AN EXAMINATION OF SIGHT-SINGING TEACHING PRACTICES, ASSESSMENTS AND ATTITUDES AMONG GEORGIA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS TEACHERS

by

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(Under the Direction of Roy Legette)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine various aspects of sight-singing instruction among Georgia public high school chorus teachers. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are some practices of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?
2. How do Georgia public high school choral teachers assess effective sight-singing instruction?
3. What factors do Georgia public high school choral teachers perceive as barriers to effective sight-singing instruction?
4. What are some attitudes of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?

A survey by Kuehne (2003) was adapted for public high school chorus teachers in the state of Georgia. The survey was first piloted among middle school choral teachers, retired high school choral teachers and college choral teachers in order to verify that it was clear and easy to use. In the principal study, the survey was distributed via email to public high school choral

teachers. To increase the response rate, several email invitations were sent followed by phone calls. The data were collected and analyzed for frequencies and percentages of responses. In general, teachers demonstrated a belief in sight-singing as an important part of the choral curriculum and most taught sight-singing to every class. Preferred practices included movable-do solfége with la-based minor, traditional counting for rhythm, and using the piano for scaffolding rather than doubling. Regarding attitudes, most participants felt confident in their own sight-singing capabilities and identified a lack of sufficient class time and a lack of student motivation as barriers to achieving optimal sight-singing results.

INDEX WORDS: Sight-Singing; Chorus; Choral Music Education; High School Chorus; Sight-Singing Assessment; Sight-Singing Practices; Sight-Singing Materials; Georgia Music Educators Association

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Dona Price and Larry Riley. Despite the many obstacles you each faced, you committed yourselves to giving me a happy, secure childhood and training me to work hard, to seek virtue instead of fortune, to serve, to forgive and to always lean on my faith in times of trouble. You sacrificed much of your own needs and comfort in favor of mine, and any good I have done in the world is because of you. I love you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The goal of most choral and vocal classes is to teach students concepts, repertoire and skills that will enable them to participate in a variety of singing activities for the rest of their lives (Phillips, 2004). One such skill that many of these activities require is sight-singing. The importance of sight-singing in the school curriculum is reflected by its inclusion in events presented by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and in the standards of local educational agencies (LEA) such as school boards or other public school authorities. For decades, NAfME's state affiliate, the Georgia Music Educators' Association (GMEA), has incorporated sight-singing into many of its events, including district choral festivals and the audition process for All-State Chorus. More recently, GMEA has added to its auditioned honorary groups an All-State Reading Chorus, dedicated exclusively to sight-singing,. In the wake of Georgia's participation in the Race to the Top federal grant program, several LEAs in Georgia have added standardized assessment to previously unassessed classes. For chorus, sight-singing is frequently included in these assessments because it offers an alternative to written testing that can still be easily quantified as correct or incorrect. Consequently, sight-singing has become an essential component of the Georgia high school chorus program.

Purpose and Need for the Study

While some researchers have examined sight-singing among high school choral programs in the state of Georgia (McClung, 1996; McClung, 2001; Goss, 2010), their efforts either focused exclusively on assessment of choral students or participation in GMEA All-State choirs. The

population of the principal study consisted of Georgia public high school choral programs across the state, regardless of assessment focus or GMEA involvements, and examined a wider range of variables. The purpose of the study was to examine sight-singing teaching practices, means of assessment, and attitudes of Georgia public high school chorus teachers regarding the teaching of sight-singing. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are some practices of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?

2. How do Georgia public high school choral teachers assess effective sight-singing instruction?

3. What factors do Georgia public high school choral teachers perceive as barriers to effective sight-singing instruction?

4. What are some attitudes of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?

Design of the Study

An adaptation of an internet-administered survey developed by Kuehne (2003), designed to determine, among other factors, sight-singing practices and attitudes of middle school chorus teachers in Florida, was distributed to public high school choral directors across the state of Georgia. The survey underwent a pilot test to determine clarity and effectiveness prior to widespread distribution. In order to gather contact information for Georgia public high school chorus teachers, the author consulted the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Music Educators' Association. For survey distribution, the author followed a series of steps similar to those outlined by Kuehne (2003). The survey was initially sent to three hundred and sixty-two potential participants by way of email, along with a brief explanation of its purpose.

Participants who did not respond to the initial email were sent a second email, and a third as needed. Follow-up phone calls were made to teachers who did not respond to email requests. One hundred and forty-five Georgia public high school chorus teachers completed the survey.

Instructional practices studied included how often and for how long teachers worked on sight-singing with their classes, which solmization system was used, and what (if any) published material was used. Assessment practices studied included participation in GMEA events which included a sight-singing component, LEA- or school-mandated testing, and in-class testing either from a printed curriculum or a teacher-generated exam. To gain a better understanding of teacher attitudes, teachers were asked to describe, via free response, their own feelings regarding sight-singing instruction and assessment and to report perceived barriers to success in this area. Teachers were also asked to provide demographic data about themselves and their schools.

The first chapter introduces the need and rationale for the study. The second chapter reviews and synthesizes literature related to these areas of sight-singing instruction and the third chapter includes demographic details about both the pilot and principal study participants and the methodology of the study. In the fourth chapter, the results of the pilot and principal studies are reported. In the fifth chapter, the results are analyzed and interpreted. Implications for teaching and future research are explored.

Limitations

This study included only high school choral teachers in the public schools. Given that teachers in private schools, private lesson instructors, community-based choral directors and some high school instrumental ensemble teachers also teach sight-singing to students in grades 9-12 (Thomas, 2015), the study was not comprehensive.

Definition of Terms

- Local Educational Agencies (LEAs): "A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for a combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools" (Local educational agency, 34 CFR § 303.23).
- Race to the Top: A grant included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 meant to help participating states and schools implement more data-driven methods of teaching, assessment, teacher and leader training and teacher recruitment (GA Dept. of Education, 2015).
- Solmization: A system of designating musical notes by syllable names.
- Movable Do Solfége: A solmization system using the syllables "do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti" in which "do" represents the major tonic. To represent chromatic pitches, the vowel sounds of scale degrees are altered. Scale degrees which are raised by a half-step are pronounced with an [i] vowel. For example: "do-sharp" would be performed as "di." Scale degrees which are lowered by a half-step are pronounced with an [ɛ] vowel with the exception of lowered "re", which becomes "rah." For example, "ti-flat" would be performed as "teh."
- Fixed Do Solfége: A solmization system using the same syllables as movable do solfége, but as absolute pitch names rather than functional names based on a tonic. "Do" represents C, "re" represents D, etc. As with movable do, vowel sounds are altered to

reflect chromatic alteration, so that C-sharp would be called “di” while D-flat would be called “rah.”

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The research explored in this study is organized into the following broad categories: teaching practices and methods, assessment practices, barriers to effective sight-singing instruction, and attitudes regarding sight-singing instruction. Where practices, trends or materials are listed, they are listed in descending order of popularity.

Teaching Practices and Methods

Solmization

Movable Do Solfége

Many recent investigations comparing the use of different solmization systems in high school chorus classes indicate that some form of movable do solfége is the most popular (Nichols, 2012; Demorest, 2004; McClung, 2001; Floyd & Bradley, 2006). However, comparisons of different systems do not readily yield results that explain the popularity of one system over other techniques. Demorest and May (1995) randomly assigned melodies of varying difficulty to 414 Texas high school choristers and compared the results along various descriptive and demographic factors, including which solmization system they used. Movable do solfége singers scored significantly higher than fixed do solfége singers, but there also was a higher prevalence of external factors that correlated with sight-singing achievement, including private lessons and consistency of early solfége training. Henry (2004) administered a sight-singing pretest to 67 novice high school singers and then assigned them to one of two groups with treatments meant to target specific pitch skills. One treatment was movable do solfége, the other

was identifying the target patterns in familiar songs. Each group improved significantly on post-test scores, but neither significantly outscored the other.

Curwen hand signs are occasionally taught with solfége to provide a kinesthetic representation of pitch (Towner, 2016). Nichols (2012) compared the popularity of six different solmization systems, where movable do solfége with Curwen signs and without Curwen signs were counted separately. The version using hand signs was the second most prevalent system, exceeded only by the without-hand signs version. McClung (2008) compared these two applications of movable do solfége to each other. Thirty-eight high school choristers trained in Curwen hand signs sang two melodies, one group with hand signs and the other without. Neither condition yielded a significantly different result, although participants who had undergone instrument playing instruction scored the highest overall and tended to score higher while using hand signs, while students who studied only singing tended to score higher without using hand signs.

In addition to Curwen signs, teachers who use movable do solfége must decide whether to approach minor tonalities with do as tonic or la as tonic. Demorest (2004) found minor la to be the more popular choice. In another study comparing different assessment procedures that used one major melody and one minor melody for testing, Demorest also found that participants in both groups only improved on the major melody, suggesting that choral directors' problems teaching minor may lie deeper than the question of what label to assign (1998A).

While frequently used, movable do solfége is not without its critics. Brown (2003) discusses the problems of a transient society in which a student is likely to encounter several solmization systems over the course of schooling, and proposes a system which mixes elements of different approaches. Miller (1930), an advocate of his self-developed Rochester System that

emphasizes intervallic reading, similarly claims that movable do solfége syllables fail to assist in reading highly chromatic or modulating music.

Numbers

Among the comparison studies examined for this review, the number solmization system appears to be the second most common after movable do solfége among high school chorus teachers (Nichols, 2012; Demorest, 2004; Floyd & Bradley, 2006). McClung (2001), in a survey of high school All-State Chorus participants from six Southern states, discovered that numbers are the preferred system over movable do solfége in five of the states. As with movable do solfége, there are two options for approaching the minor mode. Unlike movable do solfége, teachers preferred using 1 as the minor tonic over 6 (Demorest, 2004). Brown (2003) expressed a preference for numbers because they build on existing knowledge, eliminating the need to teach new syllables to a novice, and they make intervallic relationships more obvious. In his proposed mixed system, numbers are the basis for his devised hand signs. Although they are not discussed in the literature, the researcher has experience with two predominant techniques for singing chromatically altered pitches with the number system. One mimics the vowel-alteration method used in solfége, pronouncing raised pitches with an [ei] diphthong sound (e.g. one becomes “wayne”, two becomes “tay”, etc.) and lowered pitches with an [ah] vowel (e.g. three becomes “thrah”, two becomes “tah”). In the other technique, the chromatic symbol is sung, so that a sequence performed as “sol, si, la” in solfége would become “five, sharp, six” in numbers.

Non-tonicizing systems

The prevalence of movable do solfége and numbers points to a cultural preference for systems that identify a tonic and emphasize intervallic relationships. Between these and systems based in absolute pitch, there exists a preference for neutral syllables. They are typically

selected as the top choice after the tonicizing systems (Nichols, 2012; Demorest, 2004; McClung, 2001).

Compared to the previously discussed systems, fixed do solfége appears markedly unpopular. Both Nichols (2012) and Demorest (2004) placed it next-to-last among their choices and McClung (2001) found it to be the least popular choice. Although fixed do solfége is considered a distinct system, according to Miller (1930), in practice its users rely on the same skills as movable do solfége singers, with singers reading by intervals, harmonic perception, and familiarity with notated pitches.

Letter names reflect absolute pitches, much like fixed do. Letter names tend to be unpopular with high school chorus teachers; only Nichols (2012) surveyed a population which contained enough letter name system teachers to warrant its inclusion. As with the number system, Brown (2003) expressed a preference for letter names because of convenience and commonality. Nearly every chorister knows the alphabet; this entry knowledge dovetails with the fact that letter names are the standard labeling system for absolute pitches among American musicians ("Pitch, in music", Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia).

Of the studies collected for this review, only Demorest (2004) investigated rhythm reading systems. Traditional counting was preferred, followed by assorted variations of the Kodály "ta-ti" syllable system. According to Demorest, some who chose the "Other" category and then described their system fell close to either counting or "ta-ti."

Curricular Practice

As previously noted, comparing systems in order to choose one does not always yield useful or predictable results, suggesting that the system used bears less influence than other factors. Two of the studies examined for this review asserted that targeting a specific skill in

some manner is effective on its own, regardless of the system used (Henry, 2004; Mishra, 2016). In Daniels' landmark 1986 sight-singing study, the only curricular variable that significantly predicted sight-singing success was the occasional use of rote procedures; neither exclusively rote teaching nor exclusively note teaching yielded a similar relationship. Demographic and non-curricular factors which correlate with sight-singing achievement are discussed later in this review.

Time Use

Teachers who answer surveys, write articles on the subject, or participate in sight-singing studies generally agree that sight-singing is a task best addressed daily as part of the rehearsal routine (Osborne, Wright, Adams, Ranucci, Garofalo, Wagstaff, Swanzy, McLean, Leong & Kugler, 1976; Cutietta, 1979). Goss (2010) surveyed chorus teachers in Georgia who participated in the first All-State Chorus audition for that year and found that most taught sight-singing between five and ten minutes per day. Floyd and Bradley (2006) surveyed 24 high school choral directors in Kentucky whose choirs had received a distinguished score at their district performance evaluation. These directors reported an average of 18% of daily rehearsal time devoted to sight-singing. Brendell (1996) observed choral classes in 33 Florida high schools and found that the average amount of daily rehearsal time spent on sight-singing was 22.23%.

Publications and Materials

Research conducted by Demorest (2004) and Floyd and Bradley (2006) revealed that respondents preferred to create sight-singing materials themselves. Rather than using various publications dedicated to sight-singing, Demorest's participants preferred self-generated materials, followed by choral literature/octavos, followed by hymnals. Conversely, Floyd and

Bradley reported that, following self-generated material, respondents preferred sight-singing publications followed by choral literature/octavos. Goss (2010) found that Georgia high school teachers most frequently use past audition and LGPE materials made available through GMEA, followed by self-generated material, and followed by various sight-singing publications. Where specific publications were named, those that appeared in more than one study included the *Jenson Sight-Singing Course* (Bauguess, 1984), Bach chorales, *Essential Musicianship* (Crocker & Leavitt, 2007), *The Sight Singer* (Snyder, 1993), and Kodály's *333 elementary exercises* (1941).

Rehearsal Behaviors

Outside of labels and systems, some authors and researchers focus on specific strategies and behaviors that can improve sight-singing achievement in all situations. Killian and Henry (2005) presented two melodies to 198 high school choristers participating in All-State camps in Texas and compared the behaviors of the highest scorers to those of the lowest. The highest scorers used strategies such as tonicization (establishing the tonic by means of short warm-up scalar or arpeggio exercises), Curwen hand signs, practicing aloud, making sure they sang the entire example at least once, and isolating problem areas. Henry (2008) found that these strategies can be effectively taught to students and that lower-achieving students in the treatment group made significant post-test improvement. This list of productive sight-reading behaviors holds across several musical disciplines. Saxon (2009) presents an almost identical list to piano teachers, and Osborne (1976) uses a similar list of "commandments," as Osborne refers to his recommendations, for band students.

In summary, writings regarding sight-singing practices and methods among public secondary school chorus teachers reveal certain patterns and preferences. Most participating

teachers use a tonicizing solmization system with traditional counting, incorporate sight-singing into each rehearsal, use materials they create themselves, and demonstrate strategies for successful preparation and execution of sight-singing tasks.

High School Sight-Singing Assessment Practices

In-Field Evaluative Events

Since their inception, choral competitions and festivals hosted by music organizations such as NAfME or the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) have wrestled with the decision of whether or not to include sight-singing as a component, and if so, how much weight should it carry in scoring. Walker (1972), speaking from an adjudicator's point of view, believes that sight-singing should be included, but should be scored separately from a choir's overall score.

Based on information gathered from all 50 state affiliates of both NAfME and ACDA regarding high schools, Norris (2004) found that 86% of the states hold festivals, 58.1% require sight-singing as a component, and 56% include the sight-singing score in the overall score. Focusing specifically on the state of Michigan, Stegman (2009) discussed the merits of including sight-singing in district performance evaluations and highlighted newly established scoring procedures that encouraged good sight-singing habits over a polished sight-singing performance. Demorest (2004) found that directors who attended contests and festivals spent more time on sight-singing and gave it more weight in their grading than directors who did not. Findings from research by Yarbrough, Orman and Neill (2007) revealed that directors tended to tailor their sight-singing practices to the rules and requirements of their competition or festival.

Local Educational Authority Assessment

Just as in-field evaluations can affect a director's sight-singing pedagogy, so too can district- and building-level evaluations (Perrine, 2013; Goss, 2010). Music teacher evaluation has taken on many forms, usually in reaction to larger educational trends (Branscome, 2012). Currently, Race To The Top and its emphasis on data collection and systemic evaluation has caused participating states and districts to find ways to assess every subject for growth, including those ignored by previous efforts. Some music teachers are not evaluated using any content-specific measure, but are instead evaluated primarily on whole-school gains on math and reading tests (Perrine, 2013; Gates, Hansen & Tuttle, 2015).

In some districts, however, administrators have explored more authentic assessment formats which can include sight-singing. Hash (2013) listed districts which have proposed using in-field evaluations for this purpose, although concerns regarding validity and reliability were raised. Hash (2013) and Wesolowski (2014) also describe districts which allow music teachers to write their own assessments, giving these teachers control over which skills and standards are tested. The author of the current study co-wrote assessments for Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Chorus for the Hall County, Georgia school district. Each of these assessments includes sight-singing tasks.

In-Class Assessment

Format and Frequency

High school chorus teachers use a variety of formats to assess and, in most cases, grade sight-singing within the course. Differences among these formats include whether students are assessed alone or with others, in-person or via recording, or with any defined structure at all. Respondents in a study conducted by Demorest (2004) assessed sight-singing using formats that include, in descending order of popularity: singing alone for the teacher, an undefined "other",

no sight-singing assessment, alone in rehearsal, in quartets in rehearsal, alone on tape, in quartets for teacher and in quartets on tape. Many choral directors believe that the best means to improve sight-singing is individual assessment (Demorest, 1998B; Floyd & Bradley, 2006), although not all of them necessarily live up to this ideal (Goss, 2010). Some researchers assert that frequency of assessment is related to achievement in sight-singing, as students who were more frequently assessed achieved higher scores on their test melodies (Demorest and May, 1995).

Different response modes and formats can also prove helpful. Furby (2013) suggests that a variety of response modes be used throughout the year in order to reinforce learning, including written assignments in which students label scale degrees or rhythmic values. A software program used in research by Henry (2015) was determined to be effective in assessing sight-singing. However, students should be well acquainted with the software interface and program before using it as an evaluative tool.

Scoring

In regards to scoring sight-singing, Goss (2010) found that participants preferred a rubric which evaluated solely pitch and rhythmic accuracy, similar to the one used in All-State Chorus auditions. Others preferred a rubric which combined many elements, a simple pass/fail system, or some combination thereof. Furby (2013) recommends a one-row rubric which combines pitch and rhythmic accuracy in error ranges, as opposed to a running tally of errors.

The findings of the above studies regarding sight-singing assessment practices tend to be quite varied. Sight-singing achievement can be assessed by a teacher's peers and mentors via in-field evaluative events, by administrators and LEAs, and/or by teachers themselves as part of the grading process. When sight-singing is included in in-field festivals and contests, it may or may not be included as part of a choir's overall score. LEAs may or may not choose to include sight-

singing in subject assessments, depending on their goals and/or the stipulations of current legislation. Chorus teachers themselves tend to believe that individual testing is the best way to assess sight-singing skill, although not all of them are able to achieve this goal. Generally, they prefer using rubrics, although the emphases and point distribution can vary widely from teacher to teacher.

Barriers to Effective Sight-Singing Instruction

Time and Demographics

Methods and motivations are only effective if there is sufficient opportunity to use them. According to Demorest (1998B), directors devote varying amounts of time to sight-singing instruction according to which curricular elements they deem more important. The advent of the 1994 National Standards marked a shift in amount of rehearsal time devoted to sight-singing. Participants in a study conducted by Goss (2010) perceived a lack of time as the principal barrier to the individual sight-singing assessment. In Kuehne's 1993 survey of middle school chorus teachers and their sight-singing practices and attitudes, respondents voiced complaints about having inadequate class time and chorus classes not meeting often enough.

Some studies found demographic factors beyond the directors' control that correlated with sight-singing achievement, such as ethnicity, whether one attended a rural or urban school, the presence of a piano in the home, whether or not one takes private music lessons, and the size of the school (Daniels, 1986; Demorest and May, 1995; Killian and Henry, 2015; Henry, 2011).

Pre-Service Training

Undergraduate music education majors take methods courses in their chosen field as a matter of course, but the usefulness of these courses once students become teachers is disputed. Nichols (2012) and Floyd and Bradley (2006) found that directors were most likely to use

methods that their own grade school teachers used as opposed to those learned in methods courses. In Floyd and Bradley's study, undergraduate courses in any form comprised only 24% of responses from choral directors regarding how they learned to teach sight-singing. Some cited undergraduate theory instead of methods courses, again indicating that participants taught sight-singing the way they were taught to sight-sing.

Floyd and Haning (2015) conducted a content analysis of 10 textbooks that are commonly used in undergraduate choral methods courses and discovered that they were lacking in information regarding sight-singing instruction, how to develop audiation skills in students, how to create assessments, and how to plan a curriculum. As for the instructors of those methods courses, Aguilar and Richerme (2016) found that they were highly knowledgeable about advocacy, state standards and the 1994 National Standards, but were ill-informed on topics such as Race To The Top and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) initiatives.

In summary, chorus teachers tend to cite lack of time as the principal barrier to achieving their sight-singing goals. Even when instructional time is adequate, demographic factors beyond the teacher's control can influence students' sight-singing achievement. Researchers report that publications, both those written for sight-singing instruction and those written to prepare undergraduates for teaching, are insufficient or unsatisfactory for those purposes. Regarding the latter, teachers often complain that their preservice methods courses did not adequately prepare them for sight-singing instruction and typically choose the methods their own sight-singing teachers used.

Attitudes

Since the earliest days of American public school music education, differing opinions among teachers about sight-singing instruction have resulted in arguments and wide variations in practice (Mark & Gary, 2007). Shortly after the founding of NAfME, Osborne McConathy (1913) asserted that sight-singing should be a primary component of any music course. Some of the more recent survey and observational research among chorus teachers indicates a similar belief among participants that sight-singing is an important skill that deserves significant time and attention (Walker, 1972; Nichols, 2012). Reponses to a survey administered by Smith (1998) revealed that teachers believed students who sight-sang well learned repertoire more efficiently and that those teachers who had been teaching longer tended to feel more confident about their ability to teach sight-singing. Dunstan (2016) ascertained that higher sight-singing achievement could result in better self-confidence for the student as well.

However, not every chorus teacher shares this enthusiasm for sight-singing. According to Daniels (1986), many chorus teachers teach very little or no sight-singing skills. Similarly, while observing chorus teachers who had earned high performance ratings at contests, Fiocca (1989) found that the directors whose methods were most highly-rated by the judging panel did no sight-singing at all as part of daily rehearsal. Demorest (1998C, 2001) explored possible explanations for teacher reluctance to teach sight-singing. Findings revealed that some teachers felt hesitant or unqualified to teach sight-singing because they were poor sight-singers themselves; others had too much difficulty motivating students to participate, too little time to teach it, or had so separated sight-singing from the broader skill of repertoire reading that they failed to see its value.

According to the above studies, chorus teachers have many different attitudes and opinions about sight-singing. Some consider it a vital part of the choral curriculum and give it substantial weight in their classes. Others consider its value dubious or nonexistent and teach accordingly, due to their own inadequate skills or their inability to overcome various obstacles to its success.

Summary

Research conducted on sight-singing practices among high school chorus teachers reveals a hierarchy of priorities within the field. Because pitch is a highly abstract concept for a vocalist, its introduction and reinforcement as a concept reigns supreme among curricular problems, resulting in an abundance of studies comparing, describing, critiquing and devising solmization systems. The decades-long tradition of music competition and festival participation is also a popular subject, although the position and importance of sight-singing in these events is by no means standardized or solid.

More personal and less public topics, such as which materials to use, how much time to study them, and how to grade one's own students, garner less attention. Topics too new to yield much substantive data, such as curricular and evaluative adjustments made in the wake of Race To The Top, are also scarce as data continues to accumulate. Barriers to effective sight-singing are interesting to write about, but such information is not useful if most of those barriers are outside of a directors' control. Finally, there are few studies examining teacher attitudes toward sight-singing instruction, particularly where such attitudes are negative.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Test

Prior to launching the survey among high school teachers in the full study, the survey was pilot tested to determine instrument clarity and data gathering and reporting capabilities of the survey platform.

Survey selection and modification.

The survey instrument used in this study is based on a survey developed by Kuehne (2003). In that Kuehne's survey was designed for middle school chorus programs, the researcher made a series of minor modifications in order to make the instrument appropriate for use with high school teachers in Georgia. Previous research (Korb, 2012; Sauro, 2016; Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004) has shown that modifications to a survey that do not change the format or constructs being measured may be made without affecting the instrument's reliability or validity. The modifications made were as follows:

- Information pertaining to the title, institution and specific researcher were changed to reflect the current study.
- Questions regarding professional membership were changed from Florida organizations such as the Florida Vocal Association to Georgia organizations such as the Georgia Music Educators' Association.
- Outdated names and acronyms, such as MENC, were changed to current ones such as NAfME.

- The phrase “middle school” was replaced with “high school” and references to grades 6 through 8 were replaced with grades 9 through 12 throughout the survey.
- The word “contest” was replaced with “contest, festival or evaluation” throughout the survey in order to reflect the types of evaluative choral events offered in Georgia.
- In questions regarding solmization, Kuehne alternated unequally between solfége and numbers rather than consistently listing one or both. These items were modified to consistently list both, as they are two labels for the same practice. For example, in Kuehne’s Item 34, the statement “The ‘Movable DO’ method (where DO changes to the tonic of the key signature” was changed to “The ‘Movable DO’ method (where DO or 1 changes to the tonic of the key signature.”
- The section titled “Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency and Time” was changed to “Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency, Time and Assessment” with multiple-choice items regarding in-class and district- or state-mandated assessment added in order to better address the research questions of the current study.
- Item 8 in the Kuehne survey, a short-answer question about the teacher’s degrees and major areas of study, was changed to multiple-choice format with various suggestions and a short-answer “other” category in order to streamline data collection.
- Item 11 in the Kuehne survey, which asked if the participant taught in a school considered “at-risk”, was eliminated as it did not pertain to the research questions of the current study.
- Item 14 in the Kuehne survey, a long-answer question regarding the types and levels of choirs taught, was changed to a multiple-choice format with various suggestions and a short-answer “other” category in order to streamline data collection.

- Kuehne's Item 24, a series of Likert-scale statements, was altered in the following ways:
    - The question about teaching sight-singing because of the 1994 National Standard about reading music was removed because the 2014 National Standards do not explicitly include music reading.
    - The question about teaching sight-singing because the cluster high school expects it was removed.
- The Kuehne sections regarding textbooks, published books, computer software and teacher designed/unpublished methods were reordered to appear together under a single section titled "Textbooks, Materials and Publications."
- Item 37 in the Kuehne survey, asking about the order in which aural patterns and written patterns should be introduced, was removed because the same questions were covered in a previous series of Likert-scale statements.
- Item 41 in the Kuehne survey, a yes/no question about using an unpublished sight-singing method designed by someone other than yourself, was changed to a short answer format so that respondents could answer more specifically. This reflects Goss's (2010) findings that Georgia chorus teachers often use past Large Group Performance Evaluation and All-State Chorus sight-singing examples posted on the Georgia Music Educators' Association website.
- The section titled "Influences" was expanded to create an "Influences, Attitudes and Barriers" section and included Item 43 from the Kuehne survey along with additional Likert scale and multiple-choice items meant to better address the research questions of the current study.

Survey format and platform.

Once the necessary modifications had been made, the survey was drafted in Google Forms. Google Forms is part of Google's web-based productivity software suite and features a variety of customizable question formats. The Google Forms platform also provides data collection and reporting in a variety of formats, including charts with frequencies and percentages, individual responses, and a spreadsheet of responses that can be copied into Microsoft Excel or SPSS. The survey was given a unique link for sharing and the privacy settings were calibrated so that only participants with a link could complete the survey (meaning it could not be accessed via a general web search) and to prevent participants from seeing the responses of others.

The survey consisted of forty-seven items and was divided into five sections. The first section was titled "About the Choral Director and School" and consisted of eighteen questions pertaining to participant and school demographic data, types of choirs taught by the participant, and procedural questions about sight-singing in evaluative events. Most of these items were multiple-choice with an "other" option for cases in which none of the choices were accurate. A few items were better suited to a short answer format, such as the name or zip code of the school.

The second section was titled "Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency, Time and Assessment." It contained eight items examining how often, for how long and for what reasons the participant taught sight-singing. Questions on frequency and length of instruction were multiple-choice, while rationale for instruction was ascertained using a Likert scale item in which participants agreed or disagreed with various statements about sight-singing instruction. These statements represented a range of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for sight-singing

instruction, such as a personal belief in the importance of sight-singing as a skill (intrinsic) or the pressure of a district requirement to attend an evaluation (extrinsic.)

The third section, "Textbooks, Materials and Publications," contained fourteen items regarding the use of both published and unpublished print and nonprint resources. Items examining the attributes of these resources, such as solmization method or inclusion of rhythm exercises, were multiple-choice, while items asking for specific titles and/or publishers were short-answer.

The fourth section, "Sight-Singing Practices," contained two multiple-choice items concerning approaches and one detailed Likert scale item that included various pedagogical statements. These statements compared participants' opinions on various practices, such as solmization methods or the use of Kodály (Curwen) hand signs, as well as sequencing of aural patterns versus musical notation. Three statements in the Likert scale item and one multiple-choice question addressed how frequently and why participants used the piano in sight-singing instruction.

In the fifth section, "Influences, Attitudes and Barriers," the first item, in a Likert scale format, addressed the impact of various formative experiences on the participants' current practice, including the participants' own K-12 teachers, pre-service training, and in-service workshops. The second item, also a Likert scale item, ascertained the participants' feelings about their own sight-singing capability and to what extent they felt personally responsible for their students' sight-singing success. The third item was a multiple-choice question listing various barriers to effective sight-singing instruction that participants might have encountered, and the fourth item was an open-response question giving the participant an opportunity to share any further information with the researcher.

Population

To prevent contamination of the sample for the principal study, the survey was piloted among middle school teachers, retired or out-of-state high school choral directors, and collegiate choral directors with previous high school teaching experience. These teachers had each worked with the researcher in a teaching context prior to the study and were known among Georgia choral educators as outstanding teachers. A link to the survey was emailed to 40 such teachers and 17 responded (42.5%).

Participant profile.

The majority of the participants had been teaching music and chorus for fewer than fifteen years (64.7%, n=11). There was a small segment of the population with twenty-six or more years of teaching experience (29.4%, n=5) and with twenty-six or more years of choral teaching experience (23.5%, n=4)(see Table 1).

Table 1

Summary of Teaching Experience

Years	Teaching music at any level		Teaching chorus at any level		Teaching high school chorus		Teaching at current school	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
0-5	*1*	5.9	*2*	11.8	*10*	58.8	*6*	35.3
6-10	*7*	41.2	*8*	47.1	*4*	23.5	*7*	41.2
11-15	*3*	17.6	*1*	5.9	*0*	0	*1*	5.9
16-20	*1*	5.9	*1*	5.9	*0*	0	*0*	0
21-25	*0*	0	*1*	5.9	*2*	11.8	*1*	5.9
26-30	*1*	5.9	*0*	0	*0*	0	*0*	0
31-35	*2*	11.8	*2*	11.8	*1*	5.9	*1*	5.9
36-40	*1*	5.9	*1*	5.9	*0*	0	*0*	0
41-45	*1*	5.9	*1*	5.9	*0*	0	*0*	0

As shown in Table 1, among those who had been teaching longer than fifteen years, very few taught high school chorus or had spent much time in their current school.

All of the participants held Bachelor's Degrees. Other degrees represented include Master's (88.2%, n=15), Specialist's (17.6%, n=3), Doctorate (5.9%, n=1) and a second Bachelor's Degree (5.9%, n=1). Ten (58.8%) of the participants completed their degrees in vocal areas of study, seven (41.2%) in both vocal and instrumental, and one (5.9%) in music education. Professional music organizations of which the participants were members include the Georgia Music Educators Association (88.2%, n=15), the National Association for Music Education (88.2%, n=15), the national organization of the American Choral Directors Association (17.6%, n=3), the Georgia chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (11.8%, n=2) and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (5.9%, n=1). These data are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Level of Education and Professional Membership.

Degree Completed	*n*	%	Area of Study	*n*	%	Professional Membership	*n*	%
Bachelor's	*17*	100	Vocal	*10*	58.8	Georgia Music Educators' Association	*15*	88.2
Master's	*15*	88.2	Both Vocal and Instrumental Emphases	*7*	41.2	National Association for Music Education	*15*	88.2
Specialist's	*3*	17.6	Music Education	*1*	5.9	American Choral Directors Association National Organization	*3*	17.6
Doctorate	*1*	5.9				Georgia Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association	*2*	11.8
Second Bachelor's	*1*	5.9				American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers	*1*	5.9

Eight (47.1%) participants taught in rural schools, seven (41.2%) in suburban schools and two (11.8%) in inner city schools. The school enrollment and choral program size data are summarized in Table 3:

Table 3

School Enrollment and Choral Program Size

School Population	*n*	%	Choral Program Size	*n*	%
100-500	*1*	5.9	Fewer than 25 students	*2*	11.8
501-1000	*5*	29.4	51-100	*2*	11.8
1001-1500	*5*	29.4	101-200	*9*	52.9
1601-2000	*2*	11.8	201-300	*3*	17.6
Over 2000	*1*	5.9	301-400	*1*	5.9

As shown in Table 3, most of the school population sizes fell between 501 and 1000 students (29.4%, n=5) or 1001 and 1500 students (29.4%, n=5). One school enrollment (5.9%) fell between 100 and 500 students, two (11.8%) fell between 1501 and 2000 students, and the enrollment of one school (5.9%) was over 2000 students. The number of students enrolled in choral programs ranged from fewer than 25 students (11.8%, n=2) to 301-400 students (5.9%, n=1).

Fifteen (88.2%) participants taught on the period schedule, meaning that they conducted choral classes every day for 40-60 minutes for the entire school year. Two (11.8%) taught on the block schedule, meaning that they conducted choral classes every day for 80-100 minutes for a semester. All of the participants offered some kind of open membership mixed choir and twelve (70.6%) offered an open membership treble choir. Twelve (70.6%) conducted choirs with prerequisite classes, either mixed (41.2%, n=7) or treble (29.4%, n=5). Auditioned or select treble and mixed choirs are represented equally, with four participants (23.5%) conducting each type.

In regards to evaluative events or contests, thirteen respondents (76.5%) attended some kind of event, three (17.6%) did not attend an event, and one (5.9%) declined to answer. Participants that attended an evaluative event also reported the inclusion of a sight-singing component. Only five participants (29.4%) were required by their district or administration to attend such an event.

Pilot Study Findings

Section Two: Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency, Time and Assessment

All participants taught sight-singing to all of their choirs. Most (64.7%, n=11) taught sight-singing during every rehearsal of the school day, although two (11.8%) taught it only three times per week and three (17.6%) taught it sporadically, with no specific schedule or with a goal of several instructional units per week. One participant (5.9%) taught sight-singing only once per week. Sight-singing lessons tended to last between five and ten minutes (52.9%, n=9) or between ten and fifteen minutes (35.3%, n=6). One teacher (5.9%) spent under five minutes in each lesson, while another (5.9%) spent between fifteen or twenty minutes on each lesson (see Table 4).

Table 4

Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency and Time

Frequency	*n*	%	Time	*n*	%
No specific schedule	*3*	17.6	Less than 5 minutes	*1*	5.9
One rehearsal per week during the school day	*1*	5.9	5-10 minutes	*9*	52.9
Every rehearsal during the school day	*11*	64.7	10-15 minutes	*6*	35.3
Three times per week	*2*	11.8	15-20 minutes	*1*	5.9

Item 23, in a Likert scale format, asked participants to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements regarding sight-singing instruction. One represented "strongly disagree" and ten represented "strongly agree." Most participants strongly agreed with

the statements: “Choral teachers should teach sight-singing to high school choral students” (82.3%, n=14); “If high school choral students do not go to sight-singing contests, festivals or evaluations, their choral teacher does not need to teach them to sight-sing” (94.4%, n=16); and “High school choral teachers should teach sight-singing because students should learn how to read music in addition to learning how to perform it” (76.7%, n=13). Statements with which participants strongly disagreed included “High school teachers should only teach sight-singing because the state and/or school district require it” (70.8%, n=12) and “If the state and/or districts do not require it, high school choral teachers should not teach sight-singing” (88.5%, n=15). Responses were less uniform for the statements “High school choral students should learn to sight-sing because they have to go to sight-singing contests, festivals or evaluations” and “High school choral teachers should concentrate more on teaching students to perform and less on teaching them sight-singing.”

Participants employed a variety of sight-singing assessment strategies, including both formal and informal systems. Their assessment strategies are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Sight-Singing Assessment Practices

System	*n*	%
I provide feedback regarding sight-singing, but do not give grades.	8	47.1
I have them sight-sing as an ensemble and give everyone the same grade.	6	35.3
I have them sight-sing as an ensemble and give individual grades.	5	29.4
I have them sight-sing in small groups and give individual grades.	6	35.3
I have them sight-sing individually and give individual grades.	10	58.8
I give sight-singing grades informally, using my own observations and feelings about the students’ progress and/or achievement.	5	29.4
I give sight-singing grades based on a rubric or system I have designed.	8	47.1
I give sight-singing grades based on a rubric or system designed by someone else.	3	17.6

Most participants (58.8%, n=10) listened to individual students sight-sing and gave them individual grades. The next most popular methods included providing feedback without assigning grades (47.1%, n=8), giving sight-singing grades based on a self-designed rubric (47.1%, n=8), having the ensemble sight-sing together and giving everyone the same grade (35.3%, n=6) and having the students sight-sing in small groups and giving individual grades (35.3%, n=6). Giving individual grades based on ensemble sight-singing (29.4%, n=5) and giving informal grades based on their own observations (29.4%, n=5) were less widely used, and giving sight-singing grades based on someone else's rubric (17.6%, n=3) was the least used method.

Many school districts in Georgia use student growth assessments in their teacher evaluation systems. Eleven participants (64.7%) reported that their school or district required them to administer a test assessing student growth over the course of the year. Of these, seven (41.2%) reported that this test included a sight-singing component, while the other four (23.5%) reported that there was no sight-singing included in their test.

Section Three: Textbooks, Materials and Publications

Textbooks

In the survey, a textbook was defined as, "a book that the state or your district accepts for use in a majority of its schools for a period of 1 to 10 years and which the state or district may have purchased" (Kuehne, 2003). Using this definition, four participants (23.5%) reported using a textbook. Only one (5.9%) supplied a title: *Experiencing Choral Music* (Hal Leonard, 2004). Three participants (17.6%) indicated that they used their textbook for sight-singing instruction.

When asked which sight-singing approaches appeared in their textbooks, more than four participants responded, despite the fact that only four claimed to use textbooks. The most

frequently selected approaches were numbers for pitches (29.4%, n=5), "movable do" (29.4%, n=5), and exercises designed for sight-singing (29.4%, n=5). The next tier of responses included solfége syllables (23.5%, n=4), melodic exercises (23.5%, n=4), rhythm exercises (23.5%, n=4), and exercises designed for interval practice (23.5%, n=4). The least used approaches included the Kodály (Curwen) solfége hand signs (11.8%, n=2), a scope and sequence for sight-singing instruction (11.8%, n=2) and movement suggestions (5.9%, n=1). Participants' use of textbooks and the characteristics of those textbooks are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

Textbooks

Question	***n***	**%**
Uses a textbook	4	23.5
Uses a textbook for sight-singing instruction	3	17.6
Characteristic of textbook	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	4	23.5
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	2	11.8
Numbers for pitches	5	29.4
Melodic exercises	4	23.5
Rhythm exercises	4	23.5
"Movable do" method	5	29.4
Scope and sequence for sight-singing instruction	2	11.8
Suggestions for movement	1	5.9
Exercises for interval practice	4	23.5
Music designed for sight-singing	5	29.4

Published books and computer software

Four participants (23.5%) used a published sight-singing method that did not meet the given definition of "textbook." These books included *Music for Sight-Singing* (Rogers & Ottman, 2013), *Tonal Sight-Reading for Choirs* (Frazer, 1970), *The Classical Sight-Singing Series* (Beebe) and the sight-singing books created by the Georgia Music Educators' Association (GMEA) for Large Group Performance Evaluation, which are made available on the GMEA website.

Regarding computer software, three participants (17.6%) regularly used at least one software program to help students with their sight-singing skills. Two of these programs were downloadable notation programs available for purchase: Finale (MakeMusic, Inc.) and Sibelius (Avid Technology). The other two were internet-based programs requiring a monthly subscription: Music Prodigy (The Way of H, Inc.) and MusicTheory.Net (Musictheory.net, LLC).

Self-designed methods

Most of the participants (58.8%, n=10) used a sight-singing method or approach that they designed themselves. Again, when asked to list characteristics of this method, more than ten participants gave responses. The characteristics of these self-created methods are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7

Self-Designed Method Characteristics

Characteristic	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	13	76.5
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	12	70.6
Rhythm reading syllables	10	58.8
Numbers for pitches	4	23.5
"Movable do" tonality approach	11	64.7
Exercises for interval practice	11	64.7
Exercises for melodic practice	9	52.9
Exercises for rhythm practice	11	64.7
Suggestions for movement	3	17.6

In regard to solmization, participants overwhelmingly preferred solfége syllables (76.5%, n=13) to numbers (23.5%, n=4). Other preferred approaches and methods included Kodály hand signs (70.6%, n=12), the "movable do" tonality approach (64.7%, n=11), exercises designed for interval practice (64.7%, n=11), exercises designed for rhythm practice (64.7%, n=11) and the use of specific rhythm reading syllables (58.8%, n=10). Exercises designed for melodic practice

(52.5%, n=9) were less frequently used and suggestions for movement (17.6%, n=3) were used least.

Unpublished methods

Unpublished methods and methods drawn from other teachers were reported by four participants (23.5%). One participant (5.9%) described a specific sequence beginning with the major scale, moving to rhythmic values, then combining the two; this person wrote that this was the "only way [he or she has] ever remembered sight-singing throughout [their] schooling." Two participants (11.8%) listed *Sightread101*, a method created and distributed by Georgia chorus teachers Kirk and Melissa Grizzle, and one participant (5.9%) listed the aforementioned sight-singing books available on the GMEA website.

These methods and materials used the "movable do" tonality approach (23.5%, n=4), solfége syllables (17.6%, n=3), Kodály (Curwen) hand signs (17.6%, n=3), exercises designed for interval practice (17.6%, n=3), exercises designed for melodic practice (17.6%, n=3), and exercises designed for rhythm practice (17.6%, n=3). Two participants (11.8%) included specific rhythm reading syllables and one participant (5.9%) used numbers for pitches. (See Table 8).

Table 8

Characteristics of Unpublished Methods

Characteristic	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	3	17.6
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	3	17.6
Specific rhythm reading syllables	2	11.8
Numbers for pitches	1	5.9
"Movable do" tonality approach	4	23.5
Exercises designed for interval practice	3	17.6
Exercises designed for melodic practice	3	17.6
Exercises designed for rhythm practice	3	17.6

Section Four: Sight-Singing Practices

As with item 23, item 41 presented participants with a series of statements and asked them to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed. One represented "strongly disagree" and ten represented "strongly agree." Practices that drew a majority of "strongly agree" responses included the use of either solfége or numbers (76.7%, n=13), the use of the "movable do" tonality approach (76.7%, n=13) and teaching students to sight-sing in multiple voice parts (64.9%, n=11). Some statements received a majority of responses of 6 or higher, indicating that the participants agreed with these statements to some extent. These statements included the use of the Kodály (Curwen) hand signs (88.2%, n=15), the use of solfége syllables or numbers during warm-ups (88.2%, n=15), the use of movement activities (82.4%, n=14), and teaching staff notation and aural patterns simultaneously (76.5%, n=13).

None of the statements received a majority of "strongly disagree" responses, although several received a majority of responses of 5 or lower, indicating that participants disagreed with these statements to some degree. These statements included the use of the "fixed do" tonality approach (100%, n=17), the idea that using the piano is necessary (94.1%, n=16), the use of the piano to support weaker reading voices (82.4%, n=14) and the idea that the piano should not be used at all (70.6%, n=12). Regarding the separate teaching of rhythm and melody and the teaching of aural patterns prior to notation, responses were distributed roughly equally across the scale and could not be characterized as generally in favor or opposed.

For the final two items in Section Four, participants were asked to select which practices they used in their sight-singing instruction and to what extent they used the piano for this instruction. Every participant indicated that they used the Kodály (Curwen) hand signs in some way, and thirteen (76.5%) used them during warm-up activities. Sixteen participants (94.1%)

indicated that they used solfége syllables and extracted rhythms and melodies from repertoire the students would perform for sight-singing and rhythm practice, while fourteen participants (82.4%) created melodic and rhythmic exercises themselves. Fifteen participants (88.2%) employed the "movable do" tonality approach with "la" or 6-based minor. Twelve (70.6%) used some type of rhythm syllable. Fewer participants tended to use physical movement aside from the hand signs (47.1%, n=8), numbers for pitches (23.5%, n=4), "do" or 1-based minor (17.7%, n=3), and the "fixed do" tonality approach (5.9%, n=1).

In regards to using the piano, thirteen participants (76.5%) only gave starting pitches from the piano. Two participants (11.8%) played along with the students as they were first learning to sight-sing and then gradually stopped playing as the students become more proficient, while two used the piano for harmonic structure rather than doubling parts. Participants' teaching practices and piano use responses are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Teaching Practices and Piano Use

Method	*n*	%
Solfége syllables	16	94.1
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	17	100
Rhythm syllables	12	70.6
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs during warm-up activities	13	76.5
Physical movement other than the hand signs	8	47.1
"Movable do" tonality approach	15	88.2
"Fixed do" tonality approach	1	5.9
Numbers for pitches	4	23.5
"La" or 6-based minor	15	88.2
"Do" or 1-based minor	3	17.7
Rhythms from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises	16	94.1
Melodies from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises	16	94.1
Self-created rhythm exercises	14	82.4
Self-created melodic exercises	14	82.4
Using the piano to play students' parts when they are first learning and gradually withdrawing it	2	11.8
Using the piano for harmonic structure	2	11.8
Only giving starting pitches from the piano	13	76.5

Section Five: Influences, Attitudes and Barriers

Influences

When asked to rate the level of influence other teachers, college courses, and in-service training have had on their teaching, most participants gave responses of 6 or higher to their own high school choral teachers (58.8%, n=10), undergraduate theory and aural skills teachers (58.8%, n=10), undergraduate music education teachers (70.6%, n=12), graduate music education teachers (70.6%, n=12), middle school choral directors in their district (64.7%, n=11), other high school teachers in their district (64.7%, n=11), teachers outside of their district (58.8%, n=10), and music in-service workshops they have attended (76.5%, n=13). Participants gave responses of 5 or lower to their middle school choral teachers (70.6%, n=12) and their high school music teachers other than their choral teacher (64.7%, n=11). Their feeder program teachers received mixed responses.

Attitudes

Participants were asked to respond to a series of statements about their sight-singing abilities and teaching effectiveness. Regarding barriers they faced when teaching sight-singing, most participants reported that their students were not motivated to learn to sight-sing (82.4%, n=14). Seven participants (41.3%) reported that they did not have enough class time to teach sight-singing effectively and three (17.7%) reported that they lacked sufficient materials. One participant (5.9%) did not know or have access to effective methods.

The last item in the survey, item 47, was an open-response question giving participants the opportunity to share any other thoughts with the researcher. Only five participants (29.4%) chose to answer this question; their individual responses were as follows:

- "I wish there was a tiered curriculum for sight reading where students of all ability levels could be instructed during the same class period."
- "Numbers and Solfége are equally good systems for sight reading although Solfége generally produces a more pleasing sound and allows for practice of pure vowels [sic] sounds. Which ever system is the primary system in use students should be given experience in the other system. The number system is valuable in learning the basics of music theory."
- "I'm glad you chose this important topic…would love to see/hear the results!"
- "Sight-singing is the MOST important aspect of choral teaching. Our goal should be to create independent music readers."
- "Daily sight-singing in choirs is essential and important for musical understanding and growth."

Principal Study

The purpose of the principal study was to examine sight-singing teaching practices, means of assessment, and attitudes of Georgia public high school chorus teachers regarding the teaching of sight-singing. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are some practices of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?

2. How do Georgia public high school choral teachers assess effective sight-singing instruction?

3. What factors do Georgia public high school choral teachers perceive as barriers to effective sight-singing instruction?

4. What are some attitudes of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding

the instruction of sight-singing?

Method

To identify participants for the full survey, the researcher compiled a list of Georgia public high school chorus teachers during the spring of 2017. A list of Georgia public schools was acquired from the Georgia Department of Education website. Any school that did not include at least one of the high school grades – ninth, tenth, eleventh and/or twelfth – was eliminated. From this list, the researcher then examined school websites, called schools, and used the Georgia Music Educators Association OPUS platform (an online interface that allows GMEA members to communicate with one another and organize district and state events) to discover which schools had choral programs and to gather contact information for those directors. The final list resulted in a target population of 362 choral teachers.

Each of these teachers was sent an email detailing the purpose of the survey and a link to follow if they wished to participate during September 2017. In October and November, teachers who had not yet responded were sent the same email as follow-up. In February and March of 2018, teachers who had not yet responded were left phone messages and teachers who had a previous working relationship with the researcher were contacted via email. In May of 2018, 145 teachers had filled out the survey, constituting a response rate of 40%, consistent with the typical response rate of a survey administered online (Nulty, 2008; Sheehan, 2001; McPeake, Bateson & O'Neill, 2014; Wengrzik, Bosnjak & Manfreda, 2016).

Participant Profile

Participants reported a wide variety of experience levels, both in their music teaching careers and choral teaching careers (see Table 10).

Table 10

Summary of Teaching Experience

Years	Teaching music at any level		Teaching chorus at any level		Teaching high school chorus		Teaching at current school	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
First – 5	*27*	18.6	*29*	20	*44*	30.3	*70*	48.3%
6-10	*33*	22.8	*33*	22.8	*41*	28.3	*38*	26.2
11-15	*32*	22.1	*34*	23.4	*28*	19.3	*18*	12.4
Over 15	*49*	33.8	*47*	32.4	*32*	22.1	*17*	11.7

As shown in Table 10, forty-nine participants (33.8%) had taught music for over fifteen years, forty-seven (32.4%) had taught choral music for over fifteen years, and thirty-two (22.1%) had taught high school choral music for over fifteen years. Teacher positions at their current schools were shorter, with nearly half (48.3%, n=70) reporting that they had taught at their current school for five or fewer years. Only seventeen (11.7%) had taught at their current school for over fifteen years.

The participants' GMEA districts are summarized in Figure 1 with color coding: higher response rates are represented by blues and greens, while lower response rates are represented by yellows and pinks. Participants represent every Georgia Music Educators Association district. The highest response rates came from District Fourteen, located in the northeastern corner of the state (13.1%, n=19), District Nine, in the northern central portion of the state (9.7%, n=14), District Five, consisting of Fulton County in Metro Atlanta (9%, n=13), and District Six, a southwestern portion of the Metro Altanta area (8.3%, n=12). Fewer responses came from District Thirteen, consisting of Gwinnett County in Metro Atlanta (7.6%, n=11), District Eleven, in the center of the state just below Atlanta (7.6%, n=11), District Seven, in the northwestern corner of the state (7.6%, n=11), District One, farthest east including four coastal counties (7.6%, n=11) and District Ten, on the eastern side of the state below Athens (6.9%, n=10). The fewest

responses came from District Eight, on the south-central end of the state including two coastal counties (5.5%, n=8), District Four, the northern and eastern part of Metro Atlanta less Cobb, Fulton and Gwinnett counties (4.8%, n=7), District Twelve, consisting of Cobb County in Metro Atlanta (4.1%, n=6), District Two, in the southwestern corner of the state (4.1%, n=6) and District Three, on the west-central end of the state (2.1%, n=3)

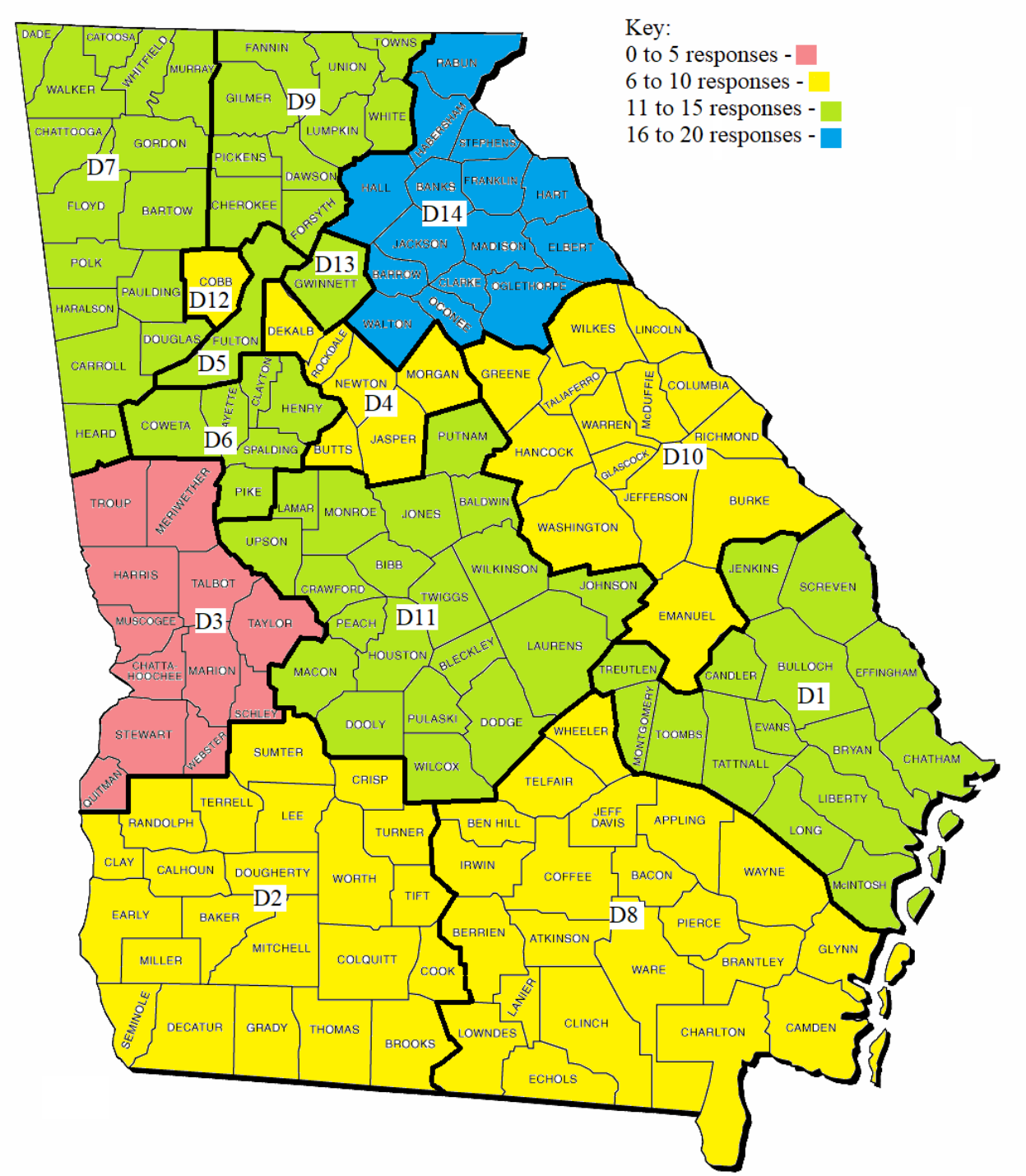

Figure 1

Response Rates by GMEA District

Several professional organizations were represented among the participants. This information is summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

Professional Membership

Organization	*n*	%
Georgia Music Educators Association	142	97.9
Georgia chapter of American Choral Directors Association	39	26.9
National Association for Music Education	119	82.1
National organization of American Choral Directors Association	48	33.1
Others added by participants	4	2.8

. Among the organizations represented, there were one hundred and forty-two members of the Georgia Music Educators Association (97.9%), one hundred and nineteen members of the National Association for Music Education (82.1%), forty-eight members of the national organization of the American Choral Directors Association (26.9%), and thirty-nine members of the Georgia chapter of the American Choral Directors Association (26.9%). Additionally, each of the following organizations were listed by one participant (0.7%): the Sigma Alpha Iota Music Fraternity, the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, the Jazz Association of Macon and the National Federation of Music Clubs.

In regard to earned degrees, most of the participants (80.7%, n=117) held Bachelor's degrees, eighty-nine (61.4%) held Master's degrees, twenty (13.8%) held Specialist's degrees and six (4.1%) held doctorates. Two (1.4%) indicated that they were currently working on a doctorate, one (0.7%) listed a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies among their credentials, and one (0.7%) listed "a year of graduate work." One hundred and three (71%) participants completed their degrees with a vocal emphasis, twenty-five (17.2%) with an instrumental emphasis, and twenty-five (17.2%) with both vocal and instrumental emphases. Given the opportunity to specify another area, participants listed conducting (2.8%, n=4), curriculum and

instruction (1.4%, n=2), leadership (1.4%, n=2), history (0.7%, n=1), education (0.7%, n=1), "Vocal performance and music education" (0.7%, n=1), "Secondary Education: The Arts" (0.7%, n=1), and "Choral Music Education with Piano as Major Instrument" (0.7%, n=1) (see Table 12).

Table 12

Degrees Earned and Areas of Study

Degree	*n*	%	Area of Study	*n*	%
Bachelor's	117	80.7	Vocal	103	71
Master's	89	61.4	Instrumental	25	17.2
Specialist	20	13.8	Both vocal and instrumental	25	17.2
In-Progress Doctorate	2	1.4	Conducting	4	2.8
Completed Doctorate	6	4.1	Curriculum and Instruction	2	1.4
Other as detailed by participant	2	1.4	Leadership	2	1.4
			Other as detailed by participant	4	2.8

Most of the school sizes reported by participants fell in the middle of the range of options in Item 10, specifically between 500 and 2000 students. Participants' school sizes and choral program sizes are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13

School Enrollment and Choral Program Size

School Size	*n*	%	Choral Program Size	*n*	%
Under 100 students	1	0.7	25 or fewer students	9	6.2
100-500	9	6.2	26-50	13	9
501-1000	31	21.4	51-75	21	14.5
1001-1500	33	22.8	76-100	34	23.4
1501-2000	40	27.6	101-150	42	29
More than 2000 students	31	21.4	151-200	19	13.1
			201-250	6	4.1
			Over 400 students	1	0.7

Thirty-one teachers (21.4%) taught in schools with more than 2000 students, forty (27.6%) taught in schools with between 1501 and 2000 students, thirty-three (22.8%) taught in schools with between 1001 and 1500 students, and thirty-one (21.4%) taught in schools with

between 501 and 1000 students. The smallest school sizes were represented by far fewer teachers, with only nine (6.2%) teaching in school with between 100 and 500 students and one (0.7%) teaching in a school with fewer than 100 students. Seventy participants (49%) categorized their school as suburban, fifty-three (37.1%) as rural, and twenty (14%) as inner city.

While schools with higher enrollments were more heavily represented, participants more frequently reported choral program sizes toward the middle of the range. Only one teacher (0.7%) reported having over 400 students in his or her program, and six (4.1%) taught between 201 and 250 students. Nineteen teachers (13.1%) taught between 151 and 200 students, forty-two (29%) taught between 101 and 150 students, thirty-four (23.4%) taught between 76 and 100 students, and twenty-one (14.5%) taught between 51 and 75 students. Thirteen programs (9%) comprised between 26 and 50 students and nine (6.2%) comprised 25 or fewer students.

The period schedule was the most frequently used among participants (45.5%, n=66), followed by the block schedule (38.6%, n=56) and an alternating block schedule in which classes met for 80-90 minutes on alternating days over an entire school year (9%, n=13). Several participants listed scheduling systems outside of these. Responses are listed as follows and each represents a single participant (0.7%).

- "Period schedule – 25 minutes for all except the audition mixed for 50 minutes."
- "52 mins 4 out of 5 days with one of the days 90 mins."
- "I actually have both block and AB alternating block in the same class."
- "Advanced Treble Auditioned Group meets 5 days for 50 minutes. Open Mixed Ensemble meets 4 days (3 for 50 minutes and 1 for 90 minute block."
- "After school and next semester every day."

- "…the counselors agreed to put my students in my advisory class which meets every day for 50 minutes."
- "Twice a week as an extracurricular club. In the past, it has been a period schedule class."
- "I see the mastery students all year every day for 90 mins, other levels every day for 90 minutes."
- "Hybrid schedule: M, Tu, F is period and W, Th is Block."

The most popular type of choir offered by participants is open membership mixed choir (75.2%, n=109), followed by open membership treble choir (49.7%, n=72) and auditioned/select mixed choir (49%, n=71). An equal number of participants offered either a treble choir with prerequisite choral classes or an auditioned/select treble choir (35.2%, n=51). Only thirty-seven (25.5%) offered a mixed choir with prerequisite choral classes. Outside of the suggested voicings and levels, participants added open membership men's choir (10.3%, n=15), an auditioned extracurricular or after school choir (3.4%, n=5), men's choir with no specified prerequisite or audition requirement (2.8%, n=4), musical theatre (0.7%, n=1) and an open membership extracurricular choir (0.7%, n=1) (see Table 14).

Table 14

Types of Choirs Offered

Type of choir	*n*	%	Type of choir	*n*	%
Open membership treble	72	49.7	Open membership mixed	109	75.2
Treble with prerequisite choral classes	51	35.2	Mixed with prerequisite choral classes	37	25.5
Auditioned or Select Treble	51	35.2	Auditioned or Select Mixed	71	49
Open membership men	15	10.3	Open membership extracurricular	1	0.7
Men, prerequisite or audition not specified	4	2.8	Auditioned or Select extracurricular	5	3.4
Auditioned or Select Men	3	2.1	Musical Theatre	1	0.7

The majority of participants took their choirs to at least one choral contest, festival or evaluation during the school year (93.1%, n=134). All of these included a sight-singing component and fifty-three (36.6%) were required to do so by their district.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are some practices of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?
2. How do Georgia public high school choral teachers assess effective sight-singing instruction?
3. What factors do Georgia public high school choral teachers perceive as barriers to effective sight-singing instruction?
4. What are some attitudes of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?

Data Analysis

The Google Forms platform was used to analyze multiple-choice item data. Where an "other" category was provided as an answer choice, responses were reviewed for commonalities. Responses to short-answer and free response questions underwent content analysis in order to determine frequencies and percentages of responses.

Principal Study Findings

Section Two: Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency, Time and Assessment

One hundred and thirty-eight (95.8%) of the participants taught sight-singing to all of their high school choirs, while six (4.1%) did not and one (0.7%) declined to answer the

question. The six who reported not teaching sight-singing to every choir gave the following explanations:

- "None of my choirs"
- "Beginning Women – it is a dump class."
- "A cappella after school choir because they have to be good readers to be a part of the group."
- "One of my choirs is compiled of students with Visual impairments plus some cognitive development."
- "My extracurricular groups – the students in these receive instruction during the school day."
- "My Homeroom choirs only meet for 25 minutes and not every day, so we don't practice structured sight reading in there."

Of those who taught sight-singing, many of them (65.5%, n=95) did so in every rehearsal during the school day. Other schedules, in descending order of popularity, include "no specific schedule" (13.1%, n=19), one rehearsal per week during the school day (5.5%, n=8), all rehearsals including during and outside the school day (4.8%, n=7), a series of open responses that all indicate multiple times per week (6.9%, n=10) and other open responses indicating that sight-singing instruction decreases in frequency as concerts or adjudicated events approach (2.8%, n=4). The duration of these sight-singing lessons was most often between five and ten minutes (53.1%, n=77). Less often they lasted between ten and fifteen minutes (24.1%, n=35), between fifteen and twenty minutes (12.4%, n=18), fewer than five minutes (4.1%, n=6), over twenty-five minutes (3.4%, n=5), and between twenty and twenty-five minutes (2.8%, n=4) (See Table 15).

Table 15

Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency and Time

Frequency	*n*	%	Time	*n*	%
No specific schedule	*19*	13.1	Less than 5 minutes	*6*	4.1
One rehearsal per week during the school day	*8*	5.5	5-10 minutes	*77*	53.1
Every rehearsal during the school day	*95*	65.5	10-15 minutes	*35*	24.1
All rehearsals (during and outside school day)	*7*	4.8	15-20 minutes	*18*	12.4
Varying frequency depending on time of year	*7*	4.8	20-25 minutes	*4*	2.8
Other (specific answers listed below)	*7*	4.8	More than 20 minutes	*5*	3.4

Some participants gave more specific responses to this question. Their responses were as follows:

- "2-3 days a week."
- "Twice a week during the school day."
- "Between 2-4 times a week. More than once a week but cannot guarantee everyday. I try though."
- "I try to aim for 2-3 days per week."
- "3x / week."
- "Multiple times per week during school day."
- "Approximately 3 days out of the week during part of the class."

On item 23, most participants had similar levels of agreement or disagreement on most of the statements. The statements with the most "10" responses included "Choral teachers should teach sight-singing to high school choral students" (66.9%, n=97) and "High school choral teachers should teach sight-singing because students should learn how to read music in addition to learning how to perform it" (59.3%, n=86). The statements with the most "1" responses included "If high school choral students do not go to sight-singing contest, festivals or evaluations, their choral teacher does not need to teach them to sight-sing" (71.7%, n=104), "High school teachers

should only teach sight-singing because the state and/or school district require it" (72.4%, n=104) and "If the state and/or districts does not require it, high school choral teachers should not teach sight-singing" (75.2%, n=109). Most participants responded with a 5 or lower to the statement "High school choral teachers should concentrate more on teaching the students to perform and less on teaching them sight-singing" (86.9%, n=126). Responses were spread across the scale regarding the statement "High school choral students should learn to sight-sing because they have to go to sight-singing contests, festivals or evaluations."

About half of the participants reported that they did not assign grades specifically to sight-singing (50.3%, n=73) and seven indicated that they did not regularly assess their students' sight-singing at all. Among those who do grade sight-singing, sixty-two (42.8%) have them sight-sing individually and give individual grades, forty-nine (33.8%) have them sight-sing in small groups and give individual grades, thirty-nine (26.9%) give sight-singing grades informally based on their own observations and thirty-three (22.8%) have the entire ensemble sight-sing and give everyone the same grade. Only nineteen (13.1%) give individual grades based on the whole ensemble's sight-singing. Regarding the use of rubrics, forty-six (31.7) use a rubric they designed themselves and twenty-seven (18.6%) use a rubric designed by someone else. (See Table 16).

A little more than half of the participants reported that they were not required to administer a test meant to assess student growth by their school or administration (55.9%, n=88). Sixty-four (44.1%) reported having such a test and twenty-seven (21.3%) indicated that the test included a sight-singing component

Table 16

Sight-Singing Assessment Practices

System	*n*	%
I do not regularly or systematically assess my students' sight-singing	7	4.8
I provide feedback regarding sight-singing, but do not give grades.	73	50.3
I have them sight-sing as an ensemble and give everyone the same grade.	33	22.8
I have them sight-sing as an ensemble and give individual grades.	19	13.1
I have them sight-sing in small groups and give individual grades.	49	33.8
I have them sight-sing individually and give individual grades.	62	42.8
I give sight-singing grades informally, using my own observations and feelings about the students' progress and/or achievement.	39	26.9
I give sight-singing grades based on a rubric or system I have designed.	46	31.7
I give sight-singing grades based on a rubric or system designed by someone else.	27	18.6

Section Three: Textbooks, Materials and Publications

Textbooks

Using the aforementioned definition of "textbook", thirty-five participants (24.3%) reported using a textbook for their high school choir and thirty (21.4%) used that textbook for sight-singing instruction. The most widely cited textbook was *Experiencing Choral Music* (2004) from Mc-Graw Hill (8.3%, n=12), followed by *Essential Musicianship* (Crocker & Leavitt, 2007) (2.8%, n=4), *The Jenson Sight Singing Course* (Bauguess, 1984) (1.4%, n=2), and *Sing at First Sight* (Beck, Surmani & Lewis, 2005) (1.4%, n=2). Individual participants also listed *90 Days to Sight Reading Success* (McGill & Stevens, 2010), *31 Bach Chorales for Sight-Singing and Performance* (Leavitt, 2010), *Bruce Phelps Sight Reading Manual* (Phelps, 2010), *Choral Connections* (Tower, 1999), *Progressive Sight-Singing* (Krueger, 2016), *S-Cubed* (Duncan, 2014), *Sight Singing for Beginners* (Farkas, 2016), *Something New to Sing About* (Schmid, 1989), *Successful Sight Singing* (Telfer, 1992), and *The Singing Musician* (Folkerts, 2014). Two participants (1.4%) indicated that they used multiple textbooks and a third listed the company Masterworks Press rather than a specific book.

The most frequently reported characteristics in these textbooks included the "movable do" approach (38.8%, n=50), solfége syllables (38%, n=49), melodic exercises (34.9%, n=45) and rhythm exercises (34.1%, n=44). Exercises for interval practice (28.7%, n=37), music designed for sight-singing (25.6%, n=33) and the Kodály (Curwen) hand signs (23.3%, n=30) appeared less often. The least reported characteristics were a scope and sequence for sight-singing instruction (14.7%, n=19), numbers for pitches (12.4%, n=16), suggestions for physical movement (7.8%, n=10) and the "fixed do" approach (2.3%, n=3). When asked if there were elements besides the given choices that were featured in their textbooks, one participant (0.7%) listed sight-singing in parts, another listed stylistic and theory information, and another listed the use of choral literature excerpts for sight-singing instruction. The textbook use data and the characteristics of those textbooks are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17

Textbooks

Question	***n***	**%**
Uses a textbook	35	24.3
Uses a textbook for sight-singing instruction	30	21.4
Characteristic of textbook	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	49	38
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	30	23.3
Numbers for pitches	16	12.4
Melodic exercises	45	34.9
Rhythm exercises	44	34.1
"Movable do" method	50	38.8
"Fixed do" method	3	2.3
Scope and sequence for sight-singing instruction	19	14.7
Suggestions for movement	10	7.8
Exercises for interval practice	37	28.7
Music designed for sight-singing	33	25.6

Published books and computer software

Sixty-one participants (42.4%) used a published book that did not meet the definition of "textbook." More than one participant listed the following titles or resources: past examples from the GMEA website (9%, n=13), *Sing at First Sight* (Beck, Surmani & Lewis, 2005) (6.2%, n=9), *The Jenson Sight Singing Course* (Bauguess, 1984) (5.5%, n=8), *Sightread101* (Grizzle & Grizzle) (4.8%, n=7), *Progressive Sight Singing* (Krueger, 2016) (2.1%, n=3), *S-Cubed* (Duncan, 2014) (2.1%, n=3), *Successful Sight Singing* (Telfer, 1992) (2.1%, n=3), *Music for Sight-Singing* (Rogers & Ottman, 2013) (1.4%, n=2), and Sight Reading Factory (GraceNotes, LLC) (1.4%, n=2). Each of the following titles was listed by one participant (0.7%): *The Right to Sight Sing* (Short, 1978) (1.4%, n=2), *A Cappella Songs Without Words* (Heffley, Land & Williams-Wimberly, 2005), *Essential Elements for Choir* (Killian, Daniel & Rann, 1999), *Essential Musicianship* (Crocker & Leavitt, 2007), *Experiencing Choral Music* (McGraw-Hill, 2004), *The Folk Song Sight Singing Series* (Crowe, Lawton & Whittaker, 2007), *Keys to Sight Reading Success* (Hemmenway, Leach & Wehrung, 2001), *One-Minute Sight Singing* (Slabbinck & Slabbinck, 2010), *Patterns of Sound* (Bacak & Crocker, 2013), PerfectMyMusic, *Bruce Phelps Sight Reading Manual* (Phelps, 2010), *Sight-Singing for SSA* (Eilers & Crocker, 1995), *Sing On Sight* (Snyder, 2011) and *Steps to Harmony* (Palmer, 2015). One (0.7%) used repertoire being studied for performance, one (0.7%) indicated that they used "several" books and five (3.4%) listed "Masterworks Press" without specifying a title.

Regarding computer software, sixty-six participants (46.5%) used at least one software program for sight-singing instruction. The most used program listed in this category was Sight Reading Factory (GraceNotes, LLC) (25.5%, n=37). Other programs with multiple users included SmartMusic (MakeMusic, Inc.) (4.8%, n=7), *Sightread101* (Grizzle & Grizzle), which

includes both online and print versions (3.4%, n=5), MusicTheory.Net (MusicTheory.net, LLC) (4.1%, n=6), Finale (Farrand) (2.8%, n=4) and RhythmBee (Green) (1.4%, n=2). Individual teachers (0.7%) listed EarMaster (Jakobsen), Flat.io (Tutteo, Ltd., 2018), Google Classroom (Google, 2018), MuseScore (Schweer, 2017), Music Ace (Harmonic Vision, Inc, 2013) and PerfectMyMusic (PerfectMyMusic, 2018).

Self-designed methods

Sixty-eight participants (47.6%) used a self-designed method. Characteristics of these self-created methods are summarized in Table 18.

In regards to solmization, participants preferred solfége syllables (57.7%, n=75) to numbers (19.2%, n=25). Other preferred approaches included exercises designed for interval practice (59.2%, n=77), the "movable do" tonality approach (57.7%, n=75), exercises designed for rhythm practice (45.4%, n=59), and the Kodály (Curwen) hand signs (34.6%, n=45). Exercises designed for melody practice (29.2%, n=38), rhythm reading syllables (26.2%, n=34) and suggestions for movement activities (18.5%, n=24) were less frequently used and the "fixed do" approach was used least (4.6%, n=6).

Table 18

Self-Designed Method Characteristics

Characteristic	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	75	57.7
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	45	34.6
Rhythm reading syllables	34	26.2
Numbers for pitches	25	19.2
"Movable do" tonality approach	75	57.7
"Fixed do" tonality approach	6	4.6
Exercises for interval practice	77	59.2
Exercises for melodic practice	38	29.2
Exercises for rhythm practice	59	45.4
Suggestions for movement	24	18.5

Unpublished methods

Unpublished methods and methods drawn from other teachers were reported by twenty-eight participants (20.3%). The most popular example given was the sight-singing examples posted on the GMEA website (5.5%, n=8). Other resources used by multiple participants included *Sightread101* (Grizzle & Grizzle) (4.1%, n=6), Bach chorales (public domain) (2.1%, n=3), examples pulled from nonspecific internet searches (2.1%, n=3), and repertoire being studied for performance (1.4%, n=2). Individual participants (0.7%) listed *Bruce Phelps Sight Reading Manual* (Phelps, 2010), Sight Reading Factory (GraceNotes, LLC), hymnals, the method used by their middle and high school teachers, and "[teaching] ear training and sight-singing from the piano."

Methods and materials used by participants included exercises for interval practice (30.7%, n=31), solfége syllables (28.7%, n=29), the "movable do" approach (27.7%, n=28), exercises for rhythm practice (21.8%, n=22), exercises for melodic practice (20.8%, n=21), rhythm reading syllables (12.9%, n=13), numbers for pitches (11.9%, n=12) and Kodály (Curwen) hand signs (11.9%, n=12). Only three (3%) used suggestions for movement activities and two (2%) used the "fixed do" approach. These data are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19

Characteristics of Unpublished Methods

Characteristic	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	29	28.7
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	12	11.9
Specific rhythm reading syllables	13	12.9
Numbers for pitches	12	11.9
"Movable do" tonality approach	28	27.7
"Fixed do" tonality approach	2	2
Exercises designed for interval practice	31	30.7
Exercises designed for melodic practice	21	20.8
Exercises designed for rhythm practice	22	21.8
Suggestions for movement	3	3

One participant (0.7%) described the method drawn from an outside source as teaching a "line, space relationship" and another described their specific list of characteristics ("movable do", solfége syllables, and interval exercises) as being the method their district agreed upon.

Section Four: Sight-Singing Practices

Participants were asked to provide responses to a series of statements about sight-singing instructional practices. Practices that drew a majority of responses of 6 or higher included using solfége syllables or numbers (91.7%, n=133), the Kodály (Curwen) hand signs (64.8%, n=94), using solfége syllables or numbers during warm-up activities (81.4%, n=118), the "movable do" approach (91%, n=132, the use of movement activities (76.6%, n=111), teaching aural patterns and staff notation together (66.9%, n=97), and learning to sight-sing in two or more parts (83.4%, n=121).

Most participants gave responses of 5 or lower to the use of the "fixed do" tonality approach (81.4%, n=118), the separate teaching of rhythm and melody (54.5%, n=79), the teaching of staff notation before aural patterns (73.8%, n=107), the idea that using the piano is necessary (60.7%, n=88), using the piano to double weaker reading voices (76.6%, n=111), and the idea that the piano should never be used (84.8%, n=123). Learning melodic patterns aurally before learning staff notation received a split response, with seventy-three (50.3%) responding with 6 or higher and seventy-two (49.7%) responding with 5 or lower.

For general sight-singing practice, one hundred and thirty participants (89.7%) used the "movable do" approach, one hundred and twenty-three (84.8%) used solfége syllables, one hundred and seventeen (80.7%) used "la" or 6-based minor, one hundred and nine (75.2%) used solfége syllables during warm-up activities, ninety-nine (68.3%) used Kodály (Curwen) hand signs and rhythms from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises, and

ninety-three (64.1%) used melodies from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises. Other popular practices included using self-created rhythm exercises (57.2%, n=83), using self-created melodic exercises (56.6%, n=82), using physical movement (55.9%, n=81), using rhythm syllables (53.1%, n=77), and using Kodály (Curwen) hand signs during warm-ups (51.7%, n=75). Using numbers for pitches was less frequently reported (27.6%, n=40) and the "fixed do" approach was the least reported (3.4%, n=5).

In regards to using the piano, most participants only use it to play starting pitches (50.3%, n=73). Roughly a quarter of respondents reported using the piano to double students' parts at the beginning of the year and withdrawing it gradually (25.5%, n=37). The other suggested uses were far less frequently cited: using the piano for harmonic structure (9%, n=13), using the piano to double weaker voices (7.6%, n=11) and using piano all the time (2.8%, n=4). One participant (0.7%) had no piano in his or her classroom. Given the opportunity to elaborate on their use of piano, participants gave the following answers (each representing one person, or 0.7%):

- "To check for tonality and fix mistakes once they have sung the example."
- "I use the piano as a tool for solidifying ear training…I ALWAYS use the piano in warm ups to reinforce correct intonation."
- "I can't say 'only' to any of these. I try not to use it but there are times when it is necessary and that is just how it is. I sometimes have my students for only 18 weeks and so I don't have years to train their ear and reading skills. Sometimes allowing them to be successful in the moment is more important."
- "Students work in differentiated groups and find their 'do' using a pitchpipe app."

- "The goal is to only use the piano for starting pitches. I often use it to demonstrate correct pitches after a sight-singing exercise has been attempted or during a second attempt."
- "I use the piano more in the less proficient groups. It really depends on the rehearsal."

Specific overall practices and piano use are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20

Teaching Practices and Piano Use

Method	***n***	**%**
Solfége syllables	123	84.8
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs	99	68.3
Solfége syllables during warm-up activities	109	75.2
Rhythm syllables	77	53.1
Kodály (Curwen) hand signs during warm-up activities	75	51.7
Physical movement other than the hand signs	81	55.9
"Movable do" tonality approach	130	89.7
"Fixed do" tonality approach	5	3.4
Numbers for pitches	40	27.6
"La" or 6-based minor	117	80.7
"Do" or 1-based minor	23	15.9
Rhythms from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises	99	68.3
Melodies from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises	93	64.1
Self-created rhythm exercises	83	57.2
Self-created melodic exercises	82	56.6
Using the piano to play students' parts when they are first learning and gradually withdrawing it	2	11.8
Using a piano all the time	4	2.8
Using a piano for weaker voice parts	11	7.6
Using the piano for harmonic structure	13	9
Only giving starting pitches from the piano	73	50.3
No piano in the classroom	1	0.7

Section Five: Influences, Attitudes and Barriers

Influences

Regarding the influence other teachers and past teachers have had on their practices, participants gave responses of 6 or higher to their own high school choral teachers (62.1%,

n=90), their undergraduate theory and aural skills professor (73.8%, n=107), their undergraduate music education methods professor (67.6%, n=98), and music in-service workshops (62.8%, n=91). They gave responses of 5 or lower to their middle school choral teachers (65.5%, n=95), middle school directors in their districts (70.3%, n=102), and their feeder elementary and middle school teachers (70.3%, n=102). Their high school music teachers other than their choir directors, graduate school music education methods professors, other high school teachers in their districts and other teachers outside of their districts received split responses.

Attitudes

Participants were asked to respond to statements that reflected their attitudes regarding their own sight-singing capability and their teaching ability. Statements that received a majority of responses of 6 or higher included: "I feel that I teach sight-singing effectively" (86.2%, n=125); "I feel that I teach sight-singing adequately, but have room to improve" (86.9%, n=126); "My students' sight-singing ability can be attributed both to my teaching and to individual students' musical experience and talent" (81.4%, n=118); "My students' sight-singing ability is a direct reflection of my teaching" (78.6%, n=114); and "I am a proficient sight-singer" (92.4%, n=134). Statements that received a majority of responses of 5 or lower included: "I feel that I teach sight-singing inadequately" (89.7%, n=130); "My students' sight-singing ability is a reflection of their own experience and talent rather than my teaching" (86.9%, n=126); and "I am not a proficient sight-singer" (93.1%, n=135).

Among those who reported barriers to sight-singing instruction, most participants reported that their students are not motivated to learn to sight-sing (68.1%, n=64). Thirty (31.9%) indicated that they did not have enough class time to teach sight-singing effectively, twenty-three (24.5%) did not have enough materials, fifteen (16%) did not know or have access

to effective methods and one (1.1%) did not feel that sight-singing was a necessary component of choir.

Among the free responses in item 47 are several statements revealing teachers' feelings about sight-singing instruction. Sixteen (11%) asserted that sight-singing is the most important curricular element of the choral classroom, and one lamented that such instruction must occasionally be interrupted for performances. Another sixteen (11%) discussed the challenges they faced and how they have worked to overcome them. Finally, one participant (0.7%) expressed that the ability to use a solmization or rhythm reading tool does not always transfer to the reading of choral octavos in a functional manner, saying, "True sight reading is the ability to accurately sing your part in a "reading situation"...new choir, an audition, new music. Solfege is a system that helps the ear recognize aural patterns and relationships. Rhythm counting is a tool to help the eye and ear develop patterns and recognize visual relationships. A+B does not necessarily equal C. The proof is that my students can solfege 8 bars of diatonic music very well, and can even write solfege and counts into their literature. Take the tool away, and they cannot "read" the music."

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of the study was to examine sight-singing teaching practices, means of assessment, and attitudes of Georgia public high school chorus teachers regarding the teaching of sight-singing. An adaptation of an internet-administered survey developed by Kuehne (2003), designed to determine, among other factors, sight-singing practices and attitudes of middle school chorus teachers in Florida, was distributed to public high school choral directors across the state of Georgia. The survey underwent a pilot test to determine clarity and effectiveness prior to widespread distribution. Contact information for participants was collected from the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Music Educators' Association websites. The survey was sent to participants by way of email, along with a brief explanation of its purpose. Participants who did not respond to the initial email were sent a second email, and those who did not respond to the second were sent a third. Some participants responded to phone call invitations and some to in-person requests.

Instructional practices studied included how often and for how long teachers work on sight-singing with their classes, which solmization system was used, and what (if any) published material was used. Assessment practices studied included participation in GMEA events which include a sight-singing component, LEA- or school-mandated testing, and in-class testing either from a printed curriculum or teacher-generated. To gain a better understanding of teacher attitudes, teachers were asked to describe, via free response, their own feelings regarding sight-

singing instruction and assessment and to report perceived barriers to success in this area. Teachers were also asked to provide demographic data about themselves and their schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are some practices of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?
2. How do Georgia public high school choral teachers assess effective sight-singing instruction?
3. What factors do Georgia public high school choral teachers perceive as barriers to effective sight-singing instruction?
4. What are some attitudes of Georgia public high school choral teachers regarding the instruction of sight-singing?

Discussion

Research Question One: Practices

Research question one was concerned with the sight-singing instructional practices of Georgia public high school chorus teachers. Most participants taught sight-singing to all of their choirs, but a small minority reported not doing so, largely citing time or membership constraints as the reason. Most participants also reported teaching sight-singing in each rehearsal during the school day, but many also reported a less structured schedule or a schedule that fluctuates according to the time of year. Many reduced the frequency of sight-singing close to a concert, and many increased the frequency as Large Group Performance Evaluation drew near. One participant spoke candidly, saying, “I am not as consistent when we are not preparing for adjudication.” Another remarked, “It is possibly the most important thing we teach.

Unfortunately, the need to perform causes us to slow down our sight reading approach at times." These data combined indicate that Georgia public high school chorus teachers find it challenging to balance rehearsal time between performance skills and music literacy skills. This is consistent with the findings of research by Goss (2010) and Kuehne (1993), both of whom found that their participants struggled to find sufficient time to teach sight-singing.

Regarding print and electronic resources, participants listed a variety of books, publications, software and descriptions of their self-created methods. Among these, most participants used computer-based instructional aids such as Sight Reading Factory or self-generated methods. The popularity of software programs over hard-copy print resources might be attributed to the relative convenience of online resources and the increased trend in education toward using more technological resources. There are not many studies that examine how music teachers use software or compare their software use to their print resource use. Rather, current research on music teaching software focuses on practical suggestions for how to use specific platforms or programs in specific classrooms and often does not compare programs to one another (Minott, 2015; Moore & Moore, 2008; Riley, 2016). As more software becomes available and enough time passes for trends to emerge, perhaps more research will develop.

Many of the books listed by participants include sequenced concepts and lessons, but they vary widely in approach, order of concepts, terminology, etc. While trumpet players can begin with a fundamental pitch or string players with open strings and pizzicato technique, a singer can approach literacy from a variety of equally valid starting points and teachers often do not agree on which is best. This is further illustrated by the responses to Item 41, in which no overwhelming majority emerged between teaching aural patterns before or after staff notation. Many teachers start from the musical skill or concept they deem most important or best, such as

the major scale or the foundations of note reading, and use print resources for supplemental exercises rather than strictly following the sequence and scope of a print resource. Prior findings by Demorest (2004) and Floyd and Bradley (2006) support this result, although their findings for what teachers preferred following self-generated material differed. Findings by Demorest showed that teachers prefer choral literature. Floyd and Bradley found that sight-singing method books were most preferred by participants. Additionally, participants indicated that their undergraduate theory and aural skills professors and their own high school chorus teachers had some of the greatest influence on their teaching of sight-singing, consistent with findings by Nichols (2012) and Floyd and Bradley (2006). Rather than following a prescribed program, teachers may be simply teaching the way they remember being taught.

Aside from resources, the general practices preferred by Georgia public high school chorus teachers include the "movable do" approach over "fixed do", the use of solfége syllables over numbers, and the use of "la" or 6-based minor over "do" or 1-based minor. This is consistent with prior research (Nichols, 2012; Demorest, 2004; McClung, 2001; Floyd and Bradley, 2006). Investigations that compare the use of solfége versus numbers, however, do not consistently yield accuracy or effectiveness results that explain the predominance of solfége. Such a preference might be explained by anecdotal or popularly-believed benefits that would be difficult to measure. Many chorus teachers feel that the solfége syllables lend themselves to the teaching of pure vowels and their spelling and pronunciation mimic Latin vowel pronunciation. This could provide a foundation in singing in languages that use these vowel pronunciations. On Item 47, one participant expressed such an opinion, saying, "I like solfeggio because I can teach vocal technique with the bel canto vowels while teaching sight-singing."

"Movable do" and "la" or 6-based minor used together create predictable and consistent intervals between syllables, helping a student develop and retain relative pitch. Therefore, a student trained with these two methods combined and given the starting pitch on any scale degree can theoretically produce any other pitch in that same key because the intervals are always the same. On Item 47, which invited participants to share any last thoughts, opinions clearly diverged. Four participants expressed a marked preference for solfége, with one stating, "Numbers should be used for counting and solfége syllables should be used for singing pitches." One participant who used numbers, however, commented, "I would like to see greater acceptance of sight-singing methods other than solfége. There seems to be a 'shaming' of the use of numbers." Finally, one participant chose neutrality, saying, "Numbers and solfége both work…I think that consistent teaching of sight reading everyday [sic] and building a culture of excitement about music reading skills is pivotal to student success."

According to the rules for Large Group Performance Evaluation for chorus, the teacher may give an establishing tonic chord and starting pitches from the piano, but may not provide any further assistance from the piano and may not play during the sight-singing performance. Similarly, students auditioning for All-State Chorus and All-State Reading Chorus are given only a tonic chord, an arpeggio and a starting pitch from a piano. These rules and procedures may explain why most participants only use the piano to give starting pitches during sight-singing lessons – they prepare for an evaluation by duplicating its conditions as closely as possible. Conversely, the fewest participants reported using the piano all the time to double vocal parts during sight-singing lessons. This inverse relationship remained consistent across conditions. The more piano involvement an item described, the less participants indicated agreement.

Research Question Two: Assessment

Research question two examined the assessment practices of Georgia public high school chorus teachers. The collected responses to different methods comprised greater than 100% of respondents, indicating that many participants employed more than one assessment method. About half of the participants reported giving in-class feedback only, without assigning any grades. In previous research (Goss, 2010; Kuehne, 1993) as well as the current study, participants reported not having enough time to teach sight-singing effectively. Therefore, this feedback-only population likely eschews grading in order to save time. Fewer than half (42.8%) reported listening to individuals sight-sing and giving individual grades, while smaller populations indicated using some other alternative: giving individual grades for whole-group or small-group sight-singing or giving a common grade for whole-group sight-singing. Some assigned grades informally, but most who assigned grades did so according to a rubric. A rubric allows a teacher to clarify expectations and justify the grades given so that they are less susceptible to dispute by administrators or parents. Goss (2010) and Furby (2013) both describe effective rubrics which rely on clear, quantifiable elements such as pitch and rhythmic accuracy so that the assessments are as objective as possible.

Research Question Three: Barriers

Research question three sought to determine what barriers Georgia public high school chorus teachers face when trying to teach sight-singing effectively. The most frequently cited barrier was a lack of student motivation. Such student attitudes are understandable when singing is compared to instrumental study. Based upon the researcher's experience as an assistant band director and choral teacher, instrumental students quickly connect the notes on the page to the physical actions needed to create them, making their reading exercises a nearly unconscious stimulus-response process. Singers, on the other hand, must combine their ear and eye,

performing continuous relative pitch with every note they read. In a professional, non-classical music setting, such as a Broadway show, the trombone player in the pit needs to be able to read music, but the mezzo soprano on stage can learn her entire part by rote, or use rote learning extensively alongside note reading to memorize her songs. As a result, teachers face a challenge in making the benefits of music reading obvious to singers, a connection that Demorest (1998C, 2001) found was often missing among teachers who struggled with sight-singing instruction.

In the last item of the survey, some participants described the ways they bridge the gap between the relative ease of rote learning and the cognitive load of sight-singing. One participant used well-known melodies to connect entry knowledge to new skills, saying, "I don't have to teach those melodies…I teach them what they look like on paper." Another found that using repertoire and octavos rather than exercises written for sight-singing yielded more motivation because the students felt more gratified by the results of their efforts. Based upon the researcher's experience, as well as that of one participant who exclaimed, "Sight singing is the bomb," a teacher with an enthusiastic attitude toward sight-singing can make more progress and inspire similar enthusiasm in his or her students.

The next most frequently cited barrier was insufficient class time, a complaint reinforced both in the barriers section of the survey and in some of the free-response questions in other sections. One teacher explained, "My homeroom choirs only meet for 25 minutes and not every day, so I don't practice structured sight reading in there." Another reported having only after school choirs because there were too few students interested for it to become a class. Because an after-school activity must be scheduled around other after-school activities such as athletics, and because homeroom time is often used for administrative tasks and cannot be used to pull students

for every single meeting, these situations lend themselves to less rehearsal time than a traditional class-time choir.

Of particular interest are the fifteen participants who reported not knowing or having access to effective sight-singing instructional methods, despite the many resources cited by other participants in the publications and software section. To an extent, this may be explained by the growing number of chorus teacher "hybrids" who come from other disciplines, particularly band, or from other teaching situations which did not require robust sight-singing instruction. Two participants identified themselves as band teachers who had come into chorus teaching later in their careers. As a result, these teachers had less preservice training or exposure to sight-singing approaches. One remarked that he or she only learned the approaches of the preceding chorus teacher, while the other learned from observing other chorus teachers. Without the background and in-field networking that people who began their careers as chorus teachers have, these teachers have far less support and guidance when it comes to choosing materials and approaches from among an ever-growing and widely varied selection.

Research Question Four: Attitudes

Research question four examined the attitudes of participants toward sight-singing instruction. Most were confident in their ability to teach sight-singing and tended to feel at least partially responsible for their students' sight-singing achievement. Most agreed that it was either a direct reflection of their teaching or a combination of their teaching and the students' talent and prior musical experience. A few reported feeling that their sight-singing instruction was inadequate, while a similar number reported that they were not strong sight-singers themselves. According to Demorest (1998C, 2001), teachers who feel poorly about their own sight-singing capability feel less confident teaching it, which suggests that these groups of participants

probably overlap. A variety of factors could explain why some chorus teachers might not be strong sight-singers. Just as certain demographic factors correlate with sight-singing achievement in high school students (Daniels, 1986; Demorest and May, 1995; Killian and Henry, 2015; Henry, 2011), so might those same factors correlate with the achievement of their teachers. The teachers who reported moving to chorus teaching from band, and one who came from a school where sight-singing was not emphasized, reported low confidence in their sight-singing capability because they did not have a need to maintain the skill themselves. Even teachers with choral and vocal teaching backgrounds could encounter difficulties if they come to high school teaching from middle or elementary school, where the target skills and concepts are less difficult. Like their colleagues coming from other disciplines, these teachers may have felt less of a need to maintain more complex sight-singing skills.

While making phone calls to teachers who had not responded to the survey, one participant expressed several struggles and barriers reported elsewhere in this chapter. She had extensive choral teaching experience in another state, had recently moved to Georgia and admitted to struggling with sight-singing teaching. She taught choirs for many years in her home state and the organization she worked with did not include sight-singing in as many events as GMEA. Additionally, as an undergraduate and as a chorister, she did not see the benefit of sight-singing because of her piano skills, which she felt were a faster and more reliable means of learning choral repertoire than sight-singing. Every collegiate or professional choir she had ever seen or worked with included an accompanist who could supply pitches, so she felt that this was an authentic approach to choral education. Upon coming to Georgia, she found the heavier emphasis on sight-singing and the suggested approaches foreign and intimidating. She attended the GMEA In-Service Conference sessions on sight-singing and found that most of them did not

meet the needs of entry-level sight-singing educators and that the participants seemed to form an unwelcoming clique. As a result, she was hesitant to complete the survey because she felt her responses would not yield useful data. Although she spoke only for herself, it is possible that her experience is not unique. There are possibly several other teachers with similar dilemmas who reported them in the survey to the best of their ability or did not complete the survey at all.

Implications

Teacher Preparation

The literature regarding teacher preparation for high school chorus teachers suggests that there is room for improvement. Nichols (2012) and Floyd and Bradley (2006) found that directors were most likely to use methods learned from their own K-12 teachers rather than those learned in methods classes. Aguilar and Richerme (2016) found that college methods professors were less informed about recent changes in educational policy and trends, particularly Race To The Top and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) initiatives. Regarding the current study, the increasing number of teachers who teach both middle and high school or both band and chorus reflects a reality to which teacher preparation should respond. For years, music teachers in the state of Georgia have all acquired the same certificate, meaning that regardless of one's area of expertise, a music teacher in Georgia can be hired to teach any music class to any K-12 age group. In the researcher's teacher preparation program, this fact was treated as an afterthought; one specialized in a particular area (e.g., chorus, band, orchestra, etc.) and only learned enough about the others to pass the certification exam. Today, however, more and more teachers find themselves teaching multiple musical disciplines. In order to prepare teachers for this scenario, teacher preparation programs should give candidates more rigorous training and experience in different areas of music education.

As with teacher preparation programs, the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) could do much to address the needs of teachers who come to high school chorus from other disciplines. Although the survey did not collect data regarding participants' pre-college experiences, it is likely that many Georgia public high school chorus teachers are graduates of Georgia public high schools. The responses to the last item revealed that certain terms and practices have become second-nature to some of these teachers, such as "takadimi" and "bel canto vowels." To a teacher thoroughly trained in Georgia choirs from high school through graduate school, such as the author, such terms are immediately understood. However, to an "outsider" who has never used or been exposed to these concepts, they may sound foreign. According to expressions of the aforementioned out-of-state teacher, the tendency for Georgia chorus teachers to take for granted that everyone in their field has the same foundation and knowledge can cause those who do not to feel alienated. To alleviate this problem, state music education associations such as GMEA might establish better communication among veteran and novice chorus teachers in order to create venues where these problems can be openly discussed, perhaps through the establishment of a mentor program. Additionally, GMEA could encourage and provide programming at In-Service Conference and/or other training opportunities that offer entry-level knowledge and resources to teachers in need. Finally, it is hoped that the current study will help raise awareness of the plight of the chorus teacher coming from a different musical discipline or environment and help dissolve insular cliques described by the out-of-state teacher.

Some of the more popular results and responses derived from the data can be regarded as pedagogical. Many authors recommend daily practice for sight-singing success (Osborne, Wright, Adams, Ranucci, Garofalo, Wagstaff, Swanzy, McLean, Leong & Kugler, 1976;

Cutietta, 1979). Similarly, several participants in the current study recommended daily practice, with one remarking, "Daily practice is a must, even if you can only spend 1 minute a day." Regarding evaluative events and assessment, such as Large Group Performance Evaluation, participants also recommend duplicating the conditions of the assessment as closely as possible. Just as an "academic" teacher would make his or her formative and summative assessments match in format and content, chorus teachers could construct their sight-singing practice to match the evaluation scenario which the students might experience.

Although participants generally preferred movable-do solfége with la-based minor, some expressed broader opinions in the last item. One wrote, "Use a method, any method, but use something." Another stated, "Be consistent with a method and be consistent with time spent on instruction." Such suggestions are echoed in existing research, such as Demorest and May's (1995) finding that, among other things, consistency of approach across a student's schooling highly influenced that student's sight-singing achievement.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study examined possible reasons for the use of specific practices, the survey was designed largely for quantitative data. A qualitative design, such as an interview or journal format, might help provide missing information, such as why teachers use or do not use certain books or resources or why they feel strongly about solfége or numbers. Designs that incorporate observation might also provide data regarding nonmusical elements of sight-singing instruction, such as pacing, use of humor, environmental elements, etc.

Despite extensive efforts to contact as many teachers as possible, many potential participants chose not to complete the survey. Some teachers may have felt insecure about their sight-singing instruction and were too self-conscious to complete the survey, or may have felt

that sight-singing was not a necessary curricular component of chorus. For these teachers, a design focusing less on sight-singing and more on general teaching practices may prove more attractive. A survey that addresses more aspects of choral teaching, rather than focusing entirely on sight-singing, might help participants feel less scrutinized.

Some teachers may have chosen not to complete the survey because of its length. This could be especially true for teachers who teach multiple content areas, such as chorus and band or chorus and drama. For those teachers hesitant to engage in a long survey, a shorter instrument or an observational study that does not impose on their schedule might provide further data.

Although some participants perceive an increase in chorus teacher "hybrids" from other states or disciplines, there is not current research to support this observation. A longitudinal study examining the number of chorus teacher "hybrids" from other states or disciplines over several years might clarify whether there is indeed an increase of this teacher type or whether teacher "hybrids" are more prevalent in certain geographical areas or districts that require a teacher to perform multiple duties. Knowing whether or in what places these trends exist might prove useful in designing or modifying teacher preparation programs or in-service training.

An adaptation of this survey for other populations, such as public school choral music teachers of other grade levels or private teachers, would also add to collective knowledge about the status of sight-singing instruction in the state of Georgia. Teachers of younger students might offer different suggestions for entry-level approaches, use of rehearsal time, or rationales for their curricular choices. Instrumental teachers occasionally have students sight-sing as well in order to bolster their sense of relative pitch or to expose rhythmic mistakes. An examination of their practices and the reasoning behind them might provide a link between instrumental and vocal education that "hybrids" might find useful.

Conclusion

Despite the presence of sight-singing at evaluative events and the abundance of sight-singing seminars at the yearly In-Service Conference, sight-singing instruction in the state of Georgia is not a widely agreed-upon practice. There remain discussions and arguments about best practices, the effectiveness of these practices toward broader goals of music literacy, and whether or not such goals are meaningful or attainable in a strictly choral environment. It is hoped that this study will provide a clearer picture of the status of sight-singing instruction in the state of Georgia and that this information will help individual teachers gain new insights into their own teaching methods and the methods of others.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT LETTER/EMAIL

Choral Teachers,

My name is Ashley Whelchel, and I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Roy Legette in the Department of Music at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled "A Survey of Sight-Singing Practices, Assessments and Attitudes among Georgia Public High School Chorus Teachers." The purpose of this study is to collect data for use in a doctoral dissertation. Public records (such as school websites) indicate that you are a public high school chorus teacher in the state of Georgia; if this is inaccurate, please do not complete the survey.

Your participation will involve completing this survey and should only take about fifteen minutes. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to stop or withdraw from the study, the information/data collected from or about you up to the point of your withdrawal will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed.

The results of the research study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be used.

The findings from this project may provide information on sight-singing instruction in the state of Georgia. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me at (678) 316-3237 or send an e-mail to atwmmed@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 609 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu.

To complete the survey, please follow this link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdReKJ_hT_rp6DfS9ydZb8Ep4Wl7CNHft0Mk4xi3_Adb162gw/viewform

Thank you,

Ashley T. Whelchel

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

A Survey of Sight-Singing Teaching Practices, Assessments and Attitudes

Thank you for choosing to participate in this research study! This survey should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Section 1: About the Choral Director and School

In this section, you will provide demographic data about yourself and your school.

1. What is the name of your school and the district in which it is located?

2. What is your school's ZIP code?

3. Are you a member of any of the following professional music organizations (check all that apply)?
   - ☐ I am not a member of any professional music organizations
   - ☐ Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA)
   - ☐ Georgia chapter of American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)
   - ☐ National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
   - ☐ National Organization of American Choral Directors Association (ACDA)
   - ☐ Other (please specify):

4. How many years have you been teaching music (at any level)?

5. How many years have you been teaching choral music?

6. How many years have you taught choral music at the high school level?

7. How many years have you taught at your current school?

8. What degree(s) have you earned (check all that apply)?
   - ☐ Bachelor's
   - ☐ Master's
   - ☐ Specialist
   - ☐ Doctorate
   - ☐ Other (please specify):

9. In what areas of study have you completed your degree(s) (check all that apply)?
   - ☐ Vocal (including music education with a choral emphasis, vocal performance, vocal pedagogy, etc.)
   - ☐ Instrumental (including music education with an instrumental emphasis, instrument performance, instrument pedagogy, etc.)
   - ☐ Both vocal and instrumental emphases
   - ☐ Other (please specify):

10. What is the size of your school?
- ☐ Under 100 students
- ☐ 100-500 students
- ☐ 501-1000 students
- ☐ 1001-1500 students
- ☐ 1501-2000 students
- ☐ More than 2000 students

11. Is your school defined as Inner City, Suburban or Rural?
- ☐ Inner City – can be characterized as within city limits in a completely urban setting
- ☐ Suburban – can be characterized as in a suburb of a city and within close proximity to a major city
- ☐ Rural – can be characterized as a small town school which is not in close proximity to a major city

12. What grade level(s) of students attend your school (check all that apply)?
- ☐ 9^{th} grade
- ☐ 10^{th} grade
- ☐ 11^{th} grade
- ☐ 12^{th} grade
- ☐ Other (please specify):

13. What types of choirs does your school offer (check all that apply)?
- ☐ Open Membership Treble (Unison Treble, SA, SSA or SSAA) Choir
- ☐ Open Membership Mixed (Unison Mixed, SAB, SSAB or SATB) Choir
- ☐ Treble Choir comprising members with prerequisite choral classes
- ☐ Mixed Choir comprising members with prerequisite choral classes
- ☐ Auditioned or select Treble Choir
- ☐ Auditioned or select Mixed Choir
- ☐ Other (please specify):

14. What is the total number of students in your choral program?
- ☐ Fewer than 25 students
- ☐ 26-50 students
- ☐ 51-75 students
- ☐ 76-100 students
- ☐ 101-150 students
- ☐ 151-200 students
- ☐ 201-250 students
- ☐ 251-300 students
- ☐ 301-350 students
- ☐ 351-400 students
- ☐ Over 400 students

15. How often do you see your choral students in class (during the school day)?

- ☐ Period schedule – every day for approximately 45-60 minutes over an entire school year
- ☐ Block schedule – every day for approximately 80-90 minutes over a semester
- ☐ Alternating block schedule – every other day for approximately 80-90 minutes over an entire school year
- ☐ Other (please specify):

16. Do you take your high school choir(s) to at least one choral contest, festival or evaluation during the school year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17. Are you required by your school district and/or state to take you high school choir(s) to a contest, festival or evaluation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

18. Do any of these events include choral sight-singing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 2: Sight-Singing Instruction Frequency, Time and Assessment

19. Do you teach sight-singing to all of your high school choir(s)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20. If you selected "no" on the previous question, which choirs do not receive sight-singing instruction and why?

21. How often do you teach sight-singing in your high school choir rehearsals?

- ☐ I do not teach sight-singing
- ☐ No specific schedule
- ☐ One rehearsal per month during school day rehearsals
- ☐ One rehearsal per month during the school day or during extra/after school rehearsals
- ☐ One rehearsal per week during the school day
- ☐ One rehearsal per week during the school day or during extra/after school rehearsals
- ☐ Every rehearsal during the school day
- ☐ All rehearsals (during school day and extra/after school rehearsals)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

22. When you teach sight-singing, approximately how much time do you spend in each session of sight-singing instruction?

- ☐ I do not teach sight-singing
- ☐ Less than 5 minutes
- ☐ 5-10 minutes
- ☐ 10-15 minutes
- ☐ 15-20 minutes
- ☐ 20-25 minutes
- ☐ More than 25 minutes

23. Rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use a scale of 1-10 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Strongly Agree
Choral teachers should teach sight-singing to high school choral students										
High school choral students should learn to sight-sing because they have to go to sight-singing contests, festivals or evaluations										
If high school choral students do not go to sight-singing contests, festivals or evaluations, their choral teacher does not need to teach them to sight-sing										

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Strongly Agree
High school choral teachers should teach sight-singing because students should learn how to read music in addition to learning how to perform it										
High school choral teachers should concentrate more on teaching the students to perform and less on teaching them sight-singing										
High school teachers should only teach sight-singing because the state and/or school district require it										
If the state and/or district does not require it, high school choral teachers should not teach sight-singing										

24. How do you assess your students' sight-singing achievement and/or progress (choose all that apply)?

- ☐ I do not regularly or systematically assess my students' sight-singing
- ☐ I provide feedback regarding sight-singing, but do not give grades
- ☐ I have them sight-sing as an ensemble and give everyone the same grade
- ☐ I have them sight-sing as an ensemble and give individual grades
- ☐ I have them sight-sing in small groups and give individual grades
- ☐ I have them sight-sing individually and give individual grades
- ☐ I give sight-singing grades informally, using my own observations and feelings about the students' progress and/or achievement
- ☐ I give sight-singing grades based on a rubric or system I have designed
- ☐ I give sight-singing grades based on a rubric or system designed by someone else

25. Does your school or your district require you to administer a test meant to assess student growth?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

26. If you selected "yes", does this test include sight-singing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not applicable

Section 3: Textbooks, Materials and Publications

A textbook is a book that the state or your district accepts for use in a majority of its schools for a period of 1 to 10 years and which the state or district may have purchased (Kuehne, 2003). Other publications, like those designed specifically for sight-singing, materials you create yourself or materials provided for free, are also explored in this section.

27. Using the above definition, do you have a textbook for high school choir?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

28. If you selected "yes", what is the title and publisher?

29. Do you use your textbook for sight-singing instruction?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not use a textbook at all
- ☐ I do not teach sight-singing

30. Please check all of the choices below for sight-singing that are included in your textbook.

- ☐ I do not use a textbook
- ☐ Solfége syllables
- ☐ Kodály (Curwen) solfége hand signs
- ☐ Numbers for pitches (1, 2, 3, etc.)
- ☐ Melodic exercises
- ☐ Rhythm exercises
- ☐ "Movable do" method (where Do changes to the tonic of the key signature)
- ☐ "Fixed do" method (where Do always represents C)
- ☐ Scope and sequence for sight-singing instruction
- ☐ Suggestions for students' physical movement while they are sight-singing
- ☐ Exercises designed for interval practice
- ☐ Music designed for sight-singing

31. Please list any other elements that your textbook includes for sight-singing instruction that are not included above:

32. Do you regularly use at least one published sight-singing method book that does NOT meet the above definition of "textbook" for sight-singing instruction in your high school choral classes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

33. If you selected "yes", please list the title(s) and author(s) of the book(s) you use to teach sight-singing in your high school choral classes:

34. Do you regularly use at least one computer software program to help your high school choral students with their sight-singing skills?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

35. If you selected "yes", please list the title(s) of the software program(s) you use and a brief description of how you use them:

36. Do you use a sight-singing method that you have designed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

37. Please choose all that apply for the method that you have designed:

- ☐ I do not use a self-designed method
- ☐ Solfége syllables
- ☐ Kodály (Curwen) hand signs
- ☐ Specific rhythm reading syllables
- ☐ Numbers for pitches
- ☐ "Movable do"
- ☐ "Fixed do"
- ☐ Exercises specifically designed for students to learn to sing intervals
- ☐ Exercises specifically designed for students to learn to read melodies
- ☐ Exercises specifically designed for students to learn to read rhythms
- ☐ Suggestions for movement activities when students are sight-singing
- ☐ Other (please specify):

38. Do you use an unpublished sight-singing method designed by someone other than yourself?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

39. If you selected "yes", please describe what it is and how you acquired it:

40. Please choose all that apply for the method designed by someone other than yourself:

- ☐ I do not use an unpublished method designed by someone else
- ☐ Solfége syllables
- ☐ Kodály (Curwen) hand signs
- ☐ Specific rhythm reading syllables
- ☐ Numbers for pitches
- ☐ "Movable do"
- ☐ "Fixed do"
- ☐ Exercises specifically designed for students to learn to sing intervals
- ☐ Exercises specifically designed for students to learn to read melodies
- ☐ Exercises specifically designed for students to learn to read rhythms
- ☐ Suggestions for movement activities when students are sight-singing
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Section 4: Sight-Singing Practices

41. Rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree.

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Strongly Agree
Students should learn sight-singing by using solfége syllables or numbers.										

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Strongly Agree
Students should learn by using the Kodály (Curwen) hand signs.										
Solfége syllables or numbers should be used during choral warm up activities.										
The “movable do” method (where Do or 1 changes to the tonic of the key signature) is an effective method to use.										
The “fixed do” method (where Do or 1 always represents C) is an effective method to use.										
Rhythm and melody should be taught separately.										
Movement activities are very useful.										
Students should learn melodic patterns aurally first, before seeing staff notation.										

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Strongly Agree
Students should learn staff notation and aural patterns together.										
Students should learn staff notation first.										
Using the piano is necessary.										
The piano should only be used for the weaker reading voices.										
The piano should never be used.										
Students should learn to sight-sing in two or more voice parts.										

42. Please check all of the items below that you use when teaching sight-singing to your high school choirs.

- ☐ Solfége syllables
- ☐ Kodály (Curwen) hand signs
- ☐ Rhythm syllables
- ☐ Kodály (Curwen) hand signs during warm up activities
- ☐ Physical movement (other than the hand signs)
- ☐ "Movable do" method
- ☐ "Fixed do" method
- ☐ Numbers for pitches
- ☐ "La" or "6"-based minor
- ☐ "Do" or "1"-based minor
- ☐ Rhythms from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises
- ☐ Melodies from literature the students will perform as sight-singing exercises
- ☐ Self-created rhythm exercises
- ☐ Self-created melodic exercises

43. Please choose the item that best describes how you use the piano when teaching sight-singing to your high school choirs:

- ☐ I use a piano to play students' parts when they are first learning and gradually stop using it completely when they become more proficient
- ☐ I use a piano all the time when students are sight-singing regardless of their skill levels
- ☐ I use the piano only for weaker voice parts
- ☐ I use the piano strictly for harmonic structure
- ☐ I only give starting pitches from the piano
- ☐ I don't have a piano in my classroom
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Section 5: Influences, Attitudes and Barriers

44. Please rate how much influence each of the following has had on how you currently teach sight-singing. Use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = No Influence and 10 = Very Strong Influence

	1 – No Influence	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Very Strong Influence
The teacher(s) who taught you when you were in middle school choir										
The teacher(s) who taught you when you were in high school choir										
Other music teacher(s) who taught you when you were in high school										
The professor(s) who taught you basic aural and theory skills when you were an undergraduate										

	1 – No Influence	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Very Strong Influence
The professor(s) who taught your teaching methods or other music education courses when you were an undergraduate										
The professor(s) who taught your teaching methods or other music education courses when you were a graduate student (Masters and/or doctorate)										
Middle school choral directors in your district										
Other high school choral directors in your school district										
The teacher(s) in your feeder middle and elementary school programs										
Other teachers who do not teach in your school district										
Music in-services/ workshops you have attended										

45. Rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Use a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree.

	1 – Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 – Strongly Agree
I feel that I teach sight-singing effectively										
I feel that I teach sight-singing adequately, but have room to improve										
I feel that I teach sight-singing inadequately										
My students' sight-singing ability is a reflection of their own experiences and talent rather than my teaching										
My students' sight-singing ability can be attributed both to my teaching and to individual students' musical experience and talent										
My students' sight-singing ability is a direct reflection of my teaching										
I am a proficient sight-singer										
I am not a proficient sight-singer										

46. Please choose any circumstances or situations that you feel negatively impact your ability to teach sight-singing effectively:

- ☐ I do not have enough class time to teach sight-singing effectively
- ☐ My students are not motivated when it comes to sight-singing
- ☐ I do not have sufficient materials for sight-singing instruction
- ☐ I do not know or have access to effective methods for sight-singing instruction
- ☐ I do not feel that sight-singing is a necessary curricular component of choir

47. Is there anything else you would like to share with the researcher about your feelings or methods regarding sight-singing in high school choir?

Thank you! Your participation is deeply appreciated and will help other choral directors learn more about their field!