

The Use of Class Voice in Choral Music Education Programs in the United States

Thesis Statement:

In the vast majority of collegiate music programs in the United States, choral music education majors are receiving applied voice instruction based on a 200 year old model of one-to-one weekly, hour long lessons. This method was developed primarily to train professional opera singers in the traditional "bel canto" style. This method of instruction also puts the focus on a student's own proficiency in singing this particular style, with no real training for teaching others how to sing. This can be especially problematic in developing an understanding of how other voice types work, especially male vs. female. Additionally, choral music education graduates enter a marketplace where the bel canto style of singing has become a seldom used component of K-12 music education. A wider range of singing styles have become more prevalent in schools, including pop, rock, r&b, gospel, jazz, and musical theater.

In an effort to address the widening gap between traditional applied voice lessons and the changing marketplace, a small but growing number of vocal programs across the country have begun to modify this method of training by incorporating group vocal instruction in a classroom setting. There has been no significant research into how these programs work, or their effectiveness.

This project will attempt to identify which specific collegiate vocal programs in the United States currently utilize class voice as a method of training choral music education majors and how it is implemented.

Summary of Results:

- 144 Colleges offering the BME degree (Bachelor of Music Education) were identified from the NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) directory.
- Each program was analyzed through a detailed review of degree programs, courses of study, and course catalogues. It was determined that 4 of 144 programs officially used group instruction.

Alabama State University +
Alcorn State University
Anderson University (South Carolina)
Arkansas State University
Arkansas Tech University
Armstrong State University
Auburn University
Baker University +
Baldwin Wallace University
Baptist College of Florida, The
Baylor University
Benedictine College
Birmingham-Southern College
Bradley University
California Baptist University
Calvin College
Cameron University
Cedarville University
Central Methodist University
Central Michigan University
Chicago State University
Cincinnati Christian University
Coker College
College of Wooster, The
Concordia University Chicago
Cornelison University
Culver-Stockton College
DePaul University
Delta State University

Drake University
Drury University
East Tennessee State University
Eastern Michigan University
Eastern New Mexico University
Emporia State University
Florida Gulf Coast University
Florida Southern College
Florida State University
Georgia College & State University
Gettysburg College
Grand Valley State University
Greensboro College
Harding University
Howard Payne University
Idaho State University
Illinois State University
Illinois Wesleyan University
Indiana State University
Indiana University
Indiana University - Purdue University, Fort Wayne
Indiana University, South Bend
Jackson State University
Jacksonville University
Kentucky State University
Lee University
Lincoln University
Louisiana State University
Louisiana Tech University

Loyola University +
Mercer University
Metropolitan State University of Denver
MidAmerica Nazarene University
Mississippi College
Mississippi State University
Mississippi Valley State University
Missouri Baptist University
Missouri State University
Missouri Western State University
Montana State University Bozeman
Morehead State University
Morningside College
New Mexico State University
Newberry College
North Park University
Northeastern State University
Northern Arizona University
Northern Michigan University
Northern State University
Northwest Missouri State University
Northwestern State University of Louisiana
Ohio State University
Oklahoma Baptist University
Oklahoma Christian University
Oral Roberts University
Osterlein University
Ouachita Baptist University
Pacific Lutheran University

Pennsylvania State University
Pittsburg State University
Reinhardt University
Samford University +
Shepherd University (West Virginia)
South Dakota State University
Southeast Missouri State University
Southeastern Louisiana University
Southern Oklahoma State University
Southern Arkansas University
Southern Nazarene University
Southern University and A&M College
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Stetson University
Texas Christian University
Troy University
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith
University of Arkansas at Monticello
University of Central Florida
University of Central Missouri
University of Central Oklahoma
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Kansas
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Michigan, Flint
University of Missouri, Kansas City
University of Montana
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

University of New Mexico
University of North Florida
University of Northern Colorado
University of Northwestern - St. Paul
University of Oklahoma
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
University of Tulsa
University of West Florida
University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire
University of Wisconsin - River Falls
University of Wisconsin - Superior
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
University of Wyoming
Valparaiso University
VanderCook College of Music
Warburg College
Weber State University
Weber University
West Virginia Wesleyan College
Westmont College
Wheaton College
Wichita State University
Wingate University
Winthrop University
Wittenberg University
Young Harris College

- Each of the 4 programs only used class instruction during the freshman year. After the freshmen year, each program used traditional one to one applied instruction.
- 2 of the 4 programs used group instruction exclusively in the freshman year, the other 2 augmented the class voice model with traditional one to one applied instruction.

Interesting Findings for Future Research...

In collecting curriculum information from collegiate vocal educators, there were numerous inquiries about the study itself. After the information collection stage of the study, it became clear that there is a serious desire for more information about the possible use of class voice in Choral Music Education programs from educators across the country.

Programs Currently Using Class Voice in for the BME Degree:



Alabama State University

"Class voice" for freshman only
*In addition to Applied Lessons



Baker University

"Class Voice" for freshmen only



Loyola University

"Freshmen Voice Lab"
*In addition to Applied Lessons



Samford University

"Class voice" for freshman only

Next Steps...

- I will be making a more in depth analysis of each of the 4 programs that currently use group instruction as a part of their vocal training for the BME degree. Possible future research could include the perceived effectiveness of these programs when compared with more traditional models.
- I will be developing a survey for the Choral Music Education programs that currently do not use class voice. The survey will attempt to gauge general interest in the concept of class voice for the BME degree and will work to identify the biggest problem areas of the current model.
- Using the results from above, I plan on exploring a pilot program that would include group instruction for BME students at FSU.