

THREE ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC TEACHERS' APPROACHES TO
SINGING WITH THEIR STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Instructional processes comprise three basic components: planning, delivery of instruction, and assessment. Educators frequently reflect on the relationships among those components to choose the most effective approaches to increase student learning. Teachers' continual assessment of student knowledge and understanding through reliable, valid measures critically propels teachers' effective instruction forward. Constraints on funding for public education have resulted in larger class sizes and smaller budgets for the arts, as well as a heightened focus on standardized testing, less instructional time, and fewer resources (Slaton, 2012). How, then, are music teachers effectively assessing student achievement while grappling with those challenges?

To fill a gap in the research literature, the purpose of this research was to explore singing voice development assessment practices that public-school elementary-general-music teachers use with their students. The following overall question guided this research: What can we learn from three kindergarten through fifth grade general music teachers about their approaches to singing with their students? I sought to document three teachers' singing voice development processes and assessment techniques. Recognizing that this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, I also sought to document participants' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the techniques they shared, especially as they grappled with teaching singing in new learning models that were emerging; and adaptations they were using to safely and effectively guide students' singing voice development—whether they were teaching their students virtually and/or in person.

For this study, I chose symbolic interactionism as a theoretical lens and an interview-only design. Upon approval from Temple University Institutional Review Board, I invited the three participants who consented to engage in three semi-structured individual interview conversations to explore singing voice development assessment techniques, and benefits, challenges, and adaptations of those techniques, especially as they grappled with teaching singing in new instructional models that emerged as a result of COVID-19.

After participants completed member checking of each of their transcripts, I used a content analysis approach to the data to identify emerging codes. Four themes summarized participants' approaches to singing voice development assessment: teachers rely on their (a) personal philosophy formed from influences and values, (b) planning processes and objectives, (c) interactions with their students through selected techniques and tools, and (d) having time to make necessary adaptations in their singing voice development assessments. The key idea emerging from the study: the three teachers prioritized providing worthwhile musical experiences for their students. They situated singing voice development and assessment as one piece of their broader general music curriculum. A symbolic interactionist lens informed my themes and key idea by placing the context of teachers' interactions in the forefront, and my understanding of how their experiences have shaped their views.

While findings from this study are not generalizable, readers may find them transferable. Potential applications for other music teachers' assessment practices include the following six examples: using a variety of tools to model appropriate use of singing voice, implementing pattern instruction to develop and assess singing voice,

incorporating opportunities for individual singing, providing students with performance experiences, maintaining consistency in changing instructional models, and focusing on informal assessment through observation and questioning techniques. Future researchers can continue to shed light on how teachers approach singing with their elementary general music students by learning about factors outside of teachers' instructional processes that impact singing voice development assessment, and how music teachers adapt their processes for singing voice development assessment in emerging instructional models.

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CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the United States, there is no mandate or guidance from the federal government regarding elementary general music curriculum. Instead, state governments oversee mandates and guidance. Some states provide more guidance than others, and many states leave the majority of the decisions to district-level administrators (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014). Many districts rely on their own music teachers to develop, revise, and update curriculum across the PK-12 grade span.

When curriculum development is left up to individual elementary general music teachers, who typically serve as the only general music teacher in an elementary school, they determine their own curricular path. Many school districts employ curriculum cycles, which result in set time periods between review and revision for each department. As it comes time for a music department to edit their curriculum, music teachers within the district are relied on for expertise and training in making decisions about how general music will be taught. The resulting curriculum is teacher-driven, teacher-created, and teacher-vetted.

Thus, general music teachers may be simultaneously provided opportunity through the flexibility of designing and implementing curriculum while also challenged with the overwhelming curricular choices that flexibility brings. Whereas music teachers who provide instruction primarily through ensemble settings focus on repertoire and performance, general music teachers follow curricular structures such as unit

organization and report card or other reporting mechanisms. Although general, instrumental and choral music teachers may all use concerts to serve as an assessment or evaluation point for reporting students' music achievement, general music teachers typically do not rely solely on such performances. Instead, they face ambiguity as a result of required reporting mechanisms that organize general music endpoints. The ambiguity between performance dates and report card issuances may exist to some degree for all music teachers, but it is especially present for elementary general music teachers, due to the content responsibilities with which they are afforded. Many choices are then left up to the general music teacher: Which musical concepts, skills, and learning activities should be addressed during students' elementary school years? With which grade level? Which skills are emphasized? How should a general music curriculum be structured?

Curriculum Components

A curriculum is a course of study for a subject, and guides teachers to create objectives, lessons, and assessments, including what students will learn, what materials and techniques will be used by teachers and students, and what methods will be used to evaluate student learning. Across the field of music education, some teachers agree about what a general music curriculum requires. Regardless of a music teacher's training, certification, or background in pedagogies such as Kodály, Orff, or Music Learning Theory, music education tends to be focused on developing a *musical child*. At the elementary school level, Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2019) described the musical child as “the singing child,” “the moving child,” “the playing child,” “the listening child,” and “the creating child” (pp. 8-9). Wiggins (2015) described the process as teaching for

musical understanding through the exploration of performing, listening, and creating musical “problems” (p. 58). Gordon (2012) described a whole/part/whole approach to elementary music curriculum, with sequential skills to develop students’ tonal and rhythm audiation. Because “singing is a phenomenon for all ages, times, and cultures, but it begins and is nurtured in childhood” (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2019, p. 72), singing is featured as a primary means through which to develop musicianship in these authors’ approaches to elementary general curriculum.

The curriculum frameworks that Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2019), Wiggins (2015), and Gordon (2012) provide can serve as a starting point, but curriculum continues to be driven by teachers currently practicing in the elementary general music context. As experts in the field, and they are the individuals responsible for establishing and following the curriculum in their classrooms. Although curriculum frameworks (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2019; Gordon, 2012; Wiggins, 2015) serve as models, there are other factors that challenge or limit teachers’ curriculum development processes. For example, administrators—who typically lack extensive music education backgrounds—often initiate and guide teachers’ curriculum writing processes. District administrators may select curriculum models with formats or organizational structures that elementary general music teachers may find challenging to align with musical instruction. And sometimes, administrators provide insufficient time and funding for teachers’ curriculum writing, causing teachers’ resulting curriculum to be produced under duress.

Even in the best of circumstances, when ideal curriculum is written by teachers for teachers in an ideal setting with sufficient time and funding from an administration,

the skeletal framework of the curriculum leaves much for teachers to interpret and apply in different ways. Elementary general music teachers in a single district who follow the same curriculum most likely still flexibly choose varied techniques, tools, and repertoire to achieve specific curricular goals. What guides elementary general music teachers' choices?

National Music Standards

Elementary general music teachers in the United States can turn to national and state music standards to help in making some teachers' curricular decisions. Standards are useful alongside a general music curriculum in designing lessons because they provide a broad sense of what is expected from a particular group of learners, offer a process across grade levels, and can be used to design measures of accountability. Standards-aligned curriculum can also promote some consistency between schools, districts, and states, even with the lack of a national general music curriculum.

The first national standards for music were originally developed by the Music Educators National Conference (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994). In 2014, the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards redesigned the music standards to align with other art disciplines, such as visual art, dance, and theater. Like math and English language arts as listed in the *Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), the *National Core Arts Standards* are not a curriculum, but rather a description of what students will know and be able to do at each grade level (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2014). The *National Core Arts Standards*

(2014) include four “artistic processes”: *Creating, Performing, Responding*, and *Connecting* (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014, p. 9). Within each artistic process are two to three anchor standards that define specific goals for students. The anchor standards follow a matrix of goals that build upon skills from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Although most elementary general music teachers include singing in elementary general music classrooms, interestingly, the *2014 Music Standards* (State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, 2014) make no explicit reference to *singing voice development*. Teachers who first turn to those standards may opt to turn to their state standards instead. However, state music standards may vary drastically in layout, thoroughness, and emphasis (G. W. Phillips, 2014). Sometimes, district administration requires a particular set of standards to be used, and sometimes, they may leave it up to teachers’ discretion. As a result, no one set of standards guides general music teachers as they work at the district level to design standards-based curriculum (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014). However, as previously stated, elementary general music teachers agree that emphasis should be placed on singing in the general music classroom. Regardless of the standards selected, almost all elementary general music curricula include singing voice development as a major component of their design.

Singing Voice Development and Assessment

To effectively include singing in elementary general music curricula, teachers make decisions about instructional techniques and assessment processes based on their knowledge of singing voice development. Researchers have contributed to teachers’

understandings of how the singing voice develops. The research I share in this chapter was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, when singing was a whole-group, in person experience. Previous researchers have indicated that tonal memory most likely plays a role in ability to sing accurately (Petzold, 1963). Students acquire greater vocal accuracy as they mature, including the ability to expand their ranges (Guerrini, 2006). Rutkowski (1990, 1996) also focused on expanding children’s singing voice range. Singing accuracy improves from kindergarten through late elementary grades (Demorest & Pfordresher, 2015), a time during which teachers can guide the development of children’s singing voice generally, and specifically, singing voice quality and expanding singing voice range (Rutkowski, 1990, 1996) and pitch matching (Nichols, 2016b).

Based on those understandings, researchers also have contributed definitions to describe elements of singing voice development. Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2019) described three: (1) tonal and rhythmic accuracy, (2) physical technique (e.g., posture, breath support, and tone), and (3) expressivity. Welch, Rush, and Howard (1991) described singing ability on a developmental continuum. Rutkowski (1996) found singing voice development to be defined by discrete, musical skills. Nichols and Wang defined singing voice development as “the ability to phonate in certain ranges of the singing voice” (2016, p. 552). Regardless of the definition, there seems to be agreement among researchers that singing is a *developmental skill*.

Singing is a learned skill that relies on effective physiological techniques such as energized breath and effective listening (K. H. Phillips, 2014). Many researchers have investigated the effects of specific instructional techniques on singing voice development.

For example, emphasizing individual and small group singing experiences help students to develop their singing accuracy (Nichols, 2017). Accurate, high-quality singing models are essential for improving singing skills (Hornbach & Taggart, 2005; Nichols, 2016b; Rutkowski, 1996). Other techniques, like doubling children’s singing voices (Hornbach & Taggart, 2005; Nichols, 2020) and providing frequent high quality singing instruction (Rutkowski & Miller, 2003a) seem to impact the effectiveness of children’s singing voice development positively.

Researchers may disagree about the terms “measurement” and “evaluation.” For the purpose of this research, I use the term “assessment” to mean measurement, and define it as *the variety of methods or tools a teacher uses to document learning progress and skill acquisition* (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). Assessment occurs formatively, as an ongoing process, and summatively, at the end of a unit or as a formal demonstration of skills. I use the term evaluation in a broader sense to mean *the extent to which students have demonstrated mastery of an educational objective, formally reported through grading systems* (Lindsay, 2015).

Assessing singing voice development formatively involves listening to children as they sing in class, in small groups, or individually and then asking guiding questions or providing concise, specific feedback (Gallo, 2019; Svec & Lockard, 2019). Svec (2018) found that verbal feedback yielded the largest effect on children’s singing improvement.

Assessing singing voice development summatively often includes recordings of individuals, small groups, or a large group during class time, or following a unit of study or during a concert program, which can be useful to “trace the development of children’s

vocal range, tessitura, vocal strength, musical accuracy, and expressivity” (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2019, p. 108). Davidova, Zavadzka, and Rauduvaite (2019) suggested that levels and indicators of formal singing voice assessment in young children should focus on four dimensions: expression, breathing, intonation, and articulation.

Brophy (2019) examined singing voice development assessment processes in the elementary general music classroom, providing an overview of how teachers can incorporate various types of assessment. Welch (1994) suggested that singing behaviors can be assessed based on context and developmental sequences. Hale and Green (2009) identified key principles for music assessment through a process including diagnostic testing, student self-assessment, and use of rubrics. Within these numerous studies, researchers have provided suggestions for singing voice development assessment, but there appears to be a lack of consistency in these suggestions, and there are seldom examples of how to measure and evaluate the elements of singing voice development provided. Singing is clearly an important part of what music teachers are expected to do, but how are they assessing their teaching of singing voice development?

To fill a gap in the research literature, the purpose of this research was to explore singing voice development assessment practices that public school elementary general music teachers use with their students. The following overall question guided the study: What can we learn from three kindergarten through fifth grade general music teachers about their approaches to singing with their students? I sought to document three teachers’ singing voice development processes and assessment techniques. Recognizing that this study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, I also sought to document

participants' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of the techniques they shared, especially as they grappled with teaching singing in new learning models that were emerging; and adaptations they were using to safely and effectively guide students' singing voice development—whether they were teaching their students virtually and/or in person.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED RESEARCH

Many researchers in the field of music education have studied the child singing voice, development of singing voice, and pitch accuracy. Educational researchers have also studied assessment processes in music classrooms at all levels. Numerous articles and scholarly essays have been published about vocal mechanisms, choral techniques, and singing voice development that span the K-12 educational experience. In addition, educational researchers have published studies focusing on assessment techniques in instrumental ensemble classes, such as band and orchestra. With such a wealth of extant research in both singing voice and music assessment, I narrowed my scope to focus only on assessing singing voice development throughout the elementary experience (K-5). Because I was interested in exploring processes that currently practicing elementary general music educators employ with their students, I concentrated on synthesizing researchers' results to illustrate what we can understand about singing voice development, as well as common practices for singing voice assessment. In this chapter, I describe how their research provided a foundation of understanding for my study. I also describe resources that influenced my interview-only design and methodology.

Rutkowski: Singing Voice Development

Rutkowski studied singing voice development and assessment spanning from the mid-1980s to present day, making her one of the most published researchers on the topic. Each of the researchers I describe in this chapter cite Rutkowski in their references as

well, further underscoring her influence on the topic of singing voice development and assessment. She contributed a wealth of research to the field and inspired other researchers to expand on her findings. Both Rutkowski's direct contributions and her influences on others provided a foundation of understanding for my own research study.

Furthermore, I was very fortunate to learn directly from Dr. Rutkowski during my undergraduate music education program at Penn State University. Her research first influenced my experiences as a preservice teacher, which translated directly into my early ventures as an elementary general music teacher. Her contributions to the literature have now also influenced my endeavors as a graduate student in music education. I found the connections that span across my career to be especially personal in nature, which is why I chose to include some of her many publications in my related research.

Rutkowski stated that "use of singing voice is a separate but requisite behavior to the ability to sing with accurate intonation" (1990, p. 3). She developed a rating scale known as the *Singing Voice Development Measure* (SVDM) to measure children's use of singing voice:

- 1 – "Presinger" does not sing but chants the song text.
- 2 – "Speaking-range singer" sustains tones and exhibits some sensitivity to pitch but remains in the speaking voice range (usually A2 to C3).
- 3 – "Uncertain singer" wavers between speaking and singing voice and uses a limited range when in singing voice (usually up to F3).
- 4 – "Initial range singer" exhibits use of initial singing range (usually D3 to A3).

5 – “Singer” exhibits use of extended range (sings beyond the register lift: B3-flat and above). (Rutkowski, 1996, p. 357)

The SVDM rating scale was shown to be a valid measure of children’s use of singing voice (Rutkowski, 1990). From the explicit criteria detailed in the SVDM, I learned one frame for how teachers might assess their students’ singing voice development, which helped me to develop the purpose of my study.

Researchers used the SVDM subsequently in several studies to examine effectiveness of different teaching strategies for assisting children with singing voice development. Rutkowski (1996) found that individual and small-group singing activities had an effect on kindergarteners’ use of singing voice. Rutkowski and Miller (2003a) reported similar findings in first graders’ use of singing voice as well. They also examined the effects of teacher feedback and modeling as strategies for improving first graders’ use of singing voice, but their results were statistically insignificant, concluding that “further research investigating the effectiveness of various strategies is needed” (Rutkowski & Miller, 2003c, p. 8). I was interested to learn whether currently practicing elementary general music teachers implemented any of these researched strategies when instructing and assessing their students.

Through her research, Rutkowski presented challenges associated with children’s singing voice development. First, younger singers tended to sing only in the comfortable speaking part of their voice range, especially when songs required a wider pitch range (Rutkowski & Miller, 2003b). Second, many music teachers only see their students once weekly for a short period of time, but a higher frequency of instructional sessions had an

effect on singing achievement (Rutkowski & Miller, 2003a). Third, even as students learned to control their singing voice, children “did not sing with 100% accuracy within their comfortable registers” (Rutkowski, 2015, p. 290). I wondered if currently practicing elementary general music teachers faced similar challenges that affected their processes and techniques selected for singing voice development assessment.

Rutkowski studied singing voice development from a quantitative perspective using a continuous rating scale. Her findings have been useful to guide elementary general music teachers’ documentation in their classrooms. Her recommendations opened a pathway for examining currently practicing music teachers’ practices from a qualitative perspective. I used what I learned from Rutkowski’s research to determine the purpose statement and craft the interview questions for my study.

Levinowitz, Barnes, Guerrini, Clement, D’April, and Morey:

Measuring Singing Voice Development

The authors of this article used Rutkowski’s Singing Voice Development Measure (SVDM) to assess its reliability, “ascertain whether the use of the singing voice is developmental in grades 1 through 6”, gauge the dependability of a child’s singing voice while singing in a major mode versus singing in a minor mode, and “provide an understanding of the expectation for use of the singing voice in students from grades 1 through 6” (Levinowitz et al., 1998, p. 38). Five graduate students recorded 40 students each, while students sang one song in minor tonality and one song in major tonality. Then, the graduate student co-investigators rated each recorded performance using the SVDM.

Levinowitz et al. (1998) found that the interjudge reliabilities reported from use of the SVDM were consistent with previous researchers' findings for students in grades 1 through 5, but that reliabilities in grade 6 were lower, possibly due to those students' preference for chest singing. The researchers "failed to find a statistically significant difference in the use of children's singing voices in grades 1 through 6," most likely due to elementary school students' tendency to "vacillate between the speaking voice and the singing voice" (Levinowitz et al., 1998, p. 41). With respect to their third goal, the researchers found that their participants used their singing voice more dependably while performing the major song, which did not align with previous findings. The authors suggested that variables like length of the song played a role on participants' ability to dependably perform a song. Finally, many students in grades 5 and 6 used their speaking-voice range, perhaps due to motivational or social factors.

Levinowitz et al. (1998) reinforced my interest in exploring singing voice development assessment practices of currently practicing elementary general music teachers. I defined "elementary" as kindergarten through fifth grade in an attempt to reduce the challenges of the male changing voice that researchers encountered in their study. I also found it fascinating that a major conclusion of their study was that "a large portion of the children sampled did not have full use of their singing voice" (Levinowitz et al., 1998, p. 35). Since the study was almost 25 years old at the time of my research review, I wondered if similar trends reported from the study were still present in today's elementary general classrooms. I was curious to hear from elementary general music teachers about their processes and techniques for guiding students to access full use of

their singing voice, given that so much of elementary general music curriculum is focused primarily on singing voice development.

Nichols: Children's Singing Accuracy

Much of what Nichols has contributed to the body of research in music education involves singing accuracy, singing development, and assessment (2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2020). He also co-authored two studies examining children's singing accuracy (Nichols & Lorah, 2020; Nichols & Wang, 2016). In this section, I share three studies in chronological order. I chose to include those three studies in particular because they guided my understanding of children's singing accuracy and provided a foundation for exploring elementary general music teachers' singing voice development assessment processes.

Nichols and Wang: The Effect of Repeated Attempts and Test-Retest Reliability in Children's Singing Accuracy

In this study, the researchers sought to "examine the effect of repeated attempts at singing accuracy tasks" (Nichols & Wang, 2016, p. 551). Automated computer testing was used as a measure to determine accurate singing in terms of pitch matching tasks and song singing tasks. Examining two tasks in one test allowed researchers to compare performances on the tasks, which provided insight into singing accuracy. Researchers recruited 94 participants from grades 1, 2, 3, and 5 to be tested on four tasks. The first three were pitch matching tasks: single pitch matching, interval matching, and pattern matching. The fourth task was song singing. The test was administered twice to evaluate reliability. Participants repeated each of the pitch matching tasks five times in both

administrations of the test. Nichols and Wang found that test-retest reliability was stable. Because participants improved their accuracy as they progressed through the five attempts designated for each task, researchers recommended the use of practice items prior to formal assessment in order to achieve a valid measure of an individual's singing accuracy. I was curious to see whether practice items surfaced as a practice in my study.

One key concept illustrated in Nichols' and Wang's study influenced my interview protocol. Researchers concluded that pitch matching accuracy seems to improve over time, and thus recommended that teachers document students' developmental singing ability informally while refraining from reporting singing development formally through academic measures like grades on report cards (Nichols & Wang, 2016). Assessment results are often expected to be reported as grades. In my interview-only design, I planned to ask about teachers' various assessment processes, and I anticipated that grade reporting might potentially surface as one of these processes.

Nichols: Task-Based Variability in Children's Singing Accuracy

Assessing students' singing accuracy has been identified as one of the "biggest pedagogical challenges" in elementary music classrooms (Nichols, 2016, p. 310). On top of that challenge, the extant research has illustrated inconsistent results in how students improve their singing accuracy skills. Improvement across component skills for singing, such as breath support and range extension, has not been shown to correlate with improvement in other singing accuracy skills (Nichols, 2016, p. 310). Furthermore, researchers collected data using performance tasks that varied in terms of complexity and, as such, proved challenging to compare. For example, some researchers explored

solo singing accuracy, while others employed doubling (where students are singing in unison with peers or the teacher). The conflicting results most likely emerged from a variety of conditions, unique tasks, or testing procedures. Nichols aimed to “explore the effect of task demands on children’s singing accuracy . . . in solo and doubled response conditions” (2016, p. 309). Similar to Nichols and Wang (2016), Nichols assessed student performance on four task types: single pitch matching, interval matching, pattern matching, and song singing. The test formatting, including five items per task to assure reliability, was parallel to Nichols’ and Wang’s 2016 study as well.

Participants were 120 fourth grade students from six schools. Interestingly, “participants demonstrated significantly more accurate performance in the doubled condition than in the solo condition” (Nichols, 2016, p. 314). Another result of the study, “single pitch and interval task performances were significantly more accurate than pattern and song task performances” (Nichols, 2016, p. 315-316), led Nichols to conclude that there might be a “hierarchy of task difficulty that teachers may find useful for developing or remediating singing skills in their students” (p. 316). Prior to conducting my review of the literature, I was unaware of the hierarchy of singing skills, and I wondered if any currently practicing elementary general music teachers used a hierarchy of singing skills in planning for and assessing singing voice development.

Nichols (2016) recommended that teachers might begin with doubled singing prior to introducing solo singing as a way to build confidence in students. He also suggested that teachers methodically transfer skills in which students demonstrate competency to more challenging tasks. Lastly, he discussed scaffolding activities as a

method to achieve improved student solo performance and advised that teachers “emphasize solo and small-group singing experiences in the classroom” (Nichols, 2016, p. 317). I included this study in my related research because it directly labeled several techniques that teachers could use to teach singing voice development, and it provided tangible pieces of evidence that could improve singing voice accuracy.

Nichols: Effect of Vocal versus Piano Doubling on Children’s Singing Accuracy

In this study, Nichols continued to examine the effects of doubling on singing accuracy, by exploring “the effect of doubling timbre on singing accuracy in a commonly used test construction” (2020, p. 3). Thirty-three third grade and 28 fourth grade students performed *Jingle Bells* twice, once in a piano doubled condition and once in a vocal doubled condition. The resulting scores indicated that the vocal doubling condition had a greater effect on children’s pitch matching accuracy (Nichols, 2020). However, those results were limited by a “range of possibilities in teacher and student characteristics” (p. 6). Nichols explained that the students sampled for the study were taught by a music teacher that did not focus on “piano-assisted instruction” (p. 6), but perhaps other music classrooms where piano accompaniment was a more prominent feature of singing instruction would have different results.

Nichols also noted that stimuli or “vocal cues” (2020, p. 7) such as a preparatory breath, head nod, or conducting gesture tend to exist when a vocal doubling condition was provided, but not when a piano doubling condition was provided. He suggested that those vocal cues may be a factor affecting children’s singing accuracy. I was interested in hearing from teachers how and when they incorporated vocal and piano doubling as a

means to support their students' singing voice development, and whether they used any of the vocal cues that Nichols described.

Gallo: Formative Assessment

Gallo was interested in how formative assessment techniques could be leveraged to support a wide range of goals in K-12 music education. She asserted that formative assessment could be used not only to improve student achievement, but also to “facilitate self-regulated learning” and to “promote [students'] motivation and self-efficacy” (Gallo, 2019, p. 594). Prior studies in the field of music education that referenced formative assessment examined student error detection ability and student self-evaluation of instrumental skills but results highlighted inconsistencies in student ability to accurately self-assess. Furthermore, Gallo chose to focus on the effects of formative assessment on improving elementary children's singing accuracy, as that particular area of music education had yet to be investigated.

Her purpose was “to determine the effect of formative assessment strategies on second grade students' singing accuracy and to examine how music educators planned for and enacted these practices” (Gallo, 2019, p. 595). She used an explanatory mixed methods design along with a complementary strengths stance to first conduct a quasi-experimental study, which then guided the linked instrumental case study. In the quantitative portion of her study, Gallo assigned assessment feedback practices to four music teachers to use with their 2nd grade classes. Two teachers represented the control groups, one received the partial treatment with only one type of formative assessment incorporated, and one received the full treatment with multiple formative assessment

tasks and strategies. After results from the quasi-experimental study indicated that the partial treatment group's gains on test scores were significantly higher than the control group, but the full treatment group's gains were not significantly higher than the control group, Gallo (2019) used a case study design to explore the partial treatment teacher's "strategies for improving students' pitch accuracy and tempo through formative assessment techniques" (p. 599).

Gallo suggested that formative assessment strategies could have a significant effect on improving students' singing accuracy. Gallo noted that teacher characteristics "likely played a role in how students developed understandings for singing accuracy and the extent to which they improved their singing" (2019, p. 603). During the case study portion of her design, observations and interviews "illuminated differences" in how teachers incorporated assessment practices specifically for singing voice, and also reinforced how individual beliefs played a role in the selection of assessment strategies (Gallo, 2019, p. 603).

Three of Gallo's conclusions and implications influenced what I chose to examine in my study. Gallo explicitly stated that "perhaps for elementary-level singers, feedback in combination with other interventions like vocal modeling may affect their singing accuracy, but more research on this topic is needed to draw any conclusions" (2019, p. 595). In my study, I wanted to hear directly from teachers what interventions were put into place for both developing and assessing singing voice. With regard to additional professional development in the area of formative assessment, she suggested that "music educators might benefit most from distributing their expertise with other educators in

local contexts where they share common characteristics within their schools” (Gallo, 2019, p. 605). I was curious about possible professional development experiences that may have had an influence on teachers’ singing voice development assessment processes. Finally, Gallo asserted that a focus of teacher education programs should be on various types of assessment so that teachers are prepared to develop and implement effective assessment. I was interested to understand how currently practicing elementary general music teachers perceived their teacher preparation programs with regard to assessment processes.

Influences on Design, Analysis, and Reporting

As I conducted my related research, I was focused on the results and implications that the authors contributed to the literature on singing voice development. All of the studies I included in this chapter were quantitative (Levinowitz et al., 1998; Nichols, 2016; Nichols, 2020; Nichols & Wang, 2016; Rutkowski, 1990, Rutkowski, 1996; Rutkowski, 2015; Rutkowski & Miller, 2003a; Rutkowski & Miller, 2003b; Rutkowski & Miller, 2003c), or had at least one quantitative element in the design (Gallo, 2019). Because I was interested in how teachers described their own approach to singing with their students, I decided to use qualitative inquiry.

I prepared myself for the qualitative approach through additional review of the literature, such as *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (Seidman, 2006) and *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (Patton, 2015). I searched for other articles that used symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework (Reynolds, 2003; Reynolds & Hyun, 2004). I

searched for other studies that used a semi structured interviewing process and member checks (Szarkowski & Brice, 2016). I identified other studies that implemented constant comparison, deductive coding, and inductive coding that I used as a model for my own data analysis process (Reynolds & Conway, 2003; Szarkowski & Brice, 2016). I also researched enhancing trustworthiness in qualitative data through audits (Akkerman et al., 2006; Carcary, 2009).

Summary

The researchers' studies and additional resources I described in this chapter laid a foundation for my understanding of singing voice development assessment. Those informed my decisions about the purpose, research question, design, analysis, reporting choices, and my reflections on the data. The studies and resources I included in this chapter guided my process as a first-time qualitative researcher, which I describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Because I was interested in learning about elementary general music teachers' individual experiences and processes regarding singing voice development assessment, I chose a qualitative mode of inquiry (Creswell, 2003). I sought to “capture stories to understand people’s perspectives and [lived] experiences” (Patton, 2015, p. 7), to attain “direct personal contact with the people under study in their own environments” (Patton, 2015, p. 55), and to maintain flexibility through emergent design (Patton, 2015).

Theoretical Lens

Whereas a framework is a way for researchers to fit their data into a pre-existing theory, a lens is a tool through which researchers can view their results. Participants' individual experiences and meaning guided my research, so I chose symbolic interactionism as a lens through which to look at my study, rather than as a framework for building my study. Symbolic interactionism is the perspective that a person is built from their interactions with others, and that individuals are highly influenced by others, based on how they construct and interpret interactions that happen in their daily life. Rather than examining impacts of social structures and macro-level institutions on individuals, symbolic interactionism shifted the focus to “micro-level processes that emerge during face-to-face encounters” (Carter & Fuller, 2016, p. 932), which resulted in individuals' unique perspectives. Those emerging processes were ongoing, reflective, and

unique, during which an individual was continuously modifying or reconstructing their understandings based on experiences.

Blumer coined the label symbolic interactionism in 1937, which became a more widespread perspective in the mid to late 20th century (Patton, 2015, pg. 133). According to Snow (2001), Blumer (1982) identified three underlying tenets of symbolic interactionism: (1) individuals act towards objects and other people based on the meanings they have for them, (2) social interaction is the basis for the emergence of meaning, and (3) these meanings are recreated and transformed as individuals interpret processes of interactions with others. With these three fundamental tenets, only through “direct interaction with people in open-minded, naturalistic inquiry” (Patton, 2015, p. 133) could a person’s interpretation of the world be understood by another.

Symbolic interactionism has also been applied as a lens to examine self and identity processes, as well as social context and the role of the environment (Carter & Fuller, 2016). In my role as researcher, I reflexively viewed participants’ shared singing voice practices through a symbolic interactionist lens. As this study is focused on understanding three individual teachers’ approaches to assessment processes, the symbolic interactionist lens helped me to place their responses in context.

Design

At the time I was completing the Temple University Institutional Review Board (TU IRB) protocol template, the TU IRB was only approving research conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For my study, I chose an individual, in-depth, three-interview design (Seidman, 2006) that could be implemented completely virtually.

Interviewing “provides access to the context of people’s behavior” (Seidman, 2006, p. 10), which in turn provides perspective and understanding for understanding their behavior.

A three-interview design approach offered the opportunity for a cumulative interview process. I prepared to build rapport with each participant starting in the first interview and continuing in the second and third interviews. My purpose in building rapport was to establish a relationship involving “respect, interest, attention, and good manners on the part of the interviewer” (Seidman, 2006, p. 97) so that the participant felt comfortable and conversation flowed naturally. However, Seidman considered the issue of rapport to be a “balancing act” (2006, p. 97), and cautioned that over-rapport can muddle the interview experience and cause a distortion of what the participant shares or reconstructs. In order to avoid over-rapport, Seidman (2006) recommended “formality rather than familiarity” (p. 97). I prepared by writing a loose script to follow. As my participants were all known to me personally, I had to be careful not to insert my own experiences unless directly asked, and I practiced maintaining a tone of “friendly” rather than of “friendship” (Seidman, 2006, p. 97).

For each interview, I used semi-structured approach to interview questions. I prepared five to ten questions to ask each participant, and I anticipated asking either similar or unique follow-up questions of each participant depending upon their responses to the planned questions (see Appendix A). I designed each interview to take no longer than 60 minutes, as recommended by Seidman (2006).

In the first interview, to establish each participant's "focused life history" (Seidman, 2006, p. 17), I asked participants to reconstruct relevant experiences from their background, education, and community. In the second interview, I asked for specific details regarding singing voice development assessment. Questions during the second interview established the processes by which participants engaged in assessing students' singing voice development, such as selecting repertoire and providing feedback. In the second interview, participants also offered artifacts of singing voice development assessment, such as rubrics, rating scales, or tools they have used in their classrooms. In the third and final interview, I asked participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences, and to examine recent changes in singing voice development assessment due to the fluid nature of instructional models in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants

Upon approval from the TU IRB (See Appendix B) on September 17th, 2020, I began my combined purposeful and snowball sampling procedures to identify between three to six participants who met the following criteria: currently practicing public school elementary general music teachers in western Pennsylvania with at least 15 years' experience, who were teaching students in kindergarten through fifth grade and included singing in their classrooms. Music teachers who taught any other grade level span (e.g., sixth through eighth grade) or did not teach singing, were not included in this study. Teachers who were teaching in cyber school settings, charter schools, and private schools were not included.

I first sent individual email invitations to three colleagues with whom I have established professional relationships, and for whom I had contact information. From 2016 to the present, they served as my mentors during the induction processes in the three school districts in Pennsylvania in which I have been employed. At the time of recruitment, each had at least fifteen years' experience teaching music in public school as well as in other settings, a wealth of knowledge and resources related to singing voice development, and a network of professionals across the field of music education. In the initial email invitation, I simultaneously implemented snowball sampling to inquire whether these three teachers were willing to suggest other music teachers who met the criteria for interviewing.

Two of the three colleagues agreed to participate, after which we completed their consent process. After sending a follow-up email to the third potential participant, I received no reply. Then, I widened the geographical requirements in order to invite an alternate third potential participant, also a colleague of mine, who consented to participate. As part of the snowball sampling design, all three participants recommended additional qualifying elementary music teachers. They recommended five additional music teachers. I sent them invitations through my Temple email. None replied.

Next, I assigned the three participants pseudonyms: "Lisa," "Chelsea," and "Rebecca." To maintain confidentiality, only participants and I knew their pseudonyms. At the time of my study, Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca were all practicing elementary general music teachers. Two teachers, Lisa and Chelsea, were also teaching elementary instrumental music lessons and private studio lessons. Chelsea previously taught in a high

school choral setting. Rebecca also directed musicals at the high school level. Lisa and Chelsea were teaching in western Pennsylvania, and Rebecca was teaching in Delaware. Lisa and Chelsea both taught kindergarten through 5th grade students, and Rebecca taught 1st through 5th grade students. When I conducted the interviews, Lisa and Chelsea had been teaching for sixteen and seventeen years, respectively, and Rebecca had been teaching for seven.

Setting

When my protocol was submitted, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TU IRB was reviewing only virtual studies. The interview design was scheduled to be virtual anyway, to accommodate teachers located at a geographic distance. I conducted this study from my classroom or my home office, depending on the time of the interview. Participants were in their homes during their interviews. All interviews took place on Zoom.

Interview Procedures

Once participants confirmed that Zoom was an acceptable video conferencing platform, I scheduled the first three interviews and sent individuals their meeting links. Prior to the first interview with participants, I engaged in three practice interviews with friends and family members. Practice interviews helped me in my role as a researcher become acquainted with interviewing techniques such as asking follow-up questions and connecting responses (Seidman, 2006; Patton, 2015). I asked two other music teacher colleagues who were not participating in this study to answer my interview questions. I also conducted a practice interview with my husband, asking similar questions about his

background and professional experiences. During the practice interviews, I developed follow-up questions to expand on pre-written interview questions, and I practiced using phrases like “can you tell me more about that?” to encourage additional conversation. I learned how to provide ample wait time for my participants to respond, and I practiced how I might refocus the conversation if the participant strayed off topic. I did not change any of my pre-written interview questions as a result from the learning I experienced during practice interviews, but I did note additional follow-up questions to guide the conversations.

After my practice interviews were complete, I began the formal interviewing process. I set up Zoom to video record and generate the corresponding transcript for each participant’s interview for review. Two interviews were rescheduled due to shifting schedules. I completed all nine interviews within a two-month time frame (see Appendix C for a detailed interview timeline).

Immediately following each interview, I reflected on the discussion and made notes about my overall impressions, key ideas, or curiosities in my researcher’s journal. Then, I uploaded the Zoom-generated transcript into Sonix, an online transcript-editing tool. I used Sonix to ensure an accurate transcript document. During the transcript editing process, I also inserted pseudonyms and removed any reference to a participant’s real name. The total editing process took an average of six hours for each transcript.

Member Check

Once an edited transcript was ready, I provided a copy of each interview transcript to participants to complete member checks. I explained the member check

process to participants as an opportunity for follow-up and feedback. I sent the first transcript for a member check within four days after the first interview occurred, prior to the second and third interviews being conducted. I sent the second transcript for a member check within four days after the second interview occurred, prior to the third interview being conducted. I sent the third transcript for a member check within four days after the third interview occurred. I scheduled the final member check of my thesis manuscript for participants to provide feedback, with particular regard to the results section, to occur in March 2021.

In total, I completed nine hour-long interviews within a two-month span. I repeated the transcript generating, editing, and member checking process for each interview. Two of the three participants did not return comments during the member check process (See Appendix C). The third participant made very small edits to her interview transcripts, which were reflected in my final transcript documents. The resulting recordings totaled eight hours and eight minutes. Transcripts, edited with 12-point, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, totaled 195 pages. I secured all data on a password protected folder in a password protected computer. All data collected were anecdotal, personal experiences of individual participants.

Analysis

Throughout the interview process, I kept a researcher's journal of curiosities about participant responses. At the conclusion of each interview, I wrote down overall impressions of the conversation, general takeaways, and questions I wanted to ask in subsequent interviews. I used my notes to help me prepare for the second and third

interviews. Although my researcher's journal was not a direct source of data, the notes I made to myself initiated the early stages of analysis. My researcher's journal launched constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), because I used my reflections following each interview to prepare following interviews. For example, after completing Lisa's first interview, I made a note to "ask more about specific pedagogies" in my first interviews with Chelsea and Rebecca. I also documented follow-up questions for each participant in my researcher's notebook, which helped me to compare their lived experiences across all three interviews.

Once the member checks were complete, I began the formal data analysis process. To launch the content analysis (Berelson, 1952), I identified six a priori labels from my purpose statement and research questions: *exploration*, *processes*, *techniques*, *benefits*, *challenges*, and *adaptations*. I used a constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to check transcripts for supportive language. I extracted statements from each transcript. Those statements became my codes. When I coded unique extracted statements, I put those codes aside, and continued with constant comparison.

I used a deductive coding approach (Patton, 2015) as I looked for participant statements across all transcripts that fit my a priori labels. Using the Insert Comment feature in Microsoft Word, I entered the location code and the a priori label for each extracted statement. I coded the unique statements inductively (Patton, 2015), which resulted in an additional four in vivo labels: *tools*, *values*, *objectives*, and *influencers*. Those in vivo labels emerged from constant comparison of all codes that did not support an a priori label.

As I continued the coding and analysis process, I identified ten categories in total. The first six, the a priori categories, were *exploration*, *processes*, *techniques*, *benefits*, *challenges*, and *adaptations*. I identified those through a deductive coding process. The four additional, the in vivo categories, were *tools*, *values*, *objectives*, and *influencers*. I identified those through an inductive coding process. I continued to use the Insert Comment feature to enter the location code as well as the label for each extracted statement. The labeling process took approximately three hours per interview, depending on the length of the transcript.

Next, I organized categories into columns a Microsoft Excel workbook. To ensure I had saturated the data (Patton, 2015), I pulled every code from all nine transcripts and organized them by category. I sorted codes so that they did not appear in multiple categories. I used a color-coding system to identify the frequency with which participants' voices were represented within those codes. I indicated all three participants' voices with green, two participants' voices with blue, and one participant's voice with red.

To be consistent with labeling, I assigned definitions to each category. I derived these definitions from an online dictionary (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a-j), and I present them here in the order previously listed:

- **exploration:** the act of searching for something, investigating, or examining.
- **process:** a series of actions or steps taken over time in order to achieve a particular end.

- **technique:** the execution of carrying out a particular task in a skillful or efficient way to do or achieve something.
- **benefit:** something that is advantageous or good, or something that produces helpful results or effects.
- **challenge:** a task or situation that is difficult because a lot of effort, determination, or skill is required.
- **adaptation:** the act or process of changing to better suit a situation, or specifically a change in the way instruction and assessment are carried out to allow a learner equal opportunity to demonstrate mastery of concepts and achieve the desired learning outcomes.
- **tool:** a device or implement used to carry out a particular function or used to extend the ability of an individual to modify features of the surrounding environment.
- **value:** one's judgment of the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.
- **objective:** an aim or goal sought, typically written as a brief, clear, specific statement of what learners will be able to do at the end of a lesson.
- **influencer:** a person or thing that has an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone.

As I organized the codes into categories by column, I began to examine the data for themes and key statements. I placed *influencers* in the far-left column, because the codes that fit into that column were mostly derived from the first interview and appeared to represent a foundation for other categories that I placed to the right. *Influencers*

primarily included experiences such as K-12 music participation, undergraduate programs, student teaching, previous teaching settings, and workshops and professional development. I placed *values* next to *influencers*, because these two categories included codes that seemed to be directly linked to one another. To the right of the *values* column, I placed *exploration*, because much of what a participant chose to explore seemed to be based in their background experiences and values.

I continued to move across columns in the Excel spreadsheet from left to right. I placed *processes* in the next column, to the right of *values*. Participants described planning and assessment as linear processes that occurred on larger scale time frames, such as throughout an entire elementary music experience (kindergarten through 5th grade), a span of several grades (kindergarten through 2nd grade; 3rd grade through 5th grade), or one school year. Participants also described processes that occurred routinely over the span of a nine-week grading period or 18-week semester. *Processes* encompassed both student-centered approaches, such as scaffolding, chunking, and ongoing informal assessment, as well as teacher-centered approaches, such as reflecting on instruction, repertoire selection, and maintaining records. I noticed that participants often referenced specific goals or intended outcomes that seemed to be inextricably linked to their processes, which is why I placed *objectives* in the column to the right *processes*.

Throughout their three interviews, participants described techniques and tools that they used to assess students' singing voice development. Participants seemed to select specific techniques and tools based on their personal teaching philosophy and their

planning process; therefore, I placed *techniques* in the column to the right of *objectives*. I interpreted that for these teachers, *tools* were inextricably linked to *techniques*, because they were specific items or devices that are used to enhance or carry out a technique. Participants described several tools that could be used in conjunction with one or more technique. For example, tools like *a puppet*, *solfege syllables*, or *lip trills* could be used in conjunction with the technique of *teacher modeling*. All of the *techniques* and *tools* participants described were irrelevant without student interactions.

I continued to narrow the scope of my Excel spreadsheet from left to right. The remaining three categories, *benefits*, *challenges*, and *adaptations*, seemed to serve one purpose as a fourth theme, but also served a second purpose as a bridge between other themes. Those three categories also displayed the most variety. To better represent participants' descriptions in those three categories, I sorted their codes into ten subcategories. I identified five subcategories for *benefits*: "individual student benefits," "curricular benefits," "technology benefits," "benefits emerging from COVID-19," and "miscellaneous benefits." I identified three subcategories for *challenges*: "limiting factors at school," "personal limiting factors," and "challenges emerging from COVID-19." I identified two subcategories for *adaptations*: "in person learning" and "virtual learning." Participants described *benefits* and *challenges* that were outside of their control, like district mandates and decisions made by administration. *Adaptations* were rooted in efficiency and making the most of time with students. Per the definition provided earlier in this chapter, an *adaptation* is the act or process of changing to better suit a situation by specifically changing the way instruction and assessment is carried out. *Adaptations*

referred to how participants changed instruction and assessment for all students, not specifically those with special needs.

Data Audit

I used a data auditor to help with trustworthiness (Carcary, 2009). Initially linked to the concept of a fiscal audit, a data audit's purpose is for a study's findings to be examined by a second party for trustworthiness (Carcary, 2009) and to demonstrate rigor in data analysis (Rogers, 2008). All research decisions, including theoretical and methodological choices along with analytical procedures, informed the audit process. My advisor helped me to identify an individual with expertise in elementary general music and qualitative research processes to serve as an external auditor.

After completing the data analysis process, I contacted the predetermined auditor through my Temple email to initiate the data audit. My thesis advisor recommended the auditor based on their credentials, which included their teaching assignment in an elementary general music setting, their prior experience with qualitative research, and their connection to the Boyer College of Music and Dance at Temple University.

I shared all raw data, field notes, methodological descriptions, and data analysis process with resulting categories and themes (Rogers, 2008, p. 43) with the data auditor. I captured that information in 11 total documents: nine transcript documents, one document that detailed relevant background information and interview procedures, and the Excel spreadsheet with codes, categories, and themes. Although I offered to mail paper copies of the 11 documents, the auditor chose to review all documents electronically.

Previous qualitative researchers have varied in the extent to which they implemented data audits (Rogers, 2008, p. 43). I followed my advisor's recommendation that 20-30% of transcripts be reviewed. To reduce the total number of pages required for auditing, I removed non-coded sections such as conversational introductions and conclusions within the interview transcripts, which reduced all nine transcripts to a total of 147 pages of consistently formatted 12-point, double spaced, Times New Roman font. Therefore, the audit was to consist of between 29-44 pages. To ensure the auditor's review reflected pages from each of the nine transcripts, with an equal distribution across all three participants and all three interviews, I suggested that the auditor choose 11-16 pages across the three first interview transcripts, 12-18 pages across the three second interview transcripts, and 6-10 pages across the three third interview transcripts.

The data auditor received my data on January 28th, 2021. The data auditor selected the number of pages from each transcript to review based on my suggestions. The auditor reported that they examined 13 pages from the first interview transcripts (pp. 1-5 from Chelsea, pp. 9-11 from Lisa, and pp. 13-17 from Rebecca), 18 pages from the second interview transcripts (pp. 1-5 from Chelsea, pp. 5-12 from Lisa, and pp. 14-20 from Rebecca), and 12 pages from the third interview transcripts (pp. 4-8 from Chelsea, pp. 4-7 from Lisa, and pp. 1-4 from Rebecca).

On February 9th, 2021, when I met with the auditor via Zoom to discuss findings and clarify any points of confusion, the auditor confirmed all ten categories and four themes, and did not identify any other codes or categories beyond what I reported. After our meeting, I updated my Excel document to include suggestions the auditor provided: I

reassigned a few codes between categories based on label definitions, I added category label definitions, and I re-evaluated the codes that we discussed. I then re-sent the updated Excel document to the auditor for a second review. The auditor's own constant comparison process contributed to rigor in my content analysis to confirm my category labels and overarching themes (Rogers, 2008).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the four themes that emerged from the ten categories I shared in Chapter 3. For each theme, I share examples from the categories from which that theme emerged. When related literature filters in, I describe the relationship to the relevant components of each theme.

Theme One: Teachers Rely on Personal Philosophy

The first theme, *Teachers Rely on Personal Philosophy*, emerged from three categories: *influencers* on participants, their *values* as teachers, and *exploration* into other interest areas, such as additional trainings or new opportunities based on their priorities as teachers. Those three categories cohesively represented a participant's personal philosophy. Although participants' responses referenced similar *influencers* and *values*, teaching philosophy appeared to be a deeply personal construct.

Influencers

Influencers on participants included undergraduate music education degree programs, student teaching and previous teaching experiences, continuing education and post-baccalaureate credits, professional development opportunities, personal performance experiences, and collaboration with respected colleagues.

Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca each cited their primary instrument along with professors that had a significant impact during their undergraduate experience as major *influencers* on their teaching style and philosophy. Chelsea and Lisa were both clarinet

majors and attended the same university, so they shared many of the same *influencers*. Chelsea noted that her undergraduate program placed a strong emphasis on “pedagogy for the young developing voice,” and Lisa described her undergraduate program as “very vocally focused.” At the time, the chairperson of music education at their university had studied in Hungary, so there was a prevalence of Kodály teaching with some exposure to the Orff approach. The chairperson seemed to have a profound impact on Lisa and Chelsea, as they both made references to Kodály styles and values throughout their three interviews. Contrastingly, Rebecca’s choral concentration included both piano lessons and voice lessons. She explored developmental singing voice in her elementary methods class through a “heavily music learning theory focused” lens. Similar to Lisa and Chelsea placing value on the Kodály approach, Rebecca seemed to strongly value Gordon’s Music Learning Theory.

Both singing voice development and assessment were introduced in participants’ undergraduate programs, but all three reported that there was no course designated specifically to either topic. As Chelsea put it, “we didn’t have an actual class that focused on [just assessment], although it was definitely something we talked about.” Similarly, Rebecca remarked that there were singing voice development assessment techniques “baked into some of the method classes,” but it was not a separate course requirement. Perhaps the means by which these topics were presented in their undergraduate programs could be considered an *influencer* on participants as well.

Student teaching experience also seemed to have an impact on how participants approached singing voice development assessment. Rebecca said she “learned a lot on

the job,” referring to the ongoing, informal, observational assessment process that her co-operating teacher modeled. Chelsea recalled hands-on experience with individual and small group assessment procedures that she gained during student teaching, noting that she followed similar procedures in her current teaching assignment. Lisa’s co-operating teacher was “all about assessment.” Lisa explained how she formed a habit of incorporating some type of assessment into “every lesson, every day” as a result of that emphasis on assessment during her student teaching assignment.

Other academic pursuits beyond student teaching influenced participants’ personal philosophy as well. At the time of this study, none of the participants had completed a master’s degree. Rebecca was the only participant actively enrolled in a master’s in music education program, while Chelsea and Lisa described a smattering of continuing education courses. Interestingly, both Lisa and Chelsea completed credits towards reading specialist certification, because they were interested in exploring other potential career pathways. Some of the techniques and tools that we discussed in later interviews were direct results of their detours.

Across their varied post-baccalaureate experiences, participants reported variety in how frequently their professors addressed assessment or evaluation. Assessment was “definitely not a focus at all” in Chelsea’s courses, whereas Rebecca was required to take an entire course dedicated to assessment. Lisa recalled minimal amounts of assessment technique being incorporated as she observed other teachers, but “didn’t do a whole lot with that” in classes. Perhaps the structure and content emphasis of these courses also impacted participants’ approaches to instruction. For example, Lisa said “I think it’s

important that we assess, but we don't assess too much." Chelsea, while reflecting on how she differentiated assessment across grade levels, mused that "in kindergarten, I don't know how much [I] really want to assess." Clearly, assessment was one piece of participants' teaching practice, but not the sole focus.

Similar to continuing education experiences, participants cited professional development workshops that impacted their approaches to singing voice development. Chelsea described a conference session she attended that taught her "about the way the voice works," saying that she stole many of the techniques from that practitioner for use in her own classroom. She also mentioned a choral rehearsal techniques session that helped her address boys' changing voice more effectively. Lisa explained how in a previous district, she was a member of a county-wide association for music educators that provided regular workshops with new ideas about singing voice development. Rebecca referenced tips she picked up from her professional learning community meetings, like singing tonal patterns on the syllable "too" instead of "bum" to focus the pitch. Rebecca also described an influential American Choral Directors Association meeting in which the presenter "talked a lot about different strategies for accessing the singing voice."

When asked about community-based influences on singing voice development assessment, whether from a teaching perspective or performer perspective, participants had mixed responses. All three found that their own participation in community ensembles did not have a strong impact on their teaching practice. The lesser influence of community music participation could be partially attributed to the fact that participants reported low participation in these types of ensembles. For example, Lisa said, "I've

thought about [joining a community choir] a couple of times, but it just hasn't worked out. It'd be nice to be in a church choir or something, but I just have never pushed myself to do it." Similarly, Chelsea said, "I participate a lot more instrumentally in the community than singing-wise;" and Rebecca said, "I've done a few community choirs since I started teaching. I haven't stuck with any."

Lisa and Chelsea referenced other performance opportunities, like playing in a pit for a musical or joining a local symphonic wind ensemble, but these experiences were detached enough from singing voice that they did not have much of an impact on the way participants approached singing voice development assessment. Chelsea did mention that her perspective as a member of a community ensemble caused her to reflect on how she provides feedback to her students: "I think when you're participating, you think of it differently. Sometimes you'll think, oh, I've said that to my kids. And you think about how they took that in." That insight may have influenced the feedback element of her assessment process.

Other teaching experiences outside the role of an elementary general music teacher seemed to influence Rebecca and Chelsea. They both described a process of transferring skills from one teaching setting to another. Rebecca referenced a co-teaching experience with a neighborhood children's choir where she learned "loads from [the director] about children's singing voice development." Chelsea cited her experience teaching private voice lessons, which helped her in differentiating between different age groups. "You start to get some different ideas about the best way to describe things to kids and different things that work." Although these different settings did not alter the

participants' understandings of singing voice development assessment, they clearly influenced Rebecca's and Chelsea's practices in the general music classroom.

The last *influencer* on participants' singing voice development assessment were colleagues in the field of music education, whether accessible locally or through online means. Participants discussed resources that they accessed from peers in social media groups designed for elementary music teachers. Lisa explained, "I follow this lady on YouTube, and she is primarily a middle school choral teacher. She has some really good stuff that I just blatantly stole. And [the students] loved it." Participants also referenced discussions with other music teachers within their district or local community as sources of fresh ideas for vocal assessment. "Oh, I steal from everybody!", Chelsea exclaimed. Rebecca described how her department has "had a lot of opportunities to meet and share tunes and ideas." Participants talked about these types of informal collaborations as chances to reinvigorate their practices and add new techniques to their own teaching repertoire.

Values

Participants placed value on positive relationships with their students. Lisa spoke of knowing her students well and building positive relationships with students as prerequisites for teaching and assessing singing voice development:

I think it all comes down to your relationships with your students. You make them want to be there. The more we do to maintain those relationships and make [students] want to see us . . . that's the best way to advocate for your program. The one thing we can control is those relationships with those kids.

Similarly, Chelsea suggested that “if they trust you, I think they’re more willing to sing for you.” Rebecca explained how building relationships simultaneously builds trust and confidence in students. She reflected on an experience in a virtual music class session:

I met a fifth grader’s black cat the other day. Maybe just letting our hair down a little bit more . . . maybe in some ways that makes the students feel more comfortable to sing in front of me, and in front of each other.

Rebecca suggested that getting to know her students was especially helpful for continuing to develop singing voice: “[Students] just come to my room and I take them where they are and try to bring them to where they need to be.”

Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca all encouraged high levels of student participation and effort in music class and tended to base music grades on student participation and effort as a result. For example, Rebecca said:

I don’t give them a low grade if they can’t do it, or they’re working on it. I give [a low grade] if they refuse to try. . . . As long as kids are doing what they’re supposed to do, they’ll get a pretty good grade from me. But if they have a really low grade, it’s usually because they weren’t trying or doing anything. . . . Elementary related arts experiences are more about effort. . . . The last time I updated my policies, I think it was fully 75% of their number grade in music was just their participation.

With participation built into their evaluation system, participants indicated that they valued student participation. Their grading systems and reporting methods seemed to align with recommendations outlined by Nichols & Wang (2016).

Participants also placed value on singing in the elementary general music classroom. Rebecca described, “Singing voice is a tool through which we develop musicianship.” A large portion of class time was devoted to singing activities.

Participants left some space in their lessons for other musical skills, as well as time for

musical exploration and appreciation, but emphasized vocal development. For example, Chelsea reflected on how she incorporated musical appreciation, stating “it’s good to do some appreciation, but I feel like that shouldn’t be our whole deal.” Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca agreed that “singing voice is a priority,” and that value guided their planning and assessment processes. Lisa summarized her values when she said, “I feel like my job is pitch matching and singing. That’s my goal.” Clearly, participants emphasized developing singing voice as a direct result of their values.

Chelsea and Rebecca alluded to additional values such as choir opportunities, vocal technique, and readiness indicators as valuable. Chelsea believed that all fifth grade students in her building should be able to join choir; therefore, she designed the program to be co-curricular and non-auditioned. Rebecca also valued choir experiences for older elementary students and pushed for her school to offer choir during the school day rather than as an extracurricular. Lisa and Rebecca described practices for promoting vocal technique through warm-ups, diction exercises, and other activities because they valued older students developing advanced singing techniques. Rebecca received her Gordon Institute for Music Learning certification over the previous summer, and through her music learning theory lens, she discussed values such as the coordination of breath and body as a readiness for formal instruction.

Values that surfaced throughout the interview process were the basis for decisions that participants made regarding their instructional delivery and assessment procedures. Participants also seemed to be guided by their values when they explored new opportunities, which is linked to the next category in this theme: *exploration*.

Exploration

The category of *exploration* could be thought of as a brainstormed list for potential next steps that participants might take as they sought out additional opportunities both for themselves to grow professionally and for their students to develop musically. Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca each indicated an interest in expanding their teaching pedagogy through registration for continuing education credits and attaining Orff levels, in pursuing additional performance opportunities for themselves, and in collaborating with colleagues in their districts to problem-solve and improve singing voice development assessment.

Rebecca detailed her investigations into identifying opportunities and extracurricular experiences for students as well as learning more about technology and recording software. “Today, I started exploring with my fourth and fifth graders. We were trying to see if they could record [during a synchronous virtual music class]. . . . I’m still learning a lot in this new [online] world.”

Within the category *exploration*, participants also described trying new techniques in virtual or hybrid settings, collecting more information about students’ backgrounds, considering other opportunities to teach music to different ages and grades, and understanding more about learning sequence activities (LSAs). Participants’ choices in *exploration* were linked to what they valued as teachers.

Theme Two: Teachers Rely on Planning

The second theme, *Teachers Rely on Planning*, included *processes* and *objectives*. As participants explained the bigger picture, starting with a span of several grade levels

or an entire assessment cycle, they identified processes that mapped out their overall approach. Then, from these *processes*, participants began planning for instruction. Specific *objectives* served as learning outcomes directly tied to instructional delivery.

Processes

Participants identified five *processes*: (1) ongoing informal assessment, (2) maintaining student records, (3) repertoire selection, (4) preparing for performances or competitions, and (5) unit and lesson planning. None of the participants described their lesson planning process step-by-step, but all three referenced lesson and unit planning when asked specifically about *processes*.

Participants seemed to assess their students through multiple touchpoints conducted over time. Chelsea described informal assessment primarily through observation and listening: “I do a lot of informal evaluation . . . I’m constantly assessing. [Students] are constantly assessing their peers or assessing themselves, too.” Rebecca echoed, explaining that “as I’m noticing that more and more students . . . are ready to transition onto the aural/oral stage; I’m able to start teaching these more formal music concepts.”

Lisa said that she gave students assessment rubrics to take home, and also recorded those scores for herself. Chelsea entered daily student grades into her online gradebook in order to maintain accurate student records. Rebecca mentioned adding student scores from rating scales and rubrics into her district’s “online home access center.”

While selecting repertoire, Chelsea considered her students' musical literacy and vocal range:

If I'm wanting to assess [a student's] voice, I'm probably not going to go with some big choral piece. I'm probably going to go with something that matches where we are in the curriculum that I think is readable, singable, and probably demonstrates a couple voice [register] changes.

Her goal was to "pick something where [students] are getting up into their head voice and not singing everything down where they're super comfortable."

Lisa, on the other hand, went more with a gut feeling while selecting repertoire: "I usually listen to it and I can tell if it's going to work." When I asked for clarification, Lisa explained:

It definitely just takes time to know what the kids can do, and you have to go with your kids. . . . A lot of [the repertoire selection process] was just trial and error and trying to figure out what works for the kids.

She later added, "I tend to stick with a lot of the same composers . . . because [their music] is not too high, it's not too complicated, it's not dumb, it makes sense." She preferred folk and pop music repertoire.

Rebecca selected repertoire from resources with "a variety of tunes and a variety of meters and tonalities." She described picking her repertoire from curricular books, referring to the *Music Play* and *Jump Right In* series.

Chelsea noted that much of her experiences with adjudications were "a rough process; [students] have to really want to do it." Rebecca had an opposite performance process, noting that her 4th and 5th grade choir did not compete, but performed a winter and a spring concert as well as a district choral festival. Rebecca also described processes related to the school musical she directed annually, which included an audition process

for interested 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. “It’s not much different than running a regular elementary choir rehearsal in terms of just assessing and what I need to do to remedy.”

Lisa and Chelsea broke down their planning process into two grade spans: kindergarten through 2nd grade and 3rd through 5th grade. They described their scaffolding process as beginning with basics in kindergarten, like finding the singing voice, and matching pitch on “so” and “mi,” and then building to identification of the four voices and accurately singing a pentatonic scale in first and second grade. Lisa described, “In kindergarten, they’re still learning how to use their singing voice, and usually by first grade, I can get them matching pitch pretty well. And the expectation is by second grade, they should be able to [accurately match pitch].” Rebecca said, “In the early years, I’m just trying to get [students] to feel comfortable singing in front of me.” Chelsea said, “Kindergarten through 2nd grade is just so hands on and working with them one on one.” Lisa and Chelsea introduced rounds in third grade, which built on singing skills through fourth grade, until part singing was introduced in fifth grade. Chelsea described her process: “You go from just getting in the right part of your voice to vowel shaping and diction. . . . In 3rd through 5th grade, we talk more about diction and enunciation and vowel shape.” Throughout the macro-level planning process, Lisa and Chelsea described how they listened to students, reflected on their instruction, and adapted their techniques as needed whilst their students were expected to refine their own musical skills. Chelsea explained, “By third grade, I expect a little bit of tone quality, and then by fifth grade, I expect a little bit more mature tone quality.” Similarly, Rebecca

said, “It definitely is good to see that progress and know that what you’re doing is working so you can make adjustments if it’s not.”

Participants described several other processes related to singing voice development. Lisa outlined her process for introducing and teaching a round, start to finish, over multiple lessons: first introducing the background of the song, discussing the lyrics, then working towards memorization, echoing short and long phrases by rote from the teacher’s model, next focusing on details like diction and incorporating peer assessment, and then finally performing the song as a round in two parts, then three parts, and lastly in small groups as part of a formal assessment.

Chelsea detailed how she incorporated singing voice development into state-mandated student learning objectives (SLOs): “My SLO was based on sight singing actually, because it was something very specific that I could evaluate.” Rebecca referenced using chunks of patterns to move students sequentially through the skill learning sequence: “If we’re doing classroom activities and I’m giving patterns, [I’m] matching the difficulty of my pattern to the student’s aptitude.” She also mentioned moving into full song assessment from pattern assessment, planning to incorporate more peer and self-assessment, and including creativity and improvisation after foundational vocal skills have been laid.

Objectives

Participants framed *objectives* as questions, such as “Are students using their voice appropriately for their age?”, “Are students matching pitch with good tone?”, and “Are students using their head voice?” Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca agreed that

kindergarten students were learning how to access and manipulate singing voice, while 1st grade students were learning how to sing in tune in their head voice.

Beginning in 2nd grade, participants delineated based on their pedagogical approaches. Chelsea and Lisa listed objectives by grade level. Second grade students were expected to consistently match pitch, use the correct register, and begin to demonstrate vocal independence. Third grade students were expected to become more independent through rounds and the introduction of harmony. Fourth grade students were expected to demonstrate proficiency with rounds, and 5th grade students were expected to demonstrate vocal independence through partner songs or two-part harmony.

Contrastingly, Rebecca described her expectation for second graders as “independently singing melodies,” and then listed additional *objectives* as questions that applied to all subsequent grades. “Are students audiating resting tone?”, “Are students breathing and coordinating to sing resting tone?”, and “Are students accessing their singing voice consistently?” Whereas Lisa and Chelsea followed a sequential approach by grade level, Rebecca employed a sequential approach by skill acquisition.

Participants stated *objectives* by starting with “Students will be able to . . . ,” and ending with examples such as *sing resting tone*, *sing with or without accompaniment*, *put singing in their vocal mask*, and *identify intervals of a minor 2nd, minor 3rd, and perfect 5th*. All *objectives* were linked to a process that participants identified and described during interviews. Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca described using the same *objectives* across multiple activities, lessons, and units, which reinforced the developmental nature of the child’s singing voice (Welch, Rush, & Howard, 1991).

Theme Three: Teachers Rely on Interactions

The third theme, *Teachers Rely on Interactions*, detailed the *techniques* and *tools* that participants used to bring *processes* and *objectives* to life. None of the *techniques* participants implemented, nor the *tools* participants selected, would carry meaning without the students with whom participants facilitate interactions.

Techniques

Participants in this study identified 48 *techniques* they used to teach and assess singing voice development. Among all of these *techniques*, modeling emerged as the most frequently cited technique as well as the most relevant to singing voice development. Modeling seemed to be an umbrella technique: participants described teacher modeling, which included tonal pattern instruction, rhythm pattern instruction, matching pitches in unison, demonstrating vocal technique such as vowel shape or enunciation, song fragments such as echo singing or call and response singing, asking a musical question, improvisation, breath control, sliding between notes, and how to practice, and peer modeling, which included matching pitch, solo singing, four voices, vocal shape, song fragments, working in small groups, improvisation, breath control, providing a musical answer, and demonstrating vocal range. Participants reported modeling techniques that reinforced some of the suggestions that Nichols (2020) made for effective doubling to improve children's singing accuracy, and also aligned with Rutkowski's and Miller's (2003c) findings regarding the effects of teacher modeling on children's singing. Participants also reported breath techniques that aligned with K. H. Phillips' (2014) foundational text, *Teaching Kids to Sing*.

Participants described other *techniques* that had to do with managing student behaviors, assessing students, and providing musical experiences. Participants referenced intentional seating chart arrangement, differentiating instruction, framing activities as a game, avoiding singling individuals out, and working in predetermined peer groups as techniques for managing behaviors in the classroom. For Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca, classroom management techniques were a minor but present factor. The interactions that resulted from effective management helped participants build relationships and focus class time on singing voice development.

Participants assessed students through a variety of *techniques* including listening, questioning, note-taking, observation, spoken and written peer assessment, spoken and written self-assessment, journaling, and recording students to capture assessment. Chelsea and Rebecca linked their procedures for providing feedback to their assessment techniques. They noted that feedback could be spoken or written, but it needed to be intentional and specific to be meaningful for students.

Participants drew on nine additional *techniques* to provide musical experiences for their students: promoting performance opportunities, maintaining consistency through routines and expectations, demonstrating the “wrong” way versus the “right” way, establishing tonality or meter, teaching songs by rote, changing keys or modulating, expanding vocal range through warm-ups, making adjustments as needed during rehearsals, and providing directions to explore concepts like choral tone, dynamics, intervallic relationships, contour, and standard music notation.

Tools

Participants selected *tools* to bring their teaching techniques to life. *Tools* also brought flexibility to *techniques*. Almost every *technique* discussed could be implemented with more than one *tool*, which gave participants options during instruction. Because *tools* encapsulated 90 codes in my data analysis, I stratified them into seven subcategories: manipulatives, games, musical content, assessments, resources, exercises, and technology. In the next section, I briefly describe each of those subcategories.

Manipulatives included items that could be physically passed out to students, or used by the participant as a visual enhancement, such as puppets, stickers, books, balls, and whisper phones. Lisa used a puppet to ask a musical question: “get the turtle out for [students] to hold and move him where their voice is.” Rebecca used whisper phones to help students with self-assessment. Chelsea tossed a ball up into the air “to bring [students’] voice up.” There were possibly other manipulatives that participants used during music class, but the scope of my interview only covered manipulatives used in conjunction with teaching singing voice development.

Participants described singing games, judge games, and rollercoaster games as tools that could be used to assess singing voice development. Singing games included simple question and answer style activities, as well as round singing and part singing games. Lisa used what she termed “judges” as part of an assessment procedure. “I give two kids a sticker book, and I tell them that their job is to listen to everybody as we sing a song. At the end, they give a sticker to someone that they thought was really good.” To

implement a rollercoaster game as a tool, students were told to imagine that their voice was on a rollercoaster, and they practiced different ways to manipulate their voices.

Participants listed three types of musical content tools such as songs, vocal exercises, or singing activities that might be coupled with teacher modeling techniques. Participants listed 23 specific examples of musical content tools: solfege, vocalises, musical questions, contour lines, rounds, supplemental songs outside of prescribed curriculum, seasonal songs and activities, partner songs, two-part songs, piano accompaniment, actions or movements, warm-up activities, posture chants, rhythm exercises, brain teasers, tongue twisters, silly songs, resting tone, syllables, tonal patterns, rhythm patterns, I-V patterns, and stepwise patterns. Chelsea and Rebecca explicitly named audiation as an important tool for students to develop in alignment with singing voice development as well.

Assessment tools were specific assessments such as checklists, rubrics, rating scales, or standardized tests that participants mentioned by name. Rebecca shared a rating scale for assessing students as they sang tonal patterns (see Appendix D), which was reminiscent of Rutkowski's (1996) SVDM. Rebecca also shared a singing achievement rubric for whole song performance (see Appendix D). Lisa shared a rubric for assessing individual performances of simple melodies (see Appendix D). The assessment tools subcategory also included a 3rd grade district benchmark assessment singing rubric, a district-level assessment tool to measure 5th grade students' singing achievement, individual conferences, sight-singing tests, music aptitude tests, note name assessments, written benchmark assessments prescribed by state guidelines, projects, and lyric checks.

Participants cited many resources as *tools* during the planning process. Curricula such as *GamePlan*, *Music Play*, and *Jump Right In*; standards such as the *National Core Arts Standards* (2014); websites such as the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association website and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) website; and other books including a middle school chorus warm-up book, Beth Bolton’s collection of tunes, and Gordon’s Learning Sequence Activity books were all referenced. Participants intentionally selected which parts of these resources they wanted to implement as a tool in their classroom. For example, when Chelsea was looking for supplemental material to enhance her instruction, she searched NAfME’s website and found other teachers’ lesson plans that aligned with her instructional goals and objectives.

Chelsea, Lisa, and Rebecca all reported reservations about implementing the *2014 Music Standards* in their lessons. All three agreed that the previous nine national music standards published in 1994 were more specific and useful. Lisa had already been using the old national standards for more than a decade when they were updated, and even though she had her doubts, she reflected on the benefits of the *2014 Music Standards*:

They’re a good guide at what we should be doing . . . I try to think about [the standards] when planning lessons. . . . Nobody’s perfect, and we’re not hitting all those standards all the time, and there are certain harder ones that don’t lend themselves well to our field, but we have to keep trying to get them in there somehow.

Chelsea also reflected on the previous national standards and how those standards were “driven into our heads [as undergraduate students].” She described how she thinks about those nine standards while she engages in lesson planning and how she finds the *2014 Music Standards* to be more exploratory in nature.

Rebecca explained her frustration when her district adopted the *2014 Music Standards* after her first year of teaching:

There was nothing specifically addressing singing development, or reading, or head voice, or anything like that. I don't feel like these standards address a lot of musical skills. And it's really frustrating to me . . . I've been really disappointed and frustrated with these standards because I don't think they focus on music skills and music making.

Even though she had not been teaching long when her district abandoned the previous national standards, she clearly preferred the old standards, reminiscing: “[they] just made so much more sense, because each overarching standard addressed a discrete musical skill.” Regardless of any controversy surrounding the implementation of the *2014 Music Standards*, participants cited the standards as a resource for planning and assessment.

Exercises to develop more advanced vocal technique and breath support emerged as the sixth subcategory of *tools*. Participants referenced belly breaths, taking “a quiet sip of air,” lip trills, vocal sirens, and sliding exercises, as well as analogies to describe appropriate mouth shape and diction such as a pirates analogy (“Arrgh, there’s no pirates in music class!”), a marshmallow analogy (“imagine you have a marshmallow on the back of your tongue . . . it helps to open everything up . . .”), and a cavern analogy (“keep that cavern in your mouth”). Chelsea also mentioned a trick she learned from a high school student:

If you do a plié when you go to hit a high note, while you think about going low to high, it actually really works . . . just do a little plié when you get to the top of the scale. Try it sometime. It's so weird. It works, though. It's just a mental thing.

Technology including hardware, software, apps, and programs represented the seventh and last subcategory of *tools*. Participants mentioned Chromebooks, iPads,

GarageBand, Quaver, Schoology, Zoom, SmartMusic, iDoeco, virtual xylophones, FlipGrid, Rokaru, Google Docs, and Google Forms as methods for promoting singing voice development or capturing singing assessment. Rebecca also detailed her use of the “Ask to Unmute” feature in Zoom while teaching synchronous virtual music classes. Participants described audio and video recording technology as an efficient method of collecting assessments and maintaining student records.

Techniques and *tools* represented a significant portion of interview discussions and the resulting codes, which suggested that participants focused a majority of their energy on interactions with students. Thus, the third theme, *Teachers Rely on Interactions*, introduces the fourth theme, focusing on time.

Theme Four: Teachers Rely on Time

The fourth theme, *Teachers Rely on Time*, encompassed the *benefits*, *challenges*, and *adaptations* to assessing singing voice development. Participants varied in their responses across those categories than in any other theme, perhaps due to different individual circumstances based on where participants were teaching. Participants described benefits of their assessment strategies, their individual settings, and the choices that they control when planning for instruction. They also described *challenges*, which included a wide array of limitations and frustrations, often linked to factors outside of their control. *Adaptations* referred to any change in the way instruction and assessment were carried out to better suit a situation. Participants spoke of two types of *adaptations*: those that applied to in-person learning, and those that applied to new modes of learning as a result of COVID-19.

Benefits

Participants described *benefits* as methods, resources, or results that could enhance singing voice development assessment through “making the most” of their time with their students. They noted connecting with students, making quick instructional adjustments, identifying students that need extra support, and providing differentiation as immediate individual student benefits while assessing singing voice development. Chelsea thought that assessment through project-based learning was motivating for students, and Lisa echoed the benefit of motivation when she described her peer collaboration process as well.

Lisa and Chelsea agreed that their curriculum adequately addressed singing voice development, because it had an emphasis on head voice and voice crossing. The benefit of following their curriculum was that they were able to focus on what they valued. Chelsea brought up curriculum as a benefit again when she described the consistency of how singing voice was taught across grade levels. Rebecca mentioned that her repertoire selection process resulted in students learning varied repertoire, with “stretches their musicianship.” Participants also described using a district-required or state-mandated formal rubric as comprehensive, because the rubrics provided useful, specific information about each student.

Participants described the benefits of implementing technology to help with singing voice development assessment. Recording apps and software were “efficient tools that help with routines.” Recorded vocal assessments allowed participants to maintain a permanent product of student assessment, review progress on their own

timeline as needed, save class time, and reduce student anxiety about performance.

Chelsea said she preferred to use video recordings so that she could see and hear student technique: “Recording technology has come a long way. . . . It’s much higher quality now.” Lisa and Chelsea also mentioned that they viewed recorded assessment as authentic assessment, because using technology for assessment could paint a more accurate picture of a student’s true abilities.

Throughout the interview process, participants also mentioned flexibility, support, and new opportunities as benefits when it came to singing voice development assessment. Chelsea said, “My colleagues are likeminded, supportive, and flexible.” Lisa described her administration as “open to suggestions of people to bring in, and workshops, or professional development needs we have.” Even though Rebecca disliked the written assessment component of her state standardized testing guidelines, she did disclose that “the nice thing is, I set my own growth goals . . . so [I] have some flexibility.” Participants compared their current districts to previous teaching assignments in other districts, noting that a benefit of their current position was more funding or higher availability of resources. Finally, participants referenced opportunities to take students to district choral festivals and other county-wide events as *benefits* for singing voice development. The benefits of festivals and events was twofold: first, students were provided with additional performance opportunities that enhanced classroom experiences, and second, students got to see live performing ensembles, typically made up of older students. Those experiences tended to motivate younger students to want to achieve

similar outcomes, which helped participants in their singing voice development processes.

Challenges

Whereas *benefits* appeared to exist where participants took advantage of the time that was available, *challenges* seemed to be rooted in lack of sufficient time. *Challenges* also stemmed from insufficient funding or perhaps lower-priority budgeting at the district level. As explored earlier, Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca all expressed frustration with the *2014 Music Standards*: they “don’t address relevant skills” and “lack key materials,” which made it difficult for participants to use them as a planning guide. Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca also pointed to outdated method books or resources that were not developmentally appropriate for singing voice development.

Another challenge that participants faced was a trend of changing voices starting in 5th grade. Rebecca described, “I have had a few 5th grade boys whose voices start to change. . . . Sometimes I can’t even model down the octave, because I don’t have that range.” Chelsea reflected, “I don’t ever remember having this many boys with changing voices in a fifth grade class. We have a couple that are really low.” Participants described the *challenges* of finding new *techniques* and *tools* to adequately address these students’ singing voice development needs. Those *challenges* seemed to reinforce findings from Levinowitz et al. (1998), in which a lower percentage of students than expected were singing in expanded vocal ranges.

Seven additional challenges stemmed from policies and systems in participants’ schools: inequitable scheduling and layout of the choir program, the unhealthy influence

of pop music, extra assigned duties during the teaching day, a limited physical teaching space, poor attitudes either from families or from students about their singing abilities, inconsistencies in skills that students demonstrated from week to week, and concert preparations that overshadowed other priorities.

Lisa and Chelsea identified limited class time as a challenge for singing voice development assessment. Especially when Lisa opted to use a paper copy of a rubric and asked students to complete a self-assessment, she felt as though the process of passing out papers and pencils was time consuming and ineffective. Limited class time also made it difficult to provide an opportunity for every student to sing individually. Similarly, insufficient time was a challenge identified in my related research (Rutkowski & Miller, 2003a).

Lisa and Chelsea both identified lack of vocal professional development as a challenge as well. Local professional organizations were “not geared toward elementary music,” and the focus in department meetings tended to be on performing ensembles. “If we have anything, it’s instrumental,” Lisa explained.

Personal limiting factors were especially individual: there was no overlap in participant responses within this subcategory at all. Rebecca has not experienced a complete year of school in her current assignment, which impacted her long-term planning and reflection processes. Lisa found the lack of local choir and ensemble opportunities to be limiting to her own musicianship. Chelsea cited discourse and disagreements in social media music teacher groups as “confusing.” One participant also

mentioned that family responsibilities outside of her career impacted the time she was able to devote to her teaching practice.

Adaptations

The most frequently cited adaptation for higher-achieving students during in person learning was select ensemble groups. These choirs, musicals, and chamber ensembles could be auditioned or non-auditioned, but they were provided as extra opportunities for students to shine. The most frequently cited adaptation for lower-achieving students during in person learning was “pulling kids individually for extra help.” Chelsea identified “creative ways to hear all students independently,” like listening to them during recess or before or after school. Participants also selected supplemental materials and activities that fit their objectives and piqued student interest. Lisa sometimes altered two-part songs or warm-up materials to fit the needs of her students. Additionally, Lisa changed the chord progression in the harmonic accompaniment she played to support the second part in a two-part song she was teaching. Participants also described other in person learning adaptations such as intentional group and part assignments for rounds and partner songs, turning an activity into a game, or remedying students that were not yet coordinated with direct and explicit modeling.

Virtual learning, whether hybrid or fully remote, presented participants with other opportunities for adaptations. Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca all emphasized maintaining consistency: “Preserving what can be preserved” was priority. When asked how to adapt her assessment techniques for virtual learning, Lisa replied, “I don’t think they need to be adapted at all, honestly. . . . I don’t think we need to make big changes.” Even so,

participants made alterations to activities that could not be transferred directly from in person learning. For example, Lisa assigned her students the task of singing with a family member, neighbor, or friend at home to make up for the lack of a polyphonic experience in a fully remote model of learning. Chelsea chose to use project-based rather than performance-based assessments in the virtual setting. In spring 2020, when schools first shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were new to various recording and editing software. Because the process of creating a virtual concert that consisted of individual student recordings laced together seemed overwhelming, participants instead hosted virtual talent shows with individual performances, livestreamed their own performances, and assigned students projects like designing a program to perform at home for their family.

Within the remote instructional model, participants applied adaptations to synchronous learning, and adaptations to asynchronous learning. Chelsea talked about “judging [expectations] based on each situation individually.” She planned different assignments for students to complete asynchronously depending on each student’s need (e.g., internet access and device capability, other materials at home, prior student performance). Lisa and Rebecca scheduled synchronous virtual conferences with students in an attempt to boost lower-achieving individuals. For students that were at home without classroom instruments, Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca thought of creative ways to transfer instrument parts to body percussion.

Choices regarding the implementation of specific *adaptations* seemed to be based on the time available to a participant, the mode of instruction, and possible supplemental

resources identified. Furthermore, *adaptations* were highly personal, depending on both the participant's choices and their student's needs.

COVID-19

The third and final interview in my study's design posed questions about singing voice development assessment in new modalities of instruction, like online learning. Participants reflected on their *processes, objectives, techniques, and tools* as they were transferred into new and unfamiliar settings. Two *challenges* arose for Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca: constant changes and inconsistencies in the format of delivery of instruction, and the latency issue in synchronous online lessons meant the experience of singing together was significantly diminished. Lisa found it challenging to "effectively plan with so much uncertainty." All three found it impossible for peer groups to sing together virtually, so students missed out on ensemble experiences. Because students were not together in a face-to-face classroom setting, Rebecca noted that they were not "enveloped in that peer sound," and Lisa stated that her students "couldn't compare their voices to their peers."

Chelsea and Rebecca brought up the *challenges* with singing during in person instruction, which directly impacted singing voice development assessment. The guidelines for what was considered to be safe singing were vague and misconstrued. Many students had ill-fitting face coverings or were still learning how to properly wear their face masks, which discouraged participants from feeling comfortable with in-person singing activities. One participant that taught singing in-person found it difficult to

provide meaningful feedback, since she was unable to see students' mouth shapes under their masks.

Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca disclosed frustrations with the technology component of online learning. Each participant described inequities: some students did not have access to any device; others had to share one device amongst multiple siblings. Even if a school provided a device directly to each student, students' internet access was not necessarily guaranteed. And even when a student's device was fully functional and connected to the internet, multiple apps could not be supported, because a device's microphone could only attend to one app at a time. Technology issues like spontaneously uncooperative software permeated instruction, and even the participants that felt advanced in their technological capabilities reported challenges in diagnosing technology problems. Perhaps those issues partially accounted for the low student attendance and low student engagement that participants experienced during fully virtual learning. Chelsea lamented that she noticed "way less buy-in from students" during virtual learning, adding that "building relationships [with students] solely online is harder." Fully virtual models of learning were exhausting for students and teachers alike, and many families felt overwhelmed with virtual learning.

Lisa noted that virtual learning seemed to be different everywhere, depending on who she talked to: "It's different everywhere you go. There are inconsistencies in what is expected of teachers, and no one has identified the ideal model [of learning] for all of this." She cited "no clear direction from administration," as well as societal uncertainties about the best way to continue with music education in a pandemic. Lisa was only

allowed to post asynchronous assignments for music class, which she believed was “not a well-rounded music education.” Rebecca taught synchronously online but could not hear if students were actually following directions when everyone was muted. In the fully online synchronous mode of learning, Rebecca also had to deal with inconsistent student groupings and shortened class time. All of those uncertainties and inconsistencies “disrupted scaffolding for appropriate [student learning] support.”

Many of the *challenges* brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic affected macro-level aspects of education, which trickled down to affect how participants assessed singing voice development. The same can be said of the *benefits* that emerged from COVID-19.

Rebecca and Chelsea described how they planned to increase efficiency on their classrooms when they return to fully in-person learning. Rebecca described a new process she planned to use in-person: “I do think that when we go back that I can ask [students] to record themselves singing into GarageBand, I can give them the setup, they have their earbuds, and everyone could all do that at the same time.” Both students and participants became more technologically proficient, and Rebecca predicted those skills would be valuable across the long term. Chelsea explained how her students “will be a lot more technologically fluent than if we weren’t going through this experience right now . . . I think it’ll pay off in the future, with various things that we can do in our classrooms.” Lisa agreed, saying “hopefully the district continues to try to offer training on these [applications] that we could use in the future, too.”

Participants noted that another benefit of technology was more frequent communication with their students outside of class time. Chelsea explained her students' increased usage of Google Classroom as a functional communication platform:

I tend to put more things into Google Classroom now than I have ever before, especially for young kids. Before, [students] weren't required to look there much, they didn't have to. But now, they regularly check their [Google Classrooms], and look for things, because they had to last spring. So, we kind of managed to roll that into our regular curriculum. And I think that's a good takeaway, actually.

Other specific *benefits* varied by individual. Some examples included: a perceived reduction in classroom management issues in virtual settings, enunciating through a mask as good practice for diction, flexible scheduling gave teachers more time to collaborate, and participants had the opportunity to learn more about students' personal life through the virtual lens. Rebecca predicted that new software would emerge that "may eliminate latency issues," and Lisa noted that assessing at home meant students were less nervous to sing alone:

If [students are] at home, they're a little less scared or afraid to participate. You're getting a better picture. They're not hiding their voice. So, I guess it's more of an authentic assessment, because they're in their safe place, hopefully, and they're not worried about friends or others hearing them.

Lastly, participants suggested that the pandemic reinforced the significance of music education. Lisa described her belief that "[music teachers] are music therapists right now . . . Whatever great experiences we can give [students], and whatever they get out of that is great . . . We are there to connect and give a positive experience." Chelsea reflected that "singing is such an important emotional outlet." Although participants faced many challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that affected singing voice

development, Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca still identified positive takeaways and spoke in an optimistic tone.

Key Idea: Teachers Provide a Worthwhile Musical Experience

I bound together the four themes into one overarching key statement: *Teachers Provide a Worthwhile Musical Experience*. Participants relied on personal philosophy, planning, interactions, and time to provide a meaningful, enjoyable musical experience to their students. Personal philosophy influenced some of the decisions that participants made, but other decisions were limited by factors outside of their control. Furthermore, it seemed that particular benefits and challenges arose from specific teaching settings beyond a participant's scope of control, which also impacted their decision-making processes. Expectations from outside factors influenced participants, but ultimately their decisions regarding singing voice development assessment were very personal and unique. For example, participants selected tools through individualized processes based on resources available, perceived worthwhileness, and predetermined goals. Although the resources available to them may have been somewhat outside of their control, participants were autonomous in selecting what was worthwhile or in setting educational goals for their students.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Because few researchers have explored elementary general music teachers' descriptions of their assessment of singing voice development among their students, the purpose of this research was to explore singing voice development assessment practices that public school elementary general music teachers use with their students. The following question guided my research: What can we learn from three kindergarten through fifth grade general music teachers about their approaches to singing with their students? To document teachers' singing voice development processes and assessment techniques, and the benefits, challenges, and adaptations resulting from those techniques, I designed a qualitative interview-only study through the lens of symbolic interactionism. I invited purposely sampled music teachers from my professional network to participate in the study. Three consenting participants completed three 60-minute interviews each in October through December 2020. In my role as a researcher, I steered the semi-structured interview process and edited the resulting transcripts.

During the first interview, participants described *influencers* on their singing voice development assessment practices, such as their undergraduate music education program and their student teaching experience. They outlined *values* that guided their decision-making *processes* and highlighted explorative opportunities that impacted their teaching practice. During the second interview, participants delved into the particulars of their singing voice development assessment processes, detailing *techniques* and *tools* that

aligned with their educational *objectives*. During the third interview, participants continued to explore the ways in which *benefits*, *challenges*, and *adaptations* played a role in their singing voice development processes and reflected on COVID-19's impact on singing voice development assessment.

As researcher, I conducted constant comparison content analysis to extract codes from transcripts. I assigned codes to category labels, six of which were identified a priori and four of which emerged in vivo. After data analysis, I enlisted a data auditor to examine my findings. The data audit process enhanced trustworthiness and supplied rigor to my results.

Based on my interpretations of the data, I identified four themes: *Teachers Rely on Personal Philosophy*, *Teachers Rely on Planning*, *Teachers Rely on Interactions*, and *Teachers Rely on Time*. Personal philosophy encompassed *influencers* that had an effect on teachers' practices, *values* that impacted a teacher's judgement of worth or usefulness of a particular practice, and the choices about investigation and *exploration* that teachers made to enhance or update their practice. Planning included *processes* by which teachers planned for instruction over a period of time, and the *objectives* that teachers selected as student learning outcomes. Interactions stemmed from the *techniques* and *tools* that teachers selected to be used with students while engaging in singing voice development assessment. Time involved the *benefits* and *challenges* of assessing singing voice development, both through in person learning and the various modes of virtual learning, as well as *adaptations* that teachers implemented to make the most of their students' experience in the music classroom.

Another part of providing a musical experience was adapting and adjusting instructional processes to fit new and emerging modes of learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers reported some benefits and challenges of assessing singing voice that stemmed directly from virtual and hybrid learning. Teachers emphasized maintaining consistency in their routines and expectations as much as possible, while also expanding their technological skills to capture authentic singing voice development assessment.

Conclusion

The three teachers in this study approached their singing voice development practices through personal philosophy, planning, interactions and time, manifested in the four themes bound together represent one key statement: *Teachers Provide a Worthwhile Musical Experience*. Lisa, Chelsea, and Rebecca valued providing a high-quality, meaningful music education experience to their elementary students primarily through the development of singing voice.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Study

This study contributes to literature on elementary general music teachers' perspectives on singing voice development assessment and provides a glimpse into how elementary general music teachers are adjusting singing instruction and assessment to make the most of limitations brought about by COVID-19. Since this study involved three elementary general music teachers describing their own personal processes for assessing singing voice development, the results may not be generalizable. However, the

three teachers' approaches to singing voice development assessment suggest several implications.

First, teacher preparation programs seem to have a strong impact on these three music teachers' understandings of the young child's singing voice and related effective assessment processes. Because our profession has varied approaches to preparing preservice teachers to successfully assess singing voice development, factors like how and when preservice teachers are exposed to singing voice development assessment throughout coursework and during practicum experiences seems to have influenced their processes for administering assessment once they became inservice teachers. Teachers also adapt their processes from observing and conversing with colleagues, seeking out professional development opportunities, and reflecting on their practice; however, teachers make choices about their types of activities based on influencers that can often be traced to their background experiences.

Second, these three elementary general music teachers tended to prioritize singing voice in their classrooms, visible through their decisions during planning and assessment processes. Like the teachers in this study, other elementary general music teachers can (1) select tools and techniques that align with educational objectives to guide students' singing voice to develop, and (2) view singing as a tool for developing other aspects of musicianship. Perhaps the importance participants placed on singing voice in the elementary general music classroom warrants a further investigation into how teachers assess singing voice.

Third, for the teachers in this study, teaching is a highly personal, individualized activity that draws on their individual background, philosophy, and priorities, while also being influenced by outside factors. Teachers' values and beliefs about what matters, and the role of elementary general music curriculum directly affects their planning and instruction processes. However, circumstances like funding, availability of resources, or support from administration and the community can vary drastically from one district to another. Those types of situational challenges are generally outside of teachers' control, but they impact teachers' processes, nonetheless. More research is needed to understand how factors beyond the scope of teachers' control impact singing voice development assessment.

Last, elementary general music teachers demonstrate flexibility through their handling of the benefits, challenges, and adaptations that accompany singing voice development assessment. In school years before COVID, elementary general music teachers faced limited time, outdated resources, inequitable funding, and limitations in professional development. Most worked daily to make the best of their individual settings by connecting with students, differentiating instruction based on assessment results, and planning to provide a meaningful music experience. Many of those established challenges were magnified due to pivoting to online only and hybrid instruction when the COVID-19 pandemic complicated education for all. Nonetheless, these teachers continued to persevere and adapt to the new climate so that their students might successfully develop their singing voices. In particular, the three teachers in my study learned more about technology's role in assessing singing voice development. More research would be

beneficial over the long term to determine how music teachers continue to adapt their processes for singing voice development assessment.

In conclusion, Lisa, Rebecca, and Chelsea reminded me of the importance of personal philosophy, planning, interactions with students, and time to prepare singing voice development assessment processes. As I continue in my own career, I will work to ensure that I am creating meaningful and enjoyable musical experiences for my students, using singing voice development assessment as a way to critically propel my students' achievement.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview One: Focused Life History Questions

1. Were you required to take any class on assessment or evaluation at any point throughout your undergraduate music education program? If so, do you feel that this class influenced your assessment techniques and methods in your current teaching practice?

2. Were you required to take any class on assessment or evaluation at any point throughout your graduate music education program or continuing education beyond undergrad? If so, do you feel that this class influenced your assessment techniques and methods in your current teaching practice?

3. Can you explain your assessment processes related to singing voice development? What kind of techniques are used, and why? How do you go about selecting resources to be used?

4. Do you use different assessment techniques for singing voice development per grade level? Would you briefly explain how they are differentiated?

5. What are the benefits you have found when assessing singing voice development?

6. What is the most challenging part of assessing singing voice development for elementary general music teachers?

7. Do you incorporate any peer assessment or self-assessment into your procedures? If so, with what grade levels, and what are the processes and techniques used?

Interview Two: Details of Experience Questions

1. How do you guide your students' singing voices to develop?
2. How do choices in professional development opportunities impact your assessment processes?
3. Do you have other community-based experiences that influence this aspect of your teaching?
4. What is your favorite singing assessment practice that you've chosen to share today? (rubric, lesson plan, artifact, etc.)
5. From your professional development, interaction with peers, and knowledge of other music educators, would you describe your current singing assessment techniques and procedures to be common and representative of what is happening across elementary music classrooms? Why or why not?
6. Describe a full assessment cycle you have used specifically for singing voice development from beginning to end.
7. How have national and/or state music standards impacted your singing voice development assessments?

Interview Three: Reflection on the Meaning Questions

1. In what ways are singing voice development assessment techniques being adapted to preserve the effectiveness of singing instruction in the current COVID-19 climate?
2. Can you describe assessment processes for online learning? What kind of assessments might be used in a virtual setting, and why?
3. What are some benefits and challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed relating to the assessment of singing voice development?
4. How will you adapt plans to fit changing circumstances while preserving the fidelity of assessment techniques?

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL



Research Integrity & Compliance
Student Faculty Center
3340 N. Broad Street, Suite 304
Philadelphia PA 19140

Institutional Review Board
Phone: (215) 707-3390
Fax: (215) 707-9100
e-mail: irb@temple.edu



Approval for a Project Involving Human Subjects Research that Does Not Require Continuing Review

Date: 17-Sep-2020

Protocol Number: 27472
PI: REYNOLDS, ALISON
Review Type: EXEMPT
Approved On: 17-Sep-2020
Committee: A1
School/College: BOYER COLLEGE OF MUSIC & DANCE (2200)
Department: BOYER: MUSIC EDUCATION (22060)
Sponsor: NO EXTERNAL SPONSOR
Project Title: Singing-Voice Development Assessment Practices: Learning from Elementary General Music Teachers

The IRB approved the protocol 27472.

The study was approved under Exempt or Expedited review. The IRB determined that the research **does not require a continuing review**, consequently there is not an IRB approval period.

If applicable to your study, you can access your IRB-approved, stamped consent document or consent script through ERA. Open the Attachments tab and open the stamped documents by clicking the Latest link next to each document. The stamped documents are labeled as such. **Copies of the IRB approved stamped consent document or consent script must be used in obtaining consent.**

Note that all applicable Institutional approvals must also be secured before study implementation. These approvals include, but are not limited to, Medical Radiation Committee ("MRC"); Radiation Safety Committee ("RSC"); Institutional Biosafety Committee ("IBC"); and Temple University Survey Coordinating Committee ("TUSCC"). Please visit these Committees' websites for further information.

Finally, in conducting this research, you are obligated to submit the following:

- **Amendment requests - All changes to the research must be reviewed and approved by the IRB.** Changes requiring approval include, but are not limited to, changes in the design or focus of the research project, revisions to the information sheet for participants, addition of new measures or instruments, increasing the subject number, and changes to the research funding. Changes made to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects and implemented prior to IRB approval must be promptly reported to the IRB.
- **Reportable New Information** - using the Reportable New Information e-form, report new information items such as those described in HRP - 071 Policy - Prompt Reporting Requirements to the IRB **within 5 days**.

APPENDIX C

FALL 2020 INTERVIEW TIMELINE

Monday, October 26 – Interview #1 with Lisa

Transcript for member check provided Friday, October 30 (no comments returned)

Thursday, October 29 – Interview #1 with Chelsea

Transcript for member check provided Sunday, November 1 (no comments returned)

Wednesday, November 4 – Interview #2 with Lisa

Transcript for member check provided Saturday, November 7 (no comments returned)

Thursday, November 12 – Interview #2 with Chelsea

Transcript for member check provided Sunday, November 15 (no comments returned)

Monday, November 16 – Interview #3 with Lisa (rescheduled from Friday, November 13)

Transcript for member check provided Saturday, November 21 (no comments returned)

Tuesday, December 1 – Interview #3 with Chelsea (rescheduled from Monday, November 23)

Transcript for member check provided Friday, December 4 (no comments returned)

Thursday, December 3 – Interview #1 with Rebecca

Transcript for member check provided Saturday, December 5 (comments returned Saturday, December 5)

Wednesday, December 9 – Interview #2 with Rebecca

Transcript for member check provided Saturday, December 12 (comments returned Sunday, December 13)

Thursday, December 17 – Interview #3 with Rebecca

Transcript for member check provided Saturday, December 19 (comments returned Thursday, December 31)

APPENDIX D

SINGING VOICE ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

Lisa's Singing Rubric (kindergarten through 2nd grade)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Expert</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Apprentice</u>	<u>Beginner</u>
Confidence & Participation	I always try my best when singing.	I regularly participate in singing.	I hesitate to sing.	I rarely participate in singing.
Singing vs. Speaking	I always use my singing voice when needed and can access a wide range of pitches.	I can use my singing voice when needed but it may be limited in range.	I can manipulate my speaking voice to create pitches; I am learning how to use my singing voice.	I do not use my singing voice; I always speak.
Pitch Matching (1- to 3-note motives)	I always match the given pitch(es).	I sing within a half-step of the given pitch(es).	I sing within a minor third of the given pitch(es).	I sing pitches that are not close to the given pitch(es).
Singing in Tune (4-note or longer melodies)	I stay in the same key during an entire song and sing all intervals accurately.	I sing intervals accurately but in a different key than given.	I sing the correct melodic direction but not the correct intervals.	I do not establish a tonal center and/or do not match melodic direction.
Posture	I always stand and sit up straight while singing.	I stand and sit up straight most of the time while singing.	I stand or sit up straight while singing when I am reminded.	I slouch while singing.
Breathing	I take deep breaths, keep my shoulders down, and can sustain phrases.	I use good breath support most of the time.	I try to use good breath support when I am reminded.	My breathing is shallow and frequent.
Tone	My tone is consistently clear and light.	My tone is consistent.	My tone varies.	My tone is inconsistent or inappropriate for singing.

Lisa's Singing Rubric (3rd grade through 5th grade)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Expert</u>	<u>Proficient</u>	<u>Apprentice</u>	<u>Beginner</u>
Confidence & Participation	I always try my best when singing.	I regularly participate in singing.	I hesitate to sing.	I rarely participate in singing.
Vocal Register (Head Voice and Chest Voice, Blended Register)	I always sing in the appropriate register. I can switch between registers during a song and may even use my blended register.	I usually sing in the appropriate register; I may have trouble switching registers during a song.	I can access both my heavy and light registers but may have trouble using them at the appropriate times.	I only use one vocal register, or I am unaware of which register I use.
Pitch Matching (1- to 3-note motives)	I always match the given pitch(es).	I sing within a half-step of the given pitch(es).	I sing within a minor third of the given pitch(es).	I sing pitches that are not close to the given pitch(es).
Singing in Tune (4-note or longer melodies)	I stay in the same key during an entire song and sing all intervals accurately.	I sing intervals accurately but in a different key than given.	I sing the correct melodic direction but not the correct intervals.	I do not establish a tonal center and/or do not match melodic direction.
Posture	I always stand and sit up straight while singing.	I stand and sit up straight most of the time while singing.	I stand or sit up straight while singing when I am reminded.	I slouch while singing.
Breathing	I take deep breaths, keep my shoulders down, and can sustain phrases.	I use good breath support most of the time.	I try to use good breath support when I am reminded.	My breathing is shallow and frequent.
Tone	My tone is consistently clear.	My tone is consistent.	My tone varies.	My tone is inconsistent or inappropriate for singing.
Vowel Shape	I always sing with an appropriate mouth shape.	I usually sing with an appropriate mouth shape and correct it if I forget.	I need to be reminded to sing with an appropriate mouth shape.	My mouth opening is small when I sing, or I don't open my mouth any wider for singing than for speaking.
Enunciation	I pronounce every word clearly.	I pronounce most of the words clearly.	I pronounce some of the words clearly.	I do not pronounce any words clearly.

Rebecca's Tonal Pattern Rating Scale

Score:	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
Description:	No response	Mostly or all inaccurate pitches; mostly or all in speaking voice	Melodic contour is followed but pitches are not quite accurate; singing voice is emerging	All pitches are accurate; all in a gentle, supported, child's singing voice

Rebecca's Singing Achievement Rubric

Criteria	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Melodic Contour	Child sings with accurate melodic contour	Child sings with mostly accurate melodic contour	Child sings melodic contour with some accuracy	Child sings melodic contour inaccurately
Pitches	Child sings majority of pitches accurately	Child sings most pitches accurately	Child sings some pitches accurately	Child sings majority of pitches inaccurately
Rhythm	Child sings majority of rhythms accurately	Child sings most rhythms accurately	Child sings some rhythms accurately	Child sings majority of rhythms inaccurately
Singing Voice	Child uses singing voice	Child mostly uses singing voice	Child mostly uses speaking voice	Child uses speaking voice
Starting Pitch			Child sings starting pitch accurately	Child sings starting pitch inaccurately