best sound. And I’d say the most important for health wise and not just quality of how you sound would be breath support, probably posture as well, and then the space that you have in your head, in the back of the throat.

## **Case Study 6: Jesse and Alivia**

### **Pedagogue Description**

Jesse is a baritone vocalist who serves as an assistant professor of voice at a private historically black university in the south with a student population of

approximately 4,600. Teaching courses such as the business of music, opera theater, and applied voice lessons, Jesse holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Master of Music in Voice and Literature. His career has allowed him to perform on both the operatic and concert stage in numerous cities across the United States and Europe.

The music program where Jesse teaches provides one-on-one voice instruction to both majors and minors who are interested in taking private lessons. Jesse is one of three voice faculty teaching applied voice lessons at the university. Undergraduate students who decide to take voice as a major may pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance. Students may also take applied voice lessons while pursuing a degree in Music Education, Music Recording Technology, or Audio Production.

### **Pedagogue Background**

Before his college education, Jesse took private voice lessons which began at the age of 15. Receiving his bachelor's and master's degree from the same institution, Jesse went on to participate in a yearlong professional studies program, completing all the coursework except the recital component. The following four years for Jesse would include him participating in studio programs with various opera companies around the country. While considering courses such as vocal pedagogy, art song, and his applied studio lessons as classes that have impacted his teaching saying, "I find myself saying the same things they said to me," describing his vocal pedagogy and applied studio instructors. While many of Jesse's students prefer to perform genres such as R&B or gospel, he uses what he has learned from his studies and implements that operatic foundation into his applied studio lessons.



### **Lesson Observation and Interview.**

While Jesse may describe the students in his applied voice studio as “varied and vast,” many of them have great potential for a nice classical sound, although they prefer to sing any other genre besides classical or operatic repertoire. Though many of his student’s push away from the classical repertoire, it is “because they think you’re trying to change their voice and make them into something,” reminding his students that he is only trying to enhance what they already have. While Jesse believes that choosing repertoire can be one of the most challenging parts of the lesson, he bases his choices on the student's experience and what they want to sing, attempting to make a compromise with the students on classical repertoire and the non-classical repertoire they would like to perform.

For Jesse, a healthy singer is someone that:

Uses their instrument in a conscious way. They’re not simply relying on their talent. They have taken a little bit of time to understand how to play that instrument no matter what the style is; they need to know how to play it.

Making sure to incorporate the proper steps to healthy singing, Jesse encourages his students to sing “*legato*, on the breath,” and also make sure that they use their instrument correctly.

Jesse’s applied studio lessons take place in his office on the second floor of the university’s music building. While the trapezium-shaped office is small, it is very welcoming. Looking straight ahead when entering the studio sits a black grand piano to the left with a filing cabinet in the right corner. On the right wall is a large poster from a recent performance that Jesse has participated in that sits above his desk. On the left wall, there is a full body mirror where students stand to sing and a piano bench for sitting.

Due to scheduling, the student participant for Jesse's portion of the study Alivia was not seen. Instead, Angel, a Psychology major student was observed. Beginning the lesson by discussing what was completed last week, Jesse asks Angel if she had any new pieces that she would like to work on. Not having any for this particular lesson, Angel does mention that she has some pop songs in mind, mentioning Ariana Grande. Asking Jesse for advice, he recommends that she listens to the repertoire of Tamia, another rising R&B singer.

Moving into warm-ups, Jesse gives the pitch of a D and has Angel sing /o/ on a sustained pitch moving down by half steps. Getting to A-flat, Jesse then has Angel switch the vowel to /e/ as she starts to move into her chest voice keeping the same space. When singing through the area where the voice changes, Jesse looks for a "nice, fluid, smooth transition between the registers," which he believes takes time and much work to achieve. While "learning to transition through the *passaggio* takes time for young singers to learn," Jesse also believes that vowel modification and proper breath support can help in this area. With breath support, Jesse teaches what he calls "registration singing," believing that:

Breath support happens naturally when the cords are adducted properly. If your cords go together in a proper way, you don't have to think about; I have to do this with my breath. That's my philosophy.

While Jesse may not dive into many breathing exercises, he does talk about a "good inhalation and a coordinated attack," suggesting that:

If the attack is coordinated and you're in the right segment of the voice with the right registration, you're fine. The breath takes care of itself.

Going back and doing the same exercise, Jesse then asks for Angel to sing *forte*.

Stopping after three half steps down, Jesse asks Angel if she is aware that when she

“sends more air or more energy,” the sound is much more present, making the /o/ open, continuing back to the exercise.

Moving into the next exercise, Jesse plays an F4 and ask Angel to do what he calls a “blown *falsetto*” on an /oo/ ascending by half steps. As the exercise gets higher, he says, “no lips, but still, blow,” reminding her at the end of the exercise that “the higher you get, the more juice you have to give. You have to put your foot on the gas.” Asking Angel about the sensation she felt moving towards the top of her range, she is unable to explain what she felt. Jesse reminds Angel to be conscious and recognize where she is in her voice.

Demonstrating the next warm-up, seen in Figure 17, Jesse immediately stops Angel and lets her know that the space on the last note is the space he wants her to start with, letting the air “blow yourself open,” while thinking that the “inhalation is the vowel you’re about to sing,” continuing the exercise.

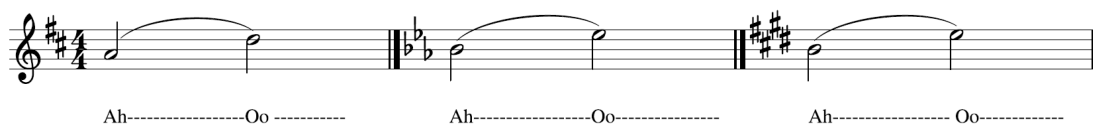


Figure 17: Jesse’s Warm-Up Exercise 1

The next exercise consists of yodeling (alternating between the normal voice and *falsetto*) from the top note (the dominant) on /oo/ to the tonic on /w + oa/, moving up by half steps. After doing only three half steps, Jesse moves into the final exercise which switches the /oo/ from the last exercise to /ah/ and rotating moving from the tonic to dominant focusing on moving from chest to *falsetto*.

While nothing was mentioned about posture during this observation, Jesse describes his approach as “simple,” as it calls for the singer to be grounded with their feet flat on the floor. Jesse also acknowledges that he does not get into the Alexander Technique but will ask his students to think of having their shoulders and ribcage suspended from the body and the head in normal alignment with the body.

Ready to move into the repertoire, Jesse wants to work on “Home,” from *The Wiz* as Angel plans on auditioning for the upcoming musical. While getting Angel a copy of the music, Jesse asks her to describe the character of the song and why the character is singing the song. Giving her interpretation of the song, Jesse continues to probe for more answers to see if Angel understands the context of the song. Before singing the first note, Jesse has Angel speak the text as if she is Dorothy trying to get her to connect to the character. Wanting just to read the sentence, Jesse says “you’re not going to just sing the sentence,” helping to develop the phrasing.

Going to the last page of the song, Jesse begins working on the last two notes of the piece. Drawing a connection to the *falsetto* /oo/ sound from the warm-ups, Jesse informs Angel that the sound made for the warm-up is the basis for the final note of the piece, demonstrating what that note should sound like. For Jesse, that sound consists of one who has, “an open throat,” and “relaxed pharyngeal wall,” believing that “a freely, floating larynx is a most pretty sound.” Attempting to reproduce the sound, Angel does not seem to be comfortable or enjoy the sound. Asking what she does not like about the sound, Angel says it feels as if she is “pushing the vibrato.” Encouraged to not worry about the vibrato, Jesse asks that Angel remain relaxed and concentrate on the breath and flow of air.

Reproducing the desired sound, Jesse works on the two measures leading into the section just worked. After hearing Angel sing the end of the piece, Jesse asks that Angel move the air to get into her “big momma voice.” To achieve this resonant sound, Jesse believes it comes from the proper adduction of the cords noting that, “when the cords go together right, and they’re vibrating correctly, it does what it does.” Jesse thinks of the instrument being made up of three parts: the engine (air), the vibrator (larynx) and the resonators (pharynx, velum, mouth, nasal cavities). “When the vocal ligaments are properly adducted, and the correct vowel is chosen for the particular register, resonance is achieved naturally.”

To end the lesson, Jesse asks that Angel work hard at learning the piece and listening to a few recordings for guidance. While Angel seemed to be resistant to the sounds she heard during her lesson, the communication between her and Jesse seems to show a great deal of trust between the two. While Jesse is not necessarily from the “academic world,” he finds that he may be a little bit more relaxed than many of his colleagues which plays a part in the rapport with his students. Jesse also believes that he approaches his students from the perspective of a professional performer making sure that they are aware of what is required of them as a performer and not just from the academic standpoint.

### **Student Interview**

Alivia is a junior Music Recording Technology student who studies applied voice in Jesse’s studio an hour a week and also participates in one of the university’s choral ensembles. Surrounded by a family deeply involved in the entertainment industry, Alivia’s mother sings jazz, her father is a lyricist and into spoken word, and she has two

aunts in the film and television business. Starting to sing at an early age, Alivia participated in talent shows and sing in the school choir. During middle school, she switched to the band and began playing the clarinet while still singing for events such as the school basketball games. For high school, Alivia attended a performing arts school where she was a vocal major and participated in musical shows, operas, show choir, the jazz band, and dance. It was at her high school where she found the love of doing production which impacted her choice of pursuing a degree in Music Recording Technology.

While Alivia believes her voice is going through a transition phase, moving from alto in high school to soprano in college, she believes that her voice has grown but still transitioning.

Well, middle school, elementary school I knew I had a voice, but it always hurt sometimes. I was singing from my throat. And in high school, I started getting a little bit more vocal training. My voice was in that transition phase. It's still in a transition phase.

While still becoming acquainted with her voice, Alivia reflects on her time in the applied voice studio with Jesse realizing that she has learned a lot. From the anatomy of the voice to the vocal technique, or the stylistic approach, these are just a few aspects covered in Alivia's voice lessons that have helped her to grow as a musician and allows her to be more prepared than other singing opportunities at the university.

There are times that Alivia brings repertoire from her choral rehearsal to the applied studio to receive feedback on what "tools," to use to make sure that she is singing the repertoire correctly and with the appropriate technique. Alivia considers the applied voice studio to be a place where she can debrief and analyze her vocal choices asking, "How should I approach this piece," with her instructor which may not be possible in a

choral rehearsal setting. Whether Alivia is in the applied studio or a choral rehearsal at the university, she feels that both experiences bring a learning opportunity to help enhance her musical growth.

Alivia considers posture a “foundational key,” when it comes to singing correctly. “When it comes to singing, my posture is very pivotal in terms of making sure that everything, all of the anatomy that we bring up, is being used properly.” In her lesson with Jesse, Alivia highlights that it is the anatomy and the effect bad posture has on the singing voice that he has taught her.

Before working with Jesse, a previous voice instructor informed Alivia that “there are a time and a place for every breath.” With this in mind, she learned about the sipping breath and the smelling breath. Alivia would describe a sipping breath as “a breath that you take similar to that of sipping from a straw, giving you a smaller more constricted inhalation.” The smelling breath is “a breath that you take out of your nose giving you a different inhalation feeling fuller than the sipping breath.” By incorporating these two forms of breaths, Alivia believes that she now knows how to properly set up a piece without drastically running out of breath halfway through a phrase. Jesse has also taught Alivia about the importance of “pushing the gas,” meaning to push the air and keeping it moving, which comes from the energy in the breath when singing.

Describing her sound like a more “hootier,” sound meaning “naturally darker,” Jesse encourages Alivia to go darker as it allows for her *falsetto* to come in more. Not realizing the importance of a consistent sound with the tone, Alivia believes the consistency whether producing a darker or brighter sound helps reach pitches high or low with more ease. Describing the middle range of her voice as “terrible,” Alivia credits

Jesse's analogy of a diving board to help her move from her "*falsetto*," to her chest voice. By using this imagery of the diving board, it helps Alivia to not stay so long on the bottom note. By jumping to the higher note, it allows her to have a smoother connection in terms of going from her lower register to her higher register.

Through participating in both the university's choral ensemble and most importantly her applied voice lessons, Alivia feels that she is continuing to learn healthy singing techniques, determining that a healthy singer consists of:

First off, they have to be cognizant of what is going inside their bodies. Also, I believe that as another form of a healthy vocalist, maybe you don't have to be in the best form of health, but an ideal healthy singer would try to make sure that they're working out in some way, shape, or form to help build their stamina. There are so many things for an important singer. At least know the basics of anatomy. I would hope to know that you're not singing from your stomach, you're singing from your diaphragm. Posture is very important. And to know that it's not healthy for your shoulders to rise every time that you sing. Another thing, no airy tones or sounds. A healthy singer knows that you have to keep the energy going for you to project. You listen to your projection. And a healthy singer takes care of themselves when they are sick. And you listen to your body.

### **Conclusion**

Similar to the previous chapter, the cases in this chapter provide a detailed look at the steps applied voice pedagogues take in integrating healthy singing habits during the applied studio lesson. The intent of this chapter was to 1) illustrate/explore how applied voice pedagogues describe their approach to healthy singing – pedagogue interviews; 2) portray the actual steps that were taken during the lesson to make students more aware of healthy singing habits – observations; and 3) describe if students are aware of the steps their instructors use to build healthy singers – student interviews.



## Chapter VI

### DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore, with six pedagogues (three choral and three applied voice), their approach to teaching healthy singing in their respective choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons while learning how their students respond and interpret the techniques used. It is hoped that a better understanding of the current trends on vocal technique in the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio will encourage other pedagogues to share their techniques and other factors that have helped in developing young, healthy singers. Qualitative data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews of both pedagogues and students and supported by observations of the pedagogue participants while working with their students. The data were coded, analyzed, and organized in relation to the four research questions.

Chapters IV and V presented six cases (three choral and three applied voice) each containing a pedagogue and student pair from the data received. In the cases presented, the findings of each pedagogue and student participant's experiences, along with the choral ensemble and individual applied studio instruction were examined. Tables 3 and 4 provide an overview of the pedagogue and student participants in the study. The number of each pedagogue in Table 3 correlates to the number of the student in Table 4.

Table 3: *Table of Participant Overview – Pedagogues*

<b>Pedagogue</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years of Teaching</b>	<b>Degree Attained</b>	<b>Degree Concentration</b>
1 - Emily	Choral	Female	45	21	Doctor of Musical Arts	Orchestral Conducting
2 - Ryan	Choral	Male	66	41	Doctor of Musical Arts	Choral Conducting
3 - Tommy	Choral	Male	45	11	Doctor of Musical Arts	Orchestral Conducting
4 - David	Applied Voice	Male	64	38	Doctor of Musical Arts	Vocal Performance
5 - Lucinda	Applied Voice	Female	58	30	Doctor of Musical Arts	Vocal Performance
6 - Jesse	Applied Voice	Male	41	5	Master of Music	Vocal Performance

Table 4: *Table of Participant Overview – Students*

<b>Student</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>University Experience</b>	<b>Degree Concentration</b>
1 - Kaitlyn	Junior	Female	Choral and Applied	Vocal Music Education
2 - Kimberly	Junior	Female	Choral	Mechanical Engineering
3 - Leslie	Sophomore	Female	Choral and Applied	Musical Theater
4 - Skylar	Junior	Female	Choral and Applied	General Music/Arts Administration
5 - Abigail	Sophomore	Female	Choral and Applied	Vocal Music Education
6 - Alivia	Junior	Female	Choral and Applied	Music Recording Technology

The intent of this chapter is to present the similarities and differences between the pedagogues and students in the study, seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?

2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students?
4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?

Seven major themes emerged from the analysis of the data and will be presented in this chapter. The first research question was designed to identify how choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues gain the knowledge and ability to teach the methods and strategies used during their applied voice studio lessons and choral rehearsals. One major theme appeared for research question one: (1) *background and training* which looks at the coursework and other informal training, such as workshops, musical participation and teaching experiences that the pedagogues considered useful in the way they currently teach. The second research question seeks to determine how choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues define and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer. One theme emerged for research question two: (2) *healthy singing and strategies* which looked at how the pedagogues define healthy singing and how they teach vocal technique during their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons.

The third research question was designed to uncover what other factors choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching their students. Four themes appeared for research question three: (3) *student abilities* looks at how the pedagogues describe their students vocal capabilities of performing as choral members and individual singers; (4) *repertoire choices* focus on how the pedagogues determine

what music their students will perform; (5) *rapport* which looks at the relationship between the pedagogues and their students in the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio; and (6) *structure of lessons/rehearsals* which looks at how the pedagogues design the structure of their rehearsals and lessons in using their time efficiently and productively. The fourth research question seeks to identify what strategies students in the choral classroom and applied voice studio consider beneficial in becoming healthier singers. One theme emerged for research question four: (7) *agreements/disagreements among students and pedagogues* which looks at the comparison among the student and pedagogue participants which will be related to research question two.

### **Research Question 1 – Developing Strategies that Result in Healthy Singing**

The first research question sought to determine the pedagogues learning experiences and how those experiences have helped in gaining the knowledge and ability to teach healthy singing to young developing singers. To determine how each pedagogue developed their approach of teaching healthy singing in their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons, the participants shared courses completed during their university training and other experiences outside of the current university setting as choral and applied voice pedagogues and students. Similar to the pedagogues found in the previous literature each of the participants in this study mentioned similar ways of learning as they continue to teach. For some of the pedagogues in this study, studying voice, observing rehearsals of other pedagogues, attending conferences that teach technique, and watching a skilled and experienced pedagogue as noted by Jones (2008) were mentioned. For others, being involved in some vocal organization, participating in musical performances

(whether as soloist, choristers, or conductors), and taking on teaching opportunities similar to the literature of Blakes-Zeller (1993) were also identified.

Among the choral pedagogues, Emily and Ryan contribute much of their current teaching methods to their own experience as a choral student or pedagogue. Emily says that her education is “steeped in the Robert Shaw tradition of singing,” as she worked with a professor who studied with Shaw in addition to Shaw himself. She credits him for the way she currently conducts her choral ensembles, incorporating a method that “makes it impossible not to hear, recognize and correct errors of pitch, rhythm, and text such as count singing or use of nonsense syllables,” during the rehearsal (Rehearsal techniques, 1978). Ryan considers the most meaningful part of his studies and training as “life in the choral rehearsal,” along with the ability to participate and watch other choral conductors. Unlike Emily and Ryan, Tommy is the only choral pedagogue who does not mention his choral experience as a beneficial factor in teaching healthy singing. Instead, he credits his undergraduate and graduate applied voice studio instruction calling it “a good balanced health-oriented instruction.” While previous choral literature of Jones (2008), recommends observing great choral conductors and participating in a choral ensemble yourself as a means of growth, the literature also notes studying voice as the first tool in growing as a choral conductor.

For the applied voice studio pedagogues, Lucinda and Jesse mention that courses in vocal pedagogy, art song, song literature, and their applied voice lessons have impacted their way of teaching and the techniques they use in building healthy singers. Unlike many university programs today, Lucinda’s undergraduate studies allowed her, while taking applied voice lessons, to work with a vocal coach, which she credits for the

enhancement of her vocal technique. While Jesse is the only pedagogue without a doctoral degree of the six pedagogue participants, his level of performance experience and participation in studio programs with various opera companies after his academic work has helped to build his knowledge of techniques that he would consider useful in his applied studio. Due to David's initial ambition of becoming an accompanist and choral director his route to learning and teaching healthy singing is slightly different. Studying in voice studios outside of the institutional setting until changing his course of study during the final semester of his masters, David credits the outside voice lessons taught leading up to his doctorate.

Each of the pedagogues presented in this study participated in both choral rehearsals and applied voice lessons as a student. Additionally, it is perhaps interesting to notice that many of the pedagogues mention their current area of focus (choral or applied voice) as an area that has impacted their teaching the most. Based on the data provided, Emily and Ryan are the only two pedagogues who consider their choral experiences as making an influence on their teaching. While Emily's impact comes through her training as a student, it was Ryan's choral rehearsals that he feels made a difference through finding what worked or did not work. According to Madura (2017), "while strong musical skills are a prerequisite to achieving success as a choral teacher, it is the knowledge of effective rehearsal strategies and repertory choices that complete the picture." Madura (2017) also includes that while music education professors believe that being a good teacher "can be taught...there is a natural inclination and desire to teach that is vital," (p. 34). Both of Madura's statements can be found in this particular group of choral pedagogues as they demonstrated effectiveness during their rehearsals.

The other four pedagogues, Tommy, David, Lucinda, and Jesse, consider their applied voice instruction to be one of the strongest influences on how they currently teach healthy singing. While the choral pedagogues focus is to rehearse and direct a performing group of musicians (Collins & Lindeman, 2013) it is in the applied voice studio that the one-on-one interaction takes place allowing students to gain knowledge while focusing on one or more aspects of vocal technique at a time (Hoch, 2014, p. 100). While Tepe et al. (2002) study shows that participating in voice lessons did not ensure good vocal health, this study shows that these pedagogues found the applied voice studio setting beneficial to their progress and in the development of their students. This is shown through the testimonies of Tommy, David, Lucinda, and Jesse as they acknowledge how applied voice lessons has made a difference for them.

While many university programs require their vocal students to participate in both a choral ensemble and applied voice studio lesson (see footnote on page 45), it is vital for all singing pedagogues to be knowledgeable of the techniques required in a choral setting and applied voice studio setting. While a majority of the pedagogues in this study consider their applied voice studio lessons to be the most beneficial in the way they teach now, the pedagogues here report that whether choral or applied the pedagogues must be well trained as their teaching methods pass down to those they teach. In the following section, the student participants attest to this fact as they mention similar teaching methods, analogies, and techniques used by their pedagogues.

## Research Question 2 and 4 – Pedagogues Conceptualization and Employ of Healthy Singing and Students Perspective

### Healthy Singing

The second and fourth research questions sought to determine how pedagogues defined and implemented healthy singing techniques into their choral rehearsals and applied voice lessons and how their students responded to those techniques used. Based on the previous literature, pedagogues Dayme and Vaughn (2014) consider healthy singing to consist of good physical balance, breathing that is accomplished easily and deeply, and staying present. For Ferrell (2010), healthy singing consists of proper breath technique, a release of tension, proper body alignment, utilizing healthy resonance, proper vowel formation, and an engaged mind. Other researchers (Emmons & Chase, 2006; Swan, 1973) also consider intonation, vibrato, and tone quality to be areas of focus to help build healthy singers. In Table 5, key findings of what each pedagogue and their respective student believe healthy singing consists of is shown.

Table 5: *Key Findings of Healthy Singing from Pedagogues and Students*

<b>Pedagogue</b>	<b>Healthy Singing (Pedagogues Description)</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Healthy Singing (Students Description)</b>
Emily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes care of the body.</li> <li>• Mindful of how they use their voice outside of class.</li> <li>• Someone who is smart.</li> <li>• They are led by someone who allows the students to sing.</li> </ul>	Kaitlyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses proper technique.</li> <li>• Posture.</li> <li>• Breath support.</li> <li>• Eat healthily.</li> <li>• Enough sleep.</li> <li>• Drink enough water.</li> <li>• Knowing when not to sing.</li> </ul>



Ryan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As little tension as possible.</li> <li>• A sound that is quite open.</li> <li>• Singing with enough depth, enough openness, and enough breath support to have a lively sound without forcing it.</li> </ul>	Kimberly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having breath support.</li> <li>• Keeping the soft palate lifted.</li> <li>• Not pushing on the vocal cords.</li> <li>• Good posture.</li> <li>• Deep breathing.</li> <li>• They are singing without strain.</li> </ul>
Tommy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posture - free of tension.</li> <li>• Understanding where the core sound is.</li> <li>• Understanding the instrument.</li> </ul>	Leslie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing in multiple styles.</li> <li>• Create many different sounds.</li> <li>• Not sounding strained.</li> <li>• Proper posture.</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper breath alignment.</li> <li>• Proper postural alignment.</li> <li>• Breath support.</li> <li>• Nice free tone with vibrato.</li> </ul>	Skylar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not push too hard.</li> <li>• Listens.</li> <li>• Physical awareness.</li> <li>• Takes care of the voice.</li> <li>• Does not strain.</li> <li>• Drinks a lot of water.</li> <li>• Control over breathing techniques.</li> </ul>
Lucinda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and warm sound.</li> <li>• Healthy vibrato.</li> <li>• Healthy tone.</li> <li>• Free of tension.</li> <li>• Free of nasality.</li> </ul>	Abigail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breath support.</li> <li>• Having space in your head and the back of the throat.</li> <li>• Posture.</li> </ul>
Jesse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legato singing.</li> <li>• Singing on the breath.</li> <li>• Using the instrument.</li> </ul>	Alivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help build stamina through some form of physical activity.</li> <li>• Know the basics of anatomy.</li> <li>• Posture.</li> <li>• Knows how to keep the energy going (through the breath).</li> <li>• Listens to your body.</li> </ul>

Based on the twelve descriptions of healthy singing provided, Emily is the only participant who does not mention some aspect of vocal technique in their description of healthy singing. Instead, she considered taking care of the body and being mindful of

how the developing student uses their voice as two areas of importance. While the other pedagogues and students in this study also agree that understanding the use of the voice and making sure it is appropriately used is essential, the remaining participants highlight specific vocal techniques that should be considered. While none of the twelve descriptions of healthy singing match exactly there are some similarities noted among the pedagogues and students.

The two most common areas of healthy singing for both the pedagogues and students is posture (including tension) and breath support. For Tommy and Lucinda, they encourage their students to remain free of tension while Ryan asks for “as little tension as possible.” While tension can derive from the singer’s posture, Tommy is the only pedagogue who connects posture and tension in their description, describing how the body should look. David mentions proper postural alignment in his definition of healthy singing. While not mentioning tension during his description or in the same manner as the other pedagogues, David acknowledges how tension can form around the larynx when the chin is too high or too low. In the student’s descriptions of healthy singing, four of the student participants (three choral: Kaitlyn, Kimberly, Leslie; and one applied voice: Alivia) mention posture as an area of importance in developing young singers. While many of the pedagogues and students’ descriptors of healthy singing included similar areas, Tommy (choral pedagogue) and his student Leslie are the only participants who mention posture as a pair.

Although Ryan, David, and Jesse acknowledge the importance of breath support in developing the young, healthy singer, each of the pedagogues mentions the breath in different ways. Ryan asks that his singers have enough breath support to have a lively

sound without forcing it. For David, the singer must use the breath to support the sound and Jesse encourages his singers to sing “*legato*, on the breath.” In some way, it seems that support, if defined as given assistance too, could be the universal connector among the three pedagogues view of the breath, as the breath supports that lively sound or *legato* singing wanted by the pedagogues. Of the student participants, Leslie (Tommy’s student) is the only participant who does not mention breath support as an area of importance in developing the young, healthy singing voice. This could come from Tommy not explaining or discussing breath support during the rehearsal as Leslie mentions during her interview.

While the term healthy may be viewed differently among choral and applied voice pedagogues, based on the data collected in this study, the participants provided similar areas of importance in their definitions determining that the term healthy could serve as a proper word choice for this topic of discussion. While the pedagogues and students were only provided with the purpose of this study before their interviews and observations, the data also shows that many of the students can determine what their pedagogues would consider components of healthy singing as there is overlap found among the pedagogue and student pairs.

### **Vocal Technique**

With the previous literature found in Chapter II in mind, the researcher interviewed each pedagogue and student on five features of vocal technique that were determined as areas of importance in developing healthy singers. Those five areas were: posture, breath support, tone quality, vocal registration, and resonance. Based on the interviews and observations of this study, a high number of discussions, vocal exercises,

and analogies are used in the pedagogue's teachings to help students gain a better understanding of the vocal techniques presented. In this section, the researcher will discuss the similarities and differences that appeared in the pedagogue's and student's descriptions of healthy singing and their relation to the previous literature, followed by an analysis of the vocal exercises used by each pedagogue during their observations. The three main vocal techniques from the literature are posture, breath support, and tone quality.

**Posture.** Dayme and Vaughn (2014) state that:

Efficient physical balance ensures that the parts of your instrument are aligned and in position to work together to produce a free sound. This means that your lungs, your voice box (larynx), and your throat (vocal tract) are all in a line and in a position of maximum efficiency for singing. (Dayme & Vaughn, 2014, p. 8)

McKinney (1994) says that good posture is interrelated with good singing as good posture allows:

- The skeletal framework and the muscular components of the body to fulfill their basic functions (of supporting, protecting, and giving shape to the body) efficiently, without any undue expenditure of energy;
- The breathing mechanism – the actuator – to fulfill its basic function (of moving air in and out of the body freely and to obtain the needed quantity of air) efficiently without any undue expenditure of energy;
- The best functioning of the vibrator and resonators;
- A psychological asset to the singer; and
- The singer to secure a positive reaction from the audience (McKinney, 1994, pp. 33-34).

While not every pedagogue spends much time mentioning posture in their choral rehearsals or applied studio lessons, each pedagogue does have their techniques, analogies, or use of imagery that they use to help their students correct their posture and identify tension. Ryan, Tommy, and Lucinda mention being “free of tension,” when observing posture as one element in developing a healthy singer. Reid (1983) defines tension as “the act or condition of being stretched, stress resulting from the contraction of an elastic body (e.g., a muscle).” While the pedagogues in this study ask to be “free of tension,” the research of Binkley (2012), suggest that Reid’s (1983) definition encourages “a balance of tension,” indicating “that all body movements (including singing) require muscular tension,” (Binkley, 2012, p. 3), as he states that “muscular tension is essential to vocal tone,” (Reid, 1983, p. 371).

David mentions the importance of having a proper postural alignment (from head to abdomen) as a key component to healthy singing. While David discourages standing against the wall to achieve this proper postural alignment, Bauer (2013) encourages it as the creation of an active lift of the upper body, the thorax, allows the chest and shoulders to fall into place, not affecting phonation and resonance. Jesse also mentions having a “normal alignment,” when referring to posture as the body should be grounded to the floor with the shoulders and ribcage suspended from the body and head aligned.

For Emily and Ryan (two choral pedagogues), posture is recognized before warming up the voice as they both have their students participate in some form of stretching and back rubs to help recognize body alignment and to release tension. Phillips (2012) discusses the importance of warming up and stretching the body before vocal warm-ups, stating that it allows the body to become “flexible and open from head to toe,”

(p. 8), which results in the feeling of creating space for sound and resonance to happen. For Tommy, the use of modeling is used to help students identify proper posture and can be observed through his conducting posture as he believes the stance for the choral conductor and singer should be the same, as students will tend to mirror what they see, which mirrors the research of Weary (2011).

Based on the previous literature on posture in the choral rehearsal and applied studio, researchers acknowledge the importance of posture as do the pedagogues in this study. It is interesting to note that of the pedagogues, David (an applied voice pedagogue) is the only participant who describes what this “proper posture,” should look like. In the related literature covered in this document, it is also important to note that while the choral literature (Corbin, 1986; Farrell, 2010; Weary, 2011) provides analogies in helping recognize posture they do not explain what “proper posture,” looks like as David and applied voice pedagogues such as McKinney (2005) do. For Emily, Ryan, and Lucinda when addressing issues of posture in their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons, phrases such as those seen in Table 6 are used.

Table 6: *Phrases Used to Recognize Posture*

<b>Pedagogue</b>	<b>Phrase</b>
Emily	“Sit on your alternate feet (the butt bone).”
Ryan	“Shoulders back and down.”
	“Put your chin down and don’t hunch forward.”
	“Check your posture.”
Lucinda	“Lengthen the spine.”

While there are only two phrases in Table 6 that would be considered as informing the students of how they should sit or stand (both used by Ryan), the pedagogues are confident that these sayings help their students become more aware of what proper posture should look like. As the phrases, “shoulders back and down,” and

“put your chin down and don’t hunch forward,” describe what posture should include, it is interesting to notice that these phrases are used by a choral pedagogue whose students sit for a majority of their rehearsal time. Farrell (2010) avoids phrases such as “stand up straight,” as he has found his singers to create tension in the body which could be an issue with phrases such as “lengthen the spine,” found in this particular group of pedagogues. On the other hand, it would be acceptable for Lucinda to use the phrase as long as the singer is aware of the steps taken to lengthen the spine, as noted in Phillips (2012) text.

While Lucinda may use phrases to help her students recognize posture, she also uses imagery as a tool of having students identify proper posture by having them use the spine of the book analogy mentioned during her interview. Appleton (2008), a writer and teacher of the Alexander Technique, specifies the importance of mental imagery as it is “temporarily telling your body what to feel; not asking the body what it does feel,” (p. 2). The thought of having your body aligned as the spine of a book helps the student create the tallness needed from the head and neck, down through the back, all the way down to the feet, which goes along with Lucinda’s saying of “lengthen the spine.” While she uses this great imagery of the spine of the book, modeling, which is done by Tommy and noted by Weary (2011) as previously stated, is done to help reinforce what she is asking her students to do.

While a majority of choral students have the opportunity of sitting during the choral rehearsal, the three choral student participants mention how their conductors stress sitting as if they are standing when singing. For Kimberly and Leslie, they both recall how their conductors, Ryan and Tommy, ask for them to sit at the edge of their chair. While not exactly telling her students to sit at the edge of the chair, Kaitlyn is reminded

how Emily encourages them to sit on their “sitz bones,” according to Kaitlyn, while Emily calls it the “alternate feet,” or “butt bone.” Using language such as that used by Emily requires the pedagogue to demonstrate or clearly explain what sitting on your “sitz bones,” means and looks like, going back to modeling. Kemp (2013) also encourages sitting on the sitz bones to achieve proper alignment when sitting. The sitz bones located in the center of each buttock, are like rocking chairs. When the weight is placed on the sitz bones, it causes the spine and torso to lengthen, putting the head in good alignment and allows flexibility in the muscles needed for breath support (Kemp, 2013, p. 53).

For Kaitlyn and Kimberly, they also mention how their conductors, Emily and Ryan, demonstrate good posture which reminds them of their posture. While the pedagogues may demonstrate good posture during their conducting or lessons, Leslie mentions that it is not always helpful based on her experiences in Tommy’s rehearsals as the seats are not the best for singing. Leslie also says that Tommy has the students stand when he sees issues with posture, which she finds the most beneficial.

As for the applied voice students, when asked to discuss posture they immediately begin discussing their posture in their lessons, while the choral students went directly to discussing the overall choir’s posture. This could be because in the applied studio the students have the one-on-one interaction that is not generally found in the choral rehearsal setting. One common factor for bad posture found in Skylar, Abigail, and Alivia’s interviews is the mention of slouching or shrugging of the shoulders. In much of the related literature, such as Corbin (1986) and Phillips (2012), they mention that the shoulders should be pushed down and back, while Bauer (2013) says the “shoulders should fall into place.” When students are unaware of what “pushed down and back,”



looks like, this can immediately cause tension and bad singing habits for the singing student. For Alivia and Abigail, the two students mention that in their lessons their instructors, Lucinda and Jesse, continue to discuss how bad posture can impact the sound of the voice while singing.

Among the student participants Kaitlyn, Kimberly, Leslie, and Alivia mention posture in their descriptions of healthy singing. During the student's interviews, each student discusses how posture plays a significant role in another layer of proper singing technique such as the breath and tone. For Kaitlyn and Kimberly, they both recall their directors using the same exercises mentioned by the pedagogues as tools for helping students improve their posture during the choral rehearsals. For Skylar and Abigail, they both mention how proper posture can help with support as Skylar is constantly reminded to keep her shoulders back which helps with the upper portion of the body. Abigail is reminded to remain tall with the sternum raised and lifted, and keep shoulders back to help improve the sound from becoming flat giving more technical detail to posture. While the shoulders and raised sternum, mentioned by Skylar and Abigail, assist in better posture, Phillips (2012) includes the head, neck, arms, and hands as other important factors to consider when thinking of positioning the upper body.

As noted in the previous literature of choral pedagogues (Smith and Sataloff, 2014; Farrell, 2010) and through this study, choral pedagogues consider posture to be one of the first areas of importance in developing a healthy sound as exercises are used to help release tension and have the students become more aware of their postural alignment prior to singing. While some exercises such as back rubs and stretching are found to be the most common and not new to the world of choral pedagogues they may be presented

at different times throughout the warm-up phase of the rehearsal or the entirety of the rehearsal. Previous research by Briggs (2011), shows that students enjoy back rubs and exercises that use their arms, hands, legs, and bodies while singing, which is also shown in the student's discussions. While not every choral student mentioned posture in their descriptors of healthy singing when asked the importance of posture they can describe why it is important. For Kaitlyn and Leslie, they both draw the connection of correct posture helping produce proper breath support.

While applied voice pedagogues may not complete stretching exercises like the choral pedagogues do before warming up in the applied studio, they are aware of the importance of posture and continue to remind their students when issues arise. In the applied studio conditions of working on or mentioning posture arise when issues are made present. While these students are always standing during their lessons unlike choral students, many pedagogues in the applied voice studio would say this is what helps them from having to complete exercises on posture before the lesson begins. It is also interesting to note that while each of the applied voice students mention proper postures impact to other vocal areas, Alivia is the only student who connects proper posture to stage appearance stating, "you don't want to go up there [on stage] slouching, it shows a lack of confidence in terms of your work." While Alivia's statement holds, this extra layer could come from her vast experience of performing noted in her study.

**Breath support.** While Corbin (1986) found breathing to be the most challenging aspect of teaching over thirty years ago, pedagogues today such as Tommy and Lucinda continue to describe breath support as a "tricky," topic. Each singer's body is made differently, possibly requiring a different approach or technique to achieve proper breath

support. For Tommy, Lucinda, and David the singing breath should be exactly like the “sleeping breath,” natural. While these pedagogues believe that the singing breath should be natural, *The Art of Singing* by Shakespeare (1898/2015) notes that:

A singer’s respiration...should be apparently natural,” but “in reality...he [the singer] would take in so small a quantity of air that he could sing only the shortest phrases, and these without effect, for they would be wanting in intensity.” (p. 5)

For this reason, Shakespeare (1898/2015) believes that “for singing purposes, diaphragmatic breathing [deep breathing] must be combined with rib breathing,” (p. 9). To teach breath support and awareness, four of the pedagogues: Emily, Ryan, David, and Lucinda use exercises that they have found useful in their training and teachings. While Emily uses a combination of exercises with her students, Ryan and David use exercises that consist of activities that include the incorporation of both breath and pitch, while Lucinda’s exercise focuses on just the breath, which is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: *Breathing Exercises Used by Pedagogues*

<b>Pedagogue</b>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Description of Exercise</b>
Emily	Straw phonation	Place the straw in your mouth and produce sound through the straw.
	“Tug-of-war”	Students pair up, face each other, and grab the hands of their partner. While taking a breath and during the release (on a hiss) the students pull away from each other.
Ryan	Pitched ‘hum’	Use a pitched hum or sustained /s/ or /z/ with an /oo/ or /ah/ vowel.
David	Sustained pitch	Sing a sustained pitch with /s/ or /z/ and an /ee/ vowel.
	Lay on the floor	While lying on the floor focus on keeping the breath natural.
Lucinda	Slow leak in the tire	Do a hiss with a steady stream of air.

Based on the exercises presented in Table 7, Ryan and David both incorporate the method of singing a sustained /s/ or /z/ to help the students connect the steady stream of air being used but have different choices of vowel usage. Although Lucinda does not

incorporate a vowel to her “slow leak in the tire,” exercise, this analogy is very similar to that of Ryan and David as it works on an awareness of the breath with a similar sound of the /s/ or /z/ being produced, allowing the student to recognize the amount of air being used. Phillips (2012) encourages singers to use a similar technique by taking in a breath and on the release produce the sound of a /sh/ to help with muscle coordination that she considers “the most important step for managing exhalation for singing,” (p. 24).

For David and Emily, having a visual effect of connecting the breath helps their students improve their healthy singing abilities through the “tug-of-war,” exercise and by laying on the floor to observe the movement of the belly during the inhalation and exhalation. By having his students recognize that the breath should be “natural,” David can help them realize that it is not the ribcage that is causing that movement in the belly. In Corbin’s (1986) study, the researcher encourages the use of a straw to help with low “belly,” breathing. For Emily, incorporating the use of straw phonation helps the vocal folds and muscles around the vocal tract to determine the most effective position and shape for self-sustained phonation, making the instrument more adequate. Using gestures such as voicing into a straw (i.e., straw phonation, Nix & Simpson, 2008) entrains more efficient vocal production (Nix, 1999/2013).

During Tommy and David’s interview, the two pedagogues agree on looking at opera singers who have sung for a while. Singers of the *bel canto* era are mentioned for their barrel-chest and how the stomach is not being puffed out during the breathing process when singing. Lamperti (1931) included that air should not be crammed into the lungs but dropped into the body from the empty, open space that has been created from “the natural decent of the diaphragm and the lateral opening of the ribs,” (p. 42). One

disagreement between the two pedagogues is that Tommy believes this barrel-chest is found more in the men, while David thinks it is found more in the women. While it is difficult to find literature on if the barrel-chest is found more in men or women, previous literature does state that “a barrel-chest... meaning that the chest becomes ‘deeper front to back’ and makes ‘deep inspiration’ difficult. The efficiency of inhalation, air exchange, and exhalation are all affected by changes in the parts of the respiratory system. Most of these changes lead to difficulty with breathing and therefore with phrasing and vocal tone quality,” (Rayapati, 2012, p. 3) which goes against Tommy and David’s recommendations.

While the other pedagogues incorporate some form of exercises to help understand breath support, Jesse is the only pedagogue participant who admits that he does not dwell on the breath as it should happen naturally when the vocal cords are adducted properly. While the research of Kemp (2013) is focused on the choral setting, there are many vocal pedagogues, both choral and applied, who may ask their singers for a deep breath. When this happens, often times the singer’s body allows the abdomen to become sucked in “with the chest held high and shoulders raised, with the air usually held by tightly closed vocal folds (or cords),” (Kemp, 2013, p. 62), which are all “natural physical reactions...counterproductive to singing,” (Kemp, 2013, pp. 62-63). “When breath support is achieved correctly [as Jesse mentions] it provides a steady and ample airstream, which in turn results in an unwavering vocal sound,” (Kemp, 2013, p. 63), that is needed when singing.

Choral students, Kaitlyn and Kimberly, notice that more attention is given on breath support during the warm-up period. For Kaitlyn, this is usually completed through

some form of physical activity or movement such as the “tug-of-war,” exercise mentioned in Emily’s interview. While Kaitlyn loves this activity and says that it works, she is not exactly sure how it “engages the breath,” which shows a lack of understanding of the technique offered to the student. Similar to Kaitlyn, Leslie mentions that Tommy “doesn’t really explain breath support,” but when issues arise, he will ask the students to change it still not explaining the process. This can show a disconnect between the instructor’s teaching and the students’ understanding of making sure the students are aware of how proper breath support can be achieved. Marden (1907) states that with the:

Act of pulling he [the singer] will necessarily exercise the diaphragm and waist muscles. The vigor and control of the breath will be proportioned to the elasticity of the diaphragm and waist muscles. (p. 17)

Kimberly recalls that Ryan typically solves the issue of breath support in one of two ways: a physical activity such as body movement while incorporating a breathing exercise or a vocal exercise such as panting or yawning.

For applied voice students, Skylar and Abigail, along with identifying breath support, awareness of the body and how it functions is important, as the term “support,” is “widely misunderstood and rarely explained well,” (Kemp, 2013, p. 61). For Skylar, making sure that her posture is aligned helps to draw the connection of proper breath support to the use of vibrato. For Abigail, recognizing where the diaphragm is and feeling the breath there has helped her through the awareness of controlling the intake of air. For Alivia, being able to identify and use different types of breaths such as the smelling breath and the sipping breath has helped her set up the breath to get through the phrase. While Bauer (2013) does not mention the smelling or sipping breath, the yawning breath

is mentioned as it encourages a comfortably dropped larynx which is not mentioned by any of the pedagogues or students in the current study.

Based on the data provided through this study and previous literature, the topic of breath support continues to be a “tricky,” area of discussion, as stated by Lucinda and Tommy. In this study, while three of the pedagogues use similar techniques in helping with breath support each participant’s description of breath support and its connection to healthy singing is different. Although the pedagogues feel confident about the exercises used to teach breath support, based on the students' responses, some of the pedagogues in this study have trouble describing the exercises or activities used during the rehearsal and lesson in a way that the student understands, especially in the choral rehearsal.

It is also interesting to notice that while each pedagogue and student highlights the importance of breath support throughout the study, none of the participants acknowledge what is taking place that makes breath support so important. Sataloff (2006) states that “the larynx generates only the raw material, the basic waveform of voice, that must be modified and shaped by the vocal tract,” (Sataloff, 2006, p. 65). While highlighting that most people like to compare the vocal system to a wind instrument, Sataloff (2006) uses the following analogy to show the importance of resistance at the vocal source (glottal source) due to air pressure and air flow.

The analogy is useful if it is clear that the instrument in question is brass, and *not* a woodwind. That is, despite the fact that we often (inexactly) speak of “laryngeal vibrations,” the vocal folds do not vibrate like a reed at all. Actually they “chop” the airstream into short bursts of airflow. Thus, if the vocal system is analogous to a musical instrument, it is more like a trumpet, and the vocal folds correspond to the trumpeter’s lips. The vocal source signal is similar to the sound a trumpeter would make with only a mouthpiece. The voice, in contrast, is the output from the trumpeter’s bell. (Sataloff, 2006, p. 65)

**Tone quality.** When it comes to discussing tone quality each pedagogue comments on the importance of the vowel which is one of three areas that Dean (2011) considers essential. For Emily and Tommy, using exercises that require their singers to sing from vowel to vowel with as little change as possible. In Emily's warm-up, she also uses exercises that encourage students to "breathe for high notes when starting on a low note," along with "narrowing the vowel when the pitch gets higher." For Tommy, when looking for a certain sound, he incorporates the use of imagery by having each vowel sound represent the sound of different instruments to determine the quality of the tone. Just like the pedagogues shown here, Olson (2010) agrees that "vowel color...contributes to the core sound of any group of singers," (p. 90).

Ryan and Lucinda, tend to use words such as warm, bright, and dark to describe tone quality to their students. While many vocal pedagogues use similar terms, these descriptors can mean different things to different teachers. Ryan will also use non-vocal descriptors to help his choir focus on a particular tone desired, as he enjoys different kinds of tones to represent different musical styles. "A choral conductor has certain expectations regarding the tone quality of an ensemble," (Olson, 2010, p. 90), which is seen here based on the data presented in this study. Lucinda agrees with Emily on the importance of shaping to help develop the desired sound. While Lucinda encourages her students to open the mouth and release the jaw, this may not be the same approach for the other pedagogues.

David and Jesse both put a focus on air or vibrato. David believes that vibrato makes the sound and resonance come from the breath which makes a freer sound. Although the breath helps to make a freer sound as mentioned by David:



Breath coordination has a big impact on what your tone sounds like when singing. If you have good breath coordination, you move your breath consistently throughout the phrases in a song. When you don't move your breath consistently, the tone may be tight and constricted because you're pressing muscles together to push out the tone. (Phillips, 2012, p. 165)

Using slightly different language, Jesse says that one must "move the air," to get into the desired sound and that comes from "proper[ly] adducted cords." Though Phillip (2012) agrees with moving air to "enhance the tone," she also believes that "moving air without understanding the muscular coordination may lead to a breathy tone," (p. 162).

When discussing tone quality, the student participants recall many analogies, vocal exercises, modeling and gestures used by their choral and applied voice instructors. Kaitlyn connects tone quality with the breath mentioning that "escaping air can cause issues with tone quality," which is noted earlier by Phillips (2012). During choral rehearsals, Kaitlyn is reminded that when Emily wants to change the tone quality of the pitch, she uses a hand gesture putting her hands together in the shape of an O, changing the size of the O to represent brighter or darker. This is an exercise that must be explained to understand. For Kimberly, tone quality is shown through exercises that include singing in "the back of the throat," creating dark sounds and "moving through the spectrum exploring the sounds possible." In Corbin's (1986) research, he encourages choral conductors to demonstrate through their voice or recordings concepts of ideal tone quality which is what Leslie recalls from her conductor. Skylar and Abigail mention the importance of shaping when it comes to achieving a good tone quality which aligns with their instructors' ideas. Skylar believes having a forward space and the appropriate shaping helps to create the desired sound. For Abigail, while it is not only space that is needed, the focus must also be on where the sound is directed.

Kimberly and Leslie mention how their instructors discuss using terms such as bright and dark to describe tone quality. While these are terms that may be used by many instructors of singing, they are also words that may have different meaning or context based on the instructors desired sound or the student's capabilities. Having the student's involvement in determining what a bright or dark sound includes can also be beneficial in the process of determining the desired tone. For Kimberly, she recalls her director having the choir experiment by making their "nastiest high school sound," to represent a bright sound and a mature sound to represent dark. While this step may not be the best, it works for this particular pedagogue and student.

Based on the data provided in this study there are several exercises and beliefs among the pedagogues that draw them together on the topic of tone quality. Whether it be the importance of vowels, the impact air or vibrato has on the tone, or the choice of words and analogies to use when searching for a specific tone; it seems that both the choral and applied voice pedagogues in this study have similar preferences when it comes to addressing tone quality. While this may be the case, each pedagogue has their own desired tone, based on the student's capabilities, voice type, or even the repertoire selected, which makes each pedagogue unique.

### **Vocal Exercises**

During the observations of each pedagogue and student pair, vocal exercises were presented during the warm-up period to help their students develop a sense of mental focus, vocal preparation for the music being practiced, and to address areas of development (Apfelstadt, 2016). While no warm-up exercise was the same, there are some key points to address. While a majority of the pedagogues taught in a more

traditional style, their warm-ups represented that focusing on *legato*, balanced sound quality, including purity of vowels. Jesse, who teaches singers interested in musical theater and pop repertoire which would be categorized as a contemporary style, uses vocal warm-ups not typically seen in a classical based applied voice studio lesson.

While choral conductors work in a group setting, they must be aware of their choices of warm-ups as they should address the combination of voices found in their ensembles. Researchers of vocal warm-ups (Philip, 2012; Kemp, 2013; Smith and Sataloff, 2013) stress the importance of having student's complete exercises that will help in adjusting the voice from daily speaking to singing. In this particular group of pedagogues, Emily is the only pedagogue who presents a warm-up that helps the student's voice adjust from their daily speaking voice to their singing voice, found in Figure 2. With this particular exercise, it allows the singer to get in touch with the breath without the complexity of vowels by using the sound of a /v/.

In the next two exercises used by Emily, she begins the initial sound with a /z/ adding /ing/ and /o/ to the second exercise (seen in Figure 3) and /ee/ to /o/ to the following one (seen in Figure 4). By placing the /z/ before the vowel, this allows the singer to bring the sound forward to the front of the lips and allows the flow of air to move before the actual pitch of the vowel or /ing/ sound. While Emily uses the vowel /o/ frequently in her vocal warm-ups, this may work well for female voices, but Hassemann and Jordan (1991) recommends that the male voice use the vowel /uh/ especially when moving into the higher range as noted in Emily's warm-ups. Hassemann and Jordan (1991) note that vowel modification or change in the vowel must occur in the upper register due to the addition of more head tone needed to make a better sound (p. 127).

Observing the warm-ups of Ryan and Tommy, the two choral pedagogues stick with the vowels /o/ and /ee/ similar to those of Emily. While these vowels again are not suitable to all of the voice types and ranges in the choral ensemble, it is interesting to observe the similarities among the choral pedagogues. It is also interesting that each of the choral pedagogues uses the vowel /o/ which is seen as a troublesome vowel for tuning in a choir, according to Smith and Sataloff (2013).

For the applied voice pedagogues, David and Lucinda follow a more traditional approach with their two female soprano students while Jesse takes on a more contemporary approach incorporating yodeling to focus on chest voice with an /oo/ to /w + oa/ exercise and an /oo/ to /o/ exercise moving from the tonic to dominant when focusing on chest to falsetto. As for David, each of his vocal exercises incorporates the vowel /o/. For a soprano voice, the /o/ vowel may work well with some modification in the higher range or when working on the mid to low chest range connecting the voice downward. Lucinda's uses of the Liebling (1956) exercises do a great job of presenting warm-ups for the soprano voice range, beginning to work in the middle of the voice first followed by an exercise that works from the top downward (as seen in Figure 15), ending with an exercise that works from the bottom upward (Figure 16).

Though none of the student participants discuss the vocal exercises that were used during their observations, all of the students consider their pedagogue's choice of warm-ups as beneficial in their learning. While Kaitlyn discusses one warm-up used by Emily during the choral rehearsal, instead of mentioning how the vocal line helps in strengthening the voice, she comments on hand movements incorporated to help keep the exercise light. For Skylar, she does highlight one exercise used by David during the

applied studio lesson that helps with staying in the same vowel space while moving through the scale. Considering this exercise to help with the transition of the voice, it is interesting to note how the applied voice student highlights technical issues the vocal exercise helps with, unlike the choral student.

As the exercises presented in this study help in some aspect of singing and warming up the voice, they do not represent a large number of warm-ups used by other choral and applied voice pedagogues. While there is consistency among the choice of vowels and approach, the study shows that many pedagogues of singing still use the traditional method of warming up the voice. While Jesse's warm-ups do not follow the traditional model, his student Alivia believes that the vocal exercises presented have helped her voice grow, especially the "blown *falsetto*," exercises helping her middle voice. While unsure if they are beneficial to the voice, this does show that pedagogues of singing should be aware of the range of musical styles currently being worked on in the applied voice studio and the techniques needed or required for this range of music.

### **Research Question 3 – Other Factors Considered When Teaching Students**

The third research question was designed to determine what other factors pedagogues considered when teaching their students. Although the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio serve different purposes, some attributes align and were observed in the interviews and observations completed. This will be addressed in this section of the chapter along with their relation to the previous literature.

### **Student Abilities**

While each pedagogue would describe their students' abilities as "well," they also realize that some students are stronger than others. Due to the choral pedagogues working with a group of students at one time, Emily, Ryan, and Tommy must be careful with their repertoire choices. Also, knowing what the overall group is capable of doing in planning their performances and the approach they take in producing a solid, healthy sound is beneficial. Ryan has discovered that his student's musical abilities tend to increase when they memorize their music resulting in greater self-awareness, observation, and listening. For Emily, she realizes that some students have more vocal strengths than rhythmic strengths and allows those students to help out in the music making process. Performing in a group setting can also hinder student's growth as many weaker students may become dependent among the more experienced singers.

Due to the one-on-one instruction in the applied studio, David, Lucinda, and Jesse can connect with their students during the learning process. While Lucinda has noticed that many of the students in the department are "not curious about exploring how far their voices will go," they are still talented. For David, he considers his studio time as a "building process," and Jesse considers the time as an opportunity to "enhance what the students already have." Due to this individualized instruction, the pedagogues are capable of finding techniques, exercises, and repertoire that are suitable for each student. This one-on-one instruction time also allows for the pedagogues to see which exercises work for students and differentiate the ones that do not work.

In each of the student interviews, it is interesting to note that when asked of how they feel about their singing abilities they are truly honest about where they are currently

in their singing. For example, Skylar shares that while transitioning from soprano to mezzo-soprano and beginning to “really lov[e] her middle range,” she still has much work to do. For Abigail, while it may not seem that much progress is being made during her voice lessons due to stopping often, “the progress is astounding.” Through this study, it shows that whether in the choral or applied voice studio setting students can reflect on their progress and realize that learning the voice is a process, which can reflect on their instructors teaching process.

In both the choral rehearsal and applied studio lesson it is crucial for the pedagogues to know what their students are capable of vocally as this can impact what repertoire will be covered and the approach, techniques, and exercises the pedagogue will use in making sure that their students grow as singers and well-rounded musicians. Brunner (1992) stresses the importance of knowing your singers and being aware of not just their ability but also the training and experience they have already accomplished. For choral pedagogues, this can be a difficult task as they are working with a group of students at one time compared to the applied voice pedagogues working with individual students.

## **Repertoire**

While the choral pedagogues have the choice of choosing repertoire for their choral ensembles, there are times where the repertoire is chosen for them especially when collaborative performances are involved. The work of Brunner (1992) states that “the literature provides the foundation for a musical experience of substance and quality,” (p. 29), which can be found in this particular group of choral pedagogues, as they discuss their repertoire choices. When it comes to repertoire preference, Emily makes sure that

her music choices are ones that the students can learn from and are capable of performing. Ryan wants to make sure that his students have a fair historical picture of what is offered, and Tommy makes sure his students experience some “broad-based classical music,” as choral music has changed in today’s school systems due to the style of repertoire performed.

Similar to previous research, each of the applied voice pedagogues stresses the importance of selecting music that matches each students’ physical limitations, voice classification, expressive/emotional factors, and musicianship skills (Nix, 2002). For the applied studio pedagogues, Jesse is the only pedagogue who allows his students to pick repertoire they would like to study making sure it is chosen with guidance. For David and Lucinda, many of their repertoire choices come from their own experience and training allowing them to give input based on their perspective of working on and performing a particular piece. For freshman and sophomore students, David and Jesse seem to be like-minded that many of their students receive repertoire in English and Italian eventually adding German and French as the student's musical ability increases. While each pedagogue may not mention it directly, their repertoire choices are assigned based on the students’ technical capabilities, which Duke and Simmons (2006) describe as an effective studio teacher behavior.

Out of the six students in this study, Skylar and Alivia are the only two participants who discuss repertoire chosen for them during their lesson. While not sharing how they feel about the repertoire chosen, Skylar discusses how David will find music in different keys that fit her particular voice range. For Alivia, she shares how she will often



bring choral repertoire to her applied studio lesson to determine what “tools,” or techniques she should use for a particular piece.

Of the pedagogues presented in this study, Jesse is also the only pedagogue who was observed teaching a contemporary style. As vocal music continues to evolve, pedagogues are beginning to find that repertoire such as musical theatre, pop, jazz, R&B, and gospel are becoming more accustomed in the choral rehearsal and especially in the applied voice studio. While this may be the case, the research in this study shows that many choral and applied voice pedagogues lean towards traditional repertoire, which may require all singing pedagogues to become aware of the techniques needed for all styles of music.

## **Rapport**

Previous researchers such as Miller (2011) mention the importance of the teacher and student rapport as the instructor can convince their students that there is something of merit in what he or she does when there is a strong rapport between the two. While each pedagogue considers their rapport to be “good,” the applied voice pedagogues also mention how they are more upfront and harder on their students. This can be helpful as being upfront, and harder on the student can be seen as showing a genuine interest in the student’s growth, which is found in Abeles (1975) research study.

Among the choral pedagogues, Ryan makes sure to add some element of humor in his choral rehearsals as he believes that helps the environment of the classroom. Emily and Tommy bring a slightly different demeanor to the choral rehearsal. Emily describes herself as “different,” from other pedagogues because she limits the amount of talking in her rehearsals and acknowledges that the time is to work on music. While Tommy does

often stop to talk in his rehearsals, this time is often used to correct and ask for what he wants from the choir. With good rapport among all participants, this allows the choral and applied voice pedagogues to be nurturing and caring while also getting their point across during their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons. By expressing this skill of communication and comfortability, the learning environment is shown to be welcoming in a sense that makes the student want to continue learning and invest time which is mentioned by Gaunt (2009).

While the pedagogues in this study represent a small population of choral and applied voice pedagogues, it is determined that the choral pedagogues are more concerned with the collaboration and culture within the ensemble. This is shown by the laughter Ryan incorporates with his group and even by the small amount of talking done by Emily and Tommy. Because of the one-on-one instruction that takes place in the applied voice studio, it would be difficult for the pedagogue to comfortably work with their students and not strike up a conversation outside of music. While the applied voice studio instruction can be intense as seen by Lucinda's observation, it is the bond between the instructor and student that allows them to work effectively on music and create a rapport suitable for that environment. Similar to the research of Gaunt (2006), each student mentioned in this study shows joy and excitement studying with their current instructor. For those students who study with both a choral and applied voice pedagogue they notice that they find pros and cons in not only their pedagogues teaching but also in the knowledge they take away from both instructors finding their rapport a positive one.

## **Lesson and Rehearsal Structure**

Based on the observations conducted during this study, each pedagogue had a similar outline for how their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons operated. While the choral pedagogue may be working with a group of students and the applied voice pedagogue working one-on-one the structure of both settings is to build musical awareness and musicianship skills for all students as noted by Brunner (1996). For the choral pedagogues, they each began with an approximately ten-minute warm-up consisting of stretching and vocal exercises, followed by working on at least two pieces of repertoire during the sixty-minute rehearsal, ending with announcements similar to the outline given by Manfredi (2006). While Smith and Sataloff (2014) believed that a cool-down period helps move the student's singing voice back to their speaking voice none of the choral pedagogues completed this during their observed rehearsal.

The applied voice pedagogue's studio lessons each consisted of checking in with their students about how their voice is feeling or how the week is going, followed by vocal warm-ups, and finally working on two pieces of music, similar to the choral pedagogues. Cox (1989) states that "an efficient choral rehearsal involves productive use of time, sequential activities, supportive director behaviors, and the creation of an appropriate rehearsal climate," which can also be found for the applied voice pedagogues in this study.

Each of the pedagogues in this study also mentions the importance of having the choral ensemble or applied voice lesson not being a place where you "just plunk notes," as Emily calls it. Rather, it is a place where students can learn the ins and outs of a piece through the structure of the rehearsals and lessons. By making sure to include those

musical and instructional skills as mentioned in the previous literature (Brunner, 1996; Abeles, 1975), the structure allows the pedagogues to spend time on what helps their students develop into healthy singers.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the data to explore the similarities and differences between the choral pedagogues, applied voice pedagogues, and their students. This analysis presented seven major themes including (1) *background and training*, (2) *healthy singing and strategies*, (3) *student abilities*, (4) *repertoire choices*, (5) *rappor*t, (6) *structure of lessons/rehearsals*, and (7) *agreements/disagreements among students and pedagogues*. Through interviews and observations, this study revealed findings relevant to choral and applied voice pedagogues and the vocal techniques and approaches taken to develop young, healthy singers.

## Chapter VII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

While the methods of singing pedagogues may vary from studio to studio or from one choral rehearsal to another, it is important for vocal music educators and performers to share their techniques so that they may help in enhancing the developing singer's voice. As various styles of repertoire continue to evolve in these settings, it is also vital that the pedagogue be knowledgeable in teaching the techniques that will make their students successful, having a long-lasting voice.

The purpose of this study was to explore with six choral and applied voice pedagogues' the similarities and differences of teaching healthy singing in their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons and how their students respond and interpret the techniques used. In order to achieve this purpose, the following research questions were explored:

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing?
2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues consider when teaching students?
4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting?

The research questions for this study were answered through a qualitative process of collecting data through interviews and observations. Through this data, the interviews and observations allowed the researcher to create cases of the six pedagogues (three choral and three applied voice) serving as participants in the study along with one student interview of each pedagogue. The pedagogues have at least five years' experience directing choral ensembles or teaching applied voice lessons at the university level, completed a graduate level degree, teach in higher education, and considered as a nationally recognized choral pedagogue or applied voice pedagogue by organizations such as the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). Each choral pedagogue was asked to select one choir, and each applied voice pedagogue was asked to select one voice lesson to observe their approach in teaching healthy singing to young developing singers.

For each pedagogue, data was collected by firstly, interviewing the pedagogue and then observing the pedagogue conduct a choral rehearsal or teach an applied voice lesson. After each pedagogue had been interviewed and observed, the student participants were then interviewed. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and sent to the participants for member checks. The data from the interviews and observations were analyzed and compared to discover the similarities and differences of each pedagogue and student pair.

Throughout the study, the term healthy is used as an effort to outline appropriate tools for developing the young singing voice in the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio setting, based on the pedagogues and student's interviews and observations. While the original intent of the study was to examine what strategies, the pedagogues

considered the most effective, the research showed that the study would be incomplete if the student's point of view were not examined. To only observe the pedagogue's method of teaching would omit how the student's musical abilities impact the choices made in the choral classroom and applied voice studio lesson.

Analyses of the six pedagogue's observations and interviews along with the student interviews presented seven major themes of consideration, which assisted in the development of the major findings in this study: (1) *background and training*, (2) *healthy singing and strategies*, (3) *student abilities*, (4) *repertoire choices*, (5) *rapport*, (6) *structure of lessons/rehearsals*, and (7) *agreements/disagreements among students and pedagogues*.

## Findings

As undergraduate students continue to major in vocal performance and vocal music education, the approaches taken by many choral and applied voice pedagogues continue to evolve based on their respective area of teaching. While the pedagogues chosen method of teaching changes, so does the repertoire appearing in the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio. With so many changes and different methods used by singing pedagogues, little is still known about what approaches choral and applied voice pedagogues employ and which they perceive are useful in developing healthy young singers.

One finding of this study is the similarities in what pedagogues and students define as *healthy singing and the strategies* used in developing the young singing voice. Through the definitions provided by the pedagogues and students, it shows that healthy

singing includes: 1) posture (whether presented through modeling or imagery) is an area that is beneficial to producing a healthy sound; 2) effective/efficient breath support (while being complicated to teach due to the misconceptions of what proper breath support looks and feels like) requires that the breath remain natural; and 3) while tone quality is often determined based on the pedagogues personal choice, it is the shaping of the vowel that makes a significant impact on what is heard. While these are just a few points addressing healthy singing, the study also shows that there is a large number of techniques and approaches used by both the choral and applied voice pedagogues that should be shared as they may be beneficial for all singing teachers and their students. For this reason, it is important that instructors of singing join together to share their methods as more overlap and inconsistencies may be found in the field.

Another finding in this study is the knowledge students gain and take along with them from their pedagogues during their studies. Just like current students, the pedagogue's *background and training* allowed them the opportunity to learn techniques that they would pass along to their students during their teaching, which they will then pass along to someone else as shown in this study. With this in mind, each student described techniques and approaches used by their pedagogues in developing their voices. While most of the students understood what the pedagogue asked of them there were occasions where a student was unable to explain what the pedagogue had suggested, especially when related to the breath. To avoid this scenario, it is imperative that pedagogues continue to stay knowledgeable and up to date in the field of vocal music when it comes to the anatomy, terminology, and approaches of the voice while making



sure that they are capable of explaining what they want from their students, in a way that the student can comprehend it.

By continuing to study or observe with other highly trained instructors and attend workshops on vocal technique, pedagogues can accomplish the task of communicating. This finding also shows that choral pedagogues should collaborate with applied voice pedagogues and vice versa to share what takes place in their respective settings. For a majority of the pedagogues and students in this study, the applied voice studio seemed to be the area where this particular group of participants gained most of their knowledge. As a result, it would be appropriate to say that the applied voice pedagogues should share more material on vocal pedagogy and the methods they use in their lessons to share with their colleagues. It would also be appropriate to say that taking applied voice lessons would not only be helpful for other singers but for choral conductors, especially those who are primarily pianists.

Finally, this study suggests that pedagogues should remain thoughtful of the *student's abilities*, along with the *repertoire* chosen, the *rapport* between them and the student, and the *structure of the lesson/rehearsal* as they all play a part in the learning process in their choral rehearsals or applied studio lessons. While choral pedagogues work in a group setting, it may be difficult to find out what each student is capable of vocally, unlike in the applied studio. This may require choral instructors to strike up conversations with their students' applied voice teachers or even create some form of a vocal check during the rehearsal to gain a better understanding of their voices in the ensemble. In this study, a majority of the repertoire presented was part of the traditional Western classical music canon. As music continues to evolve, such as that taught by

Jesse, the study shows that pedagogues should be knowledgeable of the techniques needed to teach the styles that may come through their ensembles or studios. While repertoire choices are not exactly clear in this study, the data shows that pedagogues choose repertoire based on what their students need to learn, whether individually or as a whole. As for styles of repertoire, this is often determined on the pedagogue's capability of teaching the piece, the student's capability of performing the piece, and also what the student can connect too.

While the settings of each pedagogue may vary, the participants acknowledge the importance of rapport between them and their students. In the choral rehearsal, rapport seems to be overshadowed as the pedagogue's place emphasis on the culture of the ensemble by creating an environment that recognizes appreciation of the music making process limiting the use of conversation during the choral rehearsal. In the applied voice studio, rapport stands out as the pedagogues are able to develop a mutual understanding and bond with their students even during moments when the lesson is not going well the communication is not lost. While both environments are unique good rapport along with culture helps in the learning process. Also, with these different settings, comes a structure that is conducive to learning. For this group of participants, their structure of rehearsals and lessons were similar, not in terms of methods, but in terms of introducing the material.

### **Conclusions**

The data from the observations and interviews presented several conclusions for the research questions of this study. Research question one, "How do choral pedagogues

and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop strategies that will result in healthy singing,” was addressed. The pedagogues discussed much of their teaching practices coming from either their studies in vocal courses or their experience teaching in the choral classroom or applied voice studio. While considering their participation in choral ensembles and applied one-on-one voice lessons as a means of gaining knowledge, the pedagogues also determined that observing a choral rehearsal or applied studio lesson of a well-trained pedagogue was beneficial in their growth along with attending workshops, participating in some vocal organization, and performing with ensembles or as a soloist.

Research question two, “How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer,” was addressed. The strategies used in teaching healthy singing by the pedagogues were similar as they consisted of discussions, analogies, and modeling of the vocal exercises and repertoire covered during the choral rehearsals and applied voice lessons. The pedagogues were consistent in their definitions of healthy singing by highlighting posture (including tension) and breath support as two of the main areas of developing a healthy singer. Although these two areas were mentioned the most, other areas included: understanding and knowing the voice, tone, and vibrato. The pedagogues also believed that once proper posture and breath support were present, the other following areas would come naturally.

Research question three, “What other factors do choral pedagogues, and vocal pedagogues consider when teaching students,” was addressed. The most common factor found among the pedagogues when teaching their students was the students’ vocal and musical capabilities. The pedagogues discussed areas such as what their voice could

handle and how their students could vocally and intellectually grow through the choices made for their choral ensemble and individual students. The pedagogues also mentioned that repertoire is chosen to help the students learn through something they are capable of performing successfully. Rapport and structure of the choral rehearsal and applied studio lessons were two other factors considered.

Research question four, “What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied studio setting,” was addressed. Similar to the pedagogues, the students believed that posture and breath support were two important areas in developing a healthy singer. The students also believed that knowing when to sing and taking care of the voice and body should also be considered when looking at what a healthy singer should consist of. As for strategies that the students found beneficial in helping develop a young, healthy singer, the students all mentioned similar posture, breathing techniques, and vocal exercises that were mentioned by their choral or applied voice pedagogue. Seeing that the six students interviewed and observed for the study are all undergraduate students, this can be found common as these are the only vocal pedagogues the students have had a chance to work with at the university level.

### **Implications**

The findings of this study offer several implications to the field of vocal music and most importantly to the choral and applied voice studio setting. The most important finding of this study is that teaching healthy singing is a process that includes a range of techniques. Though these techniques may vary from the use of analogies, imagery,

discussions, or modeling the pedagogues develop and use methods that best fit each student's needs. While these pedagogues may have different views of what is included in healthy singing, the pedagogues modeled healthy singing habits in their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons as the primary tool for student growth.

Understanding that the students vocal and musical abilities are a significant factor in determining what approaches to take in developing their voice. While it may be easier for applied voice pedagogues to analyze a student voice due to the one-on-one interaction, it is important that choral pedagogues develop a system in knowing what each of their choral members is capable of and create a teaching style that benefits all. Completing vocal checks throughout the school year, having discussions with the students applied voice instructor, or with the student themselves are a few ways in helping to make sure that the choral pedagogue knows what their students are capable of completing vocally and allows them to know what approaches they must take during a rehearsal.

Additionally, through this study data shows that many students consider their instructor's strategies of healthy singing as the most practical steps to improving their singing voice. While a majority of these undergraduate students have had only one choral director or applied voice instructor, this shows that students consider their instructors teaching approaches as valuable. While their educational training influences many of the pedagogues teaching experiences, it is important that choral and applied voice pedagogues stay current in their knowledge of vocal pedagogy as their students will more than likely continue to use those methods as they continue their journey in singing.

## Recommendations

This qualitative study, made up of interviews and observations, provided an understanding of how choral and applied voice pedagogues conceptualized and employed healthy singing habits in their choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons. Having an understanding of the strategies and beliefs of what the pedagogues considered healthy singing to be and consist of is a significant part of this study. To have a better understanding of what the pedagogues in this study were asking of from their students, I would try to incorporate these strategies into my choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons. Participating in the choral rehearsals or applied voice lessons with the pedagogues in this study also could have given a better understanding of the approaches taken.

This study was created to discover healthy singing techniques and strategies with young developing singers in the choral and applied voice area at the university level. While the term healthy can be viewed differently among pedagogues and student's, other singing teachers or students may have a problem with using the term healthy in their teaching along with many of the other terms (such as beautiful or proper) used in the choral rehearsal and applied studio lesson. It may be beneficial for choral pedagogues, applied voice pedagogues, and students interested in singing to continue researching ways of defining healthy singing. This may also include finding a more appropriate term than healthy to use.

A future study could be done through a K-12 music program that consists of grade level students who have minimal singing experience to gain an understanding of the development of healthy singing at the beginning stages as the students in this study all

had previous singing experience before the university level. The results of this study could provide detail on not only how to teach healthy singing to students of a younger age, but also how to structure healthy singing habits in a choral ensemble or during one-on-one voice instruction at the K-12 level.

While a majority of the students in this study have worked with only one choral or applied voice pedagogue during their university training, it would be interesting to interview students of the masters and doctorate level. Through this, gaining knowledge on how graduate students singing has changed studying with various singing teachers throughout their training could be observed along with more detail on the techniques used by their various singing instructors.

A future study on healthy singing that observes choral students who have never participated in an applied studio lesson or an applied studio student who have never participated in a choral ensemble and how the changes in developing their voice occur may also benefit the field. A study focused on one area instead of both may provide a deeper understanding of the techniques that work for that particular individual or choral ensemble members.

Observance of rapport in the choral ensemble setting would also benefit the field of vocal music. Through this study, it is appropriate to say that rapport is clearly shown among the applied voice pedagogues and their students based on their interactions. While some may consider rapport difficult to observe in a choral setting or that the choral pedagogue is more focused on the culture within the ensemble, it would be interesting to find out how choral pedagogues develop the same sense of relationship with their students as applied voice pedagogues do with their students.

Another major area discovered through this study that deserves further research is the student's input and perspective of the choral and applied voice studio setting. As literature continues to evolve on student-centered teaching, we find that this is still an issue in many choral ensembles and applied voice studio settings, as the students have very little input on what takes place during the learning process. It would be beneficial to create a study that observes student-centered learning in both settings that allow not only for the student's voice to be heard but also opportunities to lead choral rehearsals and studio lessons by including activities such as sectionals and peer modeling as a main tool of learning. While this not only gives the student teaching experience before going out into the field, it also allows the instructor to broaden their teaching strategies and approaches.

Finally, additional material on the strategies and an inside look of what happens in a choral rehearsal or applied voice studio lesson are needed. While each pedagogue in this study had a similar framework for the structure of their choral rehearsal or applied voice lesson, this is not the case for many. Also, the structure of the choral rehearsals and applied lessons in this study may not work for every vocal pedagogue. It is essential that pedagogues of singing share their methods, strategies, approaches, and structure with other vocal pedagogues to help not just beginners in the field but those looking to enhance what they already know and do.

### **Closing Remarks**

Approaching the end of this dissertation, I continued to search for more literature related to healthy singing. Combing through my data, I decided to do a Google search



and came across a blog post that asked, “What is healthy singing?” Reading the list of answers provided, I began to think back to the twelve participants and their definitions of healthy singing.

I first began to think of Emily who described healthy singing as someone who is “smart,” meaning they know how and when to use their voice. I then thought about the student participants Kimberly, Kaitlyn, and Skylar who considered a healthy singer to be someone who does not strain or pushes on their vocal cords. It was through this final search that my research began to come together, realizing that there is no one way to sing “healthy.”

Through this study, I have learned that to improve the developing young singer's voice, we as choral conductors and applied voice instructors must acquire the skills to be flexible in our teachings and gain the knowledge needed to teach vocal pedagogy effectively in our choral rehearsals and applied studio lessons. I have also learned that developing the voice is a process that requires both the vocal instructor and singer not to repeat the same habits over and over again when trying to improve a specific area of singing but to approach the area from a different angle which explains the different exercises used by the pedagogues in this study. Most importantly, I have learned that it is essential for singing colleagues to join together and share their experiences with others as a way of creating resources to help not just themselves but also their students.

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## Appendix A

## Pedagogue Recruitment Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Derrick Thompson, and I am currently the Choral Director at Staunton River Middle and High School. I am also pursuing a Doctor of Education in music and music education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

As a doctoral student, I am working on a dissertation that seeks to determine what approaches and strategies choral and vocal pedagogues consider useful in developing young, healthy singers. For this study, I will be observing pedagogues in the choral classroom and applied studio lesson to gain a better understanding of the approaches used. I am writing to see if you would be willing to participate in this study.

It is my plan to observe and conduct interviews during the summer and fall of 2018. I kindly request you reply to this e-mail if you are interested in learning more about participation in this study. In return, I will send you an Informed Consent document providing your rights as a participant in the study. Thank you so much for considering this request.

## Appendix B

Informed Consent and Participant's Right Form  
 Teachers College, Columbia University  
 525 West 120th Street  
 New York NY 10027  
 212 678 3000

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

**Protocol Title:** A Collaborative Approach: How Pedagogues of Singing and their Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms

Interview and Observation Consent –Pedagogue

**Principal Investigator:** Mr. Derrick Thompson, ME, Teachers College  
 434-851-0189, dlt2133@tc.columbia.edu

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “A Collaborative Approach? Learning How Pedagogues of Singing and Their Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you have completed a graduate level degree in music or music education, taught at least five years in your respective field, and teach higher education in music. If you are presently participating in another study, you can be part of this study. Approximately ten people will participate in this study, and it will take 2 hours of your time to complete.

#### **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

This study is being done to determine what methods and strategies choral conductors and applied voice instructors employ in developing healthy singers.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss your conceptualization of a healthy singer, the strategies employed to develop a healthy singer, and how you continue to stay knowledgeable in choral and/or vocal pedagogy. This interview will be audio-recorded. After the audio-recording is written down (transcribed), the audio-recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate. The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes. You will be given a pseudonym or false name in order to keep your identity confidential.

Finally, you will be asked to video record a choral rehearsal and/or applied voice studio lesson. This will take place in your studio or rehearsal space and last for the entirety of one lesson or choral rehearsal.

### **WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. **You do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you do not want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.** The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

### **WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of vocal music performance and education to understand better the best way of developing a healthy singer.

### **WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

### **WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?**

The study is over when you have completed the interview and observation. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you have not finished.

### **PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY**

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio-recording will be written down and the audio-recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.

**HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?**

This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

**CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING**

Audio recording and video recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_ I give my consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

\_\_\_ I consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT**

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
                                 Initial                                Initial

**WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?**

**If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Mr. Derrick Thompson, at 434-851-0189 or dlt2133@tc.columbia.edu.**

**If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.**

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**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS**

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

**My signature means that I agree to participate in this study**

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

## Student Recruitment Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Derrick Thompson, and I am currently the Choral Director at Staunton River Middle and High School. I am also pursuing a Doctor of Education in music and music education from Teachers College, Columbia University.

As a doctoral student, I am working on a dissertation that seeks to determine what approaches and strategies choral and vocal pedagogues consider useful in developing young, healthy singers. For this study, I will be observing pedagogues in the choral classroom and applied studio lesson to gain a better understanding of the approaches used. Your instructor, (insert name), has agreed to participate in this study. I am writing to see if you would be willing to participate in this study.

It is my plan to observe and conduct interviews during the summer and fall of 2018. I kindly request you reply to this e-mail if you are interested in learning more about participation in this study. In return, I will send you an Informed Consent document providing your rights as a participant in the study. Thank you so much for considering this request.



## Appendix D

Informed Consent and Participant's Right Form  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
525 West 120th Street  
New York NY 10027  
212 678 3000

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

**Protocol Title:** A Collaborative Approach; How Pedagogues of Singing and their Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms

Interview and Observation Consent – Student

**Principal Investigator:** Mr. Derrick Thompson, ME, Teachers College  
434-851-0189, dlt2133@tc.columbia.edu

---

#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “A Collaborative Approach? Learning How College Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you are a junior or senior vocal music performance or vocal music education student and currently participate in a choral ensemble or applied voice studio lesson. If you are presently participating in another study, you can be part of this study. Approximately three people will participate in this study, and it will take 2 hours of your time to complete.

#### **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

This study is being done to determine what methods and strategies choral conductors and applied voice instructors employ in developing healthy singers.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. During the interview, you will be asked to discuss your conceptualization of a healthy singer and the strategies employed to develop a healthy singer by your instructor. This interview will be audio-recorded. After the audio-recording is written down (transcribed), the audio-recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate. The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes. You will be given a pseudonym or false name in order to keep your identity confidential.

Finally, you may be asked to be video recorded in a choral rehearsal and/or applied voice studio lesson. This will take place in your studio or rehearsal space and last for the entirety of one lesson or choral rehearsal.

**WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. **You do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you do not want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.** The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

**WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of vocal music performance and education to understand better the best way of developing a healthy singer.

**WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not be paid to participate. There are no costs to you for taking part in this study.

**WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?**

The study is over when you have completed the interview and observation. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you have not finished.

**PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY**

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio-recording will be written down and the audio-recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.

**HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?**

This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

**CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING**

Audio recording and video recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_ I give my consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

\_\_\_ I consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT**

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:



Appendix E  
Survey for Pedagogues

Personal Information

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender  
 Male       Female       Gender fluid       Gender non-binary
3. Age \_\_\_\_\_
4. Race  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native       Hispanic American  
 Asian/Pacific Islander       White/Caucasian  
 Black or African American       Multiple ethnicity/Other  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Highest Level of Education  
 Bachelors     Masters     Doctorate
6. Highest degree attained.  
 Bachelor of Arts       Master of Education  
 Bachelor of Science       Doctor of Musical Arts  
 Bachelor of Music       Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)  
 Master of Arts       Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)  
 Master of Music
7. Area of Concentration \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching Experience

1. How many years have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Current Institution Name and Location

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Type of Institution

Public       Private

4. Briefly describe your teaching duties.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Number of students you teach in the chorus and/or applied studio.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Describe your previous teaching experiences.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Learning Experience

1. Describe learning experiences that have impacted you during your educational training.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. How has professional development opportunities changed and/or impacted your teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F

## Interview Protocol for Pedagogues

**A Collaborative Approach: How Pedagogues of Singing and their  
Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms  
Derrick Thompson**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PEDAGOGUES

1. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues learn to develop methods and strategies that will result in healthy singing?
  - a. *Tell me about your education/training.*
  - b. *Describe your learning experiences as a voice/choral student? As an educator?*
    - i. *How have these experiences helped you in creating strategies for developing a healthy singer?*
  - c. *What experiences outside of the classroom have helped you develop as an instructor of vocal music?*
2. How do choral pedagogues and applied voice pedagogues conceptualize and employ strategies in developing a healthy singer?
  - a. *How would you describe healthy singing?*
  - b. *What characteristics make up a healthy singer?*
  - c. *Describe the approach or strategies you would use in correcting:*
    - i. *Posture*
    - ii. *Breath support*
    - iii. *Tone quality*
    - iv. *Vocal registration*
    - v. *Resonance*
  - d. *Tell me about the vocal abilities of your students.*
  - e. *What exercises do you find useful in developing healthy singers in your rehearsals/lessons?*
3. What other factors do choral pedagogues and vocal pedagogues consider when teaching students?
  - a. *Talk me through a voice lesson/choral rehearsal. How is it structured?*
    - i. *What portion of the rehearsal/lesson do you spend more time on?*
    - ii. *How did you develop the pacing of your rehearsal/lesson?*
  - b. *How do you choose the repertoire for your students?*
  - c. *Describe the rapport between you and your students.*

## Appendix G

## Interview Protocol for Students

**A Collaborative Approach: How Pedagogues of Singing and their  
Students Navigate the Solo and Choral Realms  
Derrick Thompson**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

4. What strategies do vocal students find beneficial in helping produce healthier singers in the choral and applied setting?
  - a. *What is your current year of study?*
  - b. *What is your degree concentration?*
  - c. *Tell me about your musical background.*
  - d. *How long have you studied with your choral professor?*
  - e. *How long have you studied with your applied voice professor?*
  - f. *What other singing experiences outside of your educational studies have you had?*
  - g. *How would you describe your singing abilities?*
  - h. *Describe your learning experiences as a choral student.*
  - i. *What teaching methods do you find useful from your choral professor in becoming a healthy singer?*
  - j. *Describe your learning experiences as an applied voice student.*
  - k. *What teaching strategies do you find useful from your applied voice instructor in becoming a healthy singer?*
  - l. *Describe the approach taken by your instructor to fix the following and why you believe they are important:*
    - i. *Posture*
    - ii. *Breath support*
    - iii. *Tone quality*
    - iv. *Vocal registration*
    - v. *Resonance*
  - m. *What, if any, are some things taught to you that have been similar in both the choral rehearsal and applied voice studio?*
  - n. *What, if any, are some things taught to you in your choral rehearsal/applied voice lesson that contradicted what your professor in the other setting has taught you?*
  - o. *What characteristics do you believe make up a healthy singer and why? Define.*



Appendix H  
Observation Guide

Participant:	Date:	Time:
	Interactions	Time Length
Posture		
Breath Support		
Tone		
Vocal Register		
Resonance		
Rehearsal Structure		
Pacing		
Rapport		
Repertoire		
Other/Personal Thoughts		

\* Include a sketch of choral classroom/applied studio.

## Appendix I

## Emily's Basic Warm-Ups

<b>Starting Pitch/Key</b>	<b>Contour</b>	<b>Vowels</b>	<b>Goal</b>
C major – ascend/descend in mid-range	Do-Re-Mi-Re-Do (1-2-3-2-1)	MMMM (Tall space), NNN, VVV, ZZZ, NG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transition from day to rehearsal.</li> <li>• Start to listen to each other, without the complexity of vowels.</li> <li>• Get in touch with breath.</li> </ul>
D – rising by half step	Sustain pitch	oooo-oh-aw-ah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on vowel matching, intonation, and listening.</li> </ul>
C major – ascend	Do-Mi-Sooooool-Fa-Mi-Re-Do (1-3-5555555-4-3-2-1)	ooo/Oh (change the second vowel) or zee/Ahh (change the second vowel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training breathing in a higher note, while singing a lower one.</li> <li>• Taking intonation work from the previous exercises and applying it to moving notes.</li> <li>• Working on even dynamics (top note is in line with the rest of the phrase, and not popping out).</li> </ul>
F#	Sustain pitch through different vowels. Then split the pitch, with bass/alto on bottom and soprano/tenor on top. F – G E – G# E flat – A D – B flat C# - B C – C	VVV-Ooooo-Ohh-Ah (No AW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuning harmonies and matching vowels.</li> <li>• Listening for overtones in the consonant and dissonant harmonies.</li> <li>• Getting to a pure vowel after a consonant.</li> <li>• Not scooping.</li> </ul>

A Major – ascending (drop out when too high)	Sol-Dooo-Sol-Mi-Do (5-888888-5-3-1)	Zee AHHHHHH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warming up the lower and upper register.</li> <li>• Preparing high note before singing it.</li> <li>• Singing a clear and resonant short pick up note.</li> </ul>
F Major – descending (go up the octave when too low)	Sol-Fa-Mi-Re-Do (5-4-3-2-1) (Starting on C)	HEAD VOICE for the gentleman (ooo vowel).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warming up head voice.</li> <li>• Tune in complete unison.</li> <li>• Always matching vowels.</li> <li>• Ladies are tuning to lower octave when you jump up.</li> <li>• All feeling the transitions between registers.</li> </ul>
C – ascend as you like	Major scale – hold your notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sopranos hold 8.</li> <li>• Tenors hold 6.</li> <li>• Altos hold 4.</li> <li>• Basses hold 2, go down to 5, resolve to 1.</li> <li>• Tenors and altos resolve.</li> </ul>	ooooo, ooooh, ah (whatever vowels are important for the repertoire)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuning harmonies.</li> <li>• Listening for choral balance.</li> <li>• Matching vowels in different registers.</li> </ul>
F#/A	F# - Basses and altos A – Sopranos and tenors	Ah, oh, “Glory” – whatever you like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing with dynamics and color</li> <li>• Transitioning into repertoire by playing with text, etc.</li> </ul>

## Appendix J

## Vocal Exercises Used by Pedagogues

Figure 2: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 1*Figure 3: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 2*Figure 4: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 3*

Half step half step whole step whole step minor third minor third

7  
major third major third perfect fourth perfect fourth tri - tone tri - tone yea.

Figure 5: *Emily's Warm-Up Exercise 4*

Oh bah oh bah oh Oh bah oh bah oh

Figure 7: *Ryan's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

Do mi so do so mi do. Do mi so do so mi do.  
Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah. Dah dah dah dah dah dah dah.

Figure 8: *Ryan's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

Hee hee hee hee hee hee hee hee. Hee hee hee hee hee hee hee hee.

Figure 9: *Tommy's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

Figure 10: *Tommy's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

The score consists of two systems. The first system has a Voice part with lyrics: "Du mi su mi du ri fu lu fu ri mi su tu su mu fu su du lu fu" and a Piano part with a series of half notes. The second system starts at measure 9 and has a Voice part with lyrics: "su tu ri tu su lu du mi du lu tu ri fu ri tu du mi su mi du." and a Piano part with a series of half notes. Both systems are in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Figure 10: *Tommy's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

Figure 11: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

The score is a single melodic line in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of a series of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, with a slur underneath. Below the staff, the lyrics "Zee----- Ah-----" are written with dashed lines indicating the duration of the notes.

Figure 11: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

Figure 12: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

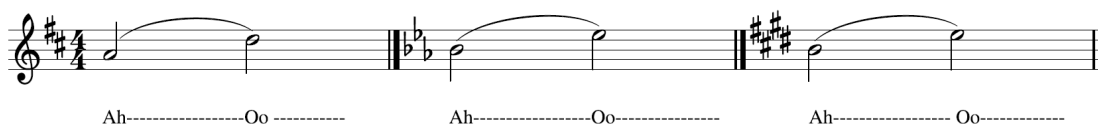
The score is a single melodic line in 4/4 time. It starts in a key signature of two flats (Bb) and changes to a key signature of three sharps (F#) at the second measure. The melody consists of quarter notes with a slur underneath. Below the staff, the lyrics "Yah----- Yah-----" are written with dashed lines indicating the duration of the notes.

Figure 12: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 2*

Figure 13: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 3*

The score is a single melodic line in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#). It consists of a series of eighth notes with a slur underneath. Below the staff, the lyrics "Yah-----" are written with dashed lines indicating the duration of the notes.

Figure 13: *David's Warm-Up Exercise 3*

Figure 14: *Lucinda's Warm-Up Exercise 1*Figure 15: *Lucinda's Warm-Up Exercise 2*Figure 16: *Lucinda's Warm-Up Exercise 3*Figure 17: *Jesse's Warm-Up Exercise 1*

## Appendix K

## Notation for Units of Sound

(Used in this dissertation)

**Vowel Sounds**

/a/	<b>apple</b>
/e/	<b>egg</b>
/i/	<b>insect</b>
/o/	<b>watch</b>
/u/	<b>umbrella</b>
/ee/	<b>eat</b>
/oa/	<b>bow</b>
short /oo/	<b>book</b>
long /oo/	<b>moon</b>
/aw/ accent	<b>dawn</b>

**Consonant Sounds**

/b/	<b>bat</b>
/d/	<b>dig</b>
/f/	<b>feather</b>
/h/	<b>hat</b>
/n/	<b>net</b>
/s/	<b>snake</b>
/t/	<b>tent</b>
/w/	<b>web</b>
/z/	<b>zebra</b>