Opinions of Minnesota Choral Directors Regarding Classroom Management

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the views of public school choir directors regarding effective choral classroom management. Although it may be argued that a classroom management strategy may be central to a choir’s success, few research studies were found regarding the different methods choir directors might use.

The subjects for this inquiry were eight choir directors from the upper Midwest (US). Interviews were conducted, inquiring about subject’s opinions regarding their pre-service training in classroom management, the classroom management strategies they employ, and the relationship between classroom management and ensemble success. Subjects were also asked to describe their grading policy (i.e., daily attendance, participation, and participation in concerts). Results were presented in narrative form and in tables.

The results of this study highlighted the close relationship between effective teaching and classroom management. All the respondents agreed that a successful classroom management strategy is a critical element in helping choirs succeed, but that they did not receive adequate training in this area as undergraduate music education majors. When managing students’ behavior in the classroom, the majority of those interviewed indicated that speaking individually with disruptive students was preferable to a public confrontation. Maintaining a professional relationship with students and protecting the dignity of students were paramount. All of the directors interviewed included some assessment of student behavior in their grading policies, and indicated that this was an integral part of their classroom management systems.

Most of the directors interviewed recommended that there should be more specific training in classroom management in the undergraduate curriculum, instead of new teachers having to learn classroom management skills “on the job”. Further discussion may lead to more
undergraduate institutions requiring explicit instruction in this subject. It is also recommended that choir directors use this study to develop a classroom management strategy that is most appropriate for their choirs.
THE OPINIONS OF CHOIR DIRECTORS REGARDING CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

While there are undoubtedly comprehensive challenges confronting the music educator who elects a career in choral music, few would disagree that one of the most formidable aspects of teaching choral music may be that of classroom management. Don Collins (1997) addresses this pressing issue:

Recent studies show that 40 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years, and the primary reason they leave relates to discipline problems. Teachers' inability to control classes causes extraordinary stress, which results in exhaustion, frustration, tension, high blood pressure, severe depression, and alcoholism. The students in my methods class invariably identify 'how to control the class' as their primary concern (p. 371).

Gordon (2001, 2002), Bauer (2001), Hamann (1985), Goodman (1980), Hancock (2003), Haberman (1987) and Richardson and Fallona (2001) support this statement, and observe that this is an important issue for directors of musical ensembles. They also propose that classroom management is not being taught in teacher's pre-service training, thus leading to considerable
distress experienced by teachers and students. "The cliche of throwing the 'new kid' into the
depth end to teach him or her to swim does not apply to teaching someone to teach" (Snyder,
1998, p. 40). It is suggested that an effective classroom management plan can promote a healthy
learning environment in which learning can take place. It is also noted that ensembles will not
succeed without a cohesive management strategy.

These same authors, as well as Bloch (1978) and Keenan-Takagi (2000), observe that
classroom management in the ensemble rehearsal presents a unique situation, noting that the
numbers of students in a given ensemble are typically greater than those in other classes, students
are often spread throughout the room instead of sitting behind desks, and students in ensembles
must be active participants, creating sounds instead of maintaining silence for most of the
classroom period. "In the secondary instrumental or vocal ensemble rehearsal, the teacher is
presented with larger than normal classes, logistical dilemmas, and the necessity for group
conformity among students of various talent and skill levels" (Bauer, 1998 p. 37).

Gordon (2001) and Rogers (1986) also note that ensembles consist of members who are
of varying ages and aptitudes, unlike classes whose members may be more homogeneous with
regard to grade level and academic histories. She submits that music is more "product oriented,"
in which the outcome of rehearsals is displayed through a public performance. Students in
ensembles must also work cooperatively in order to create music, instead of individual students
doing his or her own work. Indeed, Morrison (2001) suggests that musical ensembles have a
unique cultural identity because of these factors, stating: "Nowhere in the school is the
opportunity for celebrating both diversity and unity greater than in the school performing
ensemble--a real, living musical culture all our own" (p. 28).
Results of numerous research studies seem to suggest that having an effective classroom management strategy is an important issue among choir directors. Gordon (2002) states:

Classroom management is unique in music, requiring differences in pacing, maintenance of student behavior and constant on-task focus. Effective management is of great importance in order to attain optimal learning and promote continued motivation for students to remain in music programmes (p. 162).

While numerous studies scrutinized this topic, few were found which examined this issue on the basis of individualized opinions and cases.

Purpose of the Study

While good classroom management is important to a successful music program, there appeared to be a lack of descriptive studies investigating the specific opinions and experiences of music teachers regarding effective classroom management in the choral setting. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to obtain the opinions of public school choir directors regarding effective choral classroom management.

Statement of the Problem

The research problem investigated for this study was: What are the opinions of public school choral directors regarding effective classroom management in the ensemble rehearsal?
Research Questions

Three questions directed this study:

1) What are the opinions of choir directors regarding their pre-service training in classroom management?

2) What classroom management strategies do choir directors employ?

3) What are the opinions of choir directors regarding the relationship between classroom management and ensemble success?

Delimitations of the Study

This study sought to investigate the classroom management strategies of public school choir directors. The study was constrained to a limited geographic rural region in the upper midwest.
Definition of Terms

Classroom Management

For the purposes of this study, “classroom management” refers to the approaches undertaken by a choral director to maintain order and productivity within a rehearsal. This is also called “behavior management.”

Pre-service training

Undergraduate university or college education.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to determine the opinions of public school choir directors regarding choir classroom management. The review of literature undertaken for this study yielded a wealth of research, both prior and current, on the topic of ensemble classroom management, which lends support for the importance of this topic.

Professional definitions of classroom management are numerous. Bullough (1994) notes that undergraduate textbooks present classroom management as a specific set of skills, which are designed to control students. Walker (1998) suggests that when taught as a separate course, classroom management may be viewed by undergraduate students as separate from relationships with students and direct instruction. Richardson and Fallona (2001) directly relate classroom management to ‘manner’ in teaching. “Manner” in this context, refers ‘to a teacher’s virtuous conduct or traits of character as played out or revealed within a classroom context’". This concept of manner appears to be an important philosophical part of student learning, according to Fenstermacher (1990, 2001). Jones (1996) agrees, stating: “A central issue in defining classroom management will always be the manner with which the teacher chooses to develop safety and order” (p. 505).

Perhaps a more general definition of classroom management is suggested by Wong (1991), who says that the term includes “all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place” (p. 35). Buck (1992) states: “Discipline, in its truest sense, describes a system made up of preventive and intervention strategies designed to manage rather than control student behavior”
(p. 37). He proposes that effective classroom management is proactive and encompasses numerous teaching skills, while behavior management refers to strategies and techniques used in response to disruptive behavior. “We need to understand the relationship between classroom management and student behavior. When teachers apply principles of effective classroom management, student conduct improves” (p. 37).

Woody (2001) submits that: “Usually, however, good music teaching and good classroom management overlap” (p. 46). VanDerveer (1989) emphasizes “Teachers who become recognized as good disciplinarians are those who plan lessons well, organize their classroom activities carefully, and keep students so involved in learning that there is not time for behavior problems” (p. 24). Snyder (1998) states: “Classroom management is not a separate process divorced from the daily learning activities. It involves careful monitoring of the total environment, including instruction and student learning, in such a way as to promote an atmosphere where learning can take place” (p. 37). Merrion (1990) notes: “Master teachers exhibit musicianship within their teaching role principally because they are able to manage student behaviors so skillfully”, and “…it is clear that skillful discipline is inextricably linked to good teaching” (pp. 26 & 29).

This broad range of definitions of classroom management appears to encompass much more than how to respond in a given situation in the music classroom. The research suggests that classroom management is directly related to teaching effectiveness and how a teacher relates to his/her students.
Research Studies

Goolsby (1996) investigated time use of sixty instrumental music rehearsals between experienced, novice and student teachers at the middle and high school levels, and found that student teachers spent the most time disciplining students (3.9%), while experienced teachers spent the least (0.9%). Experienced teachers spent over half of the rehearsal time in performance and paced the rehearsal well, allowing enough time for both selections. There was little difference between student (35.5%) and novice teachers (35.1%) in the time spent performing. The novice and student teachers demonstrated a similar relationship between the amount of time spent in performance, nonverbal instruction, and verbal discipline. The student and novice teachers spent as much time in verbal instruction as in total performance time.

Brendell (1996) investigated the time use, rehearsal activity and student off-task behavior during high school choral rehearsals. Her results revealed that student off-task behavior is lower when the rehearsal activity requires more active involvement. She discovered that student off-task behavior was highest during activities which did not require active student participation. There were comparable percentages of off-task behavior during vocal and physical warm-ups. Sight-reading produced the least off-task behavior, and Brendell suggests that there may be a relationship between off-task behavior in rehearsals and the nature of the rehearsal activity in question.

Teacher Effectiveness

Several investigators examined the characteristics of effective teachers. Teachout (1997) assembled a list of forty pre-determined items. He asked pre-service and in-service teachers
"What skills and behaviors are important to successful music teaching in the first three years of experience?" Seven items emerged as critical: "Be mature and have self-control," "Be able to motivate students," "Possess strong leadership skills," "Involve students in the learning process," "Display confidence," "Be organized" and "Employ a positive approach." Teachout's subjects who were experienced teachers ranked "Maintain student behavior" as the highest, most important quality of an effective teacher. They also believed that "Be enthusiastic, energetic", "Maximize time on task", "To maintain student behavior (strong, but fair discipline)," and "Be patient", were skills and behaviors that were more crucial for initial success than did pre-service teachers.

Edwards (1986) examined effective teaching behaviors, and grouped 100 performance indicators of effective teaching under twelve general categories: management of student behavior, classroom routine, essential techniques of instruction, provisions for individual learning, lesson plans and objectives for learners, evaluation of student progress, critical thinking and problem solving, teacher-student rapport, student motivation, student participation in learning activities, reports and routine duties, and school and community relations. He asserts that effective music teachers maintain excellent classroom management and procedures.

Brand's (1985) model defines an effective music teacher as one who paces lessons well, demonstrates high energy and enthusiasm, frequent use of eye contact and physical gestures, and varies facial expressions and speaking voice. In addition, these teachers are good musicians, manage classrooms well, and relate lessons’ objectives to the student’s level of interest. He indicates that effective music teachers should maintain a positive classroom environment, communicate actively with students, and demonstrate the ability to plan, format, and pace lessons to maximize learning.
Yarbrough (1975) examined the effect of magnitude of conductor behavior on performance, attentiveness, and attitude of students in mixed choruses. Her investigation revealed that the “High Magnitude Teacher” exhibits the following characteristics: consistent eye contact, closeness (frequently leans or walks toward chorus or particular section), volume and modulation of voice (voice reflects ‘enthusiasm and vitality’), gestures (varies size of conducting patterns to indicate phrases, dynamics), facial expressions (face reflects sharp contrasts between approval/disapproval), and rehearsal pace (‘rapid and exciting’). The results of her study also revealed that off-task behavior was lower during the high magnitude condition, and students showed a preference for the high magnitude conductor. She suggests that effective choir directors vary their location while they teach; they use physical proximity to manage student behavior.

Yarbrough and Price (1981) examined performer attentiveness based on rehearsal activity and teacher behavior. In observing six high school ensemble teachers and randomly selected students from two mixed choruses, three bands and one orchestra, they found that students were more on task when doing activities that required active participation. Their results also revealed that teachers who used a great deal of eye contact had students who were more on task in rehearsal. Conversely, students were more off-task during non-rehearsal activities, and most off-task with the teachers who used the least amount of eye contact.

Price (1983) investigated the effect of conductor academic task presentation, conductor reinforcement, and student performance on attentiveness, achievement, and attitude of members of a university symphonic band. He found that active student participation resulted in less off task behavior, and students were more attentive while performing. He also recommended that in addition to focusing on student performance and instruction, ensemble directors “should also
give appropriate feedback” (p. 254). He also found that “when a conductor’s behavior is dynamic and dramatic, it may affect student performance, attentiveness, and attitude” (p. 210).

Richardson and Fallona (2001) conducted a case study of two music teachers whose management styles were very different, but still very effective. They examined the teacher’s classroom management, manner, beliefs about classroom life, moral and intellectual goals for students, and classroom behavior that directly informs students of expectations for virtuous conduct. These two subjects outlined their approach to providing a model for students, and suggested the following virtues: friendliness (showing care and respect for children and accepting responsibility for them), wit (having tact and joking/having fun with students in a tasteful way), truthfulness (being honest, having integrity, and seeking the truth), mildness (having a good temper) and temperance (keeping the expression of feeling and actions under the control of reason), justice (fairness in the application of both rules and norms to individual children), and practical wisdom (practical wisdom in a classroom accrues from reflective experience, enabling the professional to know what to do, when and why). The second subject indicated the virtues of magnanimity (expressing dignity and pride in yourself, your students and your profession), friendliness, truthfulness, honour (positively reinforcing students for their good efforts and work well done) and justice.

Richardson and Fallona reported that true learning cannot take place without effective classroom management, and that “Classroom management—and particularly effective classroom management—is interwoven with the goals and beliefs of the teacher, and with his or her manner” (p. 724). They also concluded that effective classroom management could look very different in varying classrooms and schools, and maintained that: “The relationship between student and teacher is at the heart of teaching, and, thus, at the heart of organizing and managing the
Good and Brophy (1986) undertook a study to determine the attributes of effective music teachers. They found that such teachers should be able to motivate students, possess strong leadership skills (i.e., be assertive and confident), be flexible and adaptable, and be "with-it," or aware of what's happening in the classroom. They assert that effective music teachers be able to work with students of varying ages/abilities, that they have a working knowledge of theory/history, and that effective music teachers maintain excellent classroom management and procedures.

Teacher Stress and Classroom Management

A number of research studies examined the issue of teacher stress and the relationship to classroom management skills. Gordon (2002) attempted to determine if classroom management was stressful for teachers, and to identify the particular stressors associated with discipline. Her research suggests that effective classroom management may not only yield a more productive learning environment, which improves student learning and conduct, but it may also directly empower students by teaching them self-control, better decision making, and raise their sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Gordon’s subjects were asked to measure ten types of stressors and manifestations of stress. The strongest sources of stress reported by those surveyed were student apathy and unmotivated students. Of moderate strength were discipline problems, monitoring of students,
poorly defined discipline policies and rejected teacher authority. The case study participants agreed on the following qualities which affect classroom management: 1) student’s attitudes, apathy and restlessness, 2) the lack of parental encouragement for children, 3) the consistency of management, 4) the number of discipline problems, 5) the continuous on-task teaching time required, 6) and the lack of pre-service preparation in discipline and management.

Heston, Dedrick, Raschke and Whitehead (1995) indicate that "....job stress is an ongoing problem and may lead to high levels of attrition" (p. 319). They examined the major sources of stress and satisfaction for 200 public school band directors. When asked to list the three variables that were most stressful in their work as music educators, their respondents listed “negative student attitudes, inappropriate student behaviors, and teaching load” (p. 325). These researchers concluded: “Valuable time and energy are lost during rehearsals when directors must repeatedly attend to student behaviors that interrupt the flow of instruction”, and “Students who engage in off-task behavior during rehearsals and even concerts seriously jeopardize the effectiveness of the (band) program” (p. 325). They propose that a nurturing teacher-student relationship may result in more enthusiastic and motivated music students, and that “such positive student behavior would contribute to a reduction in the level of job stress a band director experiences in relation to disruptive off-task behavior and apathy among students” (p. 325). “The development of positive high-quality interpersonal relationships between the director and students may initially need to take precedence over instructional and performance goals and may ultimately yield considerable benefits as students become more involved, motivated, and enthusiastic about their participation” (p. 325).
Several research studies were directed toward teacher’s pre-service training in classroom management. Brand (1982) focused on “classroom and rehearsal management” in his study regarding cooperating teachers influence on student teachers because “it is one of the most important skills for music student teachers, and the cooperating teacher is expected to provide primary leadership in this area” (p. 256). The beliefs of 47 student teachers and cooperating teachers were assessed before and after an eight-week student teaching experience. He found that the experience of the student teachers in his study “did not affect their classroom management beliefs and skills” (p. 262), and that they did not become more like their cooperating teachers with regard to classroom management strategies.

Bergee (2002) conducted a study in which he investigated the classroom management skills of 60 pre-service music educators. The purpose of his study was to determine if direct experience in the classroom was more effective in teaching effective classroom management techniques, or if a mediated experience (i.e., viewing videos) could also benefit pre-service music educators. He discovered that the gains in self-efficacy were virtually identical in both the direct and mediated experience groups, although the direct experience groups seemed to retain a heightened sense of self-efficacy.

In an earlier study, Bergee (1992) constructed a scale rating perceived music student teacher rehearsal effectiveness, and grouped thirty qualities of effective teachers under three categories: Conducting Technique, Teacher-Student Rapport, and Instructional Skills. He included “constructively and effectively manages student behavior”, and “uses techniques that minimize off-task behavior” under Teacher-Student Rapport. Bergee’s factors of Teacher-Student Rapport and Instructional Skills seem to encompass general teaching effectiveness, with
the category of Conducting Technique being more context-specific. He also recommends that effective music teachers use effective teaching behaviors and challenging curricular content, and provide for individual rates of learning.

Brophy (2002) conducted a four-part nationwide survey of music educators about the strengths and weaknesses of their undergraduate music education curriculum. He found that half of his respondents (those with 11-20 years of experience) listed methods courses as their best course, while teachers with twenty or more years of experience listed methods most frequently as their least useful course. His results also indicated that courses in classroom management and solfege-based theory, followed by voice and piano skills were the most recommended for the “ideal” undergraduate curriculum. 66.95% of his respondents also indicated that an “ideal balance” of field experience and coursework was fifty percent of each. Over 19% responded that “undergraduates needed more field experience and less classroom work” (p. 4). When asked to provide recommendations to improve the student teachers with which they had worked, 85% of his respondents suggested that student teachers should receive more field experience prior to student teaching. Eighty-six percent recommended increased pedagogy studies (which included matters related to teaching skills, lesson planning, sequential delivery of instruction, and classroom management).

Sogin and Wang (2002) explored the factors associated with expertise in music teaching. Subjects were participants in a teacher-training certification program. Those subjects who had completed at least three levels of specialized teacher-training courses were placed in group one, which was subsequently labeled the “expert” group. Group two was labeled “non-expert”. Eighty-seven percent of group 1 regarded flexibility as crucial for teaching effectiveness, compared to fourteen percent of group 2. This seems to suggest that pre-service preparation
programs for music educators need to stress the importance of being flexible. Sogin & Wang also suggest that a music teacher should be aware of what's happening in the classroom in order to be an effective manager of student behavior. These authors also state that establishing a "professional" teacher-student relationship assists in maintaining student behavior.

Fiese and DeCarbo (1995) discovered "...that before any teaching could take place, the teacher must have the respect of the students and control of the teaching/learning environment" (p. 28). They note that stress is a pervasive problem for teachers, particularly for teachers in urban schools; "The majority of the respondents felt woefully unprepared to teach in the urban setting. While several felt musically prepared, they said their pre-service education prepared them for teaching the "ideal" students and left them unprepared for the reality of urban schools, where most of the students do not conform to the ideal" (p. 28).

Professional Opinion

As with research studies, authors writing in professional journals also reflect strong interest in the topic of classroom management. They appear to focus on the following topics related to classroom management in music: 1) teacher burnout, 2) classroom management and effective teaching in the choral rehearsal, and 3) classroom management and pre-service training.

Burnout

One group of authors considers the relationship between classroom management and its relationship to burnout. As determined by student interviews, Stern and Cox (1993) list the following as symptoms of burnout among music teachers: "... uninteresting, unapproachable, unimaginative, dull, and always seated behind their desk avoiding contact with students" (pg.
34). While acknowledging that there may be several causes of burnout, they cite the general cause to be a “perceived general negative student attitude and a lack of self-discipline and motivation in the classroom” (p. 35). They state that a meaningful remedy to burnout is “the development of an effective discipline and positive reinforcement strategy that is organized, clearly articulated, and consistently implemented”, and advise building a self-disciplining ensemble in which the students themselves take responsibility for adjusting the deviant behavior of another student. They assert that a system such as this communicates to students that someone actually cares about them and their success, and that “…a carefully executed curriculum is essential in avoiding the teacher stress that leads to burnout. This type of healthy preparation also assists in maintaining control of a classroom” (p. 36).

In their study, Mercer and Mercer (1986) surveyed 245 directors asking their perceptions of what causes burnout. They found that 133 participants cited “student recruitment, apathy and attrition” as a source of job stress, and 92 subjects cited “student discipline/musical immaturity” as a major stressor (p. 45).

**Classroom Management and Effective Teaching**

Several musical educators, whose articles were accepted in journal publications, draw a clear relationship between effective classroom management and effective teaching. VanDerveer (1989) highlights the importance of effective classroom management and its impact on the learning process. She suggests that creating a positive atmosphere of learning is a key to good classroom management, stating: “…the absence of discipline problems is directly related to effective classroom management and planning” (p. 23). VanDerveer lists several skills as “proactive management” or “preventive discipline,” in that they help in avoiding discipline
problems, and suggests that an effective music teacher and classroom manager be musically prepared for rehearsal, having thoroughly studied each piece. She also asserts that effective choir directors maintain good eye-contact with students, use praise judiciously, but praise good behavior and musical accomplishments. She encourages music teachers to try to motivate students to control themselves for the good of the group, and recommends that an effective teacher constantly monitor student behavior without slowing down the pace of the lesson.

In addition, VanDerveer maintains that effective music teachers have beginning and ending routines for rehearsal that are established early in the year. She recommends writing the daily lesson plan on the board, especially for middle school students; and asserts that this age of student needs to see the visible plan. She also maintains that this type of clear communication assists in students feeling secure about what to expect for that rehearsal. In turn, this lessens the incidence of student misbehavior. She recommends that students have "bell work" or an assignment to do as soon as they enter the room. She maintains that this sets the pace of the lesson as soon as students walk in the door. She concludes that it is up to the director to make sure that students are kept working for the entire classroom period. "Disruptive behavior will be rare if the pace of the lesson is quick and leaves no time for problems" (p. 25).

Nimmo’s (1997) concept of “Judicious Discipline” focuses on prudent consequences instead of punishment. If the teacher/student relationship is professional, then educational strategies can be considered that will assist the student’s growth rather than punitive responses based upon personal reactions. He encourages music teachers to look for the root of the problem. “Often, what appears to be a display of inappropriate behavior turns out to be a symptom of a larger issue, not always related to the classroom” (p. 29). “In order for educators to treat all students the same, they must treat all students as individuals” (p. 30). He recommends that music
teachers address conflict with self-control and courtesy, and state clear expectations of behavior in rehearsal to students, parents, and administration.

Nimmo also suggests that directors ask students questions in trying to resolve a conflict; this gives them an opportunity to be part of the solution, and encourages taking responsibility for one's own learning by appropriate behavior. He submits that shared power in the classroom equals shared responsibility. "A conductor expects the students to be involved in the music making," and notes that "Students who have a sense of responsibility and ownership tend to make more appropriate decisions" (p. 30).

Gordon (2001) discussed the director's "manner" or demeanor with students and it's effect on student behavior. She states: "I realized that my students' performance, musically and behaviorally speaking, was a direct reflection of my teaching..." (p. 23). She is adamant that a classroom management system is crucial for student's optimal learning, that it teaches responsibility and self-control, it legally protects teachers and students, and can reduce stress for the teacher. She notes that music teachers who are adequately trained in classroom management may be more successful teachers: "When management becomes a less profound factor in teaching, stress may be greatly reduced, which could greatly enhance teacher effectiveness, encourage collegiality with faculty and staff, and prolong professional commitment to the music classroom" (p. 23). Gordon adds: "Teaching students to respect each other and the teacher is an integral part of the curriculum—it's a learned behavior" (p.23). She asserts that teacher modeling of respect, in addition to teaching students to respect each other, contributes to higher levels of self-esteem for students. This in turn fosters a healthy learning environment. She also submits that effective classroom management goes hand in hand with effective teaching by encouraging music teachers to communicate behavioral expectations clearly, be consistent when managing
For a more productive choral rehearsal, Lamb (2005) makes the following suggestions: 1) Start on time. She advocates beginning immediately after the bell rings, or setting a timer with a bell to go off right at the beginning of class. 2) Make taking attendance the student’s responsibility. Lamb suggests having students sign in as they enter (having severe consequences if students attempt to forge friend’s signatures), or using a hangtag system in which each student turns over his or her tag as they enter. She also advocates using section leaders to take attendance. 3) Take time to warm up. Lamb asserts that this time is essential for student’s vocal health and technique. 4) Include sight-singing. Lamb suggests that this practice helps students work more effectively and musically. 5) Post the order of music before each rehearsal. 6) Make sure students have pencils. Lamb encourages directors to make sure that students get in the habit of marking their scores accordingly. 7) Say as much as you can using as few words as possible. 8) Keep students singing. 9) Plan well for the rehearsal. 10). Make rehearsal fun. Lamb encourages teachers to laugh with their students, to joke about mistakes made. She asserts that this will motivate students to enjoy working hard together.

Bauer (2001) asserts that skilled classroom managers are proactive. They are well prepared for rehearsal, and understand that effective teaching includes short and long-range goals. They have procedural goals and have thought through how they will teach certain concepts. This “procedural planning” also includes having the room and materials ready before students arrive. The rehearsal order is on the board as students arrive; this avoids a potentially problematic management situation if students must wait for the teacher to explain what pieces they will be rehearsing. He recommends that music teachers know their students, treat them with
respect, and use student leaders to exert positive peer pressure. They reinforce positive student behavior and make a sincere effort to “catch ‘em being good”. Further, Bauer submits that effective choir directors vary their location while they teach; they use physical proximity to manage student behavior. This also conveys an energetic image of the conductor, instead of one who is “locked to the podium” or stuck behind a piano.

With regard to classroom discipline, Bauer (2001) admits that even with excellent planning and teaching practice that student misbehavior may still occur. He is adamant that music teachers must develop a discipline plan that is consistent with the school’s discipline policies and procedures. This plan should include rules, consequences and rewards which clearly and positively state expectations for student behavior. Bauer also encourages music teachers to communicate the discipline plan to students, parents and administration. He recommends that directors enforce rules quickly, consistently, and quietly, and reminds music teachers to remain calm when dealing with disruptive behavior. He recommends that directors do not directly confront students in front of their peers, and advises music teachers to not threaten students with a consequence that they are unable to follow through on.

Nutter (2000) offers several suggestions or “keys to classroom management”. She submits that an enthusiastic teacher attitude, organization, and communication are three elements that enable teachers to manage their classrooms successfully. Being prepared to teach includes being mindful of student’s learning styles, so the teacher can “switch gears” quickly to maintain a comfortable pacing of the lesson, lessening the opportunity for students to become off-task. It also allows the teacher to monitor the music classroom while teaching. She advocates creating a total school environment which promotes good school discipline, and in which faculty and staff
emphasize positive and preventive practices. She maintains that this aids in teaching students to exercise self-discipline and promotes excellence.

Woody (2001) encourages music teachers to take a reflective approach to classroom management, maintaining that this allows teachers to take precautions that may prevent behavior problems. He recommends being perceptive to students' needs, and observant of the conditions under which misbehavior might occur. He asserts that being creative and creating an environment in which students are motivated to participate decreases the reasons and opportunities for students to misbehave. Woody also encourages teachers to reflect on the example they are setting for students by being prepared, enthusiastic, and respectful of students.

Zeiger (1996) offers ten steps to creating a happier classroom. He asserts that music teachers must stay calm and in control, "no matter what" (p.38). He encourages teachers to meditate upon possible situations in order to prepare several courses of action, and recommends that ignoring disruptive behavior and speaking with the disruptive student individually after rehearsal will lessen the recurrence of such behavior. He suggests that maintaining a positive atmosphere, and stressing the importance of music will help students in discovering their own creative potential. Informing students and parents of the rules and grading policy, and enforcing them in rehearsal creates a secure environment in which students know what is expected of them. He maintains that being prepared to teach but being able to change that plan when necessary will keep student's attention and lessen the opportunity for misbehavior.

The Music Educators National Conference (MENC) suggests that maintaining classroom discipline begins in the well-ordered mind of the teacher, and is an element of a total school environment that emphasizes positive and preventive practices, instead of merely focusing on symptoms of misbehavior. MENC also recommends that discipline problems can be avoided by
including students in policy developments, which fosters a sense of school pride and ownership on the part of the students.

*Classroom Management and Pre-Service Training*

Many professionals are clear in stating that pre-service preparation in classroom management remains virtually non-existent. Hickey and Rees (2002) state that undergraduate music teacher degree programs “are already overloaded with required coursework” (p. 1). They go on to state:

> In the case of music teacher education, the academic requirements of most collegiate music curricula supersede exposure to early childhood studies, music technology, world music, testing and learning assessment, research, student composition, cultural sensitivity, and different learning styles, as well as incorporation of national, state, and local standards. (p. 2)

Snyder (1998) acknowledges the effect cooperating teachers have on student teachers, but states that student-teachers’ previous experiences and personalities will affect how receptive they are to a cooperating teachers’ style. He asserts that the cooperating teacher sets the stage with regard to rules and consequences, and that they have already created a specific classroom environment, which is a major factor in determining the classroom management success of the student teacher. The more structured the classroom setting, the fewer discipline problems occur. Snyder also maintains that cooperating teachers who actively work with student teachers on
Classroom management have success in affecting their student teachers' classroom management skills.

While acknowledging that teaching music ensembles provides a unique situation for classroom management, Snyder has several suggestions to better prepare pre-service music educators. He encourages cooperating teachers to create short teaching segments for student teachers in areas where the group has already achieved fairly high levels of expertise. If the student teacher’s style is different from cooperating teacher, time should be allowed for them to reflect on and re-teach the same segment so necessary skills and routines are practiced. Snyder advocates that the physical set up of the rehearsal space can also aid in effective classroom management. He suggests that teachers pace activities to allow for maximum time on task for students, and maintain good eye-contact with students. He also advocates stating clear expectations of behavior early in the academic year to students and parents, and being consistent with the application and follow-up of those rules. He asserts that effective choir directors vary the pacing and difficulty of lessons. He also encourages directors to intervene early before situations escalate, and advocates using verbal and non-verbal methods of communication to regain or keep student attention.

Classroom Management and the Music Ensemble

Professionals agree that teaching music ensembles provides a unique situation for classroom management. Morrison (2001), suggests that by recognizing the specific musical culture of school music programs, educators can become better advocates for their programs and the benefits these programs afford their students. He cites the common cultural themes of Identity, Transmission, Social dimension, Practical and Personal Boundaries, Organizational
Hierarchy, Traditional Song, Traditional Performance Practices, The Diaspora, and other areas and applies them to the music ensemble. With regard to the organizational hierarchy that exists in ensembles, Morrison acknowledges that, unlike other academic classrooms, performance ensembles often possess an internal power structure. This may be in the form of students being elected to serve as secretary, president, drum major, section leader and so on. “All classrooms have rules, but in the culture of the school music group, these rules take on a depth and breadth that go well beyond the simple maintenance of good discipline” (p. 27).

**Master Teachers**

Many authors agree that a “master” music teacher should be able to maintain discipline. Merrion (1990) indicates that master music teachers endeavor to create a total learning environment instead of using “gimmicks” to deal with isolated discipline problems. She asserts that master music teachers must select good music: “Master teachers go about selecting and presenting music with the mission of making music in mind” (p. 27). She also submits that time management is essential, and directors must use every minute to make music. “Time on task makes for more learning and fewer problems in the classroom” (p. 27). Merrion suggests that creating a positive atmosphere of learning is a key to good classroom management, and that music teachers must convey the belief that discipline problems have no place in rehearsals.

Master teachers naturally combine the integrity of the discipline of making music with effective classroom management. They are aware of the reasons that students are disruptive or apathetic. They are not easily exasperated, distracted, or frustrated. They have strong constitutions when confronting disruptive behaviors. Yet their sincerity,
intensity, musicianship, and fondness for students comes through in even the most trying circumstances. (p. 29)

Merrion recommends learning student’s names and identifying student leaders to act as role models to help in maintaining classroom management. She encourages directors to deal directly and promptly with discipline problems, and suggests that directors detach from intense situations and look for the root of the behavior problem.

Brand (1990) concurs with Merrion on several points. He asserts that: "Master music teachers never underrate the musical ability of their students" (p. 23). He states that a master teacher has a “sixth sense” for understanding his or her students, and that they go out of their way to keep their eyes on students. These teachers know their students; they know who is falling behind, who is in trouble, and perhaps most importantly, “...they care enough to do something about their students’ difficulties” (p.25). Brand asserts that master teachers have high goals and demonstrate an “instructional urgency” as a means to earn student respect and inspire loyalty. Brand maintains that master teachers are creative, and uses the term “staging” to refer to the use of “ingenious” means to attain their high musical goals. “Drawing from a menu of staging techniques reduces student apathy and encourages student motivation and absorption. Involved students are learning” (p. 25). He claims that master teachers often have a theatrical flair and are enthusiastic. This, he maintains, is also an indication of a master teacher’s charisma, classroom presence, and confidence in their abilities.
Communication

Wignes (1995) asserts that music educators will enjoy teaching more and students will enjoy learning if teachers are more selective in the words and expressions they use to communicate expectations for student behavior. She encourages educators to be thoughtful about the words they choose when interacting with students. She suggests that effective communicators offer specific praise to students. In particular, she recommends that music teachers refrain from saying “I like the way you...” but “you entered so quietly,” for example. This, she states, focuses on the action, not the student trying to please the teacher. She suggests that effective music teachers make a clear statement of rehearsal objectives, and advocates that teachers say “You are expected to...” when explaining desired behavior. She maintains that this context of expectation uses the concept of inhibition, which proposes that two opposing behaviors cannot exist simultaneously. Therefore, while a student is complying with the teacher’s expectation, he or she cannot participate in misbehavior. This environment, Wignes asserts, invites the students to accommodate the teacher’s expectation and encourages them to become self-governing.

Wignes suggests that negative classroom rules may cast an air of restriction, and recommends that music teachers make positive statements, like “Keep hands at your side”, or “Start assignments early to have them finished on time” may be better than “Your assignments are always late.” When giving directions, she advocates being brief: “Face front” or “Listening mode, please”. She also encourages teachers to say “please” and “thank you” often, and maintains that this models acceptable behavior and can improve student’s self-image. She specifically recommends a technique referred to as the “praise around”, in which the teacher
praises the behavior of everyone around the person who’s misbehaving, giving no notice to the bad behavior.

Bartholomew (1993) specifically addresses the issue of positive feedback in good classroom management. He suggests that praise can be negative in certain situations, causing feelings of inferiority for the one who is not the recipient of it; it can also cause feelings of superiority for the one who does. He also suggests that effective communicators offer specific praise to students, saying: “You sang that well” instead of saying “Good job” or “You did well”. Bartholomew maintains that careful choosing of words has a definite impact on students: “We need to use language carefully” (p. 42). He encourages teachers to refrain from using absolute terms such as “always” and “never”, because they are rarely useful or accurate. Conversely, abuse of superlatives tends to overdramatize a situation. He asserts that evaluative comments should be phrased in a way that addresses the criterion on which the evaluation is based, and draw attention to the desired behavior, not the teacher’s preference.

Suggestions for New Teachers

Walker (1993) has several ideas for new music teachers to establish good classroom management. She recommends that learning student’s names, and identifying student leaders to act as role models can help in maintaining effective classroom management. She advises music teachers to be willing to take on extra duties in order to be visible within the school community, and to consult with other teachers and administrators. She also advocates catching students being good and praising them for good behavior, and encourages directors to involve students in the objective-and-goal-setting process early on.
Merrion (1991) recommends the following as methods of "preventive discipline", but first recognizes that "No discipline strategy can compare . . . with the sense of credibility teachers must establish when on the job" (p. 54). She notes that being consistent and fair when enforcing the rules provides stability and a sense of security for students, thus reducing disruptive behavior. This consistency also leads to "trust—the foundation of any good relationship" (p. 54). She also encourages teachers to be well-prepared for rehearsal, which allows one to be flexible enough to adjust a lesson plan if needed: "Sometimes a lesson we select is far too simplistic and the students are bored, or it may be way too challenging and the students become frustrated, either of which invites the students to fall off task" (p. 55).

Classroom Management and "Troubled" Students:

For the "troubled child" Weinstein (1995) submits that these students have certain needs that must be met before effective classroom management can take place, stating: "well established routines, procedures, and rules for participation are very important to the predictability inherent in stable and consistent learning experiences. In providing these, teachers may reawaken and strengthen a troubled child's own internal capacity to be trusting" (p. 19). Weinstein likens this role of a teacher to that of a surrogate parent. He maintains that effective music teachers should be flexible, have a healthy, balanced perspective and are cool in a crisis. He recommends that teachers search for a solution calmly and deliberately, and take reasonable and appropriate action to make the best out of a difficult situation. This, he proposes, reinforces trust between teacher and student. He maintains that being consistent and fair when enforcing the rules provides stability and a sense of security for students, thus reducing disruptive behavior, and refers to this as being benevolent: "Children will feel safe and trusting when they recognize
that the music teacher has their well-being at heart” (p. 20). Weinstein submits that for music teachers to be effective with troubled students, they must first be effective teachers: “Chaotic disorganization, impulsiveness, carelessness, poor preparation, insensitivity, lateness, and broken promises at the hands of adults are dangerous experiences for children, especially troubled children” (p. 20).

Buck (1992) advocates that the physical set up of the rehearsal space can aid in effective classroom management. He defines “classroom management” as effective teaching behaviors, while “behavior management” refers to skills and techniques used when students exhibit deviant behavior. He is adamant that: “These (intervention) strategies are to be used in combination with the effective classroom management techniques; effective behavior management cannot be separated from effective classroom management” (p. 39). He recommends techniques for the physical structure of the classroom environment and the curriculum to increase student learning by using planned seating, circles instead of rows, alternating seating of disruptive and non-disruptive students, and carpet squares. Buck asserts that effective teachers know the underlying cause for the inappropriate behavior.

**Summary**

Professional research and opinion highlight the critical importance of music teachers’ ability to manage their classrooms well for effective learning to take place. There seems to be consistent agreement among music educators that their own health, sense of satisfaction in teaching, as well as the success of their ensembles depend on effective classroom and behavior management. While the varied sources reviewed for this study presented many individualized
approaches to effective teaching and classroom management, they seem to reach consensus on
the major role played by solid classroom management in the choral ensemble.
CHAPTER THREE

Research Methods

The purpose of this research project was to examine the opinions of choral directors regarding classroom management. This study obtained their opinions regarding their pre-service training in classroom management, the classroom management strategies they employed, and the relationship of ensemble success to good classroom management.

Selection of Subjects

Subjects were selected based on their perceived success and experience as choir directors. Subjects were known previously to the researcher in her experience as an undergraduate student, and as an elementary and junior high Choir Director. Preliminary contact was made with subjects by way of telephone, email or a personal visit. The purpose of the research study was described and potential subjects were asked if they would be willing to participate in an interview. Subjects were guaranteed anonymity. They were told the interview would take more than one hour, and would be tape-recorded in addition to the researcher taking notes. The final pool of subjects consisted of eight choir directors, three male, and five female. Two were teaching junior high choir, two were teaching elementary classroom music, three were teaching high school choir, and the final subject was conducting two choirs and teaching voice at the University level. All were experienced choral directors, with careers ranging from eight to thirty-two years of teaching choral music.
Methods

An interview guide was developed to direct the discussion with the subjects. Demographic information was obtained, and the directors were then asked questions in three categories: pre-service preparation, effective classroom management strategies, and classroom management and its relationship to ensemble success. A copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

All interviews were conducted after school hours in local coffeehouses, and took place from the end of December 2004 to early February 2005. Each interview was tape-recorded, and the researcher also took notes. The duration of each interview ranged from 1 and 1/2 hours to four hours. All subjects demonstrated great interest in participating in this study, despite the length of some of the interviews.

Analysis of Data

Subjects were asked questions in four categories for analysis: Demographic Information, Classroom Management Training, Classroom Management Strategies, and Classroom Management/Ensemble Success. After the interviews were completed, each subject's responses were clarified by reviewing the audiotapes. The subjects' responses were summarized and organized onto a spreadsheet. After this two-stage process was completed, raw data were examined to determine common themes in each of several sub-questions of the four categories. Results are presented in narrative form and in table format based on these emerging categories. In some instances, the raw data are presented to further illuminate the subjects' views. Subjects were also asked to describe their personal successes and failures with classroom management,
and to comment on ways effective management might have affected their feelings of success and competence. Their responses to this query are presented in narrative form.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The purpose of this research project was to examine the opinions of choral directors regarding classroom management in the choral rehearsal. Data were collected in individual interviews, which were tape-recorded and subsequently analyzed to determine emerging categories.

Demographic Information

Subjects were asked a number of questions outlining several aspects of their educational training and teaching experience, including current teaching assignment, location, level of education and prior teaching experience.

Current Teaching Assignment

Three subjects were currently teaching high school choir, conducting at least four mixed ensembles and at least one select ensemble. Two subjects were teaching elementary general classroom music and two subjects were teaching junior high choir, conducting two mixed ensembles and one select group. One subject was directing two university ensembles and teaching voice. All three high school directors were also teaching voice lessons to their students. The current teaching locations were evenly divided between urban and rural settings (four urban, four rural).
Level of Education

All subjects interviewed held a Bachelor’s Degree in Music or Music Education. Three were certified within the state of Minnesota to teach Kindergarten through 12th grade General (also called Classroom) Music, and Choir. Half of those interviewed held Master’s Degrees, with one of those also having earned a Doctorate.

Prior Teaching Experience

All of the subjects were experienced teachers, with the number of years teaching ranging from a high of thirty to a low of eighteen. This overall teaching experience encompassed substitute teaching, elementary and junior high General Music, pre-Kindergarten, and a wide range of elementary through high school courses, including high school Agriculture and Art. This also included teaching music classes (theory, history) and choirs at the University level.

The number of years of previous choral teaching experience was equal at both the high school and junior high levels. The total years of prior high school choir teaching for all subjects combined was twenty-four. Three subjects had taught 3-8 years at the high school level, and one had taught high school choir for twelve years.

The total number of years of prior junior high choir teaching was also twenty-four. The director with the most overall experience in choral music taught junior high choir for two years. Five of those interviewed had taught junior high choir for 2-8 years, while one subject had nine years of previous experience teaching junior high choir.
Opinions about Junior High Choir

Because all subjects had experience teaching junior high choir, their views about this unique teaching experience were explored. Six indicated that their experience teaching junior high choir was positive because of the students' enthusiasm. One said: "Good music does not have an age limit." Another said: "You can sell’em that choir’s great!" Two said an additional reason for their positive experience was because the administration was very supportive of their requests regarding rehearsal scheduling. Another subject said that she loved teaching junior high choir because her experience as a member of a junior high choir was very positive; her director "loved us just the way we were." One director indicated that her experience was initially negative because she had poor rehearsal facilities, but now has an excellent rehearsal space. The remaining director had a negative experience teaching junior high choir, giving as his reason the principal’s lack of discipline, and the second principal was not liked by any of the teaching staff. This director said: "The local administrator absolutely makes or breaks it" (the choir program). Of the eight subjects, seven indicated that teaching junior high choir was a positive experience.

Interviewees were also asked if they had an age preference for teaching choir. Of the two currently teaching junior high choir, one indicated that he preferred junior high choir because of the student’s enthusiasm. "You can get them hooked," he said. A second subject indicated that she enjoyed classroom music more than choir; not because of behavioral issues, but because she feels personally inadequate in teaching choir. Four subjects indicated that they prefer high school and/or university level choir because it is more musically rewarding for them. At the time of the interviews, these subjects were also currently teaching high school choir. One subject indicated that she becomes "too bored" with junior high repertoire. Subject’s responses are summarized in table one.
Table 1

Choir Teaching Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Choral Teaching Preference</th>
<th>Reasons for Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Prefers high school</td>
<td>More personally musically rewarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Prefers high school</td>
<td>More easily motivated, fewer management problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Prefers high school and/or college</td>
<td>Higher level of musical awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Prefers elementary music</td>
<td>Fewer numbers of programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Prefers junior high</td>
<td>Students’ enthusiasm: “You can give them a lifelong skill”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Prefers high school</td>
<td>More personally musically rewarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>No preference indicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Prefers junior high General Music vs. Choir</td>
<td>Has designed own curriculum, no tours, fundraising, or contests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, this group of subjects appeared to have substantial experience both in terms of years of teaching and types of ensembles directed.

Pre-Service Training in Classroom Management

Subjects were asked to describe the pre-service training they received in classroom management. They were asked to comment on their student teaching or apprenticeship experience, as well as to recommend ways for new choir directors to learn classroom management skills. Subjects were also asked what recommendations they would offer to
university or college faculty regarding pre-service training in classroom management. Their responses are grouped accordingly.

Academic Training in Classroom Management

None of the subjects interviewed said that they received specific training in classroom management in either their undergraduate or graduate education. Specifically, none of the respondents reported being required to take a specific course in classroom or behavior management. When asked to elaborate, subjects indicated that there might have been a day or two dedicated to the subject in an Education Methods or Psychology class. One director commented: “I’m thrilled you’re doing this because classroom management is ignored and it seems to me that it’s got to be the biggest qualifying factor in people quitting teaching.” Two directors participated in workshops and summer sessions about classroom management once they were employed. One director said: “There were occasional pointed statements along the way, maybe an interest session here and there” when asked about his pre-service training in behavior management. Another director explained that she was only required to practice doing lesson plans in front of a video camera, although that was “revolutionary” at the time. One director’s prior work as a camp counselor and youth director proved to be a valuable experience with regard to working with youth. Networking with colleagues once employed was helpful to one subject. This director wrote a letter to her undergraduate institution rebuking them for not preparing her for the classroom. In her interview she stated: “You didn’t prepare me for EBD teaching, you didn’t prepare me for having to make something out of nothing; when you’re given a classroom with no instruments, no music, no budget, and I’m supposed to get something going?”
Student Teaching/Apprenticeship Experience

Subjects were asked to consider whether the teaching of classroom management skills was a part of their student teaching or apprenticeship experience. Half of those interviewed stated that classroom management was not specifically addressed during their student teaching, while the rest said that it was. Subjects’ responses centered around the student teaching experience in general, and the role of the cooperating teacher.

One subject indicated that even though he was certified to teach Kindergarten through 12th grade, he only was required to student teach with grades nine through twelve. He also indicated that whatever he learned with regard to classroom management, he learned by observation and deduction. Two directors commented that they wished they could have had more “hands on” experience with students during student teaching. Another director believed that her student teaching experience was “inadequate” because it was too short, and also because she was unprepared for the “sink or swim” mentality once she attained employment.

Role of Cooperating Teacher

Subjects were also asked to comment on the role of their cooperating teacher. Two directors were told by their cooperating teachers that each teacher has her “own style” and to “do what’s comfortable for you as the director.” Of these, one director stated: “A whole lot of this (classroom management) is really being yourself, because you can’t fake any of this. Be yourself and know what your strengths are and use them to your advantage and the choir’s advantage.” Another subject’s cooperating teacher had also been the director of a boy’s choir of which the subject had been a member. This cooperating teacher was militant and used physical exercise as
a means to discipline students, with the parent's permission. Because this method appeared to be effective, the subject believed that his cooperating teacher was a good role model with regard to classroom management. "A kid was toast if he had to go to a counselor" said this subject.

Five of those interviewed stated that their cooperating teacher was a good role model regarding classroom management, while three said this was not the case with their cooperating teacher. Of the six subjects that indicated their cooperating teacher was a good role model, three said that it was because the director communicated clear expectations regarding student behavior. These teachers also communicated a genuine concern for students, while still maintaining an appropriate teacher-student relationship. One director reported having an "excellent" student teaching experience because his cooperating teachers were "tough and good; they had clear expectations and were good communicators, but the kids still knew they loved 'em." Another subject said she was thrilled with her student teaching experience because she believed she was privileged to work with a master teacher. "The kids knew every boundary, she trained the kids" said this subject. One subject recalled her elementary cooperating teacher telling her that she talked too much; "Keep directions to one or two things; that's it!"

Responses of these subjects also highlighted the importance of the cooperating teacher serving as a model for novice teachers. While five did say that they learned a considerable amount from their cooperating teachers, three subjects had an opposite experience. Those that said their cooperating teacher was a poor role model indicated this was so because of the way the cooperating teachers treated the students. These directors observed their cooperating teachers use humiliation and fear to manage student behavior. One director stated that her cooperating teacher would "go along then flip out and attack a specific student." Another elementary
cooperating teacher "used fear and terrorized students." A summary of subjects’ recollections of their early classroom management experiences is presented in table two.
Table 2

Student Teaching/Apprenticeship; Experiences in Classroom Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive experiences (N=6)</th>
<th>Negative experiences (N=3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Style was to demean and humiliate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teacher was gentle, never humiliated students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director mostly learned by observation.</td>
<td>Director felt training was inadequate because not enough contact time with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teacher was militant; had disruptive students do push-ups. Also had an understanding with school counselors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle and high school directors communicated clear expectations; students knew they cared; excellent experience.</td>
<td>Elementary director terrorized students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was thrilled with her student teaching experience because she believed that she was privileged to work with a master teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Subjects were asked if they had any suggestions for ways in which new teachers could learn choir classroom management. Four directors recommended changes or additions in the pre-service training of music teachers, specifically classes in classroom management and/or assessment. Apprenticeship is "bogus" because it is an artificial environment in which the teacher is present, as one director stated: "There should be much more time appropriated to classroom management at the undergraduate level." Another director stated: "They (undergraduates) need 1 year of classroom management theory and practical applications." She also recommended that speakers should be brought in to address undergraduate students, people "in the trenches."

Three directors recommended that teachers must have an understanding of the developmental level of their students. "Learn to understand kids, you’ll learn to understand what they’re doing. Their behaviors make sense if you know where they are developmentally" said one director. Another stated: "Kids are controlled by emotions and situations”, and another said: "Understand the grade level and what they need developmentally.”

One director recommended that undergraduates find and "observe a successful role model, whether the university requires it or not.” Another advocated that undergraduates get
more experience with students “in any context.” “Find master teachers and use them!” was the advice of another.

Some subjects included suggestions for new teachers once they had acquired employment. Two subjects suggested networking with peers, administration, and teachers from other disciplines, like language, for example. Interestingly enough, one subject did not have any suggestions, and another would not encourage anyone to pursue education as a career.

Some subjects also included their own classroom management strategies/beliefs when answering this question. One directly referred to the special relationship between teacher and student that must be protected. “There’s a delicate string between you and your students. If you break it, it takes so much more effort to re-tie it. Never break it!” Another said that one must have the “fire in the tummy” to teach these days. Another subject recommended catching students “being good”. “Find the things they do well, even the little things.”

Two subjects strongly encouraged new teachers to maintain membership in professional organizations like ACDA (American Choral Directors Association), MENC (Music Educators National Conference) and MMEA (Minnesota Music Educators Association). One suggested that teachers “stay informed” and “know what’s out there” in relation to resources regarding classroom management. A brief summary of subjects’ recommendations is presented in table three.
Recommendations to College Faculty

Subjects were asked what recommendations they would make to college faculty regarding classroom management. Suggestions were similar to the previous question, with four subjects again recommending a specific class in classroom management. One recommended a class "with experts at the college level." Two subjects suggested more direct contact experience with students, stating: "They (undergraduates) need to get out and do it (teach)." Two subjects addressed the teaching relationship between the university’s Music and Education Departments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Suggestions for Learning Choir Classroom management.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Formal undergraduate training necessary; the videos she viewed were excellent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A class in Classroom Management is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Network with peers, interdisciplinary teachers. Find out the rules in your school; what are the consequences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>None suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Would not recommend education to anyone these days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Volunteer with kids in any context to learn what they are about. Get extra experience in undergraduate training. Perhaps a class or two on “tricks” that are effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Find Master teachers and use them! Talk to the Principal, he/she might be helpful. A class on grading is necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Change the undergraduate requirements! Bring in speakers, people “in the trenches”. Teach students how to evaluate/assess choir.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Developing Classroom Management Skills
and how it could be improved. One asked: “Who’s covering classroom management?” Another mused: “If classroom management can be codified, try certain methods. Is there a way that some portions of methods can be taught by the Education Department?” One subject suggested presenting hypothetical situations to undergraduates, to help them establish a system for the daily tasks of teaching, i.e., taking attendance. Again, one subject had no recommendations, except to say that in his experience “A lot of college teachers just want to get away from kids.” Subjects’ recommendations are summarized in table four.
Table 4

**Recommendations to College Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Coordinate better with Education Department. Who is covering classroom management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A class in classroom management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>If classroom management can be codified, try certain methods. Is there a way that some portions of methods can be taught by the Education Department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Give hypothetical situations to students with different variables; help them figure out how to do the daily tasks, like taking roll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to volunteer more with kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>A class in classroom management, with experts at the college level. Teach the abbreviations for special education students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Undergraduates “need to get out and do it”. They need more hands on experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Choral Director’s Classroom Management Strategies**

The participating subjects were asked to describe their management style, how they would respond to a student who was not participating or disruptive, their rapport with their students, helpful teaching qualities, successful teaching strategies, and a grading system, if they employed one.
When asked to describe their management style, subjects' answers varied. Three subjects made a concerted effort to be "engaging" with their students. One subject described her style as "high energy and engaging"; she also employs humor and tries to entertain students to keep them involved. Similarly, another subject simply described her style as "Dramatic, positive, 'out there.'" Another subject described herself simply as "not militant", and that she makes choir fit her personality. Two subjects explained that one's style would be different depending on the personality of the ensemble. One answered this in the context of a junior high versus the high school choir rehearsal, stating that the director "can't stay on any one item too long" for junior high, and the director has "to keep them engaged in the music as much as possible." This subject also asserted that the junior high choir director "has to have a greater number of objectives per rehearsal time. High school students can concentrate longer." Another indicated that he would adjust his style depending on the needs of the group.

One subject described herself as "systematic and organized", although not as "fun" as her predecessor, meaning she required more of her students. One subject described his style as "loose", but kids knew where they stood. He indicated that there is an "informal comfort level" in his choir rehearsals. Another described herself as "very strict; students know what to expect. Here's what's expected and here's what'll happen if you don't." She also added: "The kids know that I'll follow through." Table five summarizes the management style of each subject.
Subjects were asked to describe ways they might respond to specific situations involving:

1) Non-participatory students, and 2) Disruptive students.

**Response to Non-Participatory Students**

Three subjects stated that their response to students who did not willingly participate in choir rehearsals would depend on the context of the situation; two of those specified that their response would also depend on their relationship with that particular student. One subject stated: “It depends on how well I know the kid. Some slip up, others are trying to get attention.” Three subjects suggested they initially use physical proximity and ask students one on one if they are not feeling well or are tired. Five subjects emphasized speaking individually with the student
in order to not embarrass or draw undue attention to him or her, stating: “One-on-one has a huge percentage of success when you tell them exactly what you’re seeing.” Referring to middle-school age students, another was adamant: “Never embarrass this age. That’s paramount.”

Two subjects mentioned using specific behavior management techniques which would not disrupt the flow of rehearsal. One suggested she would simply point at the student in question while maintaining the pace of rehearsal. “They know I know and they start singing.” Another mentioned he would turn the student around while singing is still going on. Table six summarizes subject’s responses.
Table 6

*Recommendations for Managing the Non-Participatory Student*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Recommendations for Managing the Non-Participatory Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Depends on the context and relationship with student. Address student respectfully, one on one if possible. Director has to know the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Point at student and keep rehearsal going. Director usually addresses the group as a whole instead of the individual, but will address the individual if they do not understand the large group social cues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Depends on the situation. Turn them around while singing is still going on; talk one on one after rehearsal if effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Inquire if student is sick or tired. Ideally address student one on one, but so many students may make that difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Use physical proximity and inquire if student is not feeling well. Depends on the context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Ask student one on one after rehearsal if they are ill. Middle schoolers are told if they have lost points for not participating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Initially observe and ignore the behavior, then talk to student privately, rarely in front of the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Talk to student at the break, never in front of the group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managing the Disruptive Student

Four subjects indicated they would remove a disruptive student from the rehearsal or relocate him or her within the group. One subject qualified her response by saying: “You have to know your kids, their situation, what makes ‘em tick; you have to know them well enough to know why they’re acting out.” Another subject recommended using the school’s “referral room” and document the nature and type of offense. Two subjects suggested a call home to parents or guardians may be effective. The option of extended eye contact with the student to regain student’s attention was advocated by two other subjects. Again, two subjects reiterated that speaking with the student individually and separate from the group may help to determine the underlying cause of the misbehavior. One stated: “Usually something else is going on.” Another subject reported that she may actually confront the student in class, depending on the nature of the disruption. Similar to responding to a non-participatory student, one subject reiterated that her response “depends on the kid,” and that “Experience will tell you if that kid’s behavior is for attention or not.”

One subject suggested couching the reason for the relocation in the context of improving the groups’ seating arrangement, thus not calling direct attention to the misbehavior itself. This subject also recommended not sending the student to the Principal’s office too early. Similarly, another subject stated that she would attempt to bring the student’s attention back to rehearsal by asking the student a question about the rehearsal piece instead of directly addressing the misbehavior by saying: “Don’t do that.” This subject also added: “A lot of times students are innocent in what they’re doing; they don’t really mean to be mean-spirited.” All of the subject’s responses indicated that some type of immediate response by the teacher is appropriate when a student is disrupting a rehearsal. A summary of subject’s responses is presented in table seven.
Table 7

**Managing the Disruptive Student**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directors</th>
<th>Recommendations for Managing the Disruptive Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Sent out of room. No tolerance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Call on them; ask questions about piece being rehearsed, not the behavior per say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Relocate the student, perhaps citing seating arrangement, not behavior. Do not refer to Principal too early.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Have them sit out from the group. Too many “time outs” require a phone call to parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Respond immediately. Remove student. Use referral room and specific form to document nature and type of offense. Referral room supervisor calls home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F | Possibilities: 1-perhaps an aberration that will not occur again  
2-extended eye contact, 3- call home, 4-talk out in hall and inquire as to what may be the underlying cause. Usually something else is going on. |
| G | May actually confront in class, depending on the disruption. May have to speak with student immediately out in the hall. |
| H | Director might stop the rehearsal and stare at the misbehaving student. |

**Director-Student Rapport**

Subjects were also asked to assess their overall rapport with students during rehearsal and in non-rehearsal settings. All of the subjects indicated having at least a “good” relationship with their choir members. One subject noted that students often refer to her as “Mom.” Although one subject reported enjoying a “good” rapport with her students, she also mentioned that she may
have been “too serious” about teaching music and possibly could have engaged her “less serious” students more. Two subjects cited established and appropriate teacher-student boundaries to describe their rapport with students. Another subject also emphasized that he attempts to maintain a “professional distance” from his students. One director said he wished he could have had “more control” in the classroom. A synopsis of subjects’ responses is presented in table eight.
Helpful Teacher Qualities/Characteristics

Subjects were asked what personal qualities or characteristics they would cite as helpful in maintaining effective classroom management. Several common themes emerged: 1) Having a sense of humor, 2) Being an effective communicator, 3) Having affection for and knowing young people, 4) Having patience and self-control, 5) Being organized, and 6) Being consistent.

Table 8

Director-Student Rapport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Self-Described Rapport with Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Good, balanced. Students call her “Mom”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good, balanced, friendly, approachable. Director believes she has established appropriate student-teacher boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Director would have liked to have more control and kept their interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Varied a lot; Director may have been “too serious” about the music and not have included the “less serious” kids enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Good teacher-student boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Good; students knew when they crossed a line, but responded well once reminded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Excellent; director knew her students loved her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Good; students knew she had set boundaries but are loyal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sense of Humor

Three subjects suggested having a sense of humor was beneficial when directing a choir. One stated that a sense of humor was “huge when I think of the master teachers I know.” One subject suggested that directors should “be light-hearted, witty and quick.”

Effective Communicator

Two subjects encouraged being honest with students. Being a good communicator was also recommended by two subjects, and two subjects stated that a choir director has to be organized. Two subjects recommended that choir directors should plan ahead.

Affection for/Knowing Young People

Three subjects stated that a director should “like” or “love” kids in order to be an effective classroom manager. One of them added: “They don’t care what you know until they know you care.” Another subject advocated the importance of understanding the developmental level of your students by saying: “Kids are works in progress.” Another subject also added that choir directors must “choose repertoire appropriate for the vocal age” and “have a physical, psychological and musical strategy for working with boys.”

Patience and Self-Control

Two subjects suggested that choir directors should exercise patience, and half of the subjects suggested that demonstrating self-control is also helpful. One stated: “Keep your cool.” Another described this as being “emotionally stable, secure and mature.” Two subjects both recommended that choir directors need to have a good sense of timing and judgment, stating that
a choir director needs to “be able to sense the rhythm of the class and how much time to spend on things.”

Organization

Two subjects indicated that effective teachers are organized. One said that choir directors must be able to multi-task. “They (teachers) need the ability to balance many different things going on mentally at one time.”

Consistency

Two subjects indicated consistency on the part of the director is an important element of effective teaching. Another subject further qualified her remarks, stating: “Seventh and eighth grade choir is a different ball of wax. You gotta be more militant.” She also said: “A lot of discipline problems happen when a person isn’t consistent with how they deal with the same behavior over and over again. The kids behave differently because of that. The teacher gets so mad at themselves because they didn’t do either that right thing or the same thing that they did last time. That’s why people hate disciplining because they’re mad at themselves most of the time. They (students) try to get you and they do get you because you’re so mad at yourself.”

Table nine summarizes subject’s responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Humor</td>
<td>Be “with-it”, and aware of what’s happening in the classroom. Be quick, witty, and light-hearted. Have a sense of humor and timing. “Have an engaging sense of humor.” Have a good sense of humor; be cheerful, funny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Be able to sense the rhythm of the class and how much time to spend on things. Use a tall physical posture, no matter the director’s actual height. Disciplinarians should not interrupt the flow of rehearsal. Be honest with students. Be direct and honest; never use sarcasm. Be a good communicator. Communicate well; look for the positive things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for Young</td>
<td>Have a physical, psychological, and musical strategy for working with boys. Choose repertoire appropriate to the vocal age. “They don’t care what you know until they know you care.” You have to love kids. “You need to like kids” “Whatever you do, don’t put these kids down.” Know the names of your students! A “type A” personality would not work. “If you have that kind of control, you don’t have happy kids. It’s about them making music.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Be “fair and firm”. Be consistent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to describing the characteristics of effective choir directors, subjects were also asked to list successful teaching strategies of effective choir directors, and how that affects classroom management. Subject’s responses were similar to their descriptions of characteristics of effective choir directors. Several categories of response emerged, including 1) Proximity Control, 2) Active involvement, 3) Clear Communication, 4) Consistency, 5) Appropriate Curriculum, 6) Removal or Relocation of students. 7) Being organized, and 8) Knowing one’s students.

**Proximity Control**

Three subjects indicated that the use of physical proximity is an effective strategy when rehearsing. They noted that this aids the director in hearing student’s voices, but also serves as a deterrent to misbehavior. Another elaborated to say that choir directors should use recorded accompaniments in rehearsal so they can “move around and listen” more closely to students’ voices.

**Active Involvement**

Five subjects also recommended keeping students engaged and actively involved in rehearsal assists greatly in maintaining student behavior. One subject advocated using kinesthetics with students to keep them engaged in rehearsal, stating: “You have to engage them every single minute. The more physical engagement you have, the less behavioral problems you’re gonna have.” This subject also added: “You have to have different ways of doing the same thing, especially with junior high.” Another subject recommended that choir directors get
students singing immediately at the beginning of the year to measure the skill level of the group. One subject advised: “Keep 'em busy, keep 'em singing.” Another stated: “Keep them engaged.”

Clear Communication

Half of the subjects also advocated clear communication in the form of appropriate use of praise, and being honest with students and letting them know if their behavior is inappropriate. Five subjects send a letter to parents and administration regarding behavioral and performance expectations. This contract has to be signed by parents and returned to the director. These subjects’ syllabi are also available to parents and guardians on the school’s websites. When responding to misbehavior, one subject recommended: “Respond immediately and impersonally. They (students) need to know when they’ve crossed the line. Deal with the problem and move on.” In the rehearsal context, another stated: “Be brief. Don’t get wordy, don’t get fancy.” This subject also recommended videotaping concerts and reviewing them in class so students can see what they look like on stage.

Consistency

Four subjects stated that choir directors must be consistent with teaching procedures and means of discipline. Three subjects submitted that choir directors should be organized and have a plan for teaching. One said; “Be procedural when teaching concepts.” Another simply said: “PLAN.” One said: “Show them the line and that you mean it; then they are safe and don’t push the limits anymore. If you’re fair and consistent with the kids, then classroom management isn’t so much of an issue.” Another stated: “Be consistent with your expectations and they will rise to them.”
Appropriate Curriculum

Five subjects recommended choosing an appropriate level of curriculum and music. Two subjects submitted that choir directors should: “have goals of high standard that make sense for the students and the group, like those recommended by ACDA and MMEA.” Another subject stated: “Choose appropriate and challenging music for their developmental level.” One subject recommended having students sing in circles and listen to each other. “You gotta challenge ‘em” stated another subject. Two subjects advocated praising students, giving them incentive, and involving students in helping their peers. One stated: “Master teachers can sense when a child needs a purpose and they give them that right away.”

Removal or Relocation of Students

Within rehearsal, three subjects again recommended isolating or relocating misbehaving students. One encouraged the use of seating charts.

Being Organized

Organization was again affirmed by two subjects as a successful teaching tool. Subject’s responses indicated that being organized included lesson plans, the physical classroom environment, and also having a procedure in one’s mind when teaching concepts.
Knowing Students

Three subjects noted that directors need to “know” their students. One stated: “Network with colleagues to find out who the student leaders are.” Another indicated that knowing one’s students and the groups within which they interact can aid in understanding why they might misbehave. Table ten summarizes subject’s responses.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity Control</td>
<td>Move within the students and use proximity. Be flexible and adaptable. Director should move around. “You have to have different ways of doing things, especially for junior high.” Have students sing in circles and listen to each other. Use accompaniment recordings so you can move around and listen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Involvement</td>
<td>Use kinesthetics with students. Be active and creative. Involve students in teaching fellow students for extra credit. Give students jobs and incentive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Communication</td>
<td>Be a clear communicator. Send a specific letter home at the beginning of the year regarding behavioral expectations and concert dates that parents must sign. Administration should also be informed. Videotape concerts and review them in class so they can see what they look like on stage. Be honest. Praise them when they succeed. Communicate goals early; have goals of high standard that make sense for the students and the group, like those recommended by ACDA and MMEA. Use a clear speaking voice. Be brief when giving directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Be consistent. Be consistent with your expectations and they will rise to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Curriculum</td>
<td>Get them singing immediately at the beginning of the year to measure the skill level of the group. Choose appropriate and challenging music for their developmental level. Use an appropriate level of curriculum and music.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A third purpose of this study was to determine the choral director’s opinions about the relationship between ensemble success and good classroom management skills. Subjects were asked to describe the characteristics of successful choirs, and three major themes emerged:

1) Student’s behavior in performance, 2) Student’s demonstration of musical and singing skill, and 3) the Choir director’s choice of programming.

**Characteristics of a Successful Choir**

When asked to discuss their opinions about the characteristics of a successful choir, responses seemed to coalesce into four categories: 1) Stage Presence, 2) Student Animation, 3) Accuracy of Performance, and 4) Level of Repertoire.
Stage Presence

Five subjects indicated that successful choirs demonstrate stage presence and self-control. Two of those specifically mentioned that they observe how students walk on and off stage. Another two reported that watching the director is a quality of a successful choir.

Student Animation

Four subjects submitted that it should be obvious that the students like or love to sing, stating: “It’s about them (students) making music.” “The mark of a good junior high choir is one in which the members continue to love to sing,” asserted another subject. Another added: “But you don’t get to the part where they look like they’re having fun without the self-control and discipline. If it was a zoo, they wouldn’t be having fun.”

Accuracy of Performance

Half of the subjects indicated that the music performed should be sung correctly as written, and in tune, with changes made only for pedagogical reasons. Subjects noted that students should demonstrate good tone quality and should sing in the octave(s) where their vocal production is most successful.

Level of Repertoire

Three subjects addressed the issue of programming and level of repertoire. One stated: “If you over or under program, you’re in trouble with classroom management.” Another smiled and said: “You’re rejoicing if you can actually find some literature that fits the group; you can teach them these concepts, they sound good and they like it and they grew because of that piece.”
One subject indicated that successful choir programs perform a variety of music, in different languages; "Not all popular tunes." Subjects' responses are summarized in table eleven.
Table 11

*Successful Choir Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage Presence</td>
<td>Director looks at choir’s stage presence and self-control. Director watches how choir walks on stage; do they do it competently? The way they carry themselves creates expectation for themselves and the audience. Do they focus on the director? Director encourages choirs to lean forward on the balls of the feet a bit, instead of resting on the heels. Director believes that music should be memorized as written, with changes only for pedagogical reasons. Listens for independence of parts. No tolerance for misbehavior on stage. How do they walk on and off stage? Are they watching the director? Do they follow directions? Clothing should be appropriate. Does the choir demonstrate self-control? Students need to know why discipline comes first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Animation</td>
<td>Is it obvious that they love to sing? Do they seem to understand what the music is communicating? Are they visibly enjoying it? It is about the kids, not the director. Are they truly performing as an ensemble? Do they enjoy it? Are they having fun?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy of Performance</td>
<td>Sing in tune depending on the number of parts. Regardless of the octave, where are they most successful and vocally accurate? Students should be able to match pitch. Director also listens for good tone quality. Students must sing the score correctly and in tune. Director listens for harmony, correct pitch and tone. <em>Unison singing</em> is ok too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relationship between Director's Personal Style and Choir's Success

Subjects' opinions were solicited regarding their perception of the relationship between their personal style and the choir's success. All subjects interviewed agreed that there is a direct relationship between the director's style and the choir's success. Two common themes emerged in the responses: 1) Director's dedication and 2) Setting standards.

Director's Dedication

All the subjects seemed to share a sincere dedication to the success of their choirs. Based on their comments, they all believe that the director not only is a determining factor in the choir's success, but that the director's specific style (regardless of what that style may be) reflects on the group. One emphatically stated: "The director IS the choir. Not the reverse," and "Success is communicating the music to the audience. I take total responsibility for the sound and behavior of the choir, for the performance and how it goes, everything about the choir." Another agreed that the choir takes on the director's personality. "If the director is organized, secure and expressive, the choir will be. A disorganized or insecure teacher will not have a solid choir."
Two other subjects also agreed, stating; “If the director isn’t having a good time, they’re not doing it right.” Another stated: “The choir senses if the director likes teaching and is confident.”

Setting Standards

Three subjects agreed that the choir director must have high standards, and be able to demonstrate them. One stated: “I couldn’t have done it if I wasn’t a good piano player.” Another subject indicated that he used the piano and his voice heavily to correct singers. In reference to junior high, one subject stated: “My credibility with those 7-9 guys was dependent upon my ability to use a mixed voice, head and chest voice more or less successfully.” At the junior high level, one director was “more worried about the process than the end result. This level is preparation as musicians.” This subject’s focus is to teach more musical skills (solfege and sight-reading) than achieve a perfect sound.

Director’s Management Style and Student Motivation

Directors also commented on their perception of the relationship between their management style and student motivation. Again, the main issues that emerged from the subject’s discussion were: 1) Director’s enthusiasm, 2) Communication, 3) Level of repertoire, but the subjects also added 4) Trust, or relationship between students and the director.

Director’s Enthusiasm

Half of the subjects emphasized that their own enthusiasm affects the enthusiasm of the choir. One stated: “I’ve got to have the energy to be excited about what I do.” Another asserted: “If I’m not motivated, why should they be?” “Of course the students will sense the personhood
of the director, whether they love what they’re doing. The director must be enthusiastic about every part of their teaching, whether it’s why posture is good, or why good tone will make you feel good,” said another subject.

Communication

Three subjects emphasized the importance of good communication with students, stating it was important to communicate belief in student’s abilities, to use praise appropriately, to “give them a treat”; i.e., the reward of singing a favorite piece as an incentive. Another subject plans “talent days” for his students, to showcase talents that might not be as evident in choir, like juggling or comedy routines. This subject also advocated “common sense” communication of rehearsal and concert dates, stating: “Then they (students) know what’s expected.” Similarly, several subjects believed that communicating to students why choir is beneficial to them is a form of motivation. One subject asserted that this approach aids in classroom management. “I can’t control them, but I can motivate them to control themselves.” This subject also emphasized the success of the group to motivate her students: “We’re only as good as our worst member.” Two subjects added that choir directors should explain: “How is this good for me? Fun for me?”

Level of Repertoire

One aspect of a director’s style was the importance of motivating students with the good use of repertoire. Several subjects noted that choosing the appropriate repertoire and having “realistic expectations” affects student motivation, stating: “Choose the right repertoire first, so
they can be successful and learn that hard work pays off.” Another affirmed: “choosing the correct music” is crucial to providing opportunities for student’s success.

 Trust

Subjects indicated that gaining their trust was another important element in motivating students. One said: “Give them big goals.” “Push them.” This subject also said: “Students must know the director believes they can do it.” Similarly, another subject emphasized consistency in teaching as a way to build trust between her and her students, stating: “Under-promise, over-deliver. Every day.” This subject also added: “They (students) like to know what you’re going to do and they like to have you follow through on what you say you’re going to do.”

Classroom Management and Assessment

Subjects’ opinions were solicited about the relationship between methods of assessment and grading in choir and classroom management. Each director was asked if they had a specific method for assessing students, and if that method included evaluating student behavior. Directors indicated that factors important in grading were: 1) theory worksheets and other written material, 2) effective participation during rehearsals, 3) daily and concert attendance, and 4) communication to students, parents and administration. Four subjects administered vocal and theory quizzes. All agreed that they included an assessment of student’s behavior as part of the grading process. One said: “Grading is a huge part of management.” Another stated: “There needs to be an undergraduate class in how to grade choir.” “Document, document, document!” asserted another subject. Four subjects also graded heavily on student participation in rehearsal
and in concerts, specifying that half to three-quarters of a students’ grade depended on effective participation in the vocal ensemble.

Communication was another important element in grading. All but one of the subjects advocated clear communication with students and parents regarding the subject’s methods of grading, with four requiring students and parents to sign a grading contract at the beginning of the academic year: “Don’t surprise them!” said one director. Three of those subjects also said they post their syllabus and concert schedule on the schools’ website.

**Personal Anecdotes Regarding Classroom Management**

Subjects were given an opportunity to offer personal anecdotes about specific situations they had experienced, both positive and negative, pertaining to classroom management. They were asked to describe a situation in which they felt most successful in classroom management. Subjects had varying responses to this question. One cited a direct physical confrontation right before a concert in which she intervened, and “was punched in the face even!” This director was successful in convincing the offending parties to stay and perform. The rest of those interviewed spoke of a successful classroom management situation in the large group context. One subject addressed connecting with at-risk students, stating: “Music speaks to their personality where other subjects don’t.” Three subjects cited the successes of their performing groups. One director conducted a Bach piece at Christmas “as a result of my good management.” Another subject specifically cited his part in rebuilding a failing choir program, and another addressed his interpersonal skill in interacting with students.

When describing a more problematic situation, subjects’ responses again varied. Four subjects cited the challenge in working with individual disruptive students; two of those
specifically mentioned how that may distract the director from working with more dedicated students. One stated: “I felt bad that I never got to her,” but added: “At what point do you sacrifice the whole group for one who doesn’t want to be there?” Two subjects cited a lack of classroom control in teaching junior high General Music, with one stating: “It was a nightmare.” Another subject cited a major lack of support by administration when attempting to discipline his junior high choir.

Classroom Management and Feelings of Competence and Success

Subjects were asked to consider ways in which their ability to manage the class might contribute to their feelings of competence and success. Seven out of the eight subjects noted that classroom management indeed has a dramatic relationship to how good they feel about their teaching, and about themselves as teachers. These subjects were adamant that effective classroom management determines how well and how much they can teach. One subject stated: “It’s a spiral; the more effective you are, the more competent you become.” Another affirmed: “Effective classroom management determines success and whether you feel successful or not.” This same subject asserted: “We have to know what we’re doing in that room and then the kids conform to what you’re teaching them and how.” “I feel I’m more free to teach if my kids are in control; there’s no question about it” said another. Another subject stated that effective classroom management lessens her stress level: “you have a foundation to work from and you can improvise if you need to.”

Two subjects noted that successful classroom management, while affirming the teacher’s abilities, also affirms the students’ abilities. One stated: “If I could keep them quiet long enough to learn some music, then they could perform well, they felt better about what they were doing,
and I was accomplishing some musical education.” Another subject indicated that “The proof is in the pudding,” meaning that his student’s enjoyment of choir is a reflection on him and his teaching.

One subject’s response was more detached: “Feelings of success do not translate into a paycheck. Sometimes you just have to do the job to the best of your ability.” He also added: “You do the best you can, use the tools that you can use, and hope that it’s enough.”

Summary Recommendations for Classroom Management in the Choral Rehearsal

Subjects were given the opportunity to contribute their final thoughts or recommendations about classroom management in the choral rehearsal. Overall, their comments seemed to coalesce into four similar major areas of interest: 1) Musicianship, 2) Understanding of students’ developmental level, 3) Communication, and 4) Caring for students.

Musicianship

Surprisingly, only two subjects were emphatic about the importance of being a competent musician and having proficient piano skills. One stated: “You have to understand the process of getting to a goal. You must be able to process what is wrong and have the tools to fix it.” This subject also added: “Piano skills, Piano skills, Piano skills! If you can’t play piano, you can’t manage a classroom!” Another subject simply said: “Be a competent musician.” This subject also made a connection between a director’s management style when answering this question, stating: “Drill sergeants also keep the troops in line, but how many of them are going to be making music? There are also some very well behaved choirs that aren’t making any music at all.”
Student’s Developmental Level

Four subjects were passionate about understanding the psychological, emotional, musical and vocal developmental level of students. One stated: “You have to know what their vocal challenges are. If you can’t play piano or understand their vocal challenges, management doesn’t mean squat because the kids are so frustrated.” These subjects indicated that this knowledge is helpful in meeting student’s particular needs, which in turn affects how they behave in rehearsal and performance. Another subject would remind choir directors that kids are self-centered; if they’re acting out, it probably isn’t about the teacher. He stated: “Kids are pretty much the same; they want success, to be recognized, to be challenged. They want to do good work, and when the teacher isn’t doing that, they’re going to cause problems. They’re going to complain. They’re going to take you to task any way they know how”.

Communication

Three subjects emphasized that choir directors should communicate with parents, kids, and the administration. One subject stated: “Find the things you really love and communicate those things to your students and they will eat that up.” Another director recommended communication with parents regarding grading and concert dates, and a discipline plan that is “in sync” with the school plan. Similarly, another director had specific advice for choir directors, stating: “Learn to read your administration like you read your kids.” In the event of an incident that involves a report, this same subject recommended that choir directors document everything and go to the administration first, before a parent calls, asserting: “They don’t like surprises.”
Caring about/knowing your students

Three subjects were emphatic about knowing one’s students as people and musicians. One stated: “You need to know your kids and what they’re capable of.” Another stated: “Never break the delicate string between you and your students, for any reason EVER.” This subject also added: “Care about them and what you do.” With regard to discipline, one subject stressed: “We cannot lose our cool EVER, unless someone’s getting killed.”

Summary

This study examined the opinions of choir directors regarding classroom management. Eight interviews were conducted, asking subjects about their pre-service training in classroom management, effective classroom management strategies, how classroom management affects ensemble success, and the relationship between classroom management and assessment. The eight subjects for these interviews were all experienced teachers with a minimum of eighteen years of experience. All were currently teaching music, ranging from elementary classroom, junior high, high school and college choirs. Their opinions consistently focused on such areas as knowing, respecting and understanding students, being flexible, having appropriate teacher-student boundaries, and being able to communicate effectively.

While subjects indicated that effective classroom management was critical in the choral rehearsal, none of them reported that a course in classroom or behavior management was required of them at any point in their undergraduate or graduate training. Seven of the subjects recommended changes or additions to the undergraduate music education curriculum regarding classroom management and assessment.
The majority of the subjects recommended speaking with disruptive students individually to avoid a public confrontation. The importance of preserving the dignity of the student was crucial. Removal or relocation of the student was the most common response to a disruptive student.

Several directors reported that a “successful” choir demonstrates musicianship, and also reported that positive student behavior is a characteristic of a successful choir. These subjects also asserted that the successful choir’s enjoyment of music should be apparent. All participants indicated that their choir’s performance, musically and behaviorally, is a direct reflection on the teaching style and personality of the director, and seven of the subjects reported that their sense of competence and success is directly related to how effective they are in managing a classroom. They believed that effective classroom management determined the success of their choir.

All of the director’s methods of assessment and grading of students’ work included an element for evaluating student behavior. They indicated that student’s grades were adversely affected if they demonstrate behavior which is disruptive to other student’s learning.

Most of the subjects spoke in general terms of the successes of their performing ensembles. When asked to describe a situation in which they felt less successful, four of the eight subjects noted situations in which there was a one-to-one interaction and they felt they did not “reach” the student, and expressed remorse at not retaining those students in the ensemble.

Four categories emerged from subjects’ discussion when asked for final thoughts or recommendations about classroom management: musicianship, understanding of students’ developmental level, communication, and caring for students. Overall responses included understanding boundaries between teacher and student, being involved in professional
organizations, being organized, and suggestions for placement of students within the choral ensemble.

The passionate and often intense responses of the subjects throughout the interviews showed little ambivalence to the topic of classroom management and its relationship to these teacher's success and personal competence. This was particularly evident in their responses to queries about musicianship, respect for students, and enthusiasm for teaching choral music. Overall, responses were consistently and almost universally in agreement that effective music teaching and classroom management are irrevocably and significantly interrelated.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study investigated the opinions and practices of choir directors regarding classroom management. Eight interviews were conducted, which sought to determine subject’s opinions regarding their pre-service training in classroom management, classroom management strategies they employ, the relationship of classroom management to ensemble success, and connections between classroom management and assessment. Results of this study revealed that none of the subjects received special training in classroom management, and all indicated that there is need for specific training in classroom management for music majors. They believed that there is a strong relationship between their teaching style and the success of their choirs, and agreed that effective classroom management helped them feel more competent as choral directors. Half of those interviewed included evaluation of student behavior in their grading methods.

Conclusions

Opinions of subjects regarding many aspects of classroom management showed remarkable agreement, and also were not evidently affected by the subject’s age or number of years of teaching experience. One area of primary agreement pertained to the importance of pre-service training for novice teachers, both in university music education and in their student teaching experiences. None of the subjects indicated having received specific training in classroom or behavior management in their undergraduate curriculum. It was surprising that this was the case for subjects who had recently completed an undergraduate or graduate degree, as well as for those who had completed their education twenty-five years ago. Those who said they
had received some training had participated in workshops or similar experiences after they had been employed.

There appeared to be no noticeable difference between the dates and years when a subject completed undergraduate and/or graduate training and the existence of specific training in classroom management. Subjects agreed in significant ways, regardless of experience and education. Regardless of when or how long they have been teaching choir, the size of their ensembles or their level of education, all the subjects interviewed asserted that they believed there is a direct relationship between their teaching style and the choir's success. Seven of the subjects asserted that their feelings of success and competence are directly related to how effectively they can manage a classroom. Further research could investigate the specifics of the definition of “style” in choral conducting, and how it affects student behavior and ensemble success.

It was interesting to note that two subjects indicated that their cooperating teacher was a negative role model with regard to classroom management, because they reportedly demeaned and humiliated students as a method of managing student behavior. These subjects completed their student-teaching experiences twenty years apart, and voiced disapproval at their cooperating teacher’s “manner” in teaching. Consequently, these directors reported their methods of managing are in direct contrast to that of their cooperating teachers. Brand’s research appears to support this; he found that the classroom management beliefs and opinions of the student teachers in his study did not significantly differentiate from the beginning to the end of their eight-week student teaching experience. This would also seem to be a reference to the difference in “style” that Snyder (1998) discusses.
Snyder also recommends that the cooperating teacher who actively teaches the student teacher about classroom management may increase that student teacher’s possibility for success. Four of those interviewed in this current study reported that classroom management was specifically addressed in their student-teaching experiences, and that their experience was positive. One subject said that his experience was positive because his cooperating teacher was quite militant in his management style, and that this style seemed to be effective. It was surprising to find that some choir directors are still employing such methods of classroom management.

Subject’s recommendations to college faculty about teaching classroom management were also compelling. Half of those interviewed indicated that an undergraduate class in classroom management and/or assessment is necessary. This is in agreement with Keenan-Takagi (2000), Nutter (2000), Snyder (1998), Gordon (2001, 2002), and Richardson and Fallona (2001) who assert that more specific training in classroom management and assessment is needed in pre-service training. These researchers are also in agreement with two of the subjects of this study who recommended that student teachers need to experience more contact time with students. Snyder (1998), Gordon (2001, 2002), and Richardson and Fallona (2001) recommend that undergraduate methods courses should serve to consolidate teaching methods, curriculum, management and assessment.

The subjects of this study offered a substantial list of qualities of an effective teacher, presenting recurring themes throughout the results. The qualities of effective communication, organization, care for students and knowledge of their developmental level, and choosing appropriate curriculum were repeatedly discussed. Subjects agreed that, in addition to many other qualities, that teaching effectiveness is strongly linked to good classroom management.
technique. With regard to teaching style, three of the subjects indicated that their personal enthusiasm aids in maintaining classroom behavior. Yarbrough (1975), Merrion (1990), Teachout (1997), Wignes (1995), Brand (1985) and Bergee (2002) assert that effective teachers are creative and energetic. In describing qualities of effective choir directors, four respondents recommended being patient or having self-control, five mentioned being honest with students, being fair and consistent, and communicating well as qualities of effective choir directors. Bauer (2001), Gordon (2001), Snyder (1998), VanDerveer (1989), and Walker (1993) also assert that being fair and consistent with rules and procedures provides a secure environment for students, thus reducing misbehavior. Subjects also noted that it is important for students to know that the director cares about them as people. This would appear to be consistent with the work of Gordon (2001), Wignes (1995), Merrion (1990) and Brand (1990), who assert that teaching and modeling respect fosters self-esteem and an environment in which students are empowered to make better behavioral choices.

Six of the subjects indicated that it is preferable to speak to the problem student one-on-one instead of confronting them in front of the large group. Research and professional opinion also seem to support this (Weinstein 1995, Nimmo 1997, Walker 1993). Buck (1992), Nimmo (1997), and Gordon (2001) agree that a teacher’s response should depend on the context and their relationship with that student.

The subjects’ responses were similar when asked how they would deal with a disruptive student. Three directors interviewed indicated that their response would be contingent upon the situation and the student. Six respondents indicated that they would relocate or remove the student. In both hypothetical situations, none of the subjects interviewed recommended embarrassing or humiliating the student.
The subjects' ideas for effective teaching strategies for maintaining classroom management again agreed with the literature. They indicated that physical proximity and moving around the rehearsal space is an effective strategy when rehearsing choirs, and also recommended that these strategies might also help in keeping students engaged and actively involved in rehearsal. This is consistent with the findings and opinions of Bauer (2001), Gordon (2001, 2002), Teachout (1997), Swears (1985), Lamb (2005), Allsup (2005), Merrion (1990) and VanDerveer (1989). Subjects also advocated clear communication in the form of a letter to parents and administration regarding behavioral expectations, appropriate use of praise, and being honest with students and letting them know if their behavior is inappropriate, and strategically locating or relocating of misbehaving students.

Subjects offered intriguing descriptions of the successful choir, and placed responsibility for this success directly on the director. According to those interviewed, successful choirs demonstrate self-control and "professional" behavior; i.e., watching the director. Successful choirs also demonstrate musicianship and an enjoyment of singing. All subjects indicated that the choir’s success is directly linked to the director’s style, and the director is a determining factor in the choir’s success. Brand (1990) and Buck (1992) might agree, and add that a director’s intense dedication to student success engenders respect between teacher and student. This is also related to the director’s personal style and how that affects student motivation. All those interviewed indicated a belief that their particular style is reflected in the group. Gordon (2001), Weinstein (1995) and Nimmo (1997) would appear to agree.

When asked about their most and least successful experiences with classroom management, the choral director’s responses covered a wide range. Seven of the subjects spoke in general terms about the success of their performing groups as a whole, while negative
experiences appeared to involve interactions with individual students. Some mentioned incidents with students whose disruptive behavior was believed to be detrimental to the success of the large group.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The subjects in this study were all choral directors in the Northern and Northwestern rural parts of the state of Minnesota. The results of this study may have been affected by the fact that this study was confined to such a specific region. A future study could explore similar questions in a different location, and compare the results of the responses. Use of a survey could assist in retrieving results from a larger sampling of choral directors. If this study was replicated in a larger geographical area, it would be interesting to observe if there would be consistent agreement overall among subjects teaching choral music.

The majority of those interviewed indicated that they preferred teaching high school or college level vocal ensembles instead of junior high because of the higher level of repertoire; these levels were more personally rewarding for the subjects. None of the subjects reported that classroom management issues played a role in this preference. Perhaps future research could investigate the relationship between classroom management, junior high choir and teacher longevity.

Those choral directors in this study who said they participated in classroom/behavioral management workshops did so on their own; it was not required in their undergraduate or graduate training. Perhaps it would be helpful to determine what colleges or universities offer courses or training in those areas. One subject indicated that she was required to view a series of videos regarding classroom management by her school district before teaching, and indicated
that those videos were very helpful. A list of video or audio resources regarding choir classroom management could be a subject of future investigation. A study could look at the availability of such resources, how they could be developed, or could compare several existing resources for their quality and effectiveness. Developing a list of resources offered by professional organizations, such as the Music Educator’s National Conference and the American Choral Director’s Association may also prove helpful to undergraduate vocal music educators.

According to the opinions voiced by the subjects of this study, there appears to be a need for pre-service training to be more specifically oriented to classroom and behavior management and assessment. Of the four subjects who specifically recommended changes in the undergraduate music-teaching curriculum, one subject recommended that pre-service music students should be required to take a year of classroom management in theory and practical applications. Perhaps future research could determine which undergraduate or graduate institutions require music students to take courses in classroom or behavior management, and how that training affects new teacher’s first year experiences.

Future research could explore various universities’ requirements for undergraduate music education majors in classroom management and identify how these requirements are logistically placed in music teacher training. Course syllabi and requirements could be examined to determine the extent to which classroom management is part of undergraduate teacher education curriculum. This research could also investigate how prepared their graduates feel once they attain employment. Those colleges or universities that are deemed successful could then serve as a template for others who might endeavor to incorporate more requirements in an undergraduate music education program.
In analyzing the responses of the subjects, it was evident that six teachers were positive and highly enthusiastic about teaching choral music to young people, and two were clearly outliers. The researcher, in fact, subsequently labeled these as “the crabby ones.” Overall they appeared to be detached from their students, were reluctant to comment on certain issues, and appeared to withhold information when responding to questions. Despite eighteen years of choir experience, one said, sadly, that currently he would not recommend teaching as a career to anyone. Subsequent studies could investigate the relationship between teacher’s attitudes about teaching and classroom management, and the perceived success of their choral programs. This apparent professional and personal dissatisfaction is a reality in any field, but the teacher’s passion and dedication may be particularly important in teaching choral music. On a more positive note, 75% of these subjects were very encouraging and enthusiastic about teaching choral music to young people.

**Recommendations for Teaching Practice**

The results of this study seem to hold implications for experienced teaching practitioners as well as for novices. Given the importance these subjects placed on classroom management skills for the choral director, and the relationship of these skills to their success and the success of their choirs, it seems important that all music educators who plan a career in choral music must undertake a variety of ways to study how they can successfully manage their students. In addition, teachers would seem to be well advised to heed the many suggested classroom management approaches listed by these veteran teachers.

There appears to be a significant disconnect between the research, professional opinion, the results of this study, and the reality of undergraduate music training in classroom
management. While the literature and the subjects of this study all assert that this training is vital on many levels of teaching, the training for these subjects was minimal or non-existent. While subjects all indicated that the topic was briefly addressed in Music Methods or Educational Psychology, none of them was required to take a specific course in classroom management. It is notable that what instruction they did receive was not memorable or meaningful. For these subjects, their lack of classroom management skill did not become apparent until they were employed. The "sink or swim" mentality seems to prevail, but needs to change if the music teaching profession is to retain potentially excellent teachers. Finally, college faculty should be mindful of the opinions of these subjects, the research and professional opinions, which consistently stated that pre-service training in classroom management is inadequate. It would seem to be appropriate that undergraduate curriculum in classroom management should be specifically developed to address this situation, and should be incorporated into all phases of the teacher education program.

The intricate relationship between classroom management, effective teaching, choir success, and student and director self-esteem seems highlighted by the results of this study. This study shed some light on what a unique and complicated subject this is, and how important good classroom management is to a choir's successful learning experience. It was encouraging to hear that the majority of subjects of this study are so dedicated to the success of choir students. It was also very clear that these subjects endeavored to teach quality repertoire within a safe and healthy learning environment. There was an overall tone to these interviews of genuine care and respect for students. As one subject stated: "They don't care about what you know until they know you care." Indeed, it seems crucial that all choral music educators should "care" about this critical aspect of their work. The views of the eight subjects of this study clearly emphasize the
unique role of good classroom management skills in the choral setting and in the subsequent success of their ensembles.
I. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Teaching environment:
   • Size of town:
   • School’s current student body population:
   • Grades in current junior high:
   • “Middle School?” / “Junior High”? Other?

2. Academic Background:
   (Undergraduate, Graduate, other?)

3. Teaching Experience:
   • Years teaching choral music:
   • Years teaching at other schools: Where?
   • Other grade levels and courses taught:
   • Years in current position:
   • Total years teaching:
• Junior high choir a positive or negative experience? Why?

• Preference for junior high choir, or another level? Why?

4. Ensemble profile

• Kind? Current size?

• How many?

5. Current student enrollment

• Growing? Why?

• Declining? Why?

• Remaining consistent? Why?

6. Performance types

• Seasonal concerts:
Thematic concerts:

Fundraising concerts:

Number of concerts per year:

II. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TRAINING

What training in classroom management skills? Where? In what courses?

How helpful was that training?

Student teaching or apprenticeship experience. What classroom management issues were addressed?

Cooperating teacher: a good role model? Why or why not?
Suggestions:

1) Ways for new teachers to learn choir classroom management?

2) Recommendations to college faculty?

III. PERSONAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Management style?

- Relating to students in a rehearsal situation:

  1) Response if a student is not participating?

  2) If a student is disruptive in rehearsal?
• Overall rapport with students:

• Inside and outside of rehearsal?

• Helpful teacher qualities/characteristics:

• Successful teaching strategies:

• Grading:
  • Effort
  • Participation
  • Attendance
  • Behavior
IV. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT / ENSEMBLE SUCCESS

• Successful choir characteristics:

• Relationship between personal style and choir’s success:

• Student motivation and management style:

Open-enders:

1) Describe a situation in which you felt most successful in classroom management.

2) Describe a situation in which you felt least successful in classroom management.

3) How does effective classroom management affect your feelings of competence and success as a teacher?
4) Any final suggestions or thoughts to directors about classroom management and junior high choirs?

Thank you!
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