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Implementing Social and Emotional Learning in the Choral Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover what happens when social emotional learning is incorporated in the choral classroom through a unit of solo songs with inspirational texts. The study was conducted in a high school beginner treble choir. The researcher collected data through pre- and post-surveys, student artifacts, and semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method. Four major themes emerged including growth in togetherness, newfound confidence, mindfulness, and boosted performance. Statistics confirmed that the unit had a positive influence on all but one of the participants. The researcher displayed her findings through poetic transcriptions and column charts.

Implementing Social Emotional Learning in the Choral Classroom

“I don’t sing out because I don’t want anyone to laugh at me if I mess up.” “What if my voice cracks?” “I don’t feel like singing today.” During my time clinical teaching, it has not been uncommon for me to hear phrases like these from the students in my beginner treble choir. In fact, for the first half of the school year, my cooperating teachers and I heard comments like these almost every day. It was clear to me that there were girls in this choir who either did not trust their peers, lacked confidence in their musical abilities, or, for whatever reason, did not have the motivation to set goals for themselves as musicians and as students in general. I wondered if there was something that we could include in our classroom to mitigate the students’ feelings of negative self-awareness. Of course, social emotional learning (SEL) seemed to be the obvious answer. But, how could we incorporate that into our daily music learning? And, would it even work?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to learn about the effects of implementing SEL in the choral classroom through songs with inspirational texts. It was also to learn how these songs influence the confidence of a beginner choral student, as well as their perceptions of their self-worth and musical ability. By teaching a unit with inspirational solo songs and using them to explore discussions and activities pertaining to SEL, my goal was to determine the effectiveness of this by answering the following research questions:

Research Question: What happens when social-emotional learning is incorporated in a choral classroom?

Sub Question 1: What influence does learning and singing music with inspirational text through a solo unit in the choral classroom have on the confidence of a beginner choral student?

Sub Question 2: How are student perceptions of their self-worth and musical ability influenced through this inspirational solo music?

One important aspect of SEL involves the students' general self-esteem and confidence in their musical abilities. This was something that needed to be worked on in my beginner treble choir. Silvey (2014) explained that "because less experienced singers are prone to feelings of vulnerability, the environment where they begin to form beliefs about their capabilities matters a great deal" (p. 54). However, getting apprehensive singers to be confident in their abilities is something that should be expected to take time and growth. Therefore, an important goal in this study was to help ease these feelings of apprehension and increase the self-esteem of my beginning choral students.

I conducted this study while I was a graduate student fulfilling year-long clinical teaching placement in a West Texas town with a population of about 120,000. My placement was at West High School (WHS), which serviced about 2,000 students in grades 9-12 (all names are pseudonyms). WHS is one of the four main public high schools in its district. The approximate racial and ethnic demographics of the school include 50% Hispanic, 31% White, 15% African American, 3% two or more races, 1.2% Asian, and <1% American Indian.

Literature Review

SEL is defined as "the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and

maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (Shaw, 2019, p. 14). There have been a significant number of studies done in the last ten years which show that the implementation of SEL in classrooms yields many benefits for students. A multilevel model analysis of the effectiveness of an SEL program for middle school students in Portugal showed positive intervention results in social awareness, self-control, and self-esteem, among other things (Coelho et al., 2015). According to Voith et al. (2020), a well-designed and well-implemented school based SEL program has the potential to produce not only these positive effects, but it can also reduce behavior problems, improve academic performance, and reduce rates of violence.

When it comes to music, many researchers agree that there is naturally an aspect of SEL present in music education already. In the music classroom, students are frequently working on goals in performance with a diverse and varied curriculum that focuses on empathy, self-esteem, and responsibility (Mogro-Wilson & Tredinnick, 2020). By simply being part of a musical ensemble, a student is presented with the opportunity to grow in their social and emotional awareness in several ways. Varner (2020) stated that “the very act of creating together as a group has significant potential to encourage social bonding and the development of social relationships” (p. 77). A study conducted in Spain analyzed and compared the socioemotional profile of a sample of adolescent musicians who sang in choir or played in a band next to those who were not involved in a musical ensemble. The findings showed that, “the musicians displayed a higher and statistically significant score in emotional competences than the non-musicians. They also showed a greater ability as leaders (or the potential to become leaders)” (Ros-Morente et al., 2019). Additionally, being involved in musical activities has been shown to

have a positive contribution to the increase of social skills and social awareness in adolescents (Aydin, 2019).

In the choral classroom, specifically, there are still several ways that SEL can be incorporated. Because words are what set choral music apart from that of other ensembles such as band and orchestra, one obvious example is through the inspirational text which can be found in the repertoire that we sing. Music educators can use music with impactful text that can move their students and help to increase their emotional maturity. Beyond simply singing this music, it is important to have conversations within the choir about the importance of the text and what it could mean to each singer. Varner (2020) explained that “by studying the text and music of quality literature and understanding what they are singing, students have opportunities to engage their own emotions deeply while also developing empathy for others experiencing the emotional setting or context of the text” (p. 77). When doing this, music educators should “consider how questions you pose might prompt students to make connections between lyrics and their life experiences” (Shaw, 2019, p. 14).

Using choir to teach SEL may also facilitate community building between the students and director(s). This is important because when a classroom becomes a community, relationships are built, thus increasing the opportunity for the students to be successful. One challenge that comes with building and maintaining a community is fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance within the students (Parker, 2016). This can be especially challenging in a choir where many of the students are beginner musicians who have never been in a formal choral ensemble before. Teaching a solo unit of inspirational repertoire can also increase the students’ confidence in their musical abilities by allowing them to increase their musical knowledge. Additionally, it would aid in getting more practice and review with music education that has

already taken place, such as the implementation of expressive and dynamic markings, for example.

Although there are many studies that have been done on SEL in the general education classroom, there are a limited number that have been conducted relating to music, and even less that have been done in the choral classroom. The art of choral music is equally significant to any other core subject that can be found in schools. Fine arts allow students the opportunity to grow in their passions and talents and build relationships and self-assurance while doing so. As a result of this, music educators must teach and help our students to be socially and emotionally mature in the choral classroom. This study explores new areas of research by providing more insight into SEL in the choral classroom specifically, as well as the influence that it has on its beginning musicians. Consequently, my research provides a unique perspective that will empower music educators with knowledge to shape their practice to better serve all their students.

Methods

The following describes the action research study I conducted in the context of a high school beginner treble choir. Qualitative data and analysis were used in this action research to determine the students' perceptions of SEL in choir. The data consisted of a pre- and post-survey, a student artifact, and a semi-structured interview.

Participant Selection

I conducted this study specifically with students in Ms. Mitchell's sixth-period beginner treble choir, which consisted of 22 females ranging from ninth through twelfth grade. School records indicated that eleven students in the class were White, seven were Black or African American, three were American Indian or Alaskan Native, and one was of two or more races. Out of these, seven were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Thirteen of the students in the class,

well over 50 percent, were at-risk. The study consisted of a pre- and post-survey, before and after a solo unit, as well as an interview (if selected) and included the collection of a regular homework assignment, in which the students created a visual representation depicting an emotion that was felt after reflecting on the text in one of the songs. At the end of the unit, I chose five students to interview based on their artifact and responses to the surveys. While everyone was expected to participate in unit, as learning and singing repertoire was still part of the curriculum, participation in the data collection process was solicited from every student. The students were previously informed of the study and received an informational letter and consent form for their parents to read and sign. A total of seven students consented to participate in the study. Three of them were White, two were African American, one was Hispanic, and one was of two or more races.

Data Collection

This unit was implemented over a period of approximately four weeks and consisted of a 30-minute lesson three times per week on two different solo pieces, “Become Yourself,” by Vicky Tucker Courtney and “Let Joy Awaken,” by Mark Patterson. In this unit, we learned the music with influential text and prepared it for performance in class. We also discussed the textual significance and potential personal, historical, and cultural connections that could be made to the text and music. These discussions served to encourage personal connections to the music and an examination of how music can provide a creative outlet for expressing emotions in a healthy manner.

Before and after the unit period, I collected data by having the students complete a survey including both Likert-scale and open-ended questions where they gave their perceptions on singing as it impacts student-confidence both as musicians and as people, as well as the mental

and emotional influence that choir has had on them thus far (see Appendix A). The objective in the unit was for the students to gradually proceed from ensemble to solo singing in front of their choir peers. At one point in the unit, the students were asked to create an artifact in which they had to draw or create a visual representation along with a written description of how one of the solo pieces from the unit made them feel (see Appendix B). As the student teacher, I collected these student artifacts and made copies of them to use in the study.

At the end of the unit, I chose five students to interview based on their artifact and responses to the surveys. To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, I interviewed a select group of students with a wide range of perceptions to get different points of view on how the implementation of SEL in the unit had influenced them (see Appendix C). To achieve this, I selected students who were greatly influenced as well as some who did not feel influenced by the unit. These one-on-one interviews followed a semi-structured format (Hendricks, 2016). Each interview lasted between 10-15 minutes and took place during class (the student was pulled out). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (Hendricks, 2016). Lastly, to protect the confidentiality of the students, all participants were assigned a pseudonym.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed by using the constant comparative method, with initial coding followed by creating hierarchies of categories and supporting codes for the interviews, surveys, and student artifacts (Hubbard & Power, 2003). I began coding by analyzing 20% of all data collected and creating a list of 15 to 20 level 1 codes, which described the direct content of the data (Tracy, 2013). I then took the level 1 codes and used them to create level 2 codes, which represented the overarching themes and findings within the level 1 codes (Tracy, 2013). The initial level 1 codes that were generated in the first 20% of the data were used to code the

remaining 80%. Throughout the coding process, I kept a running index of my codes by gathering and organizing all data for each level 2 code (Hubbard & Power, 2003). Additionally, I created a codebook providing a list of all the codes, their definitions, and a corresponding example from the data (see Appendix D). Lastly, I wrote memos regarding each level 2 code to further reflect and understand the findings and overall themes present in the data (Tracy, 2013).

The Likert scale questions on the pre- and post-surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Hubbard & Power, 2003). Two separate column charts were used for the pre- and post-survey. The column charts represented the frequency of each of the four possible responses to each question.

Findings

After collection and analysis of my data, I noticed four major themes: growth in togetherness, newfound confidence, increased mindfulness, and boosted performance. To visually represent my findings, I utilized column charts, examples of student survey responses and artifacts, and poetic transcriptions. Poetic transcriptions are a type of found poetry that the researcher creates using the words of participants to convey key findings from qualitative data (Glesne, 1997). For each poetic transcription, I used a compilation of different students' quotes from the pre- and post-surveys, artifacts, and interviews to create poetry that represented the students' perceptions of the influence that SEL through songs with inspirational text had on them. I then expanded on each major theme found and how they relate to my research questions.

Quantitative Data

Figures 1 and 2 show the differences in frequency between the responses to the Likert scale questions in the pre- and post-surveys. Each series is a different question, with different colored bars representing one of the four answer choices provided. The Likert scale consisted of

four points to avoid neutrality. As seen in the charts, the post-survey showed an overall increase in positive responses to the questions. Specifically, the frequency of the responses “agree” and “strongly agree” grew by three points each. Consequently, there was an equally significant decrease in the most negative response, “strongly disagree.”

Figure 1

Pre-Survey Responses

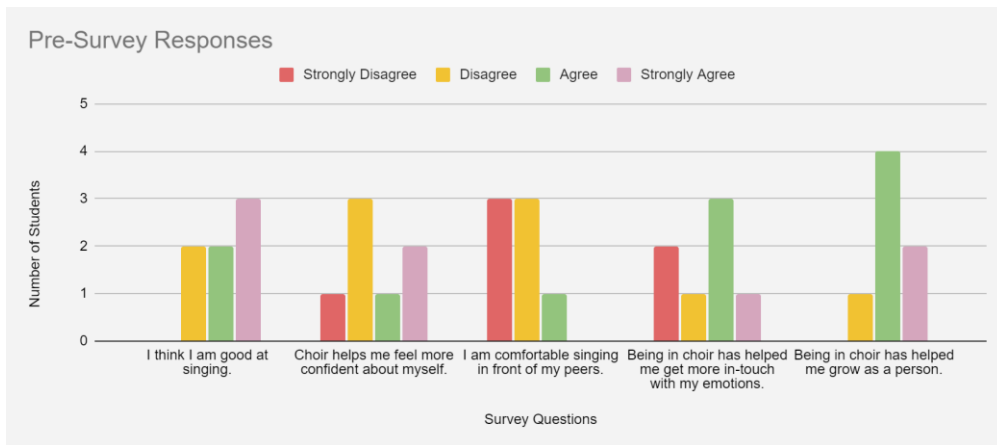
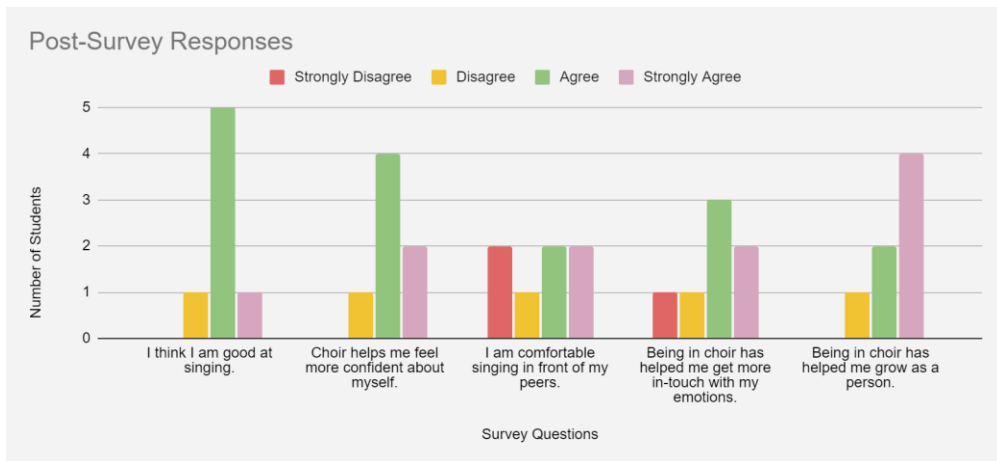


Figure 2

Post-Survey Responses



Growth in Togetherness

Close

In the beginning,
 I wasn't close with anybody.
 I shut myself off.

But now,
I've made so many friends
that I didn't think I would.

We've worked together,
 made music together,
 and *grown* together.

Together, we learned
that it's okay-
 let your guard down,
 be yourself,
 get comfortable,
 and *trust*.

Now I have a choir family,
and we are
 r e a l l y
 close.

This poetic transcription is a compilation of quotes from my students describing the change in how they felt before and after the unit. Before I began my research, there were few girls in my beginner treble choir who were friends. There was an overall lack of unity in the choir. Most of the girls did not make a great effort to get to know each other, nor did they seem to trust each other; this was evident in the timidness that could be heard in most of their voices when they sang. However, by the end of the solo unit, many students expressed that they felt closer to one-another, like a family. The first level 2 code that I could create with my data is titled "Growth in Togetherness." I defined this code as the relationships that were built within the choir through SEL.

My main research question was “What happens when social-emotional learning is incorporated in a choral classroom?” This level 2 code and the data collected within it serves as just one of the many positive answers to this question. One of my supporting level 1 codes is titled “Now I have a choir family,” because this is truly how most of the participants expressed that they felt when I spoke with them at the end of the unit, during their one-on-one interviews. Additionally, because of this, the students learned to trust each other more. This, in turn, led to them feeling more comfortable singing in front of each other, and working together as a team to perform better as a choir. By the end of the unit, my cooperating teacher and I did not have to try very hard to get the girls to finally sing out. Aside from performing better musically, the “growth in togetherness” of these students encouraged them to open up to each other more and be able to engage in deeper conversations beyond the text in the songs we were learning, which was very touching to watch.

Newfound Confidence

New Me

The old me would say

I am shy.

I am uncomfortable.

I feel like I may be judged.

But I’ve gotten better at it.

I’ve grown as a musician.

It just feels more natural,

being confident

in my sound,

in singing out,

in getting the notes right,

in *myself*.

The new me says,

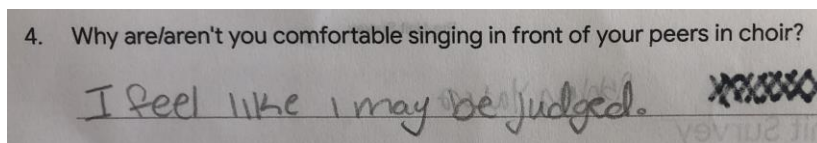
“Don’t be afraid
to put yourself out there.”

I can be myself
without being scared.

This poetic transcription describes the improvement that took place in the confidence of most of the students through the unit. The main reason that I chose to do my action research project on SEL in the choral classroom is because I could not help but notice how much confidence was lacking from the students in my beginner treble choir. In general, some of them were very closed off and did not seem to have any interest in allowing their teachers or peers to get to know them. Additionally, this lack of confidence could be especially seen in their performance as singers. Although they all have had beautiful voices from the beginning, almost every day was a struggle getting them to sing out in the choir. Initially, some students explained that they did not feel comfortable singing out due to said lack of confidence, or fear of judgment (see Figures 3, 4). However, by the end of the solo unit, many of them expressed that the inspirational songs that we learned and the conversations that we had about them helped them feel more confident about themselves, both as musicians and in general.

Figure 3

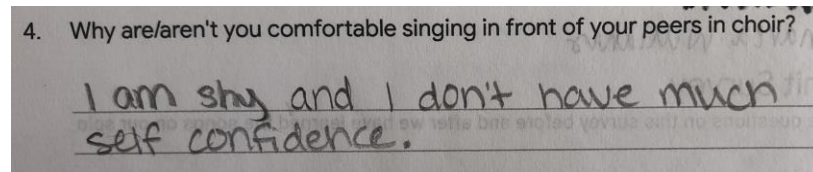
Ashley’s Pre-Survey Response



Note. The response reads “I feel like I may be judged.”

Figure 4

Andrea’s Pre-Survey Response



Note. The response reads “I am shy and I don’t have much self confidence.”

The sub questions for my action research project were “What influence does singing and learning music with inspirational text through a solo unit in the choral classroom have on the confidence of a beginner choral student?” and “How are student perceptions of their self-worth and musical ability influenced through this inspirational solo music?” This level 2 code answers both of these questions very clearly. Not only did their perceptions of musicianship change, but they also gained confidence in their voices, and this helped them become less afraid of making mistakes in front of their peers in choir. Even outside of the choral classroom, the students showed a general improvement in their self-esteem overall, and many expressed that they were no longer afraid of being judged.

Boosted Performance

Choral Lessons

Choir has taught me
to do my best
at everything
and give it 100%
each time.

To put more effort
into my work
and confront my problems.

To be more responsible
with schoolwork
and things at home.

Choir has taught me
to always
take chances,
face your fears,
and
don't
 give
 up.

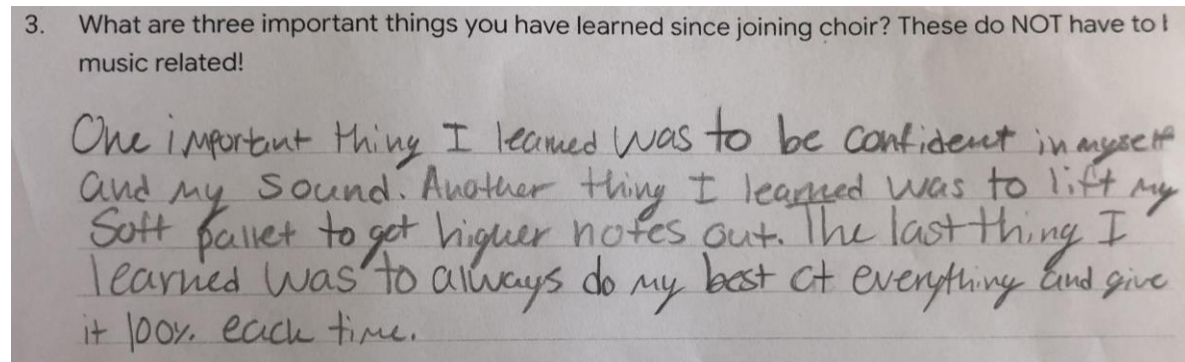
This poetic transcription shows the motivational impact that SEL had on many of the students. One common theme found within the students in my beginner treble choir is that many of them do not come from the best backgrounds. In fact, more than half of them are considered at-risk. This means that, because of their background or circumstances, these students have a higher probability of falling behind, failing, or dropping out of school completely. As teachers in an extracurricular course, we have access to all of our students' grades in every class that they are taking. This makes it easy to see who is struggling academically and needs extra support. Unfortunately, low or failing grades were a common struggle within this choir.

Thinking back to my main research question, after my solo unit using songs with inspirational text, I can say that one answer to this question is that there is a boost in the students' performance both in and out of the choir room. During my interviews with my participants at the end of the unit, many of them mentioned the encouraging talks that were had in choir during the unit and expressed that these helped them to be more motivated in school. As a result, they felt more willing and able to push themselves and try harder to do their best, both in choir and in the general classroom. These students also successfully managed to get their grades up for their other classes; this was something of which they were immensely proud. As one of my students, Hannah, stated, "The last thing I learned was to always do my best at everything and give it

100% each time” (see Figure 5). Through this, it is clear to see that SEL can make a profound impact on students both in and out of the choral classroom.

Figure 5

Hannah's Post-Survey Response



Note. The response reads “One important thing I learned was to be confident in myself and my sound. Another thing I learned was to lift my soft [palate] to get higher notes out. The last thing I learned was to always do my best at everything and give it 100% each time.”

Mindfulness

Think

I think
we are raised
to want to blend
into a crowd.

So, we fail to see
how *unique*
and amazing
we truly are.

The girl in the mirror
sees other people around her.
She compares herself to them
when she should love herself
for who she is.

But,
an uplifting song
can be helpful,
 reassuring.

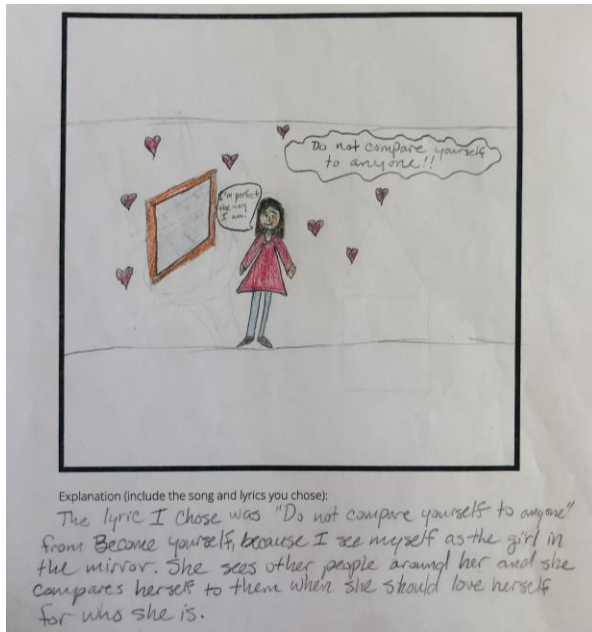
I just *think*
about the lyrics,
and it's going to be okay-
you can just
accept who you are.

And,
when we sing,
there is at least
one person
who really needs
to hear that.

This final poetic transcription describes the influence that our chosen repertoire songs had on the students, mentally and emotionally. It is based on the artifact of one of my students, Yasmin (see Figure 6). Initially, it may have seemed silly to our students to have to learn, sing, and talk about a song with a title like “Become Yourself.” However, by the end of our unit, things like Yasmin’s artifact made it very evident that the music we had learned had had influence in the students, not only in their confidence and performance, but their mindfulness as well. In my codebook, I defined this as the act of “becoming more aware of one’s own knowledge and feelings as well as others’.”

Figure 6

Yasmin’s Student Artifact



Note. The artifact reads “The lyric I chose was ‘Do not compare yourself to anyone’ from Become Yourself, because I see myself as the girl in the mirror. She sees other people around her and she compares herself to them when she should love herself for who she is.”

Incorporating SEL through songs with inspirational texts allowed the students to be more understanding, not only with musical concepts but also the importance of the music that we take the time to learn as an ensemble. For example, one of my students, Andrea, explained, “...knowing what our lyrics mean helps us understand it more from our point of view.” Another student, Ashley, stated, “...when we sing, there is at least one person in the audience who really needs to hear that.” As vocalists, one thing that makes our music special is the fact that it has words to enhance and strengthen the story we tell through song. Statements like these from my students showed me that they had finally gained a deeper understanding of the importance of what we do as musicians, and the impact that the words in a song can have on themselves and others.

Because of the music that we intentionally chose for our students to learn and be more motivated from, many of them also expressed the connection that they have with the lyrics. When asked what she does when she begins comparing herself to others, one student, Isabel, said, “I just think about the lyrics, and that it’s going to be okay.” Examples like this one and many others make it evident that incorporating SEL in the choral curriculum is worthwhile and essential for students.

Implications for Teachers

The purpose of this study was to discover the influence of SEL on a high school beginner treble choir. A target goal included learning how this incorporation influenced the students’ confidence as well as their perceptions of self-worth and musical ability in and out of the choral classroom. Having observed and been a part of many choirs in the past, I noticed that it was not common for directors to spend much time discussing or reflecting on the text in a piece of repertoire with their choirs. I have always found this concerning, as one of the unique and powerful things about the vocal instrument is the ability to use words in our music. After witnessing the apparent struggle that my beginner choir was having with their confidence as well as apathy and detachment from what they were singing, I chose to incorporate this SEL in the choral classroom through songs with text that could potentially motivate and inspire them to grow mentally and emotionally.

The study began with a pre-survey that provided a baseline of students’ perceptions of choir and its influence on their social emotional wellbeing, as well as specific insight into their feelings about themselves as musicians. After the pre-survey, we learned and rehearsed the music while also incorporating time for discussion and reflection on the text in the songs that we were learning. At the beginning of the study, the pre-survey responses from the students showed

that choir had little to no impact on their social and emotional wellbeing. Additionally, many students expressed having a lack of confidence in themselves and their musical abilities. After the end of the unit, most students exhibited positivity towards choir as well as their own self-worth and abilities. The existence of this shift was shown in the post-survey, when almost all students had more positive responses to the questions previously asked in the pre-survey.

Analysis of quantitative data revealed that six out of seven students improved their perceptions. Only one student made no change in perception. Analysis of qualitative data collected revealed four major themes: growth in togetherness, newfound confidence, increased mindfulness, and boosted performance. Through the vulnerable discussions and sharing that took place throughout the unit, the students grew closer together and were able to trust each other more, resulting in tight bonds and greater willingness to take risks for the sake of making music together. By taking time to reflect on what they were singing about, the students also gained more confidence in themselves and were able to better appreciate and celebrate their uniqueness. Additionally, by listening to their peers in discussions, the students gained empathy and a greater understanding of the purpose behind the music we were learning. Lastly, the discussions that were had also ended up serving as motivators for many of the students to make a greater effort, not only in choir but academically as well. These discussions allowed students to make deep, meaningful connections and further understand their feelings and perceptions about themselves, and about choir and the importance of song. This study taught my students the importance of taking time to reflect and channel their emotions into the music that we sing, so that it can have a long-lasting impact in their lives.

The research questions of this study were answered in full; however, I am left wondering about further areas of research. What are other ways that SEL could be implemented in the

choral classroom? In choir, the typical class period is spent rehearsing music for the next upcoming concert or contest. I chose to implement SEL using our choral repertoire in hopes that it would get an important message across to my students while still maintaining the necessary routine in choir. However, is there a certain amount of time that could be regularly devoted to SEL in the average choral classroom? Another question I have is, how would regular discussions about the text in all choral repertoire throughout the year have an impact on the social emotional growth and maturity of the students? Although not all of the music we learn in choir is going to directly aim towards building the confidence or SEL of young singers, I believe that it is still important to take the time to have meaningful conversations about the text in the songs that students learn, and it is possible that learning to make connections to what you sing could be potentially helpful in that aspect.

For teachers who are interested in implementing something like this in their own classroom, especially choir directors, I would advise them to be mindful of the fact that there will always be at least one student who shows disinterest or apathy. This, however, should not be a discourager for teachers. During my study, I had several students who seemed disinterested in the activity that we did or did not take it very seriously. Nonetheless, some of the same students ended up showing that they were impacted by the unit in the conversations that were had and the things that they built up the courage to share. Therefore, we should trust that the work we do to encourage social and emotional growth in our students will have a profound influence on at least one student, and that makes all the difference. Lastly, for students to channel their thoughts and emotions into what they sing, I encourage teachers to have regular discussions about the text in their repertoire. How can we expect our students to channel their thoughts and emotions into their performance if they do not know what they are singing about? As previously mentioned,

making the time to have meaningful conversations about the text in the music we teach will allow students to make deeper connections to the music, and this will be prevalent in their performance. Doing this during my study heavily impacted my teaching practices. I will continue to implement SEL in my future choral or elementary music classroom because of the powerful way that they helped students learn to see and appreciate themselves and their abilities, as well as the importance of the music we sing. I will use what I have learned in this study to give my students a greater chance at being successful in everyday life. There is great power in SEL, and for this I will continue to implement it in my classroom, no matter what subject I am teaching.

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Appendix A

Student Survey

Pre/Post Survey

Answer the questions on this survey before and after we have learned the songs on our solo unit.

1. I am good at singing.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

2. Choir helps me feel more confident about myself.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

3. I am comfortable singing in front of my peers.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

4. Why are/aren't you comfortable singing in front of your peers in choir?

5. Being in choir has helped me get more in-touch with my emotions.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

6. What are three important things you have learned since joining choir? These do NOT have to be music related!

7. Being in choir has helped me grow as a person.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

8. If you answered "agree" or "strongly disagree" to the previous question, how do you think that choir has helped you grow as a person?

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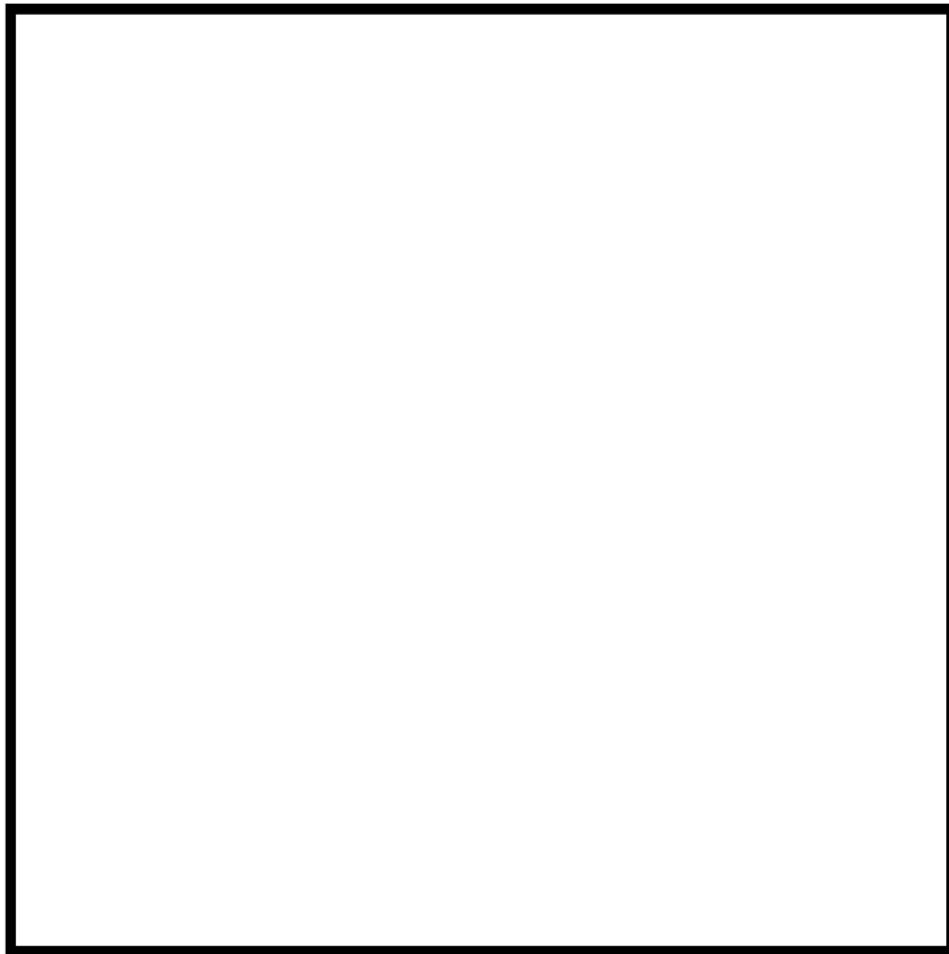


Appendix B

Student Artifact Assignment

How I See It

Directions: Create a visual representation describing a feeling that is evoked from the lyrics in one of our pieces. Try to connect it to your own life and experiences, if you can! Then, write a short paragraph explaining the meaning of what you have created.



Explanation (include the song and lyrics you chose):

Appendix C

Student Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your decision to join choir.
2. Tell me about your experience with music in general.
3. Tell me about your musical knowledge and skills?
4. How do you feel that you have improved as a musician since the intervention?
5. How did you feel about singing by yourself in front of your peers? Why?
6. How has your self-esteem, in choir or in general, changed since learning the pieces that we did?
7. How do you feel your relationship with your peers in choir has changed since the beginning of the solo unit?
8. Do you think that the music we have learned has helped you get in touch with your emotions? How or how not?
9. Tell me about a social or emotional connection that you can make with one of the pieces we have learned.
10. How do you feel about using class time during choir to learn about social and emotional learning? Why?
11. What do you think is the most important thing you have you learned from this intervention?

Appendix D

Codebook

Code	Level	Definition	Example
Growth in Togetherness	2	Building relationships with peers within the choir.	“We’ve all grown together; we’re all family at this point.”
“Now I have a choir family”	1	Finding community and sisterhood in the choir.	“I just feel like I’ve made so many friends that I didn’t think I would.”
Working together	1	Putting in equal effort as a team to create music through song.	“I truly love singing in choirs, but only when my peers are putting in 100% of their effort as well.”
Building Trust	1	Learning to trust your peers and feel comfortable singing with and for them.	“I’m comfortable singing in front of my peers now... there’s a sort of trust within the whole choir.”
Opening up	1	Trusting your choir peers emotionally.	“It’s okay to let your guard down.”
Newfound Confidence	2	Learning to be more confident as a musician and in general.	“Don’t be scared to put yourself out there.”
Increased perceptions of musicianship	1	Becoming more confident in one’s musical knowledge and abilities.	“Being in choir has helped me grow as a musician with developing my voice and reading music.”
Confidence in singing	1	Being comfortable with one’s voice.	“I’ve become more confident in singing out, and I’m more confident in getting the notes right, and things like that”
Improved self esteem	1	Feeling more confident overall.	“I’ve learned to be more confident in myself.”
Diminished fear of judgment	1	Trusting that your peers are supporting, not judging.	“I’ve gotten closer with the girls, so I don’t feel like they’re going to judge me if I make a mistake or something.”
Increased Mindfulness	2	Becoming more aware of one’s own knowledge and feelings as well as others’.	“I think that we’re raised to want to blend into a crowd, so we fail to see how unique and amazing we are.”
Increased knowledge and understanding	1	Being more aware of the music being learned and the purpose behind it.	“...knowing what our lyrics mean helps us understand it more from our point of view.”

“I just think about the lyrics”	1	Resonating with the lyrics in a song.	“I think it can be helpful for some students, like, it can say “hey, you’re not alone, other people feel this. Here’s just another example.”
Empathy towards others	1	Being more understanding of others’ feelings.	“...when we sing, there is at least one person in the audience who really needs to hear that.”
Increased self-awareness	1	Becoming more aware of one’s thoughts and feelings.	“I’ve learned that I like choir a lot more than I previously thought”
Boosted Performance	2	Increased determination and success	“The last thing I learned was to always do my best at everything and give it 100% each time.”
Improved effort	1	Trying harder to do one’s best.	“I learned to be more serious about my grades...”
Increased motivation	1	Being more willing to push oneself.	“Don’t be scared to face your fears.”
“I got my grades up”	1	Academic improvement outside of the choral classroom.	“I learned to be more responsible with school-work and things at home.”