Male Peer Modeling in the Kindergarten Music Classroom

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Abstract

The purpose of this action research study was to design, implement, and refine an approach to using male peer modeling in Kindergarten general music. Research questions investigated the male kindergarten students' and peer models' descriptions of the interactions, my perceptions of the effects of the peer-modeling process on both groups of students, the students' parents' perceptions of the effects of the process, and whether male peer modeling affected both the older and younger boys' perceptions of singing. Two sixth grade peer models interacted with and taught songs to kindergarten students in two different classes throughout two action research cycles, switching between the two cycles. Data was collected through observation and interview. I transcribed parents' emails and my teacher-researcher journal. I analyzed my teacher-researcher journal, video footage, and interviews for themes. I transcribed and coded the interviews between the sixth grade boys and myself and between the sixth grade boys and the Kindergarten students. The three most interesting themes which emerged included the peer models' relationships with the Kindergarten students, the peer models' vocal quality, and the anomaly of a male elementary school music teacher.

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Chapter One

Introduction

> I like singing and you just sort of sing and the music is good – well most of the time the music is awesome. I hear something and I know that I have to sing and it's like just telling me to sing. It starts playing in my head and it comes out my mouth! (Kennedy, 2002, p. 33)

Most music educators would agree that they entered the profession with a desire to share their knowledge and love of music, in some form, with their students. We all hold different educational philosophies, influenced by our varied backgrounds, which guide the concepts we most emphasize in our classrooms. Regardless of what concepts a music teacher may select as the focus in his or her classroom, one skill that is regarded as essential for kindergarten through twelfth grade students is the ability to "[sing], alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music" (MENC, 1994). With that in mind, it would appear that the quote from the student in Kennedy's research study (2002) reflected well on the choral teacher's success in her classroom. Would it surprise the reader to know that the student who expressed so much joy and enthusiasm over singing was not a girl, but was Matt, an eighth or ninth grade boy in the aforementioned ensemble?

Unfortunately, Matt and boys like him are not the norm in classrooms throughout the country. Researchers and practitioners refer to the continued difficulties that choral music educators face in recruiting and retaining boys in choral programs (Demorest, 2000; Harrison, 2007; Kennedy, 2002; Mizener, 1993). A large body of research has been conducted dating back to 1916 indicating that many males exhibit negative perceptions of singing, summarized in detail by Harrison in the *British Journal of Music Education* in 2007. Researchers have offered

possible causes of this negative perception, some of which include embarrassment over the male voice change (Demorest, 2000; Kennedy, 2004; Killian, 1997; Killian, 1999; Radtke, 1950), early experiences with music, role models, parental and societal factors, the culture of schools, harassment (Harrison, 2007), a negative perception of their own ability to sing, the lack of an effective means by which to teach singing (Phillips & Aitchinson, 1999), ineffective teachers (Kennedy, 2002; Harrison, 2007), and perceptions of singing as being feminine (Hall, 2005; Koza, 1993). However, the boys found in Kennedy's (2002) study elected to sing in choir, were highly engaged, and the most advanced vocal ensemble of 27 singers was almost equally proportioned between males and females. Hall (2009) shared the story of Thomas, a boy who built his identity around singing and being a member of a choir. While there are a number of reasons that boys elect not to sing, studies also show that some boys are choosing to reject negative perceptions. If educators can understand why boys reject singing, then this knowledge can be used to encourage them in the positive direction.

Research indicates that the genesis of this negative perception of singing could begin in the early elementary years, forming as early as age five, and possibly before children even begin formal schooling in the form of masculine and feminine gender identification in music (Hall, 2005; Tibbetts, 1975; Welch, Sergeant, & White, 1997).

Male and Female, Masculine and Feminine

In romantic languages such as French, nouns are considered masculine or feminine, with the article indicating gender even though the noun may not. "Le" is the masculine article and "la" is the feminine article. "La musique" translates to "the music," and is referred to with a feminine article. Although the English language is gender-neutral, we see evidence of gender stereotyping pervading our culture in the areas of vocational preferences, attitudes toward home

and family responsibilities, and personality traits (Tibbetts, 1975). Fortunately, our culture has done much to neutralize these stereotypes. Unfortunately, we have not been as successful in neutralizing the perception of something as innate as singing. Countless studies have shown that singing is perceived by both sexes as being feminine gendered (Hall, 2005; Harrison, 2007; Tibbetts, 1975). This concept is central to the proposed study, so it seems important to briefly address the differences between sex and gender. Harrison (2007) cited four different distinctions in the field of gender studies, three of which play key roles in this setting: (a) biological sex; (b) sex roles, indicating the roles that are typically associated with a biological sex; and (c) gender, which implies the "societal expectations associated with a biologically determined entity" (p. 267). Harrison (2007) stressed the idea that biological sex should not be associated with societal functions, but unfortunately often is. The term "hegemonic masculinity" is also used in several studies regarding gender stereotyping. Connell (2000) explained that, "masculinity has been defined differently at different periods of history, in different cultures and sub-cultures, and within individuals…Masculinities are ordered hierarchically where the hegemonic – meaning the most dominant form of masculinity – subjugates other forms" (as cited in Hall, 2005). The concept of the feminine gender being assigned to singing in our culture, therefore making it an unacceptable activity for boys, is often explored through this lens.

Personal Orientation

In my first teaching assignment I taught general music for three years to toddlers (18 months through three years old), pre-primary students (three years old through kindergarten), and elementary students (first through fourth grade). I also directed an after-school choir for kindergarteners through fourth graders. I recently completed my sixth year of teaching elementary general music to junior kindergarten through sixth grade students and directing an

after-school choir for fifth- and sixth-grade students at a typical Catholic grade school in an average suburban city in the United States. I was also the administrator for the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus for six years, an audition-based, professional ensemble for children ages 10-16 with unchanged voices. In my experiences, I have observed two differing perceptions of singing among my male students.

At my first position students attended music class two to three times a week and singing was a natural part of their regular classroom environment. I had an equal number of boys and girls in the after-school choir. I never saw evidence of my boys assigning feminine gender to singing. Although I did not study this, I believe that it is possibly due to the fact that singing was a natural part of the daily culture at this school, starting when they were 18 months old. It was also possibly a result of older, elementary-age students demonstrating, through their actions, that singing was an acceptable activity for both genders. Many of these older elementary students had previously been members of the pre-primary classrooms where they acted as leaders, teachers, and role models to the younger children.

In my second position, where the study took place, I have often observed a different perception of singing. Although I do not recall observing my kindergarten through second grade boys having assigned feminine gender to singing, this becomes slightly more obvious in third grade. By fourth and fifth grade it is very apparent that many boys are self conscious when singing. Some of the boys appear to be self-conscious and some are still eager to sing. The self-conscious boys are particularly uncomfortable with singing higher notes (notes above approximately A4). They do, however, still enjoy singing certain types of songs. The majority of boys in sixth grade are very self-conscious while singing and often do not sing during group activities. In my 2011 after-school choir of 52 singers, only eight of the participants were boys.

One boy dropped out in the middle of the second session. Of the seven boys that remained, five appeared comfortable being viewed as a "singer" and two appeared conflicted over that identification. In conversation, one of the confident boys explained to me that other boys made fun of him at times for singing, but that he did not care because he enjoyed singing, he enjoyed playing sports, and he did not see why he could not enjoy both. The boy who dropped out did so because of a conflict with his sports team's schedule. The culture of the school places a high emphasis on participating in sports teams. Music is increasingly becoming more accepted. In my 2012 choir of 67 singers, 16 of the participants were boys. One boy dropped out in the middle of the second session, again because of conflicts with his sport team's schedule. He, however, made it a point to explain to me that he was not dropping out because he did not enjoy choir; he just could not manage both schedules. Most of the boys expressed excitement about singing in choir through their words and actions. Boys from the first session recruited boys to join in the second session. Boys graduating and leaving the school for 7th grade expressed that they were sad to leave, thanked me for providing this opportunity for them, and hugged me. Fifth grade boys said that they were excited for next year. In reality, none of these boys sang in choir the next year. The boys who did participate in choir did so enthusiastically. However, only a small portion of the choir was comprised of boys and, of the approximate 70 potential boys from fifth and sixth grade who could have participated only 16 did so, compared with 51 of approximately 70 girls. These observations, numbers, and attitudes urge me to investigate gendered perceptions that may affect the perceived appropriateness of singing.

The Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus (MOTCC) has been in existence for nine years and I worked as their administrator for six. In those six years we always accepted 50 choristers. Typically, approximately 13 out of 86 children who audition were boys. Of those 50

choristers who are accepted, we never had more than 11 boy members in one season. The boys who participated had, for the most part, extremely positive attitudes toward singing. I can only speculate as to the reason why more boys do not audition for the ensemble.

Male Peer Modeling in Music

Researchers have conducted countless studies to determine why boys often describe having negative perceptions of singing. Many studies suggest that this negative perception develops because of hegemonic masculinity and the perception of singing as being feminine (Hall, 2005; Koza, 1993). Research suggests that boys need positive male role models to set a good example from an early age (Demorest, 2000; Hall, 2005; Harrison & O'Neil, 2002; Kennedy, 2002; Tibbetts, 1975). However, few studies exist that examine early elementary aged boys' perceptions of singing being affected by hegemonic masculinity and how they may be influenced by older, male, peer models. Those studies that did so were both qualitative and quantitative in design (Hall, 2005; Welch, 1997). Hall (2005) suggested that, "further investigation is needed into the constructions of masculinities and femininities in early childhood music, as little research exists in this area" (p. 17). Many researchers have investigated this topic with a focus on gender-based stereotypes influencing instrument choice, but few have included voice as an instrument in their research (Harrison, 2007). Studies of boy singers in middle school and above (Harrison, 2007; Kennedy, 2002) corroborated Hall (2005) and Tibbetts' (1975) findings, indicating that gender-based stereotypes do exist towards singing as well as instrument selection, but that there are various ways that a music educator can counteract these stereotypes. Hall's 2005 study is the primary one that investigated the existence of hegemonic masculinity in early childhood music class and the effect of male peer models. However, this qualitative study took place in Australia in an all-male private school, an a-typical setting.

Theoretical Framework

Gender Theory

"Research and theory suggests that one of the broad aspects of boys' gender role development is 'avoidance of femininity'" (O'Neill and Boulton, 1996). Archer's (1984) perspective on gender role development suggested that a key component is rigidity and flexibility, which involves the degree of cross-gendered behavior that boys and girl will participate in. Archer (1984) stated that research shows that boys are more rigid in their willingness to participate in cross-gendered behavior. In investigating fifth grade students at free play over the course of a year, Lever (1976) found through semi-structured interview, questionnaires, observation, and diary records that boys played outdoors, playing, "team sports and fantasy games like 'War'" (Lever, 1976, p. 480) while girls played indoors, playing, "with Barbie dolls or board games" (Lever, 1976, p. 480). Lever (1976) also found that, "girls more often play in predominantly male games than boys play in girls' games" (p. 481). Lever (1976) also shared that boys would typically only join girls' games under the premise of being the "'buffoon' or 'tease,'" (p. 481), providing the boys with a protective role to shield them from the potential negative effects of participating in opposite-gendered play. Eisenberg, Murray, and Hite (1982) studied the "avoidance of femininity" at a younger age. They observed three- and four-year-olds at free-play time with masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral toys in their classroom and then interviewed them about toy preferences as a hypothetical birthday present for themselves and for a pretend boy and girl (Eisenberg et al., 1982). Eisenberg et al. (1982) were interested in observing whether boys and girls were consciously choosing sex-appropriate toys based on knowledge about sex-roles. Interestingly, Eisenberg et al. (1982) discovered that, in the natural, free-play, classroom environment, "the children used virtually no sex-role reasoning to

justify their actual real-life toy preferences (0.42%)" (p. 82). They also found that, "the children were significantly less likely to use sex-role reasoning when discussing their own likes than when considering another's likes" (Eisenberg et al., 1982, pp. 83-84). This was similar when discussing dislikes (Eisenberg et al., 1982). The authors suggested that this could be because sex-role-based choices are already automatic (Eisenberg et al., 1982). Finally, Eisenberg et. al (1982) found that boys were more likely than girls to pick an opposite-sex toy as their most disliked toy and to say that a hypothetical boy would do the same. This is consistent with other research regarding boys being more rigid in sex-roles choices.

Research suggests different ages at which gender-identification and sex stereotyping begins. The above researchers saw the occurrence in 10- and 11-year-old fifth grade students as well as, to a different degree, in three- and four-year-old children. O'Brien and Huston (1985) sought to determine at what age young children would "consistently exhibit sex-stereotyped toy choices in a natural setting" (p. 867). The researchers observed 14-35 month-old children at free play in their day care center over the course of 14 months (O'Brien and Huston, 1985). The children were observed choosing masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral toys with which to play (O'Brien and Huston, 1985). Their results again showed that, even at the young age of under-two-years-old, children chose largely to play with sex-stereotyped toys (O'Brien and Huston, 1985). O'Brien and Huston (1985) also saw that boys exhibited this preference even within the youngest group of 14-20 months while girls were not as defined until 26-30 months. Thompson and Pleck (1986) confirmed that these perceptions of appropriate male behaviors continued into adulthood. The results of a survey administered to college-aged men demonstrated that one of three parts of the structure of male role norms included, "the belief that men should avoid stereotypically feminine activities and occupations" (Thompson and Pleck,

1986, p. 534).

Finally, a more recent, American study assessed gender labeling, gender-role knowledge, and gender schematicity among three-year-old boys and girls (O'Brien et al., 2000). Children represented a diverse sampling group including single-parent families, minority families, and families with parents with a high-school education or less (O'Brien et al., 2000). To measure gender labeling, the children verbally labeled 24 pictures of twelve male and female children and adults (O'Brien et al., 2000). O'Brien et al. (2000) suggested that the ability to label gender indicates early awareness of gender. Results showed that girls labeled more pictures accurately than boys (O'Brien et al., 2000). To measure gender stereotyping, the children designated pictures of typically masculine and feminine items as "'more for boys' or 'more for girls'" (O'Brien et al., 2000, p. 1013). Results showed the girls to be more successful in categorizing the feminine items than the boys and that there was no significant difference between girls and boys in categorizing the masculine items (O'Brien et al., 2000). To measure gender schematicity, O'Brien et al. (2000) asked the children to choose their favorite toy from 24 different pairs of pictures in various combinations of masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral toys. Their response time to each pair was recorded (O'Brien et al., 2000). A quicker choice made by a child between "clearly sex-typed items," (O'Brien et al., 2000, p. 1014), indicated a more developed gender schema (O'Brien et al., 2000). Results, however, yielded that "boys and girls performed similarly on the schematicity measure" (O'Brien et al., 2000, p. 1017). The researchers acknowledged that the test was previously used with older children and may not have been sensitive enough to the younger age group (O'Brien et al., 2000).

The researchers discussed that the results of their study showed that both boys and girls learn the male role early in life and that boys know much less about the female role (O'Brien et

al., 2000). This shows that girls may feel more comfortable exploring more masculine areas while boys may not feel as comfortable exploring traditionally feminine areas (O'Brien et al., 2000). The present study about male peer modeling in the Kindergarten music classroom involved Kindergarteners, children approximately two-and-a-half years older than the children in O'Brien et al.'s (2000) study. When applied to this study, O'Brien et al.'s (2000) results suggest that the Kindergarten students will likely be aware of gender differences, with girls possibly being more aware than boys. It also suggests that boys may be less likely to be comfortable with singing, as they may be very cognizant of the activity's place in the traditionally feminine end of the gender spectrum. Finally, the results of their gender schematicity test do suggest that it is possible that both the boys and girls make less gender-based choices than the labeling or stereotyping tests suggested.

Peer Modeling

General studies. Research dating back to the 1960s and earlier demonstrates the potential influence that a peer may have on the choices a child makes. In his 1967 study, Wahler investigated "peer group variables which may control the social behavior of children in free play settings" (p. 278). His study did show that peers greatly influenced the behavior of all five preschool age subjects in the study (Wahler, 1967). With each subject, he saw that the social attention given or withheld by the designated peers controlled a variety of social behaviors, "such as Cooperative Behavior, Aggressive Behavior, and Speech" (Wahler, 1967, p. 292). Attention given by peers influenced each subject to increase a behavior and attention retained caused the subjects to decrease a behavior.

A highly researched topic in peer modeling is whether peers or adults are more effective models. Schunk (1987) summarized, "model-observer similarity in age may be most influential

in situations where age is a salient cue for behavior appropriateness" (p.157). He also acknowledged that studies have shown that children will imitate adults as well as their peers in areas of learning cognitive skills, learning to perform new tasks, and deciding what behaviors are acceptable, choosing to imitate the model that suggests the most positive outcome. Brody and Stoneman (1981) investigated imitation by subjects of same-age, older, and younger peer models. When introduced to the peer model, subjects were told the model's grade. The peer model then showed the subject nine slides, each with two foods, and indicated a preference for the fruit on each slide. After the model left the room, subjects were asked to indicate their own preferences. Data showed that students exposed to same-age or two-year-older peer models showed higher levels of imitation than those students exposed to younger peer models. Brody and Stoneman (1981) replicated the test but with two peer models for each subject. Peer models were grouped in same-age and two-years-younger, same-age and two-years-older, and two-years-younger and two-years-older pairs. The results were the same. Students consistently imitated the two-years-older and same-age peers. Schunk (1987) and Brody and Stoneman's (1981) work suggests that same-age and slightly older peers are most likely to cause behavior imitation.

Many peer-modeling studies investigate the effect that peers can have on reducing stereotypically gendered behavior. Schunk (1987) summarized several of these studies and validates the use of peer modeling in the current study by stating, "collectively these results suggest that teachers may be able to help break gender stereotypes by enlisting the aid of peers to model behaviors that students may link with members of the opposite sex" (p. 160). Kobasigawa (1968) reviewed five studies, all conducted by him and other research partners, that focused on the effects that a model might have on controlling sex typing. Children observed peer models

playing with sex-inappropriate toys and were then allowed to choose between sex-inappropriate or gender-neutral toys to play with. He found that "exposure to the model displaying sex-inappropriate behavior has a disinhibitory effect on the observer" (Kobasigawa, 1968, p. 94). Wolf's 1973 study examined the impact on eight- and nine-year-old children of same-gendered peers playing with what Wolf called "sex-inappropriate" toys in a naturalistic setting. When left alone to choose a toy to play with after observing a same-age boy playing with the oven with the kettle and the same-age girl playing with the truck with the tire, boys and girls both chose the sex-inappropriate toy to play with. Peer modeling was able to alter these children's sex-typed behaviors. Zimmerman and Koussa's 1975 study investigated not only the influence of same- and different-sex models on children's formation of preferences, but also whether the sex of the model or the sex of the model's behavior was more influential. Four-year-old male and female children were exposed to either a male or female adult model that played with gender-neutral clothespins with either a masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral narrative. Clothespins were determined in a previous study to be the least preferred toy. The children's preferences for six different toys were recorded prior to and following observation of the adults modeling the masculine, feminine, or gender-neutral narrative behavior. For the dependent variable, experimenters observed their free play and asked the children to rate the toys in comparison with each other. Zimmerman and Koussa (1975) found that children were indeed influenced by the gendered nature of the model's play. Masculine play by both the male and female model had the most noticeable effect on children's choices in free play and toy rankings in the post-test. Masculine play had a larger influence than feminine play and feminine play had a larger influence than neutral play. A female model demonstrating feminine play had a noticeable impact on the children. Girls had a significantly greater reaction to feminine play than did boys.

"Overall, boys were more influenced by the sex-role differences of the model's play than were girls" (Zimmerman and Koussa, 1975, p. 130). For the current study this suggests that in using male peer models I must be attentive to the potential gendered nature of their interaction with the boys.

Peer modeling in music education studies. Other studies have investigated the use of peer models to attempt to change children's gendered perceptions of instruments. Bruce and Kemp (1993) utilized concerts in which adult models performed for children between the ages of five and seven on instruments shown through previous studies to be considered opposite-gendered. Students attended these concerts, observed models performing on opposite-gendered instruments, and were then invited to look at one instrument. Data showed that observing an adult the same sex as them playing an opposite-gendered instrument influenced students. Girls chose to look at a traditionally masculine instrument if a female played it and boys chose to look at a traditionally feminine instrument if a male played it. Harrison and O'Neill (2000), in an attempt to recreate and address shortcomings in Bruce and Kemp's (1993) study, also utilized intervention concerts where, in the test group, English children ages seven and eight observed adult models performing on six gender-inconsistent instruments. These instruments had been determined in previous studies as the most common ones to be perceived as having gender. The post-test showed that models of untraditional genders playing certain instruments influenced students in the test group. However, unlike Bruce and Kemp's (1993) study where they interpreted the data to show that same-sex models can cause children to choose opposite-sex instruments, Harrison and O'Neill's (2000) data showed that the children avoided typically same-sex instruments when modeled by opposite-sex adults. The results from these two studies both indicate that role models do influence children's instrument preferences in various ways.

Finally, Hall's (2005) study of the possibly gender-influenced perceptions that boys had of singing also investigated whether peer models could be influential in encouraging them to participate in singing. She utilized nine- and 17-year-old children as models to Kindergarten boys in her study. As discussed in the review of the literature, she found increased participation in singing and she found that 20 out of 35 boys wanted to join the choir. The Kindergarten boys also had a positive reaction to a performance by the older model.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this action research study was to design, implement, and refine an approach to using male peer modeling in Kindergarten general music. The four-week action research cycle involved interaction between two classes of kindergarten students and two male peer models during general music class. The peer models interacted with the students for two cycles that each included four classes over the course of two weeks. The models participated in music class and taught songs to the students. Observations and interviews were used to gather data to describe the older and younger students', their parents', and my perceptions of the interactions. Research questions included:

1. What were my perceptions of the effects of the upper-elementary male peer model on the kindergarten students? On the peer-model himself?
2. How did kindergarten students describe interacting with an upper-elementary, male peer model in music class?
3. How did the upper-elementary male peer models describe acting as a role model for younger students in music class?
4. How did parents of both groups of students describe their children's experiences interacting with the peer models?

5. Did parents and the teacher perceive that the male peer modeling had an effect on kindergarten students' gendered identification of singing, and, if so, how?

Definitions

1. Upper-elementary – a fourth, fifth, or sixth grade student
2. Peer – Berger (1977), Field (1981), and Hartup (1978) define a peer as "a child who is roughly equivalent in development to the observer" (as cited in Schunk, 1987, p. 149).
3. Model – Berger (1977), Field (1981), and Hartup (1978) define a model as "an individual whose behaviors, verbalizations, and expressions are attended to by the observer and serve as cues for subsequent modeling" (as cited in Schunk, 1987, p. 149).
4. Modeling – Berger (1977), Field (1981), and Hartup (1978) define modeling as "behavioral change that derives from observing others" (as cited in Schunk, 1987, p. 149).

Chapter one introduced the issue of males avoiding singing because of perceiving it to be feminine, presented the theoretical framework including gender theory and peer modeling, and presented the study's purpose and research questions. Chapter two will review previous literature that investigates males' negative perceptions of singing.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the literature covering the issue of males' negative perceptions towards singing. Literature will be grouped by the grade-level of the participants, beginning with studies that included the oldest participants and ending with studies that included the youngest participants. Because of the lack of research investigating gender identification in music in early elementary students (Hall, 2009), the majority of the literature reviewed will relate to and focus on this area. All studies will investigate the variety of issues that may influence boys' perceptions of singing, and many will address gender stereotyping that is often discovered to be associated with boys and their perceptions of singing. The studies will also address potential solutions to this almost century-old problem.

Perceptions of Singing of the Older "Boys"

"It [my school] wasn't really a place for singers because it wasn't considered 'normal' for a young man to sing" (Harrison, 2007, p. 275). Males in high school and beyond report both positive and negative experiences associated with singing. Two key concepts that have been investigated include older male's frequently negative perceptions of the voice change process and their feminine gender stereotyping of the singing voice. Killian (1997) was concerned with the fact that a large body of research suggested that music educators treat the voice change process carefully, but that little research had investigated how boys *felt* about the voice change process. Therefore she designed a descriptive, quantitative study to interview adult men (ages 23-80) and boys undergoing the voice change process, both singers (currently actively engaged in music) and non-singers (not currently actively engaged in music) (Killian, 1997). A pilot study indicated that Killian (1997) would receive the most authentic information if she asked

structured but open-ended questions that asked the boys and men to describe, in detail, the voice change process. Killian (1997) interviewed 164 subjects but had to reject data from 23 boys who volunteered but were not yet in the voice change process, leaving her with data from 141 subjects. Subjects were diverse in race and represented many different types of neighborhoods (Killian, 1997). Interviews were scripted and examined and revealed seven categories of data, including (a) Memory; (b) Who Noticed Change; (c) Voice Change Affected Singing; (d) Voice Change Affected Speaking; (e) Pain/Illness Mentioned; (f) Voice Quality; (g) Overall Effect of the Experience (Killian, 1997, pp. 525-526). Killian's (1997) data consisted of the frequency of responses to the operational definitions within these seven categories and the overall reliability was .91. Frequency data was managed using the chi-square statistic (Killian, 1997). Data was computed for all seven categories for (a) boy singers, boy non-singers, men singers, men non-singers; (b) boys versus men; (c) singers versus non-singers; (d) boy singers versus boy non-singers; (e) men singers versus men non-singers; (f) men currently musicians versus men currently non-musicians (Killian, 1997, p. 526).

Results of the data showed "no significant difference across any groups relative to the overall effect of the [voice change] experience", but for 19% or one in five of the men interviewed, it was a negative experience in varying degrees (Killian, 1997, p. 528). One adult singer recalled, "…there was something in here (points to throat) that I had to force in order to reach the pitches. I burst into tears and embarrassed myself in front of the whole chorus and never sang again" (Killian, 1997, p. 528). For 81% of the men, the process was positive or neutral (Killian, 1997, p. 528). In a contrasting, Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of the frequency of words that were mentioned in interviews, Killian (1997) showed that there were more than eight times more negative (251 mentions) than positive (29 mentions) comments made

(p. 529-530). Men used negative words 153 times and positive words only 11 times (Killian, 1997). Killian (1997) shared that "…memories seemed so painful for some subjects that they reacted emotionally while simply relating the incident years after the fact" (p. 531). It is important to note that Killian (1997) stated, "lifting words out of context may also mask meaning" (p. 532).

Harrison (2007) began his study by investigating examples in the research literature from 1916-2005 which indicated that boys and men of various ages do not like to sing, that they consistently choose masculine instruments, and that gender association of instruments took place as early as eight years old. Harrison began to interpret a reason for this through the literature, citing Griswold and Chroback's (1981) study which found that college students labeled the choral conductor as feminine and the band conductor as masculine (as cited in Harrison, p. 268). Harrison then explained the shift that took place in the approach to gender-related studies in the 1990s in which there was less focus on stereotyping and more focus on the sociological reasons for instrument choice. He cited that Conway (2000) and Green (1997) both agreed that gender stereotyping was a large barrier for boys and that vocal musical was more susceptible than instrumental music (as cited in Harrison, 2007, p. 269). Harrison pointed out that most of these studies did not include the voice as an instrument. He identified the purpose of his study, which was to investigate the continued existence of stereotyping of musical participation, including singing, to discover underlying reasons for this in the musical choices for boys through the literature based on research recently conducted in Australia, and to examine reasons for instrument choice and the effects of music participation choices in the lives of 21st century males. Harrison identified that his research was approached from a post-feminist view, which included the idea that many men are oppressed in various areas – in this study, music. The study utilized

a mixed-methods, explanatory design with a heavier emphasis on the quantitative data collected (Harrison, 2007).

In the first, quantitative phase of the study, Harrison used a survey to investigate the nature and extent of stereotyping of instrument choice. He selected subjects through convenience sampling and administered the survey to students ages 19-50 at a university in Queensland, Australia. His sample included 98 subjects, with 41 males (32 music majors and 9 non-music majors) and 57 females (39 music majors and 18 non-music majors). Harrison explained that the survey utilized the masculine-feminine continuum developed by Abeles and Porter (1978) (as cited in Harrison, 2007, p. 271) that, for the first time in this type of study, included singing. The test instrument was a 10-point Likert-type scale anchored on the words *masculine* (10) and *feminine* (1). Results indicated that a large portion of students did not perceive instruments to have masculine or feminine attributes, but that gender association did exist with certain instruments, with the violin and flute being feminine and the drums and trombone being masculine. It was interesting to note that the majority of students placed singing towards the middle of the continuum, with 13.3 votes at scale degree four, 28.5 votes at scale degree five, and 27.5 votes at scale degree six, indicating that 69.3 of the 98 subjects perceived singing as being gender neutral. It was also interesting to note that only five participants identified singing as being masculine, associating it with scale degrees seven – 10. Harrison (2007) found that males' perceptions were polarized and females' perceptions tended towards the middle of the scale.

In the second, qualitative phase of Harrison's (2007) study, he interviewed males to determine their perceptions' of singing while they were in high school. He interviewed 21 men of culturally diverse backgrounds between the ages of 18-33 who had attended a wide variety of

schools. Harrison (2007) explained that he chose to interview men of this age because "the reflections of adults brought an objective distance from the events experienced by participants in their school days" (p. 271). Through these case studies he sought the reasons for the gender identification of instruments in phase one of the study. After data was transcribed and analyzed Harrison (2007) discovered influential factors to include (a) participants' early experiences of music; (b) situational factors and role models, including a range of views such as singing being associated with homosexuality and being discouraged by parents or being supported as an acceptable norm by school culture; (c) the competition between music and sport; (d) stereotyping and gender issues; (e) harassment, all demonstrating both positive and negative perceptions towards singing from males, but with generally more negative accounts of singing than positive. It was interesting to note that, in discussing stereotyping and gender issues, Garry, a participant, shared, "…if I was going to play a stringed instrument it would be the cello as I saw it was more manly, I guess being deeper sounding or something: stupid I know" (Harrison, 2007, p. 277)! This concept of males identifying a high pitch or timbre of an instrument, including singing, as being feminine is a recurring theme in the research. Based on his findings from interviews with males, Harrison (2007) suggested three strategies to attempt to counteract hegemonic masculinity, including (a) positive teacher, community, industry, and student role models; (b) engaging and competent instructors; (c) commanding the respect of the community.

Middle School and the Voice Change

Gender Identification

> That's why I never done it before like, man, it's like 'girl stuff' like, only after I did it, it was like, you could see it wasn't, like the only way you would know is if you actually get in there and join, but it was different from what everybody said. (Kennedy, 2002, p. 29)

Kennedy's (2002) qualitative study examined the participation of junior high school boys in choral music. While her study depicted many of the reasons that boys do not enjoy singing, the music environment at the school was supportive and she concluded with some very positive findings and suggestions. She studied 11 males and the teacher of a 27 member, grades eight and nine, vocal ensemble. Kennedy (2002) also conducted "one group interview with three of the girls…to triangulate…with the boys' responses" (p.28). The setting was Cedar Hill Junior High, a suburban school with a population of 850 students, grades seven through nine, in a large metropolitan American city. Data included structured and semi-structured interviews with individuals and in groups of three, observation, informal conversations, a written questionnaire completed by teacher, and examination of material culture. Kennedy's (2002) coding and analysis of field notes and interview transcripts revealed four themes, (a) including the boys' motivation to join and remain in choir; (b) acquisition of musical skills, knowledge, and attitudes; (c) repertoire preferences; (d) perception of the choral experience – preferences and benefits. In the line of questioning that led to the first theme, Kennedy (2002) discovered evidence of hegemonic masculinity in the school that could have prevented the boys from joining choir. In this study, peer influence, "assist[ed] males in overcoming stereotypical hurdles to join junior high choirs" (Kennedy, 2002, p. 30).

Perceptions of Singing

The first theme revealed in Kennedy's (2002) study explores the boys' motivation to join and remain in choir. As with studies involving older participants, Kennedy's results were both positive and negative, but unlike in Harrison's (2007) study, Kennedy's results were primarily positive. She discovered one of the reasons expressed to be love of singing. When investigating the second theme, "acquisition of musical skills, knowledge, and attitudes" (Kennedy, 2002, p.

30-31), Kennedy discovered that the boys felt a sense of pride in singing – pride in working to become independent musicians and pride in their abilities. She also discovered that they valued professionalism and presentation when singing and felt pride in exhibiting these attributes.

Strategies to Address Hegemonic Masculinity and Motivate Boys to Sing

Kennedy (2002) identified several factors that may have counteracted hegemonic masculinity and encouraged boys to sing, including (a) teacher likability; (b) a teaching style that includes high expectations mixed with humor; (c) social aspects of participating in a group like a choral ensemble; (d) internal factors such as self confidence, trust, self worth, and self satisfaction; (e) sharing talents with an audience. Kennedy (2002) touched on the idea of fraternal mentoring, which could have been a powerful tool in counteracting hegemonic masculinity in singing, corroborating Harrison's (2007) suggestion to utilize positive male role models.

The Male Voice Change

Killian (1997) began her study by reiterating that boys undergoing the voice change process must be treated with sensitivity. This was supported by the findings in her data that indicated that 13% or one in five of the boys that she interviewed had a negative voice change experience (Killian, 1997). For 87% of the boys studied the experience was positive or neutral (Killian, 1997). However, Killian's (1997) analysis of the frequency of mention of positive and negative comments shows that boys made 98 negative comments regarding the voice change and only 18 positive comments, contrasting with the data first presented.

Kennedy's (2002) study addressed the issue of the importance of selecting appropriate literature for the male changing voice. Kennedy stated, "It is one of the most significant findings of this study that range-appropriate repertoire does not appear to be a contributing factor for

enjoyment among the male choristers of the Cedar Hill vocal ensemble, although there was general agreement among informants that high notes were difficult" (Kennedy, 2002, p.32). Again, as in the Harrison (2007) study, the boys brought to a researcher's attention the issue of high notes. The boys in the study discussed strategies for handling notes out of their ranges. Kennedy (2002) indicated that the boys did not ever mention feeling frustrated in regard to the range of the repertoire. They all accepted their stage of vocal development and coped with it. Kennedy (2002) wondered if this is because of the value of social aspect or the attraction of music and singing.

Perceptions of Singing and Gender Identification at an Early Age

"*Why do girls like singing?* Because boys don't like it. *Why?* Because I don't like it. *Why?* Because some people might laugh at you" (Hall, 2005, p. 13). In the following studies that involved students ages five through 11, researchers encountered intact groups of children who demonstrated both positive and negative perceptions of singing. These students also demonstrated the existence of hegemonic masculinity, which negatively effected their perceptions of singing at an early age**.**

Sex Role Orientation

Thirty-seven years ago, Tibbetts' (1975) quantitative study investigated the "sex role orientation of children in the lower elementary grades" (p. 255). Tibbetts' sampling included 42 subjects (21 boys and 21 girls) in grades one through four, ages seven through 11. Tibbetts (1975) described them as "Caucasian and African American" (p. 255). Her sampling process was simply that she studied the students who were sent to her remedial reading class, which implies that Tibbetts was both their teacher and the researcher. She acknowledged the limitations of her study in that the sample size was small and "dissimilar in age, grade, race, and

IQ" (Tibbetts, 1975, p. 261). Tibbetts (1975) verbally administered a sex-role attitudes test and classified her results by sex. Tibbetts' data showed that most responses regarding occupations, home responsibilities, and playmate choices were stereotypically gender-biased, with the exception of many girls describing a bus driver as being female, and Tibbetts wondered if this might have been because their bus driver was female. She suggested that seeing adults in non-traditional roles might improve gender bias. Tibbetts' (1975) study was published in the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* and the intent of her study did not appear to be music-related. However, her data offers interesting insight in that she included Singer, Ballet Dancer, Piano Player, and Band Leader as occupations (Tibbetts, 1975). The majority of girls (57%) and boys (62%) said that both men and women should be Singers. The majority of girls (81%) and boys (81%) said that women should be Ballet Dancers. The majority of girls (67%) and boys (43%) said that both men and women should be Piano Players. The majority of girls (57%) and boys (71%) said that men should be Band Leaders. This data may indicate that children were not as gender biased toward singing 37 years ago.

Great Singing Does Not Imply a Great Attitude Towards Singing

Mizener's (1993) study of 542 third through sixth grade students, both boys and girls, investigated the relationship between singing skill and attitude. Her subjects came from a large, urban school district (Mizener, 1993). Mizener's (1993) study was non-experimental, descriptive, and quantitative and her instruments included a questionnaire to assess attitudes and a tape-recorded evaluation of their singing skills. She first completed a pilot study using 78 subjects, which prompted her to revise the questionnaire, answer sheet, and the administration process (Mizener, 1993). Mizener's (1993) questionnaire, which was completed in one session, addressed (a) singing interest; (b) choir participation; (c) classroom singing activities; (d) out-of-

school singing experiences; (e) self-perception of singing skill. After the results of the written questionnaire were collected and tabulated, a smaller sample of subjects, n=123, were selected to complete the tape-recorded evaluation of singing skill; mainly, pitch matching (Mizener, 1993). Mizener did not explain her method for selecting this smaller sample. Mizener (1993) used Smith (1973) and Flowers and Sousa's (1988) criteria to design her own analysis of singing accuracy. Rhythmic accuracy was assessed with either a "yes" or "no" (Mizener, 1993). Two independent reliability observers showed a combined reliability level for assessment of the singing tests of 94% (Mizener, 1993).

Cross-tabulation analysis of data from the written attitude questionnaire showed that there was a "tendency for attitude toward music and singing to decline with increasing grade level [as] was evident in responses to items about singing interest and choir participation" (Mizener, 1993, pp. 236-237). Mizener (1993) was surprised to find no correlation between a positive attitude toward singing and the desire to sing in choir, and assessed singing skill, contradicting previous studies. Mizener (1993) stated that although all students feel that singing is an appropriate activity for both genders, boys are less likely to say that they like to sing because of a lack of positive male role models. Therefor, Mizener (1993) suggested that teachers plan opportunities to increase positive gender identification in music. She also stated that, "[i]n reality, such activities should be provided for boys in the lower elementary grades because evidence indicates that attitudes toward music are well-developed by the age of 8" (Mizener, 1993, p. 242).

Pitch Matching Good, Song-Singing Not

Welch, Sergeant, and White (1997) saw that various studies conducted in Ireland, England, and Japan indicated that boys were consistently rated as being less "in tune" singers

than girls. They were concerned with the lack of longitudinal studies being conducted that would allow the researcher to compare data over time (Welch et al., 1997). Thus, Welch et al. decided to design a longitudinal, descriptive, quantitative study to ascertain children's singing development in early childhood, to determine whether children's ability to sing in tune improves over time, and to determine whether boys were less able to sing in tune than girls over time. The sample group consisted of 87 boys and 97 girls, ages 5, 6, and 7 years old. The students were in Key Stage 1 of the English National Curriculum for Music and were drawn from 10 Primary schools in the Greater London area, providing a mixture of social class, ethnicity, and urban/suburban locations. The study took place over the course of three and a half years. After subjects were taught two songs by their regular classroom teachers under controlled conditions, researchers administered a specially constructed test, based on previous research, which included pitch glides, pitch patterns, sung pitches, and two sample songs, with vocal pitch accuracy assessed by a team of judges (Welch et al., 1997). Internal validity was accounted for by pre-recording test items using a trained older child and electronically produced sinusoids (Welch et al., 1997). Tests were recorded and evaluated by a team of judges. Welch et al. did not describe the frequency or time frame within which this test is administered over the three and a half year study.

Results demonstrated that both sexes showed steady improvement in test items (pitch glides, pitch patterns, sung pitches), and boys were even slightly better at test items than girls. However, girls' ability to sing songs remained constant and the boys' ability was always less than the girls,' declined steadily over three and a half years, and declined significantly in relation to the girls in year three (seven year old subjects) (Welch et al., 1997). In light of a lack of significant difference between girls and boys in pitch matching ability, Welch et al. (1997)

wondered if the decline in boys' abilities to accurately sing songs was due to them negatively identifying the act of singing the songs with the sex of their music teachers (primarily females), therefor perceiving song singing as a feminine act.

Teaching Kids to Sing

Phillips and Aitchinson (1999) were concerned with finding a better method with which to teach children to sing. They were also interested in discovering the effect of group singing lessons on children's attitudes towards singing. Their quasi-experimental, quantitative study, like Welch et al., was longitudinal, and investigated "the effect that group singing lessons had on students' aural acuity, vocal range, musical knowledge, and attitude towards singing after two years; relationship between instruction, pitch accuracy, and gender to aural acuity, vocal achievement, musical knowledge, and attitude towards singing" (Phillips & Aitchinson, 1999, p. 71). Phillips and Aitchinson's subjects included the entire fourth-grade populations (N=85) of a rural Iowa school. Students were pre-tested in third grade using Gordon's *Primary Measures of Music Audiation*. All subjects received formal group singing lessons with a researcher using Phillips' textbook, *Teaching Kids to Sing*, twice weekly for approximately 10-12 minutes for 27 weeks as the treatment in the study (Phillips & Aitchinson, 1999). There was no control in this second portion of Phillips and Aitchinson's study. Phillips and Aitchinson (1999) tested students for aural acuity using Gordon's *Intermediate Measures of Music Audiation* (IMMA). Phillips and Aitchinson (1999) also tested students for pitch accuracy, vocal range, and breathing mode and administered a music knowledge achievement test and a survey to test attitude. Phillips and Aitchinson (1999) found that most students passed the written music knowledge achievement test, that gender has no effect on aural acuity, that inaccurate and accurate singers scored almost the same on the aural acuity test (IMMA), and that after two years more than 40% of students

needed considerable improvement in accurate singing. The results from Phillip's and Aitchinson's (1999) attitude test showed that only 28% of the students liked general music class, 39% enjoyed the singing lessons, and more than a third valued singing. They also learned that most of the students held low opinions of their own abilities to sing and preferred to listen to other people sing, rather than sing themselves (Phillips & Aitchinson, 1999). Phillips and Aitchinson made no mention of a correlation between a child's attitude towards singing and his or her ability to sing accurately. Phillips and Aitchinson (1999) concluded by suggesting that we continue to search for more successful ways by which to teach singing.

First In-Depth Study of Hegemonic Masculinity Affecting Music in Early Childhood

Previous literature. Hall (2005) designed one of very few qualitative studies of children's perceptions of singing and of gender stereotyping of singing in early childhood. She reviewed a range of literature from general education that indicated that boys in Western culture felt increasing pressure to behave in masculine ways, and expressed concerns about whether singing will be viewed as an acceptable behavior for boys if this continues (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) then explored the idea of hegemonic masculinity and the fact that there can be consequences in our culture for boys who choose to engage in non-masculine behaviors like singing. She next pointed out that there were a variety of studies that investigated the concept of singing being considered feminine, but that these studies typically focused on there being more girls than boys participating in music in secondary school, the absence of boys singing at school, negative attitudes towards singing held by adolescent boys, and the choice to not sing after elementary school (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) listed cultures in which singing is considered completely acceptable and masculine, including the contemporary music industry, rock, rap, and jazz, cathedral choirs in England, male tribal songs in Australia, and referred to research of

extroverted musicians who ignore the gender norms. Hall (2005) next acknowledged that preferences are determined largely in adolescence, but suggested that gender identification may begin as early as two years old, and that boys could begin to reject singing at this early age.

Hall (2005) cited that findings from Welch's (1997) study showed that from the beginning of schooling to age seven, boys maintained the ability to match pitch but their ability to sing a song declined. This led her to pose three research questions, including (a) do boys avoid femininity before the age of seven (Hall, 2005); (b) "could peer modeling positively influence boys' perception of singing and in turn change their singing behavior" (Hall, 2005, p. 8); (c) what attitudes does this group of boys have about singing in their first year of school (Hall, 2005)? Her question regarding the positive use of peer modeling was based in research done in this area at the secondary level. Mizener (1993) also suggested investigating this approach in her study. Over the course of 19 weeks (two school terms) Hall (2005) studied "two groups of five-year-old boys (n=38) in their first year of junior school in a private, Kinder-Year 12, single-sex school in a high SES area of inner-city Melbourne, Australia" (p. 8). She described the culture of the school as having various extra curricular musical activities available, but emphasizing sporting achievements and performance in traditional academic subjects as being hegemonic, masculine activities (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) acted as the teacher-researcher in her study. She stated that this was not action research and that she would gather primarily qualitative data with quantitative data also being collected to ensure a rich quality of data (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) admitted that the depth of the study as ethnography was limited by her role, but that the close relationship that she had with the participants outweighed those limitations.

Attitudes towards singing and being male.

Phase one. Hall (2005) began by measuring the development of boys' singing voices using Rutkowski's (1997, 2000) Singing Voice Development Measure (SVDM) to investigate a correlation between lesser developed singing voices and negative attitudes and lower participation. She next read the boys a story, and a discussion emerged about singing high, in which one boy expressed his perception that, "girls sing high" (Hall, 2005, pp. 10-11). Hall (2005) also explored the boys' beliefs about acceptable instruments for boys and girls with a pictorial survey. The results were consistent with traditional gender stereotypes except regarding piano and violin, which they had experience with (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) shared that the subjects indicated that boys play certain instruments that are "big, loud, or low" (p. 12). For the final test in the first phase, Hall (2005) gave her students a pictorial survey of occupations with one being a singer and asked them to assign a male or female name to a gender-neutral stick figure. "25/34 [boys] labeled the singing stick figure female" (Hall, 2005, p. 13). In conversation with Hall (2005), the boys were neutral regarding gender appropriateness of singing, but it may have been because they knew their teacher liked and was studying singing. Hall (2005) pointed out that it was surprising to find this attitude, which mirrored an adolescent boy's attitude, in five-year-old boys in an all-male school that offered many opportunities for boys to sing. Hall (2005) suggested that boys might adopt this concept of singing not being a masculine activity earlier in life than even age five.

Phase two. Two older male students, one 17-years-old with a changed voice and one 9-years-old with an unchanged voice, both highly active in singing in and outside of school were included in the classroom to investigate the effects of peer modeling on student's participation in singing (Hall, 2005). The students developed a very close bond with the older boys very quickly and seemed to identify with them very strongly (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) shared that when the

peer model sang a choral song in classical style with vibrato and phrasing, the boys laughed and associated it with the way a girl sings. However, the boys then continued to request to hear the song (Hall, 2005)! Hall (2005) questioned if this was because a boy singing beautifully was less threatening to their masculinity than a girl singing beautifully. Hall (2005) noticed increased participation in singing in relation to the peer models. 20 out of 35 boys indicated that they might want to join the Junior School Choir in Year 4 (Hall, 2005). Also, many boys moved to the next level of vocal development, although Hall (2005) mentioned that this relationship could not be measured. Finally, Hall (2005) found no correlation between boys who were still in the early stages of singing voice development and boys who said they wanted to join choir, corroborating Mizener's (1993) and Phillips and Aitchinson's (1999) findings. Hall (2005) suggested that gender stereotyping in music might begin as early as age five, and that future research should investigate this problem as well as search for ways to deconstruct male stereotypes in the music classroom.

Conclusion

Music educators of all disciplines teach because they have a desire to share their passion for music with children. We give of our own time and talent to encourage our students' development. When negative outside influences such as gendered perceptions of singing undermine our efforts, we must seek to understand these influences, search out the sources within our school and community's culture, and develop creative methods to counteract them. Mizener's 1993 study suggested that boys are less likely to say that they like to sing because of a lack of positive male role models. Welch's 1997 study identified that boys' ability to match pitch steadily declined over the years and wondered if negative gender identification of singing can occur in male students as early as age seven due to the boys identifying singing as being

feminine and the majority of their teachers being female. Hall's 2005 study investigated the use of same-sex peer models to counteract negative perceptions of singing in first year, male students with positive results. However, her study is one of very few to investigate this idea and took place in a private, single-sex school in Australia. Negative, feminine-gender identification of singing is still prevalent amongst boys today, but these previous studies all suggest that a male role model could positively impact boys' perceptions of singing. More research is needed to assess younger boys' perceptions of older, male peer models in music class to better understand the impact of this endeavor. This study attempts to do so.

This chapter investigated the literature covering the issue of males' negative perceptions towards singing. Chapter three will describe the study's design, sampling, site, and participants. The chapter will also explain what types of data were collected and how they were collected, as well as how data was analyzed.

Chapter Three

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this action research study was to design, implement, and refine an approach to using male peer modeling in Kindergarten general music. Research addressed the following questions:

1. What were my perceptions of the effects of the upper-elementary male peer model on the kindergarten students? On the peer-model himself?
2. How did kindergarten students describe interacting with an upper-elementary, male peer model in music class?
3. How did the upper-elementary male peer models describe acting as a role model for younger students in music class?
4. How did parents of both groups of students describe their children's experiences interacting with the peer models?
5. Did parents and the teacher perceive that the male peer modeling had an effect on kindergarten students gender identification of singing, and, if so, how?

Design

The study was interpretive in design and can be described as action research. Phillips (2008) cited Kemmis and Wilkinson's (1998) definition of action research as "trying out new ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about" a given topic (p. 6). Creswell (2009) designated action research as a type of qualitative research due to several factors including (a) natural setting; (b) researcher as key instrument; (c) multiple sources of data; (d) inductive data analysis; (e) participants' meanings; (f) emergent design; (g) theoretical lens; (h) interpretive; (i) holistic account (pp. 175-176). Conway and Borst (2001)

defined action research in music education as "studies of music teaching and learning that are designed and implemented by K-12 music teachers or in equal collaboration with them" (p. 3). They described the purpose of action research as "to make changes and affect teaching" (Conway & Borst, 2001, p. 3). West (2011) stated, "because teacher research is seen as a tool for effecting classroom and school change, the object of this approach is to transform rather than simply describe school or classroom settings" (p. 90).

Phillips (2008) described the process of action research as operating in a research spiral that includes planning the study, implementing it, observing students, reflecting on the results, and repeating the process (p. 317). Glanz's (1998) model was similar but more specific: (a) select a focus; (b) collect data; (c) analyze and interpret the data; (d) take action; (e) reflect; (f) continue or modify actions, which begins the process again (as cited in West, 2011, p. 90). West (2011) pointed out that teacher research becomes action research when the teacher-researcher utilizes his or her findings to modify teaching practice (p. 91). "Thus, the spiraling aspect of action research occurs when knowledge is derived from practice and practice is informed by knowledge in an ongoing (spiraling) process" (West, 2011, p. 91).

"Successful inquiry leads to empowerment and transformation" (Levin & Merritt, 2006, p. 4). When a teacher as researcher develops a deeper understanding through action research and improves his or her practice based on that understanding, then inquiry has been successful (Levin & Merritt, 2006). Sagor (1992) cited several examples of professionals such as doctors who are expected to contribute to their professional knowledge base by disseminating research findings in medical journals (as cited in West, 2011). West (2011) pointed out that this concept is not a part of the mainstream field of education. Bresler (1994) felt that, "teachers are classroom experts and, as such, can contribute meaningfully to educational research" (p. 27). Several researchers

suggested that teacher and action research may be used to address relevant issues in the field of music education (Conway & Borst, 2001; Conway & Jeffers, 2004). West (2011) stated that action research may be used as a meaningful type of professional development for music educators. Finally, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) pointed out that, "The unique feature of the questions that prompt teacher research is that they emanate from neither theory nor practice alone but from critical reflection on the intersection of the two" (p. 15). This study brings together the theoretical frameworks of gender studies and peer modeling, the wealth of previous studies conducted on gendered perceptions of singing, and personal practice and reflection from over nine years in my profession.

The *science critique* suggests that teacher researchers are incapable of "conduct[ing] research in any objective way in their own classrooms" (Robbins, 2014, p. 200). During the course of this study I found that I made some observations that accessed and incorporated knowledge of the students' thoughts and behaviors that I gained outside of the study. I was privileged to have this knowledge because they were my students and I was their teacher. Robbins (2014) countered the science critique, saying, "teachers bring a different way of knowing to the knowledge base of teaching" (p. 200). "At the heart of…practitioner inquiry is the assumption that teachers' intimate knowledge of teaching provides an important "insider" perspective on teaching and learning" (Robbins, 2014, p. 187). From urban to suburban to rural, from low-income to high-income, from public to private to charter, one cannot imagine a less uniform setting than the diverse classrooms found across the United States. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) discussed the idea that "there is a growing realization in the research community that the positivistic paradigm that attempts to formulate general laws is probably not the most useful for understanding educational phenomena" (p. 15). Instead, teachers might benefit most

from "insight into the particulars of how and why something works and for whom it works within the contexts of particular classrooms" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 15).

Description of Site

Bresler (1994) stated that a key component of teacher knowledge, a factor that makes it most useful and relevant to music educators, is that it is "contextual rather than abstract" and involves an understanding of students and the "school reality in which teachers function" (p. 27). It is therefor important to describe, in detail, the context in which this study took place. Participants included students who attend Shrine Catholic Grade School (SCGS), a coed, faith-based school of approximately 540 students. The school is located in a suburban city in Southeastern Michigan of approximately 58,000 residents (US Census Bureau, 2009). The unemployment rate was 4.1% and median household income was $60,966 in 2013 (City of Royal Oak, 2013). 95% of residents identified as being of Caucasian descent (US Census Bureau, 2009). 77% of SCGS students identify as Caucasian, 7% identify as African American, 3% identify as Asian, and 2% identify as Hispanic (ElementarySchools.org, 2011). The site was purposefully selected by the teacher-researcher because, as is the case in most action research, she works there. School staff is very concerned about engaging students in singing at Mass. According to the Principal and many teachers, students, and parents, the previous music teacher, whom I replaced in 2010, did not encourage students to sing. The peer models were her students for four years. The Kindergarten students were never her students. The administration, Priests, and other teachers frequently encourage the students to sing more frequently and louder at Mass. The Principal praises their singing in announcements. Many grade-level teachers incorporate some singing in the classroom. The Principal expressed concern with the lack of singing when she hired me and requested I start a choir and do more than the previous teacher to encourage the

students to sing at school and at Mass. More detail describing the culture at SCGS can be found in the Personal Orientation section on page seven.

Sampling

I had largely unrestricted access to student participants during the school day and to communication with their parents via email and personal communication. Because my job at SCGS is not full time, I had the luxury of having some time and flexibility during the school day to collect data whenever I was not teaching or preparing for a class. Student participants were first selected using criterion sampling. Patton (2002) described criterion sampling as picking cases that meet some criterion (p. 243). SCGS has three kindergarten classes, with two full day classes and one half-day class. The kindergarten participants were studied as intact classes. My sample included 20 students from one full day class and 20 students from a second full day class. The following criterion were considered when choosing participants: First, I chose to study both full day classes. This provided me with the maximum amount of contact time and time to conduct interviews. Also, a full day kindergarten class schedule is more similar to older grade levels than a half-day class. If I were to conduct another study of the participants in a later grade, this would eliminate a differing external factor. Second, I ensured that the two full day kindergarten classes had a typical number of boy students. This allowed me the largest potential to investigate possible gendered perceptions of singing and the effect of the peer models on boys. Finally, children were only included as participants if they returned signed permission slips and gave verbal consent (see Appendices A and B).

Two upper elementary male peer models were also chosen based on criterion sampling. They were selected based on seven criteria, with the third criteria being based on Hall's (2005) study (pp. 13-14). First, the male peer models were chosen from sixth grade. Second, I

originally planned to select a boy with an unchanged voice so that the kindergarteners would perceive his voice as being more similar to their own voices. However, through the course of the study I found value in also including a peer model with a changing voice, so both voice types were selected. Third, the peer models always participated in singing during and after school. Both peer models were in after-school choir, demonstrating a commitment to singing. Fourth, the peer models demonstrated a positive attitude towards music and singing. Fifth, the Principal and classroom teachers confirmed that the peer models were performing acceptably in class and that missing class time would not compromise their classwork. Sixth, I originally planned to select a peer model who would be capable of comfortably and accurately singing the song that he would teach the children so that the students would not be deterred by perceiving singing as being too difficult (Harrison and O'Neill, 2000). However, as previously stated, I found value in also including a peer model who was comfortable singing the song, but had a changing, less accurate voice. Finally, the peer models returned signed permission slips (see Appendices C and D). More detail about the process of selecting the peer models can be found in the Procedure section.

Description of Participants

Kindergarten students attended music class for two 30-minute periods each week. Room A included 20 children with nine girls and 11 boys between the ages of five and six. Room B included 20 children with 11 girls and nine boys between the ages of five and six. Many of these students were entering their first formal year of school, with a few having attended one or two years of pre-school at SCGS prior to kindergarten. Children who attended pre-school at SCGS did not attend music class during this time. The culture of the school is described in more detail

in the Personal Orientation section of the Introduction, providing the reader with rich insight into the site where the study took place.

The two peer models were both sixth grade students. They attended music class one day a week for 40 minutes and choir rehearsal one or two times a week for one hour and 15 minutes. Both boys appeared to be comfortable, confident students who had good relationships with their peers and adults. During the study Joseph[1] was 12 years old and a member of the choir for three sessions. He always auditioned for solos in choir, always sang in regular music class, had a very positive attitude towards singing in conversation with peers and myself, and was very focused and hard working in choir rehearsals and regular music class. Matthew was 12 years old and was in choir for two sessions. He volunteered for solos in regular music class, had a very positive attitude towards singing in conversation with peers and myself, and was very focused and hard working in choir rehearsals and regular music class. His response to the question, "Do you think you'd be a good singing mentor for Kindergarten boys?" (Peer Model Selection Checklist) was very memorable. He replied, "Yes, because people look at me as if I'm not a singer, but I am" (Peer Model Selection Checklist).

Types of Data and Procedure

The Institutional Review Board approved this study on January 28, 2013. I proposed the study to my committee in the fall of 2012, began to work with peer models starting at the end of March 2013, and collected data in May and June 2013. Kindergarten parents were informed by email at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year and immediately preceding the study that their opinions would be valuable data that would be collected throughout the study (see Appendix E). In my first two years teaching at SCGS I had meaningful and regular email

[1] All participants in the study were given pseudonyms.

communication with parents and knew I could anticipate honest, timely feedback. The study took place over five weeks. I saw each kindergarten class twice a week. The five weeks were divided into two action research cycles of two weeks each with one neutral week of no interactions with the peer model in between. The Kindergarten students interacted with the peer models four times during the first cycle and two or three times during the second cycle. Kindergarten students were originally going to interact with the same peer model during both of the two-week cycles. In the spirit of action research, this would allow the peer model to act, reflect on his actions, and, if desired, revise his performance in the second cycle. However, as I mentioned in the Sampling section, I became interested in discovering if the Kindergarten students responded differently to a peer model with a changing, versus unchanged, voice. I modified the original plan so that, in the second cycle, the peer models interacted with the Kindergarten class they had not previously worked with.

Data was collected in a variety of ways including observations, teacher-researcher journal entries, in-person and group interviews, email, and review of documents. Mertens (2005) stated that, in qualitative research, the researcher serves as the instrument for data collection (p. 382). All interactions with the peer model were recorded to allow for credibility, and the video camera was set up, in both "on" and "off" mode, all year to lessen the possibility of students "playing" to the camera. I observed in varying degrees of participation. A description of the types of data and the procedures for data collection follows. The procedure will be described in a manner that reflects the cyclical and methodical, yet emergent, nature of action research. This study reflects the identification of a problem and a plan for action (Phillips, 2008, p. 319). The following section describes the actions that were taken and the methods of data collection (Phillips, 2008, p. 319).

Choosing the Peer Models

In the beginning of the school year I gave all of my upper elementary classes a basic explanation of the type of research I would be conducting. In December 2012 I held a recess and lunch meeting with all fifth and sixth grade boys who were in choir. These meetings were already usual occurrences for them. During this meeting, while the boys were eating lunch, I reviewed the nature of the research with them and explained what I hoped to accomplish. I also gave a basic explanation of what the peer models' duties would be. After the boys ate lunch I tested their voices to see if they had changed. I did this at the beginning of the year to place them as altos or sopranos in choir; so again, this was not unusual for them. It also gave us a chance to discuss the voice change process and for them to express any concerns. During this time I asked them if they would like to switch sections in choir and if they had an opinion as to where they were in the voice change process. Finally, once I tested each boy's voice, I asked him to complete a brief questionnaire (See Appendix F). This questionnaire gave each child the chance to express his desire to be considered. The students had the option to complete this questionnaire anonymously. After reading the students' answers to the questionnaires, I completed my Checklist to Select Peer Models (Appendix G) for all boys who indicated they would like to be considered to be a peer model.

Based on the results of the questionnaire and checklist, I selected two boys so that, in the event my first choice became unavailable, I could continue with my research. Joseph was my primary peer model and Matthew was originally my understudy. This also allowed the boys acting as peer models to feel more comfortable in their role. They were able to discuss their experiences with each other and were not singled out. My knowledge of my students over several years, coupled with the sampling criterion and their responses to the initial questionnaire,

made the selection process fairly straightforward. Once I selected the two peer models I spoke with their classroom teachers to confirm that their participation would not negatively impact their schoolwork and to coordinate our schedules. The teachers were very amicable and excited about my research. I called another meeting of the choirboys and announced my choices to the group. Both boys' parents were also very excited about their participation and happily signed the permission slips.

Preparing the Peer Models

I prepared both Joseph and Matthew for the role of peer model. First, we worked together to choose songs they felt comfortable singing and teaching. Their choices were simple, a cappella songs from *Jump right in: The music curriculum: Kindergarten* (Taggart et al., 2010). Harrison and O'Neill (2000) stated that this song be gender-neutral so the Kindergarten students are not influenced by that variable. Initially, Joseph selected *Over the River* and Matthew selected *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Next, I introduced the idea of teaching a song using rote method (Appendix H). I taught the boys songs using rote method in previous grades, so they were familiar with the method from the perspective of a student. The boys received a handout explaining the steps and I taught them a song using rote method. Next, they each taught their song to me and the other peer model. Joseph did a great job teaching his song, only needing to be reminded of a step in the rote process once or twice. He did a great job of singing all directions, mostly using the resting tone. Matthew also did a great job teaching his song using rote method, only needing to be reminded of a step once or twice. He did not play the resting tone game, step five in rote method, or sing his directions quite as easily as Joseph, but I anticipated that he would improve after another practice session (Teacher-Researcher Journal). At this time, Joseph chose to change his song from *Over the River* to *Take Time In Life*. During

this time, I observed that Matthew's voice was beginning to change and, as a result, he was singing less accurately. He had trouble singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* in the key of C major. I began to wonder if it would be better to use a student who loves to sing and can still sing easily and access their head voice without issue (Joseph) or a student who loves to sing but is beginning to struggle (Matthew). I began to wonder if it is better to display the best vocal model and someone who is very confident and at ease, or someone who is struggling a little and may be relatable to a younger student who is also struggling. Perhaps it is best to display the best vocal model, knowing that Kindergarten students still have a long time before they begin to encounter the voice change struggle. On the other hand, many Kindergarten students do have trouble accessing their head voice, and an older student who is struggling could be relatable and motivating. To attempt to answer these questions, I decided to use data from both Joseph and Matthew's interactions with the Kindergarten students, rather than using Matthew as an understudy. As a final step in their learning process, each boy taught his song to his homeroom classmates. Throughout this process I shared feedback with them in the form of written notes, video recordings, and discussion.

I met and spoke with Joseph and Matthew two days before they interacted with Kindergarten students to make sure they understood what to do during class. I also interviewed them. Guiding questions attempted to capture their perceptions of their role in the study and what they anticipated their experiences might be like. These interviews were minimally structured as part of a conversation as we concluded our meeting, and questions emerged as I began to understand what the peer models brought to the situation (Mertens, 2005, p. 386). These interviews took place in my classroom and were video recorded. I also took notes while interviewing. See Appendix I for interview protocol.

First Cycle, First Class

The peer models came to the kindergarten music classes for the entire 30-minute class period. During the first class period the peer models interacted with students as complete participants, allowing the students time to acclimate to their presence. I introduced Joseph to the students in class B and Matthew to the students in class A and explained to them that Joseph and Matthew would be guests in music class for the next month. I explained that sometimes the peer models would participate with them and sometimes they would teach them songs. I then taught the classes like I normally would, and Matthew and Joseph participated with the kindergarten students. During these classes the peer models introduced themselves to the kindergarten students and the students had the opportunity to ask Joseph and Matthew a few questions. During the first interaction, I acted in the capacity of what Spradley (1980) described as a complete participant (as cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 383). I video recorded the class periods. I made journal entries immediately following the classes of any observations of the physical environment of the classroom, the human and social environment, activities and behaviors of the kindergarten students and the peer model, informal interactions and unplanned activities, any nonverbal communication, and what did not happen (Patton, 2002). This journal entry was largely drawn from memory, as I was acting as a complete participant. See Appendix J for observation protocol. I interviewed the peer models following the classes and asked them to describe their first impressions of interacting with the students. This also allowed me to ascertain whether they were comfortable and to address any issues before continuing. This interview had minimal structure with emergent questions. See Appendix K for interview protocol.

First Cycle, Second Class

During the second interaction, the peer models again came to the kindergarten music classes for the entire 30-minute class period. For the first eight minutes of class I taught as I normally did, leading a vocal warm-up and accompanying the students on djembe as they sang the greeting song *Jambo*. Then Joseph taught Class B *A-Tisket, A-Tasket* for about four minutes and Matthew taught Class A *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* for approximately eight minutes. During this portion of the class I observed as a passive participant (Spradley, 1980, as cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 382), only assisting when absolutely necessary and making notes of observations (see Appendix J). Again, observations were triangulated with video recordings. After the peer models taught their songs, I had a quick discussion about the process with the kindergarteners. Students in Class B wanted to ask Joseph questions about himself, so I allowed this for a few minutes. In the remaining 14 minutes of class I taught as usual and the peer models participated. I did not interview the peer models following this class, as I did not want to influence their participation by appearing to be overly concerned with the quality of their interactions. After this class I emailed all parents of the kindergarten students, as well as the peer models' parents, and invited them to share any conversations they had with their children regarding the interactions in class. Creswell (2009) placed email data collection in the category of interviews (p. 179). These email interviews were minimally structured, allowing stories to emerge. See Appendix L for email interview protocol.

First Cycle, Third Class

During the third interaction, the peer models again came to the kindergarten music classes for the entire 30-minute class period. For the first 11 minutes of class I taught as I normally did, leading a vocal warm-up and accompanying the students on djembe as they sang *Jambo*. Then Joseph and Matthew led their kindergarten classes in singing *America (My*

Country, 'Tis of Thee) while I accompanied them on piano. The kindergarten students learned the song earlier in the year, so the focus was not on learning a new song, but on listening to and singing with the peer models. The students listened to the peer models sing the song, sang along with the peer models, and sang for the peer models as a class and in small groups. The song was lyrical with a moderate tempo and was gender neutral, enabling the children to focus more on the activity of singing rather than on a game, an activity with movement or props, the excitement of a fast tempo, or the possible gendered nature of the text. In the remaining few minutes of class I taught as usual and the peer models participated with the kindergarten students. During this class I observed as a moderate participant (Spradley, 1980, as cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 382), accompanying the students on the piano and suggesting their next activity. Observations were recorded after class (see Appendix J) and the classes were video recorded.

First Cycle, Fourth Class and Interviews

During the fourth and final interaction, the peer models again came to the kindergarten music classes for the entire 30-minute class period. I taught as I normally did during the first five minutes, leading a vocal warm-up and accompanying the students on djembe as they sang *Jambo*. Then, the male peer models re-visited the songs they taught during the second class and extended the songs with simple activities. Joseph led Class B in singing *A-Tisket, A-Tasket* while holding a large parachute and walking to the macrobeat. After singing the song, the students would lift the parachute and crawl under while Joseph sang the fifth scale degree. When he and the students were underneath, they would all sing the first scale degree. Matthew led Class A in singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* while moving hula hoops to the macrobeat in different ways. The peer models then engaged in an informal conversation with the kindergarteners in the form of a semi-structured, group interview (Mertens, 2005, p. 386) and

invited the kindergarteners to describe the experience of interacting with them in music class. Joseph's interview lasted 12 minutes; Matthew's interview lasted five minutes. The peer models used a list of questions to guide the discussion (Mertens, 2005, p. 386). See Appendix M for group interview protocol. The questions covered important issues but allowed the kindergarten students to voice their own opinions (Mertens, 2005, p. 386). The interactions were video-recorded and the peer models did not take notes during the interviews. During the first portion of this class I observed as a passive participant and took notes observing observation protocol (see Appendix J). I continued to observe during the first question of the group interview as a passive participant. When the peer models proceeded to the second question I excused myself from the classroom to allow the students to speak with the peer models without the teacher-researcher being present. During the next kindergarten class, I reminded the students in Class B of their interactions with Joseph. I then interviewed Class B as a group and asked them to describe their interactions with the Joseph over the course of the four classes. This interview was video recorded. This interview was also a group interview for the same reasons as described previously. See Appendix N for interview protocol. Questions were almost the same as questions asked by the peer model to allow for data triangulation and to allow students a second chance to answer if they were slow to respond in the previous focus group interview. Again, the questions were semi-structured to guide the conversation but to also allow students' genuine thoughts, feelings, and ideas to emerge and unfold. After the interview with Class B, I was prompted to show the kindergarten students portions of the video recordings taken while Joseph was a member of the class. This was followed by another, improvised, seven-minute long interview with the students to gather additional comments. Unfortunately, the school schedule prohibited me from conducting this same interview with Matthew's class, Class A.

At the end of the four classes I conducted an exit interview with Joseph to invite him to describe his experience. This interview took place the day following his final interaction with Class B. The interview was semi-structured and video-recorded. See Appendix O for interview protocol. Unfortunately, the school schedule prohibited me from conducting this same interview with Matthew.

At the end of the first cycle of four classes I was excited to conduct a second cycle of action research. A review of observation notes, interview notes, and email correspondence with parents confirmed that the peer models appeared to have an impact on the students. Many themes emerged, some predictable, some unforeseen. I was particularly interested in the influence of a peer model with an unchanged, accurate voice (Joseph) versus a peer model with a changing, inaccurate voice (Matthew). The students' reactions in class and comments in the interview process were enough to warrant a second cycle so I could compare the impact of the different peer models on the Kindergarten students. I was interested in observing whether the quality of the peer models' voices impacted the Kindergarten students' participation in singing and quality of singing. I was interested in seeing if the students selected Joseph or Matthew as their favorite vocal model. Finally, I was interested in seeing how the students responded to the new peer model as a teacher and related to him as a peer. For the second cycle, Joseph was assigned as a peer model to kindergarten Class A and Matthew was assigned to kindergarten Class B.

Second Cycle, First Class

The peer models again came to the kindergarten music classes for the entire 30-minute class period. They interacted with students as complete participants, allowing the students time to acclimate to their presence. I introduced Matthew to the students in Class B and Joseph to the

students in Class A and explained to them that Joseph and Matthew would be guests in music class, just like the previous peer model. Due to time constraints, the peer models completed all of the activities from the first cycle, first and second classes in the first class of the second cycle. Matthew introduced himself to the students, participated in the greeting song *Jambo*, taught them *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, and then participated in an activity I led. Finally, at the end of class, I allowed the students to ask Matthew additional questions and get to know him. Joseph led the Toss Across warm up, sang a solo in *Jambo* with the kindergarten students, taught them *A-Tisket, A-Tasket*, and performed *My Country Tis of Thee* for and with them. At the end of class I allowed the students to ask Joseph additional questions and get to know him. During the first interaction, I acted in the capacity of what Spradley (1980) described as a complete participant (as cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 383) and a passive participant (Spradley, 1980, as cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 382). I video recorded the class periods and I made journal entries immediately following the classes.

Second Cycle, Second Class and Interviews

Due to a final exam and the end of the school year for the kindergarten students, Joseph was unable to attend any classes following the first class of the second cycle. I did not know this until after the second class of Class A's second cycle. Not wanting to miss the opportunity to gather feedback from the kindergarten students regarding the impact of the peer models, I taught class like I normally would. The kindergarten students attended a choir concert the previous Friday in which they saw the peer models perform. One student mentioned he saw Joseph and Matthew perform in the concert, so I continued the conversation, asking the students if they remembered Joseph performing *My Country Tis Of Thee* in the previous class. We spoke about the choir concert. When I realized that Joseph probably was not going to come to class, I

conducted the group interview with the students I would have conducted at the end of the cycle, gathering some interesting data. This interview followed the same procedures as the interview conducted at the end of the first research cycle, with the exception that additional questions attempted to capture the students' perceptions of the differences between the two peer models. See Appendix P for interview protocol. I ended class by teaching the students the game Joseph would have taught them. I conducted a final, semi-structured, exit interview with Joseph the following day. See Appendix O for interview protocol.

During the second class of the second cycle, Matthew visited Class B for the entire 30-minute class and interacted with the students as a complete participant. Matthew participated in and taught portions of class under my direction. He led the class in the vocal warm-up game, Toss Across, and participated in the game with them. He sang *Jambo* with them. He reviewed singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* with the students, sitting in the position of the teacher and singing and providing feedback while I accompanied on piano and gave instructions for activities. Then Matthew and I co-taught a rhythm and singing activity to extend the song. Next, I led the class in activities surrounding the chant *Engine, Engine Number Nine* and Matthew participated with the kindergarten students. Finally, the students asked Matthew a few questions about himself, which he answered.

Second Cycle, Third Class and Interviews

During the third and final class of the second cycle, Matthew visited Class B for the entire 30-minute class and interacted with the students as a complete participant. Students lead Toss Across and Matthew participated. Then Matthew and I lead *Jambo*, singing in solo, and the students echoed us. Next, I left the room and Matthew interviewed the kindergarten students in a semi-structured, group interview (Mertens, 2005, p. 386) and invited the kindergarteners to

describe the experience of interacting with him in music class. Matthew used a list of questions to guide the discussion (Mertens, 2005, p. 386). See Appendix M for group interview protocol. The procedure was the same as during the first cycle, except that I did not observe any of the interview process. I allowed the students to speak with the peer model without the teacher-researcher being present. I listened from the hallway and interrupted once to remove a student who was being so silly and talking so much that it interfered with the interview. Following the interview, I re-entered the classroom and Matthew played a song on the piano for the students. Then I taught the students the song and accompanying game, *The Old Gray Cat*. Matthew participated as a student. Following the song and game, Matthew left the classroom. I then interviewed Class B as a group and asked them to describe their interactions with the Matthew over the course of the three classes. Interview procedure was the same as at the end of the first research cycle. Again, additional questions attempted to capture the students' perceptions of the differences between the two peer models. See Appendix P for interview protocol. Finally, I conducted an exit interview with Matthew later that day. This interview was similar to the interviews at the end of the first research cycle. See Appendix O for interview protocol.

Analysis

After completing two cycles of action research, I felt the study was complete. I had gathered ample amounts of data and observed many themes unfold. From a practical perspective, it was the end of the school year and the students were no longer attending my class. Due to my work and school schedule, I did not begin to analyze the data until a year after I collected it. Analysis took approximately a year and a half of working when I had time. This proved to be beneficial. I still teach at Shrine and the students from the study are now in third grade. I brought this perspective to my analysis of the data, findings, and discussion. My first

step in the analysis process was to create a timeline with an overview and brief descriptions of all events related to research. Next, I reviewed my research questions. I created an overview of the data sources.

Overview of Data Sources

	Total	
Kindergarten Parents' Emails	17	
Peer Model Parents' Emails	2	
Teacher-Researcher Journal Entries	24	
		Video Duration
Videos	26	8:48:04
		Number of Pages
Transcribed Interviews with Peer Models	4	54
Transcribed Interviews with Kindergarten Students	4	45
	Number of Rows in Spreadsheet	
Teacher-Researcher Journal Theme Log	87	
Transcribed Interview Theme Log	64	
Video Observation Theme Log	160	

I transcribed the parents' emails and my teacher-researcher journal. After this review of my research, I attempted to answer my research questions without coding, generating the following list of observations.

1. Peer models' characteristics:
    a. Unchanged, accurate singing voice versus changing, inaccurate singing voice:
        i. Is one preferable?

ii. Does seeing a confident boy who loves to sing, but who has a changing, inaccurate voice, benefit boys who are having trouble singing in their singing voice?

iii. Is the real issue that the kindergarten boys are having trouble using their singing voices, that they do not like to sing, or both?

iv. What issue is using a boy with a changing voice really addressing?

b. Peer model's ability to teach and efficacy

c. Peer model's comfort level with children and confidence

d. Peer fraternity

2. Kindergarten students formed a bond and identified with the peer models (see Hall, 2005). Kindergarten students mentioned having a bond previously established with peer models (after school Kids Club, playground, etc.).
3. Intrigued to have a boy as a teacher, as there are no male teachers in the school
4. Peer model does have a positive impact
5. Also a cultural issue – singing needs to be a part of the children's culture
6. Gender isn't an issue

The above observations guided the initial stages of coding the video footage. First, I analyzed my teacher-researcher journal for themes. I recorded important observations and statements as themes and assigned the themes numbers. I then watched footage of myself teaching the sixth grade boys how to teach using rote method, of the sixth grade boys teaching their peers, of interviews between the sixth grade boys and myself, of the sixth grade boys teaching the Kindergarten students, and of interviews between the sixth grade boys and the Kindergarten students. I transcribed the interviews between the sixth grade boys and myself and between the

sixth grade boys and the Kindergarten students. As I watched and transcribed the video footage, I continued to record important observations and statements as themes. After watching, transcribing, and coding the teacher research journal and videos, 16 themes (see Appendix Q), many with subthemes, emerged. I reviewed the lists of themes from the primary data sources, the teacher-researcher journal, video observed, and video transcribed to ensure that all codes were uniform. Next, I started to count the frequency of each theme in each of the three aforementioned primary data sources (see Appendix R). I was interested to see if any themes appeared noticeably more or less frequently than others. This exercise led me to realize I needed to find a guiding source with which to approach the vastness of my data. My teacher-researcher journal and transcribed interviews seemed logical sources, as they provided the most direct representation of the peer models', kindergarten students', and my own opinions and observations.

I ensured credibility in various ways. I triangulated data from observation notes and footage from video recordings. In chapter four, I will describe data using rich, descriptive language (Phillips, 2008, p. 88). I engaged in member-checking with upper elementary peer models and parents. I will describe differing perspectives as they arise (Phillips, 2008, p. 88).

This review of the data led me to focus on three themes for discussion, which I will address in chapter four. First, the peer models' relationships with the Kindergarten students. Second, the peer models' vocal quality. Third, the anomaly of a male elementary school music teacher.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

The findings chapters will be presented in the following order: First, the peer models' relationships with the Kindergarten students. Second, the peer models' vocal quality. Third, the anomaly of a male elementary school music teacher. I will discuss the findings as I present them. Kindergarten students', peer models', students' parents, and my perceptions will be presented. I will discuss how these themes relate to the Kindergarten students having a potentially gendered identification of singing. Findings will be connected to past literature. Finally, suggestions will be made for practitioners and future research.

The Peer Models' Relationships with the Kindergarten Students

Theme 4.1, the peer model's ability to have a positive relationship with the Kindergarten students, appeared 15 times in video observation, 11 times in the teacher-researcher journal, and five times in transcribed interviews. As teachers, we conduct action research because we make informal observations in our classrooms that we want to investigate further. I began this study as a teacher with the desire to address the issue of negative, gendered perceptions of singing among older boys. A review of the literature led me to use peer models in the Kindergarten classroom. Once I began the research, I was reminded that teachers, including me, frequently use peer models in their classrooms to effect change. The peer model research reviewed in the Theoretical Framework section confirms the efficacy of this approach. The real question was what effect peer modeling would have on gendered perceptions of singing.

Joseph

A positive relationship between peer models and subjects is the foundation of peer modeling. While this sounds obvious, it was not easy to estimate whether the peer models I

chose would be able to nurture a positive relationship with the Kindergarten students. I observed that the peer model who had a prior relationship with the Kindergarten students, Joseph, had much more success as a teacher than did Matthew, who did not have a prior relationship with the Kindergarten students. Joseph was more comfortable and confident. He was more capable of engaging his students. However, these observations could be explained by Joseph's personality, prior experience with younger children, and other factors. Most relevant to this finding, he seemed to easily develop the most meaningful relationships with the Kindergarten students. Several students knew him from the after school care program, Kids Club (Class B, video observation theme log, May 8, 2013) (Class B, TR journal, May 15, 2013) (Class B, TR journal, May 22, 2013) and sixth grade spirit brigade buddies (Class A, video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). They played soccer with him in previous years (TR journal, May 15, 2013). They remembered seeing him perform in the Knights in Harmony choir concert (Class B, video observation theme log, June 4, 2013). In an interview, one Kindergarten student shared that he wanted to sing like Joseph because, "In Kids Club he's my best friend" (George, video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). Another boy shared that the research experience felt, "great because it was kind of fun since I saw him at Kids Club and I saw him here" (John, video observation theme log, May 22, 2013). Norah drew Joseph a picture in Kids Club (Class A, video observation theme log, May 31, 2013). Before Joseph met the students in Class A, one boy said, "I know Elijah!" I asked, "From Kids Club?" He said, "Yeah!" Another boy said, "And I played soccer with him!" (TR journal, May 31, 2013). Later, when students in Class A asked Joseph questions, they asked what grade he was in, if he watched sports, if he played sports, if he played an instrument, if he knew John (another Kindergarten student), and what it was like being in choir. They seemed excited that they were going to the choir concert that day.

I perceived them to be searching for ways in which they were similar to Joseph (Class A, video observation theme log, May 31, 2013). In addition to my perceptions, Joseph also observed that the Kindergarten students seemed to enjoy having a special relationship with him, saying, "I just walk in [to Kids Club] and they'll be like 'Joseph!' (smiles)" (Transcribed interview, May 22, 2013). In another interview, he mentions that he and the Kindergarten students have formed a "trust bond" (Joseph, Transcribed interview, June 4, 2013). Finally, a parent confirmed the importance of the relationship out of the classroom in an email:

> The "somewhat of a big" breakthrough came on Sunday morning at Mass. We were at 9 am Mass and once Harry spotted "the boy from his music class" serving Mass, [he] had to move to the aisle seat to better see Joseph and in hopes of catching Joseph's eye to wave to him. Harry was very excited to see him and watched him the whole Mass. Harry even said he hoped we could see him afterwards and say hello. Obviously, Joseph made a big impact on Harry. (L. Kemp, parent email, May 22, 2013)

Matthew

This is not to say that Matthew did not form positive relationships with the Kindergarten students. He simply was not as connected to the students as Joseph was (Class B, TR journal, May 30, 2013). The students searched for ways to relate to Matthew. They searched for similarities, and I tried to help them find them. Matthew formed a better connection with the students when he played piano for them (Class A, TR journal theme log, May 10, 2013). They were excited to learn that his Kindergarten teacher was their teacher (Class B, video observation theme log, May 30, 2013). They remembered seeing him perform in the choir concert (Class B, video observation theme log, June 4, 2013). In a group interview with Matthew and Class A, the question that seemed to gather the most authentic responses inquired whether or not the

Kindergarten students would want to join choir. The students who seemed most excited about singing in choir were students who had an older sibling in choir or who saw Matthew perform in choir. Kevin nodded his head "yes," saying that he wanted to join, had a full conversation about his sister and Matthew being in choir, and told Matthew "goodbye" at the end of class very enthusiastically. Some students were just naturally interested. However, once one boy mentioned video games, George changed his choice from a strong “yes” to a “no” because he wanted to play video games, too. This seems to enforce the idea that it is beneficial to have an outside relationship with the peer model in order for the peer to be most influential (Transcribed interview theme log, May 29, 2013).

Comparison

It is interesting to wonder whether the students identified more with Joseph, who I observed to form a closer relationship with the students and who himself commented numerous times that he had formed relationships with them, or Matthew, who I observed to have more trouble forming relationships and who himself did not mention this topic to me. In a group interview at the end of the final action research cycle, I asked the Kindergarten students who would be a better substitute music teacher for me if I had to go on vacation. This question seemed to indicate which model they preferred or most closely identified with. First, I asked this question of Class A. They spent the most time with Matthew and only spent one class with Joseph. As expected, they indicated a preference for the peer model they spent the most time with. A majority of the students, 15, voted for Matthew. Comments from Kindergarten students included, “Matthew has a great singing voice,” “Matthew is nicer and has a great singing voice,” and "Matthew's better. He plays fun games with us" (Video observation themes log, June 3, 2013). In another interesting conversation, two students shared:

Student 1: I think that um, Matthew is um, don't tell Joseph this, I think that um, Matthew should teach us and I think he sings better 'cause I don't wanna be with the teacher that doesn't sing good.

TR: Wait, who sings better?

Student 1: Um, um, Matthew. So I don't wanna be with the teacher who doesn't sing good.

Student 2: They both sing good. (Video observation themes log, June 3, 2013)

In the same interview, I asked the students in Class A, "Was it different having Joseph as a teacher instead of Matthew?" Almost all students said, "yes," but the first three students had trouble articulating what was different. One girl pointed out the obvious, that they taught different songs. A boy liked Matthew better because "he was younger and he was more of a fit for this class [because he had a different voice] and I liked it more than Joseph's. He talks a little lighter and he's a nice kid." A second girl pointed out that they didn't have time to get used to Joseph. A second boy said, Joseph's better because he taught us new songs." This boy already knew *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, the song Matthew taught. A third girl said, "They both have different singing voices. [Matthew's is] a little bit lower than Joseph's and Joseph's sounds higher." Almost all students, except one boy, agreed that Joseph's voice sounded more like mine. This seemed to turn into a vote of favorites that had nothing to do with vocal quality, with comments like, "Matthew is awesome" (Video observation themes log, June 3, 2013).

I then asked the Kindergarten students in Class B the same question, "Who would be a better substitute music teacher for me, Joseph or Matthew?" These students spent the full, first action research cycle with Joseph and spent three classes with Matthew. This means that they spent almost the same amount of time with the two peer models. In this class, the vote was

basically evenly split between Joseph and Matthew (Video observation themes log, June 5, 2013). In the same interview, I asked the students in Class B how it was different having Joseph and Matthew as teachers. Their answers focused on the peer models' different vocal qualities, which I will focus on in Chapter Five (Video observation themes log, June 5, 2013). The evidence presented in this chapter seems to indicate that the students preferred the peer model they spent the most time with and with whom they had the closest relationship.

Narrative from Outside the Study

On March 1, 2013, before the peer models had their first interaction with the Kindergarten students, I had an interesting experience with my fourth grade students who were not involved with the study. Our conversation was so closely related to the study that I noted it in my Teacher-Researcher journal. The following story demonstrates, again, the relevance and efficacy of using peer models, particularly ones who have relationships with the students outside of the classroom:

> In a fourth grade class yesterday the students were echoing tonal patterns. Most of them were doing a great job, both boys and girls. The highest note was a ti and was approximately a high D above middle C. While this isn't high for most of them, it does require some of the boys to lighten up and access their head voice, which some of them are starting to recognize feels different. When it was Bob's turn, he started laughing nervously and saying something like, "Oh no, it's too high." Bob loves music, does a great job, seems to enjoy it, has a nice singing voice, and has never seemed to have trouble accessing his head voice or being concerned about singing before. When he sang the pattern he did have a little bit of trouble with the highest note.

The day before (Thursday, 2-28-13) I met with [seventh grade students] Grant and Chuck after school. Both of these boys were my students for two years. Both were in choir for both of those years. I even recommended Chuck for the Shrine high school musical, *Beauty and the Beast*, where he played Chip. Grant was a wonderful advocate for boys being in choir. At a recruitment concert, when he was in fifth grade, a student in the audience asked why there were so many more girls than boys. Grant had a great response. He said that, sometimes, other kids can make fun of you for being a boy in choir, but he didn't see why you couldn't do sports and choir. He was in baseball and lacrosse and other sports and he loved to sing. Simple. Grant emailed me on Monday (2-25-13) and asked me if I could help him prepare for an audition for *The Sound of Music.* He said he needed help because he couldn't hit a high note. He organized our entire lesson, and, the night before, Chuck asked if he could join us. We had a great lesson. Sure enough, Grant's voice was in the process of changing. He hadn't been singing in choir for over seven months, so he was having trouble accessing his head voice, but by the end of the lesson he was more comfortable. Chuck's voice was still unchanged and he could, in fact, sing higher than I can (and I'm a high soprano!). Both sounded beautiful. We had fun, laughed, reminisced, sang, and joked around.

When Bob had trouble singing higher notes in class, it was the perfect opportunity to use secondary peer mentoring. I told the class about my lesson with Grant and Chuck. Some of the students knew the boys because of older siblings, sports, church, etc. The boys had just graduated from the Grade School, went to Shrine Academy, and had been in the choir, so they were, in many respects, peers of some of these fourth grade students. I told

the class that, if Chuck and Grant, who are three years older, can sing these notes with some practice, there's no reason they can't sing them with some practice. I told them that Chuck can even sing higher than me! This seemed to have a really positive effect. We finished the patterns. Kids tried very hard, they were very attentive, they did everything I suggested to help them sing better, and they sang *Frere Jaques* in a four-part round beautifully, with lots of excitement and energy and great attention to dynamics and conducting, even applauding themselves when they accomplished it!

Discussion

Connection to past literature.

While prior research in music education mentions the importance of relationships in peer modeling, studies do not discuss this idea in detail. In Hall's findings in her 2005 study in which she used two peer-models in the Kindergarten music classroom, she also observed that Kindergarten students developed a very close bond with the older boys very quickly and seemed to identify with them very strongly (Hall, 2005). Schunk (1987) and Brody and Stoneman's (1981) research suggested that same-age and slightly older peers are most likely to cause behavior imitation. Joseph and Matthew were six grades older than the Kindergarten students, but were much closer to them in age than an adult. My findings seem to indicate that peer models who are approximately six years older than their subjects can still develop a positive relationship with them.

Suggestions for practitioners.

While researchers and practitioners can not hope to exactly replicate this study because, of course, they can not exactly replicate my peer models, they can intentionally select peer models that have a prior relationship with their subjects. They can select peer models who have

the opportunity to interact with the subject outside of the classroom once the study begins. They can select peer models who have prior experience working with younger children (Teacher researcher journal, May 31, 2013). These qualities seem to indicate that the peer model with have a higher chance of forming a positive relationship with the younger students.

Also, during the first action research cycle, when Matthew met with his class for the first time, we sang two songs that I was introducing to the Kindergarten students for the first time. In comparison, in Joseph's class, I was teaching a second lesson with the same two songs and the students were moving and using props. Knowing the songs may have led the children to feel more comfortable singing them and, as a result, more comfortable interacting with Joseph. Practitioners may find their peer model can form more successful relationships with younger students if he or she is introduced after the students have already been exposed to a song in at least one prior class (Video observation theme log, May 10, 2013).

Finally, during Matthew's second interaction with the Kindergarten students during the second action research cycle, I decided to co-teach the "Row Row Row Your Boat" game with him. Matthew seemed more comfortable. This also allowed him to have one on one time with the students. All the boys wanted to be his partner. It may be more feasible to utilize peer models as co-teachers, rather than asking them to be teachers. When you consider the process we undergo to become music teachers, and then the time and experience needed to become good music teachers, co-teaching may be more realistic. This allows the peer models to be more comfortable and natural and form better relationships with the students (Teacher-Researcher journal theme log, June 4, 2013).

Suggestions for future research.

I asked myself several questions in my March 1, 2013 Teacher-Researcher journal, all of which could potentially be investigated in future studies. First, is verbally referring to and sharing stories about a former student, who has recently graduated, secondary peer modeling? Next, would it be more effective to use a seventh grade student as a peer model in the future? Third, is a former student, who has recently graduated, still a peer? Finally, would secondary peer modeling, as I describe it above, have an impact on all students or just the ones who know the older boys?

Chapter four described the study's first finding, the importance of the peer models' relationships with the Kindergarten students. Chapter five will present the study's second finding, the peer models' vocal quality.

Chapter Five

The Peer Models' Vocal Quality

Throughout the study, I struggled to decide if it was better to use a peer model with a still-unchanged, accurate singing voice (Joseph) or a changing, inaccurate singing voice (Matthew). When I began the selection process, it seemed like Matthew was still capable of mostly singing accurately, in his unchanged voice. However, he was not, and, while this seemed unfortunate at first, it led me to a very interesting observation. While observing the peer models interacting with the Kindergarten students, I began to wonder if the Kindergarten students who were not as confident singers as others would feel more comfortable with Matthew and relate to him more than to Joseph because they perceived themselves to be more similar to him. On the other hand, I struggled with using a peer model with an inaccurate voice, as I obviously wanted my Kindergarten students to learn from an accurate singing model. I want as many of my students as possible to love singing and to feel comfortable doing so. However, I also want my students to learn to sing correctly.

The peer models' vocal quality manifested as Themes 4.6, 2, 8, and 13. Theme 4.6 referred to a changing, inaccurate versus an unchanged, accurate voice. Theme 2 referred to mentions of high notes or high voices, a theme also referenced in previous research. Finally, Theme 8 referred to the Kindergarten students' perceptions that the peer models' voices were different than the teacher-researcher's voice. Some data in this theme also suggested that the Kindergarten students lacked the vocabulary to accurately describe the differences they perceived. Theme 8 coordinated with data from Theme 13, which referred to the teacher-researcher's perception that some of the Kindergarten students did not appear to realize or care what an accurate singing voice should sound like. Some data in this theme also suggested that

Kindergarten students might care more about volume (loud and soft) than accurate singing voice (high and low). Joseph's unchanged, accurate voice was often softer (Video observation theme log, February 21, 2013) than Matthew's changing, inaccurate voice.

Teacher-Researcher's Perception: Changing, Inaccurate Voice Versus Unchanged, Accurate Voice

I noted my first observation of the possible benefit and possible downside of using Matthew, with his changing, inaccurate voice, as a peer model on February 28, 2013, before the sixth grade students had their first interactions with the Kindergarten students. After teaching the peer models how to teach a song using rote method, we had an informal conversation in which Matthew mentioned being concerned about the key he was singing in and feeling like he needed to sing lower (Video observation theme log, February 28, 2013). For a more detailed account of a related observation I am about to discuss, see page 64. I wrote in my Teacher-Researcher Journal:

> After reflecting upon this practice session [with the peer models], Grant and Chuck's lesson, and my conversation on Friday with the fourth grade students, I wonder if it's better to use a student who loves to sing and can still sing easily and access their head voice without issue (Joseph or Chuck) or a student who loves to sing but is beginning to struggle (Matthew or Grant). Is it better to display the best model and someone who's very confident and at ease, or someone who is struggling a little and may be relatable to a younger student who is struggling? Keeping in mind that Joseph will be a peer model for Kindergarten students, perhaps it's best to display the best model, knowing that these students still have a long time before they begin to encounter the voice change struggle? Still, many Kindergarten students do have trouble accessing their head voice,

> and an older student who is struggling could be a great motivator. I may use Matthew's data to investigate this idea. (February 28, 2013)

The peer models demonstrated my observations regarding their voices in their first interactions with the Kindergarten students.:

> Joseph's first impression [on the students in Class B] is to portray singing as being easy, common, and natural in the first class when he jumps in and sings a solo in *Jambo* after only hearing it once. He doesn't ask to hear it again, he doesn't hesitate, he doesn't make a mistake - he just sings, in an unchanged voice, and fits right in with the class. He does the same thing during *The Greenland Whale Fishery*. (Video observation theme log, May 8, 2013)

In contrast:

> Matthew's first impression on the students [in Class A] is of a person who doesn't sing "like the teacher." When he leads a verse of *Jambo*, he doesn't match pitch and isn't in head voice. Matthew even went and sat down as soon as the song was over, before even the K kids sat down, perhaps indicating that he was uncomfortable." (Video observation theme log, May 10, 2013)

In Matthew's second interaction with the students, I observed, "Matthew isn't as connected with the K students or natural as Joseph, but the students are paying attention to him and participating. Unfortunately, he keeps changing keys, can't sing the resting tone accurately, and keeps [the Kindergarten students] singing low" (Video observation theme log, May 13, 2013). In contrast:

> When Joseph begins the rote teaching process, singing his instructions in head voice, everyone is watching him very closely. [A girl] begins giggling quietly. [Another girl]

> joins her. When [Joseph] actually starts singing, an unseen student…actually laughs out loud, causing John to laugh. In spite of the giggling, Joseph is again very natural, confident, and comfortable. I think the K students can sense this. He teaches using rote method confidently, too. Students will always follow a teacher who exudes confidence, like we're told as beginning teachers. (Video-observation theme log, May 15, 2013)

In another comparison, "Joseph sang *My Country, 'Tis of Thee* in tune, in head voice, and accurately" (Video observation theme log, May 6, 2013). His voice sounded airy when he sang the highest notes; a Kindergarten student later called his voice "quiet" in an interview (Transcribed interview theme log, May 22, 2013). Matthew "really couldn't sing *America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)* in head voice the first or second time he sang. Regardless, the class clapped very enthusiastically" (Video observation theme log, May 20, 2013). To review, Matthew's students in Class A participated and applauded his singing performance, even though his voice was inaccurate and changing. Joseph's students in Class B giggled uncontrollably when he began teaching with his accurate, unchanged voice and called his voice "quiet." This seems to indicate a slightly more positive student reaction to Matthew.

Towards the end of the first action research cycle, I wondered, in my Teacher-Researcher journal, why the Kindergarten students in Class A were so much more enthusiastic about singing in small solo groups for Matthew than the students in Class B were for Joseph (May 20, 2013). I proposed that this could be a result of Matthew seeming more approachable since his voice was not perfect. At this time, I decided to have the peer models switch Kindergarten classes in the second action research cycle to see if the students would react in the same way to the new peer models. I wondered if Class A would be as enthusiastic with Joseph. I observed that they were, overall, a more rambunctious class, and were more outwardly verbal when expressing their

enthusiasm. I also observed that Class B was generally better behaved and would not talk out of turn as much as Class A. I wondered if they would be more outwardly enthusiastic with Matthew than they were with Joseph. Finally, I noted that the students in Class A were more rambunctious and also has less singers singing in head voice. The students in Class B were less rambunctious and had more singers singing in head voice. These observations indicate a slight Kindergarten student preference for Matthew, but, for the teacher, a pedagogical or skills-based preference for Joseph.

I made several interesting observations on May 29, 2013. Class B was between action research cycles and Class A was completing their final interview with Matthew. In Class B, one boy Kindergarten student, John, finally started to sing using his head voice, as did a girl. Other students were very excited for them. I wondered, "Is this an effect of Joseph's presence? Now I want to have Joseph come and continue to teach their class [in the second action research cycle] instead of Matthew. I want them to continue to have a good vocal model" (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 29, 2013).

On the same day, after Matthew taught Class A, I noted in my Teacher-Researcher journal:

> Matthew is not nearly as effective as Joseph. He does not use his singing voice as effectively, so students aren't really singing. The *first* goal is singing - that's the whole point of this study. However, maybe they're not singing because they're so silly. However, they weren't so silly that they didn't keep the beat with the hula hoops. They all did that just fine. Maybe they're *not* singing because Matthew's not modeling it for them, in which case I have another reason for wanting a good model. (May 29, 2013)

I also observed that the Kindergarten students did sing once I returned to my role as teacher (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 29, 2013). This again shows, from the teacher's perspective, a pedagogical or skills-based preference for Joseph.

I made additional observations regarding Matthew teaching, with a changing singing voice, the next day, May 30, 2013, when he had his first interaction with Class B:

> Matthew taught *Row Row Row Your Boat* successfully, but it's also an easy song and most kids already knew it. They were all singing. I still instinctively think it's most important to have a peer model who can sing in tune, but who knows. Matthew also noted after the class that everyone sang a lot more than Class A during *Jambo*.
>
> It will be interesting to see if James says anything during the interview. It could be my imagination, but he seemed more comfortable with Matthew teaching since Matthew sings lower and James is not able to sing in his head voice yet. This again brings up the problem that, while I want James to enjoy singing and to be engaged with singing, I *don't* want him to think it's okay to sing low/out of tune. (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 29, 2013)

My observations were more neutral and positive in this situation, but I was still hesitant for the students to have a peer model with an inaccurate voice. The students were engaged while Matthew was teaching, but he had, "trouble with resting tone game, [trouble singing] in tune, and [sang] in a very low key" (Video observation theme log, May 30, 2013). During Matthew's second interaction with Class B, he sang *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* for the class but could not sing in head voice, even with piano and in the lower key. The kids, however, did sing in head voice (Video observation theme log, June 4, 2013).

Finally, after Matthew's final interaction with Class B, I noted:

> I intentionally had Matthew sing *Jambo* in solo for them today so they could hear his voice again. Since part of the goal of this cycle is to compare the effect of a changing or unchanged voice on students, I wanted to give them the chance to hear him in solo. We'll see if they mention anything. (Teacher-Researcher journal, June 5, 2013)

I also made the negative observation that the Kindergarten students' "singing matches his when he sings solo, which isn't good because I want them in head voice and in tune" (Teacher-Researcher journal, June 5, 2013).

Finally, almost every student in Class A accessed his or her head voice in Toss Across with Joseph (Video observation theme log, May 31, 2013). In contrast, I noted several times that, when Matthew was their peer model, they often did not sing as accurately as the students in Class B, and I wondered if this was an issue of class culture, rather than an issue of ability (Video observation theme log, May 10, 20, 2013). In the second action research cycle, the Kindergarten students in Class A were all engaged while Joseph taught *A-Tisket, A-Tasket*. However, when they sang the song by themselves, many of them did not match pitch or sing in head voice. I wondered if, again, this was due to their class culture. Their singing was of the same quality as when Matthew was their peer model, even though their new peer model sang with an accurate, unchanged voice (Video observation theme log, May 31, 2013). When Matthew was the peer model in Class B during the second action research cycle, many students sang in head voice and in tune during vocal warm-ups and *Jambo*, as they did for Joseph, even though their new peer model sang with an inaccurate, changing voice. I again wondered if this was due to a positive class culture (Video observation theme log, June 4, 2013).

I share the above observations to illustrate that I considered various explanations for the Kindergarten students' quality of singing. One was the quality of their peer model's voice, the second was their Kindergarten class culture of being obnoxious versus calm. However, in reviewing my data, the lens of time and experience as a teacher offers a third explanation. In my Video Observation Theme Log, I also noticed that, during vocal warm-ups, towards the end of the first action research cycle, when Matthew was the peer model for Class A, the students all demonstrated the potential to sing in head voice (May 29, 2013). At the time, I attributed this to class culture. However, I now realize that the students may also have been at a different stage of vocal development than the students in Class B, in which they could access their head voices during a specific activity, but not always access it while singing a song.

High Notes and High Voices

The concept of high voices and timbres being perceived as feminine came up in a variety of previous studies, including Harrison (2007) and Kennedy (2002). In an interview with Joseph before his first interaction with the Kindergarten students, he noted that having a high voice can be a problem in his regular sixth grade music class (Transcribed interview theme log, May 7, 2013). He made a similar statement in a later interview on May 22, 2013, saying that peers told him singing high was "for girls" (Transcribed interview theme log). He also explained that he and his peers in choir placed value on becoming an Alto in choir because, in their perception, Altos sang the lower notes (Transcribed interview theme log, May 22, 2013). Later, Joseph observed that John, Paul, and a few other Kindergarten boys in Class B were giggling when he sang high while teaching *A-Tisket-A-Tasket* (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 15, 2013). I also observed several students giggling when he sang his instructions in his head voice. However, the same students did not show a reaction when Joseph sang high notes in *America the Beautiful* the

next day (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 16, 2013). In an interview between the teacher-researcher and these same students, there was very little focus on his high voice being an issue, and very little focus on him being a boy that sings high (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 22, 2013). In an interview between the Teacher-Researcher and Class A, one Kindergarten girl said, "They both have different singing voices. Matthew's is a little bit lower than Joseph's and Joseph's sounds higher" (Video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). This student was not making a judgment, but an observation. This seems to illustrate that the Kindergarten students were minimally impacted by Joseph's voice being high.

In an example that demonstrates awareness of high notes, James from Class B tried to sing the solo in the welcome song, *Jambo,* in his head voice, but he sang too high and late and realized he was wrong. Other students laughed and so did he. He then started to sing too low. I stopped the song and did the Toss Across warm up with the students, in which he did access his head voice. When he tried to sing *Jambo* again, he was close to singing it correctly, but kept laughing too much to sing. However, he was able to sing a lot of the correct notes, in head voice (Video observation theme log, May 15, 2013). While the students may not have been impacted by listening to the peer model's high voice, this student was impacted by his own inability to sing high.

The interesting high-voice breakthrough, already mentioned on page 73, occurred with John from Class B just after their action research cycle with Joseph as their peer model. John finally started singing in his head voice and was proud of himself! Another Kindergarten girl also made major breakthroughs in using her head voice. Other students were excited for them. While I could not assume causation or correlation, I wondered if these breakthroughs were related to Joseph's presence (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 29, 2013). I also noted that

in the same class, the next day, when the Kindergarten students met with Matthew, a different Kindergarten student started to sing very high, not matching pitch. I wondered if this was a result of observing my praise of John when he finally sang high and accessed his singing voice or from Joseph's presence (Teacher-Researcher journal, May 30, 2013).

Additional examples of Kindergarten students mentioning a preference for high or low voices will be shared in the following section.

Kindergarten Students' Perceptions and Preferences

Theme 8 referred to the Kindergarten students' perceptions that the peer models' voices were different than the teacher-researcher's voice. Some data in this theme also suggested that the Kindergarten students lacked the vocabulary to accurately describe the differences they perceived. In more obvious statements during an interview between Joseph and Class B following the first action research cycle, one Kindergarten girl observed that Joseph's voice and my voice sound different, and so, she explained, it was different having him as a teacher (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). In another interview between Matthew and Class B following the second action research cycle, a different Kindergarten girl observed that it was different having him as a teacher, "'cause your voices are different" (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). Most students in Class A thought that both peer models could sing as well as I could (Video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). In an interesting conversation with Class B on May 22, 2013, several students discussed their perceptions of the differences between my voice and Joseph's voice:

TR: Um, you mean his is quieter and mine is loud?

John shakes head yes, other students say "yeah."

TR: Because we're singing the notes the same.

Student: The words are the same.

Another Student: Yeah, but your voices are different.

John: His voice is like, um, minor and yours is major.

TR reminds minor = sad, major = happy.

John: Well, his is major, but it's, like, really quiet.

Girl Student: Well, yours is kinda loud and his is quieter. (Video observation theme log)

Some data in Theme 8 demonstrated that the Kindergarten students lacked the vocabulary to accurately describe the differences they perceived. Additionally, the teacher-researcher sometimes perceived that some of the Kindergarten students did not appear to realize or care what an accurate singing voice should sound like. Some data in this theme also suggested that Kindergarten students might care more about volume (loud and soft) than accurate singing voice (high and low). Joseph's unchanged, accurate voice was often softer (Video observation theme log, February 21, 2013) than Matthew's changing, inaccurate voice. When I interviewed Class A during the second action research cycle, I asked the Kindergarten students if Joseph's voice sounded like my voice they almost all said no. One girl said it was a little "lower" and another girl said, "No, it's actually lighter...higher." The Kindergarten students could hear that his voice was different, but they thought it was because his voice was higher or lower when, actually, it was just less strong because it was close to changing (Video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). Joseph was singing the same notes as me, in tune, and in head voice. In this same interview, I asked the students in Class A if it was different having Joseph as a teacher instead of Matthew. I observed that most students said "yes," but many had trouble articulating the differences. One girl accurately noted, "They both have different singing voices." Matthew's is

"a little bit low than Joseph's" and Joseph's sounds higher. Almost all students, except one, agreed that Joseph's voice sounds more like mine (Video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). This indicates that the students do hear the difference between Matthew and Joseph's voices and at least one was able to articulate the difference. I then asked these students which peer model they would prefer to sound like. Most students chose Matthew. As mentioned previously, this seemed to be because they spent more time with him. However, it also seemed like they liked the sound of his voice better. On the other hand, George chose Joseph and said, "I want to sing like him 'cause he sings better" (Video observation theme log, June 3, 2013). Another boy agreed with him.

When I asked the students in Class B, "Who's singing voice did you like better," I received a variety of interesting responses. Some students accurately articulated what they heard. One girl preferred Joseph's voice because it was quieter. "His is a little quieter, than lower, 'cause quieter sounds better than lower." I confirmed that by "quieter" she meant volume and that she thought that Matthew's was louder (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). This girl needed help to use loud/soft high/low vocabulary correctly. Paul preferred Joseph's voice because, "His is higher than Matthew's" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013), which is, again, accurate. On the other hand, John, who I mentioned previously as finally finding his head voice, said, "Totally Joseph [because] him voice is really low and I like really low" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). I demonstrated low pitch and he confirmed his statement. This is obviously confusing because Joseph's voice was higher that Matthew's. Later, during that interview, John said it was weird having Matthew as a teacher instead of me because "your voice is loud and him is a little quiet" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). When I demonstrated loud and quiet to confirm he meant volume and not high or low, he

confirmed that he did mean volume. I wonder if John could have been confusing volume and high/low. Another boy said it was "really weird" having a boy music teacher instead of a girl (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). When asked why, he had to think a bit and then said, in a robot voice, "Because, because his voice is lower and your voice is higher." When asked again, "So, why is it weird?" he said, "Because your voice is really loud and his voice is a little bit lower" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). Finally, one Kindergarten girl preferred Matthew's voice "because Matthew's is a little bit louder than Joseph's, because his, like, other people can hear if they're far away from him" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). I confirmed that she liked Matthew's better because she could hear him better. Two other girls agreed with her. A boy made a similar statement.

In the same interview with Class B, I asked the Kindergarten students how it was different having Matthew and Joseph as music teachers. One girl said, "Matthew's voice was a little bit higher; I mean, a little bit louder than Joseph's." I repeated, as a question, "Matthew's voice is louder than Joseph's?" She nodded "yes" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). Again, this girl struggled to use the correct loud/soft high/low vocabulary to describe what she perceived, but did eventually manage to describe it correctly. Another girl said their voices are different and "Joseph sings a little quieter and Matthew sings a little louder than Joseph" (Video observation theme log, June 5, 2013). This girl used loud/soft high/low vocabulary correctly.

In a different interview with Class B on May 22, 2013, students demonstrated their perceptions of Joseph's voice, my voice, and their own voices:

Mary: It was kind of different that boys sing in music.

John: I sing.

TR: Well, everyone sings.

Mary: Because it kind of sound different. His is kind of lower and yours is kind of high. (TR demonstrates low and high.)

Mary: Kind of lower. It was kind of low and soft.

James: They were, um, different voices, like a boy voice.

TR: What's a boy voice sound like?

James: Mine.

TR: How's your voice different than [a girl student's] voice?

James: I dunno.

TR: Is your voice, um, is your voice like John's voice?

James: Um, no, because his is a little lower.

TR: Is your voice like Harry's voice?

James: Yeah.

TR: Are your voice and Harry's voice like Joseph's voice?

James: Yeah.

TR: Is Joseph's voice like my voice at all?

A few students: No. (Some laugh.)

James: His voice is a little lower than yours.

TR: You mean low (demonstrates), not quiet?

James: Yeah. (Video observation theme log)

In another interesting conversation with Class B on May 22, 2013, a Kindergarten girl discussed her perception of high/low:

Student: My sister told me something and I think it's a different thing for high and low. Something alto and something…

TR: Soprano. What do you think Joseph is in choir?

Student: But I don't know what it means, I only know the words.

TR: Gotcha. Well, an alto is someone who sings a little bit lower and a soprano is someone who sings a little bit higher.

Student: I think Joseph sounds like an alto.

TR: Guess what? Joseph sings soprano in choir. He sings the higher part.

Student: Oh. (Video observation theme log)

In a final, interesting conversation with Class B on May 22, 2013, a Kindergarten girl observed that she had trouble hearing Joseph because his changing voice was quiet:

Norah: What John said, his voice is a little lighter, like this (makes gesture, pulling hand away from mouth several times while pressing fingertips together and then opening them).

TR: Do you mean it's quiet or do you mean it's high or gentle?

Norah: Like we can't hear it very much so I think we always have to go closer to him.

TR asked if anyone else had trouble hearing him and most students raised their hands because his voice was quieter. (Video observation theme log)

These examples all demonstrate that students are aware of and have preferences for high/low and loud/soft voices, but some also have difficulty articulating their preferences using the correct vocabulary and some may be confusing high/low with loud/soft.

Summary

Data does not seem to draw a clear picture. As a teacher-researcher, I saw benefits to using both my peer model with an accurate, unchanged voice and my model with an inaccurate, changing voice. Observations favored both Joseph's accurate, unchanged voice and Matthew's

inaccurate, changing voice. The Kindergarten students' actions and comments seem to indicate no overwhelming, common preference. Also, when reflecting on the information from Chapter Four, students seemed to prefer the peer model they spent more time with. As noted on page 64, this often had little to do with the peer model's vocal quality. Some students had difficulty using the correct vocabulary to describe their preference for high/low and loud/soft, and many seemed to care more about volume than high/low.

Suggestions for Practitioners

My main takeaway from the data presented in this chapter is the importance of ensuring that Kindergarten students learn the difference between high/low and loud/soft. This includes both aurally perceiving differences and accurately describing these differences. I also feel it is important to identify and discuss accurate and inaccurate voices with Kindergarten students. As a new teacher, I often did not identify inaccurate voices because I did not want to draw negative attention to these students and hurt their feelings. However, this study has illustrated the importance of educating students in what an accurate and inaccurate voice sound like so that they know what model to imitate.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers may find it interesting to study whether Kindergarten students are capable of perceiving the difference between high/low and loud/soft and whether they are capable of articulating what they hear. Researchers might also pursue a longitudinal study in which Kindergarten students who are identified as having trouble accessing their head voices are either paired with a peer model with an accurate, unchanged voice or one with an inaccurate, changing voice. It would be interesting to discover whether the Kindergarten students working

with the different peer models progressed to using their head voices and whether they expressed positive opinions of singing.

Chapter five described the study's second finding, the quality of the peer model' voices; specifically, using a peer model with an unchanged, accurate voice versus using a peer model with a changing, inaccurate voice. Chapter six will present the study's final finding, the anomaly of a male, elementary school music teacher.

Chapter Six

The Anomaly of a Male Elementary School Music Teacher

Theme 7, the anomaly of a male, elementary school music teacher, was an unforeseen and common Kindergarten student observation. To put it in Kindergarten language, having Matthew as their peer model was, “Awesome extra, ‘cause I’m a boy and you’re a boy too and we’ve never had a boy" (Harry, Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). Of all of the Kindergarten students’ comments, this one was one of the most common and was very interesting because I had not anticipated the Kindergarten boy students to already, in their first year in the grade school, feel disenfranchised by the lack of male teachers. I also found it interesting because the students were not commenting on the peer models’ vocal quality or commenting that singing was in some way inappropriate for males. They were simply excited to have a male teacher because there are no male teachers at Shrine. The two custodians and the recess monitor are males, but none of their actual teachers, the office staff, or the cafeteria staff are males. This theme can be related to Theme 4.1, the peer model’s ability to have a positive relationship with the Kindergarten students. I did not write about this topic in the literature review, but was aware of this issue from research for another paper. Therefore, I have included a short review of the literature.

Previous Literature

Role model gender.

Research suggests that boys lack male role models in schools. The following studies in music education describe the impact of a role model’s gender on students’ perceptions of singing and instrument selection and preference.

Welch, Sergeant, and White (1997), discussed in the literature review, found that both sexes showed steady improvement in test items (pitch glides, pitch patterns, sung pitches), and boys were even slightly better at test items than girls. However, girls' ability to sing songs remained constant and the boys' ability was always less than the girls,' declined steadily over three and a half years, and declined significantly in relation to the girls in year three (seven-year-old subjects) (Welch et al., 1997). In light of a lack of significant difference between girls and boys in pitch matching ability, Welch et al. (1997) wondered if the decline in boys' abilities to accurately sing songs was due to them negatively identifying the act of singing the songs with the sex of their music teachers (primarily females), therefor perceiving song singing as a feminine act.

Harrison and O'Neill (2000), discussed in the theoretical framework, found that same-sex models can cause children to choose opposite-sex instruments. However, Harrison and O'Neill's (2000) data also showed that the children avoided typically same-sex instruments when modeled by opposite-sex adults.

Finally, as discussed in the literature review and elsewhere, Hall (2005) found the Kindergarten students developed a very close bond with the older boys very quickly and seemed to identify with them very strongly (Hall, 2005). Hall (2005) shared that when the peer model sang a choral song in classical style with vibrato and phrasing, the boys laughed and associated it with the way a girl sings. However, the boys then continued to request to hear the song (Hall, 2005)! Hall (2005) questioned if this was because a boy singing beautifully was less threatening to their masculinity than a girl singing beautifully. Hall (2005) noticed increased participation in singing in relation to the peer models. 20 out of 35 boys indicated that they might want to join

the Junior School Choir in Year 4 (Hall, 2005). Also, many boys moved to the next level of vocal development, although Hall (2005) mentioned that this relationship could not be measured.

The results from these three studies indicate that the gender of role models does influence children's choices to sing or play an instrument.

Impact of teacher's gender on students' academic achievement.

Research outside of music education demonstrates differences in student achievement due to mismatched student and teacher gender. Dee (2006) analyzed "national survey and test-score data collected by the US Department of Education" (p. 68) from 25,000 eighth graders from 1988. Dee (2006) investigated the "effect of teacher gender on students' test-score performance [and] teacher perceptions of a student's performance and student's perceptions of the subject taught by a particular teacher" (p. 69). Data represented students from 1,052 national public and private schools and came from test scores and teacher questionnaires. Dee (2006) discovered "an average positive impact on student achievement of 4 percent of a standard deviation whenever the teacher-student gender was the same" (p. 71). He attributed this to teacher gender. He also found, "Boys also had fewer positive reactions to their academic subject when taught by an opposite-gender teacher" (Dee, 2006, p. 72). While these results are specific to non-music classes, findings have possible implications for teacher and student interaction in the elementary music classroom where teachers are predominantly female.

Male teachers in elementary school music.

Feminized area of the curriculum.

Roulston and Mills' (2000) multiple case study collected interviews, documents, and a survey from six teachers each (five females and one male) in Canada and Australia. Data was extracted from two other music education studies in which it was clear that femininity in

elementary music education was a clear issue for men. Data from the two males was reported in this study. Tony, a first year, elementary music teacher from Australia was also a rock musician. He knowingly entered a predominantly female profession and exploited his differences as both a male and a rock musician who was "attuned to contemporary youth culture" (Roulston and Mills, 2000, p. 228). Tony viewed his utilization of popular music in school as "a challenge to the existing school culture," which "does much to hegemonise existing dominant masculine aggressive behaviours" (Roulston and Mills, 2000, p. 229). Additionally, Tony focused much of his attention on "troublesome boys" and "his actions serve to valorise the behaviour of these boys by the implication that he is 'one of the boys'" (Roulston and Mills, 2000, p. 231). Finally, Tony only used popular music in the classroom by bands that were male-dominated and demonstrated hegemonic masculinity.

Canadian teacher Andy Howard described how he worked with a group of fifth and sixth grade boys who he classified as "droners [and] street kids" (Roulston and Mills, 2000, p. 231). Andy was successful in improving the boys' singing and perception of singing, but he accomplished it by aligning himself with "the boys against the girls" (Roulston and Mills, 2000, p. 232). Roulston and Mills (2000) pointed out that he was not only modeling singing, but hegemonic beliefs about boys being better than girls. Roulston and Mills (2000) also shared, "For these boys, singing was a homosexual activity to be avoided, and Andy recognised the crucial importance of overcoming this gender stereotype. However, he did not see any necessity to challenge the boys' demonstrations of homophobia" (p. 233). This may have been related to his own experiences refuting accusations of homosexuality while singing in college. The researchers also wondered how boys who liked singing and girls were impacted by Andy's instructional style.

Constructions of gender in education.

Roulston and Misawa (2011) investigated how five female teachers and one male elementary school teacher constructed gender in relation to teaching in 2005. Teachers were currently working in a school setting in a southeastern state in the US at the time of the qualitative interviews and had experience teaching elementary music. A case study was generated for each participant in relation to four main topics identified from coding of transcripts. The three most experienced participants expressed that "gender was not necessarily significant in their professional roles as music educators" (Roulston and Misawa, 2011, p. 11). Brian described no observable difference between boys and girls when he taught elementary school (other than voice type). However, when referring to middle school he did highlight "a 'nurturing' female teacher against a 'demanding' masculine teacher who generated positive responses from the boys" (Roulston and Misawa, 2011, p. 13). Amy attributed her success to adapting masculine traits of "'insensitivity' and 'competitiveness'" (Roulston and Misawa, 2011, p. 13). Finally, Denise acknowledged boys' avoidance of singing because of its stereotype as being feminine.

All of the teachers mentioned employing techniques that reinforced gender stereotypes and "demonstrate[d] a particular kind of (hegemonic) masculinity" (Roulston and Misawa, 2011, p. 16) to improve attitudes toward singing. This often included recruiting football players to sing in choir. Some did acknowledge the need for role models outside of the realm of sports.

Brian, the only male teacher, taught elementary music for six years before taking a middle school choral position. He partially attributed this move to frustration with people assuming he was homosexual. He even felt that principals discriminated against him in the

hiring process because of this assumption. However, Brian did situate this discrimination in the past and noted, “times have changed” (Roulston and Misawa, 2011, p. 15).

The previous studies indicate that boys may develop a negative, gendered perception of singing as being feminine as early as Kindergarten. This may be a result of an inability to relate to female teachers as role models. Additionally, when teacher and student gender is mismatched student achievement is lower and boys’ perceptions of the subject being taught are more negative. Finally, many elementary music teachers acknowledge gender as an issue in the classroom, particularly in relation to singing. Many try to address the problem, although some unknowingly reinforce hegemonic masculinity through their words and actions.

“Because You’re, Like, A Boy Teacher”

Joseph and class b.

In his pre-study interview, Joseph said he thought he would make a positive impact on the Kindergarten boys because he'd be different than what the students were used to and "more fun" (Transcribed interview theme log, May 7, 2013). When he interviewed the students in Class B following the first action research cycle and asked them what it was like to have a male as a music teacher instead of a female, responses ranged from "bad," "weirded out," and "that's weird," to "awesome," "excellent," "liked it," and "good" (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). One girl said it was different having him as a teacher because he's a boy and I'm a girl (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). This was an observation, not a judgment. Mary said it was different for a boy to be a teacher, not a girl (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). Norah said, “It was kind of funny, um, because, um, because I think boys have a little more excitement than girls” (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). Finally, another girl said it was, “Excellent, because you’re like a boy teacher and there’s not many, like,

boy teachers" (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). These reactions were largely based on the fact that Joseph was a boy and all the other teachers in the school were girls.

In an interview the day after his last interaction with Class B, Joseph shared several interesting observations. He thought that perhaps the Kindergarten boys could better relate to another boy as their teacher (Transcribed interview theme log, May 22, 2013). He said:

> I think that they thought it was more relatable, I guess, because I know as a fact, um, having girl teachers every year, not that it's bad, but we just wish that we had a boy teacher for once so that we could, I guess, relate. But, I mean, the teachers are doing more to be, like, you know, talking to the kids to be more, like, friendly… (Transcribed interview theme log, May 22, 2013)

This statement is an example of the above research from the voice of a student, rather than the adult researcher. Joseph thought he could relate to a male teacher more easily. He was mature enough to accept his situation, but he did wish for an adult he could relate to in school. When I asked him if he thought he would have had a different experience with a male teacher, he stated:

> I've never had a male music teacher before, actually. I don't think it would have made much of an impact other than me singing a bit lower, I guess, because when I'm in music class I try to mimic the teacher's voice, so… (Transcribed interview theme log, May 22, 2013)

This statement is interesting in that Joseph confirms that he realizes that students learn to sing by imitating the model they are presented with, and, since most boys in elementary school sing with an unchanged voice, the teacher must either have a higher, female voice or sing in falsetto. Joseph did remember that he had a male choir director when he was in the church choir in third grade. When comparing this director to me, he said, "I guess, not really [different], because he

did almost the same things you did. I mean, teaching music is the same no matter what gender you are, so…" (Transcribed interview theme log, May 22, 2013).

Matthew and class a.

When Matthew interviewed the students in Class A following the first action research cycle and asked them what it was like to have a male as a music teacher instead of a female, responses ranged from "It was great" (a boy), "It was the best" (another boy), "It was wonderful! (with arm gesture)" (George), "It was fun! (student smiles)" (a girl), "I liked it" (a third boy), and "It was good, amazing, awesome, exciting, adventurous, and fun, aaand…" (a fourth boy) to "Weird?" (another girl), "Um, it's, really, really different?" (a third girl), "Different" (a fourth girl), to "It still feels the same" (Transcribed interview theme log, May 29, 2013). I noted that the Kindergarten students did not make any statements like, "boys don't sing;" however, in this class the boys seemed to like having a boy teacher and the girls thought it was strange (Transcribed interview theme log, May 29, 2013). This was slightly different than from the statements made in Joseph's interview with Class B in which the girl's statements were more positive.

Matthew and class b.

When Matthew interviewed the students in Class B following the second action research cycle and asked them what it was like to have him as the music teacher instead of me, a female, Mary said, "Um, it's kinda' different 'cause you're a boy and she's a girl" (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). Next, Matthew asked, "Can you describe what it was like to have a boy as a Music teacher instead of a girl?" (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). One student stated, "Um, it's cool 'cause you're a boy and boys are cool" (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). Harry stated, "Awesome extra, 'cause I'm a boy and you're

a boy too and we've never had a boy" (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). Another student stated, "It was good, because there's not many boys that are Music teachers" (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). Again, it seems like even students as young as Kindergarten look for an adult role model with whom they can relate. These students confirmed that having the same gender was of importance to them. When I interviewed Matthew, following his final interaction with Class B, he mentioned that he did perceive that the Kindergarten boys liked having another boy as their teacher (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013). He also remembered a Kindergarten student mentioning that it was different because there were not any other boy teachers (Transcribed interview theme log, June 5, 2013).

Positive perception of singing.

One research question was meant to investigate whether male peer modeling had an effect on kindergarten students' gendered identification of singing. Literature reviewed earlier in this chapter suggests that children want a same-gender adult with whom they can identify. This peer modeling program provided them with that. While it was difficult to collect the male Kindergarten students' positive and negative perceptions of singing, I attempted to gather this data by asking them if they thought they would want to join choir in fifth grade. In an interview between the teacher-researcher and Class B following the conclusion of Joseph's first action research cycle, at least seven boys in Class B said they wanted to join choir (Video observation theme log, May 22, 2013). When Joseph asked them this question, Harry, mentioned above, said, "yes". He was very excited, nodding his head (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). Paul said, "great" and John said, "yes" (Transcribed interview theme log, May 21, 2013). The peer modeling experience seemed to have made a particular impact on John, and he his

mentioned often throughout this study. Kevin, from Class A, was very enthusiastic about joining choir (Transcribed interview theme log, May 29, 2013).

Summary and Connection to Past Research

Many of the Kindergarten boys liked having another boy as their teacher because they felt they could relate to him and because they were very aware that there were not other male teachers at the school. Welch, Sergeant, and White (1997) and Hall (2005) also found that male students wanted a male teacher to relate to. Roulston and Mills (2000) observed two music teachers who reinforced male stereotypes in order to improve their students' perceptions of singing. None of the Kindergarten students' comments indicate that they liked having Matthew and Joseph as teachers because of an exhibited male stereotype. However, it is worth noting that Matthew and Joseph both used sports as a way to create a relationship with the Kindergarten students (Video observation theme log, May 30, May 21, 2013). However, in some instances the Kindergarten students were the first to mention sports, not the peer models.

Suggestions for Practitioners

This chapter highlights the fact that boys, even in Kindergarten, look for a male role model. This person can simply be an older male student, like the peer models, but it should be someone with whom they have time to form a relationship. Therefor, a female elementary school music teacher might create a peer modeling program like the one described in this study. A male elementary school music teacher could do the same with female peer models. It is important that the Kindergarten students have time to form a relationship with this same-sex peer model, so exposure to the peer model over time is important. It also seems important to explain to the peer model that he or she should attempt to avoid enforcing male or female stereotypes with the goal to win the students' respect or affection.

Suggestions for Future Research

It could be very interesting to see if the opinions expressed in this chapter also hold true for female Kindergarten students with a male music teacher. It would also be interesting to ascertain whether female Kindergarten students with a male music teacher hold a positive or negative perception of singing, and whether that perception improves with the addition of a female peer model. Finally, it would be interesting to see if, in a study like this one, the male peer model had an impact on the male Kindergarten students' positive perceptions of singing, both in Kindergarten and in the future.

Chapter six presented the study's final finding, the anomaly of a male elementary school music teacher. The chapter also presented previous literature related to the topic. Chapter seven will summarize the study and provide a conclusion.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

A large body of research has been conducted dating back to 1916 indicating that many males exhibit negative perceptions of singing, summarized in detail by Harrison in the *British Journal of Music Education* in 2007. Researchers have offered possible causes of this negative perception, some of which include embarrassment over the male voice change (Demorest, 2000; Kennedy, 2004; Killian, 1997; Killian, 1999; Radtke, 1950), early experiences with music, role models, parental and societal factors, the culture of schools, harassment (Harrison, 2007), a negative perception of their own ability to sing, the lack of an effective means by which to teach singing (Phillips & Aitchinson, 1999), ineffective teachers (Kennedy, 2002; Harrison, 2007), and perceptions of singing as being feminine (Hall, 2005; Koza, 1993). However, the boys found in Kennedy's (2002) study elected to sing in choir, were highly engaged, and the most advanced vocal ensemble of 27 singers was almost equally proportioned between males and females. Hall (2009) shared the story of Thomas, a boy who built his identity around singing and being a member of a choir. While there are a number of reasons that boys elect not to sing, studies also show that some boys are choosing to reject negative perceptions. If educators can understand why boys reject singing, then this knowledge can be used to encourage them in the positive direction.

Research indicates that the genesis of this negative perception of singing could begin in the early elementary years, forming as early as age five, and possibly before children even begin formal schooling in the form of masculine and feminine gender identification in music (Hall, 2005; Tibbetts, 1975; Welch, Sergeant, & White, 1997).

Researchers have conducted countless studies to determine why boys often describe having negative perceptions of singing. Many studies suggest that this negative perception develops because of hegemonic masculinity and the perception of singing as being feminine (Hall, 2005; Koza, 1993). Research suggests that boys need positive male role models to set a good example from an early age (Demorest, 2000; Hall, 2005; Harrison & O'Neil, 2002; Kennedy, 2002; Tibbetts, 1975).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this action research study was to design, implement, and refine an approach to using male peer modeling in Kindergarten general music. The four-week action research cycle involved interaction between two classes of kindergarten students and two male peer models during general music class. The peer models interacted with the students for two cycles that each included four classes over the course of two weeks. The models participated in music class and taught songs to the students. Observations and interviews were used to gather data to describe the older and younger students', their parents', and my perceptions of the interactions. Research questions included:

1. What were my perceptions of the effects of the upper-elementary male peer model on the kindergarten students? On the peer-model himself?
2. How did kindergarten students describe interacting with an upper-elementary, male peer model in music class?
3. How did the upper-elementary male peer models describe acting as a role model for younger students in music class?
4. How did parents of both groups of students describe their children's experiences interacting with the peer models?

5. Did parents and the teacher perceive that the male peer modeling had an effect on kindergarten students gender identification of singing, and, if so, how?

Method and Analysis

The study was interpretive in design and can be described as action research. Participants included students who attend Shrine Catholic Grade School (SCGS), a coed, faith-based school of approximately 540 students. My sample included 20 Kindergarten students from one full day class and 20 students from a second full day class, chosen based on criterion sampling. Two upper elementary male peer models were also chosen based on criterion sampling.

The study took place over five weeks. I saw each kindergarten class twice a week. The five weeks were divided into two action research cycles of two weeks each with one neutral week of no interactions with the peer model in between. The Kindergarten students interacted with the peer models four times during the first cycle and two or three times during the second cycle. Kindergarten students were originally going to interact with the same peer model during both of the two-week cycles. In the spirit of action research, this would allow the peer model to act, reflect on his actions, and, if desired, revise his performance in the second cycle. However, as I mentioned in the Sampling section, I became interested in discovering if the Kindergarten students responded differently to a peer model with a changing, versus unchanged, voice. I modified the original plan so that, in the second cycle, the peer models interacted with the Kindergarten class they had not previously worked with.

Data was collected in a variety of ways including observations, teacher-researcher journal entries, in-person and group interviews, email, and review of documents. All interactions with the peer model were recorded to allow for credibility. I observed in varying degrees of participation.

After completing two cycles of action research, I felt the study was complete. My first step in the analysis process was to create a timeline with an overview and brief descriptions of all events related to research. Next, I reviewed my research questions. I created an overview of the data sources. I transcribed the parents' emails and my teacher-researcher journal. After this review of my research, I attempted to answer my research questions without coding. My observations guided the initial stages of coding the video footage. First, I analyzed my teacher-researcher journal for themes. I recorded important observations and statements as themes and assigned the themes numbers. I then watched footage of myself teaching the sixth grade boys how to teach using rote method, of the sixth grade boys teaching their peers, of interviews between the sixth grade boys and myself, of the sixth grade boys teaching the Kindergarten students, and of interviews between the sixth grade boys and the Kindergarten students. I transcribed the interviews between the sixth grade boys and myself and between the sixth grade boys and the Kindergarten students. As I watched and transcribed the video footage, I continued to record important observations and statements as themes. After watching, transcribing, and coding the teacher research journal and videos, 16 themes (see Appendix Q), many with subthemes, emerged. I reviewed the lists of themes from the primary data sources, the teacher-researcher journal, video observed, and video transcribed to ensure that all codes were uniform. Next, I started to count the frequency of each theme in each of the three aforementioned primary data sources. I was interested to see if any themes appeared noticeably more or less frequently than others. This exercise led me to realize I needed to find a guiding source with which to approach the vastness of my data. My teacher-researcher journal and transcribed interviews seemed logical sources, as they provided the most direct representation of the peer models', kindergarten students', and my own opinions and observations.

Findings

The peer models' relationships with the kindergarten students.

Theme 4.1, the peer model's ability to have a positive relationship with the Kindergarten students, appeared 15 times in video observation, 11 times in the teacher-researcher journal, and five times in transcribed interviews. I observed that the peer model who had a prior relationship with the Kindergarten students, Joseph, had much more success as a teacher than did Matthew, who did not have a prior relationship with the Kindergarten students. He seemed to easily develop the most meaningful relationships with the Kindergarten students. Matthew simply was not as connected to the students as Joseph was (Class B, TR journal, May 30, 2013). Evidence presented seemed to indicate that the students preferred the peer model they spent the most time with and with whom they had the closest relationship.

The peer models' vocal quality.

The peer models' vocal quality manifested as Themes 4.6, 2, 8, and 13. Theme 4.6 referred to a changing, inaccurate versus an unchanged, accurate voice. I wondered if the Kindergarten students who were not as confident singers as others would feel more comfortable with Matthew and relate to him more than to Joseph because they perceived themselves to be more similar to him. On the other hand, I struggled with using a peer model with an inaccurate voice, as I obviously wanted my Kindergarten students to learn from an accurate singing model. I want as many of my students as possible to love singing and to feel comfortable doing so. However, I also want my students to learn to sing correctly.

As a teacher-researcher, I saw benefits to using both my peer model with an accurate, unchanged voice and my model with an inaccurate, changing voice. Observations favored both Joseph's accurate, unchanged voice and Matthew's inaccurate, changing voice. The

Kindergarten students' actions and comments seem to indicate no overwhelming, common preference. Also, when reflecting on the information from Chapter Four, students seemed to prefer the peer model they spent more time with. As noted on page 64, this often had little to do with the peer model's vocal quality.

Theme 2 referred to mentions of high notes or high voices, a theme also referenced in previous research. The concept of high voices and timbres being perceived as feminine came up in a variety of previous studies, including Harrison (2007) and Kennedy (2002). While the students may not have been impacted by listening to the peer model's high voice, at least one student was impacted by his own inability to sing high. Finally, just after their action research cycle with Joseph as their peer model, John from Class B finally started singing in his head voice and was proud of himself!

Finally, Theme 8 referred to the Kindergarten students' perceptions that the peer models' voices were different than the teacher-researcher's voice. Some data in this theme also suggested that the Kindergarten students lacked the vocabulary to accurately describe the differences they perceived. Theme 8 coordinated with data from Theme 13, which referred to the teacher-researcher's perception that some of the Kindergarten students did not appear to realize or care what an accurate singing voice should sound like. Some data in this theme also suggested that Kindergarten students might care more about volume (loud/soft) than accurate singing voice (high/low).

The anomaly of a male elementary school music teacher.

Theme 7, the anomaly of a male, elementary school music teacher, was an unforeseen and common Kindergarten student observation. Of all of the Kindergarten students' comments, this one was one of the most common and was very interesting because I had not anticipated the

Kindergarten boy students to already, in their first year in the grade school, feel disenfranchised by the lack of male teachers. I also found it interesting because the students were not commenting on the peer models' vocal quality or commenting that singing was in some way inappropriate for males. It seems like even students as young as Kindergarten look for an adult role model with whom they can relate. These students confirmed that having the same gender was of importance to them. Additionally, Joseph, the peer model, said he thought he could relate to a male teacher more easily.

Suggestions for Practitioners and Future Research

Practitioners.

When implementing a peer modeling program, teachers should select peer models that have a prior relationship with their subjects. They can select peer models who have the opportunity to interact with the subject outside of the classroom once the study begins. They can select peer models who have prior experience working with younger children (Teacher researcher journal, May 31, 2013). These qualities seem to indicate that the peer model with have a higher chance of forming a positive relationship with the younger students. Also, practitioners may find their peer model can form more successful relationships with younger students if he or she is introduced after the students have already been exposed to a song in at least one prior class (Video observation theme log, May 10, 2013). Finally, it may be more feasible to utilize peer models as co-teachers, rather than asking them to be teachers.

Data presented in chapter five demonstrates the importance of ensuring that Kindergarten students learn the difference between high/low and loud/soft. I also feel it is important to identify and discuss accurate and inaccurate voices with Kindergarten students.

Finally, data in chapter six highlights the fact that boys, even in Kindergarten, look for a male role model. A female elementary school music teacher might create a peer modeling program like the one described in this study. A male elementary school music teacher could do the same with female peer models. It is important that the Kindergarten students have time to form a relationship with this same-sex peer model, so exposure to the peer model over time is important. It also seems important to explain to the peer model that he or she should attempt to avoid enforcing male or female stereotypes with the goal to win the students' respect or affection.

Future research.

Future researchers may find it interesting to study whether Kindergarten students are capable of perceiving the difference between high/low and loud/soft and whether they are capable of articulating what they hear. Researchers might also pursue a longitudinal study in which Kindergarten students who are identified as having trouble accessing their head voices are either paired with a peer model with an accurate, unchanged voice or one with an inaccurate, changing voice. It would be interesting to discover whether the Kindergarten students working with the different peer models progressed to using their head voices and whether they expressed positive opinions of singing.

It could be very interesting to see if female Kindergarten students with a male music teacher longed for a same-gender role model like the boys did. It would also be interesting to ascertain whether female Kindergarten students with a male music teacher hold a positive or negative perception of singing, and whether that perception improves with the addition of a female peer model. Finally, it would be interesting to see if, in a study like this one, the male

peer model had an impact on the male Kindergarten students' positive perceptions of singing, both in Kindergarten and in the future.

Conclusion

Teaching is often described as a very altruistic profession. Whether a classroom teacher or a music teacher, teachers enter their classrooms each day with the goal not only to impart knowledge, but to encourage the emotional and social growth of their students. In music, a discipline in which we ask our students to experience and express emotion and to *feel*, it is imperative that teachers connect with their students, understand them, and gain their trust. Action research empowered me to do exactly that. "Successful inquiry leads to empowerment and transformation" (Levin & Merritt, 2006, p. 4). When a teacher as researcher develops a deeper understanding through action research and improves his or her practice based on that understanding, then inquiry has been successful (Levin & Merritt, 2006).

As is evident from my lengthy Suggestions for Practitioners sections, I learned a lot about my students through conducting action research. In the time since I began analyzing my data, I have made many changes in my own teaching based on my research and will continue to do so. As I noted in my teacher researcher journal, it was hard to be both a teacher and a researcher, but I feel the effort was worth it when I consider the impact on my students and the knowledge I gained, particularly about the importance of a male role model for my boy students. More than three years after the study concluded, the mother of one of the then-Kindergarten boys told me:

> Every time [Kevin] sees Matthew, at church or at pickup for Hannah [her daughter], he says, "Hey, there's Matthew! I know him!" Hannah would be embarrassed, but I always want to tell Matthew because it's like he's a celebrity. He used to call him "my Matthew." (R. Jablonski, parent email, January 12, 2016)

Even three years later, those four interactions made a world of impact on a Kindergarten boy. We never know the intended and unintended impact our actions will have, but if we keep doing the best we can for our students, we can hope for the best.

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Appendix A

Consent to Participate in a Research Study – Kindergarten Students

Male Peer Modeling in the Kindergarten Music Classroom

Dear Parents,

I invite your child to participate in a research study. This study will take place in February 2013 in music class at Shrine Catholic Grade School. I am currently working towards a master's degree in music education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I attend an intense program each summer for five weeks. At the end of this coming summer I complete my final course work! As part of my degree requirements I must complete a thesis based on original research. I will investigate the use of upper elementary boys as peer models in the Kindergarten music classroom.

Students will attend music class as usual. The study will take place over eight classes. The peer model will participate in a class with the Kindergarten students. He will also teach them two songs. Students will participate in a follow-up focus-group interview lasting five to seven minutes. The children will answer questions designed to obtain their opinions in a group setting where they are encouraged to have discussion. If I notice that a student has expressed something particularly interesting, appears to want to share something but does not volunteer it in the focus group, or wants to share more than time will allow, I will follow up with individual interviews. I will gather data from observations, video recording, and interviews. Interview questions will ask students how they felt about having a boy as a music teacher, what it was like to have a boy as a music teacher instead of a girl, and whether they think they might want to sing in the choir when they are older. This data will not include personal information.

Peer modeling can have a very positive influence. I will choose peer models that love to sing. I will tell the children's stories through observation and interview. I hope to discover a way to make singing a more gender-neutral activity from the early years on up.

I do not foresee any risks involved with this study. Personal information will be kept confidential. Only myself and my small study team will view data. I will provide a fake name for all participants.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide to allow your child to participate now, you may withdraw at any time. If you allow your child to participate, but he or she does not wish to do so, I will withdraw him or her. If you decide to withdraw your child early, I will dispose of his or her data. If your child does not participate, he or she will be given a musical writing assignment.

He or she will complete this in his or her regular classroom while any research-related events take place.

By signing this permission slip, you are agreeing to allow your child to participate in the study. This will include observation, video recorded observation, and interview. Please do not allow your child to participate if all three methods are not acceptable. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. I will keep one copy with the study records. Please contact me with questions at any time at warzecha@shrineschools.com or (248) 541-4622.

If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board:

540 E Liberty St.
Ste. 202
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210
(734) 936-0933
(866) 936-0933
irbhsbs@umich.edu.

You can also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Colleen Conway, at conwaycm@umich.edu.

I agree to allow my child to participate in the study.

_____
Printed Name

_____ _____
Signature Date

I agree to allow my child to be video recorded.

_____
Printed Name

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____

Child's Name

Appendix B

Oral Consent to Participate in a Research Study - Kindergarten Students

"Boys and girls, would you like to participate in a research study? A 6th grade boy named ( ) is going to spend some time in music class with us, teach you two songs, and ask you a few questions. I'll be here too, but he's going to be your teacher for a few minutes over the next few weeks. If you would like to do that, please raise your hand."

Appendix C

Consent to Participate in a Research Study – Sixth Grade Students

Male Peer Modeling in the Kindergarten Music Classroom

Dear Parents,

I invite your child to participate in a research study. This study will take place in February 2013 in music class at Shrine Catholic Grade School. I am currently working towards a master's degree in music education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I attend an intense program each summer for five weeks. At the end of this coming summer I complete my final course work! As part of my degree requirements I must complete a thesis based on original research. I will investigate the use of upper elementary boys as peer models in the Kindergarten music classroom.

The study will take place over eight classes. Your son will participate in a class with the Kindergarteners. He will also teach two songs to the Kindergarten students. He will participate in interviews in which I will ask him questions about his experience. I will ask him his opinion about how the male students responded to having a male teacher. I will also ask him what music might have been like for him if he had a male teacher. He will also lead a focus group interview in which he asks for the opinions of the Kindergarten students. Interviews will last approximately 10 minutes. The focus group interview will last five to seven minutes. I will gather data from observations, video recording, and interviews. This data will not include personal information.

Peer modeling can have a very positive influence. I haven chosen your son because he shows a love of music. I will tell the children's stories through observation and interview. I hope to discover a way to make singing a more gender-neutral activity from the early years on up.

I do not foresee any risks involved with this study. Personal information will be kept confidential. Only myself and my small study team will view data. I will provide a fake name for all participants.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide to allow your child to participate now, you may withdraw at any time. If you allow your child to participate, but he does not wish to do so, I will withdraw him. If you decide to withdraw your child early, his data will be disposed of.

By signing this permission slip, you are agreeing to allow your child to participate in the study. This will include observation, video recorded observation, and interview. Please do not

allow your child to participate if all three methods are not acceptable. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. I will keep one copy with the study records. Please contact me with any questions at any time at warzecha@shrineschools.com or (248) 541-4622.

If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board:

540 E Liberty St.
Ste. 202
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210
(734) 936-0933
(866) 936-0933
irbhsbs@umich.edu.

You can also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Colleen Conway, at conwaycm@umich.edu.

I agree to allow my child to participate in the study.

_____
Printed Name

_____ _____
Signature Date

I agree to allow my child to be video recorded.

_____
Printed Name

_____ _____
Signature Date

_____
Child's Name

Appendix D

Consent to Participate in a Research Study – Sixth Grade Students

Dear Sixth Grade Student,

I invite you to be in a research study. This study will take place in February 2013 in Kindergarten music class at Shrine Catholic Grade School. I will investigate if it is useful to use male peer models in Kindergarten music class.

The study will take place over eight classes. You will go to Kindergarten music class. You will teach two songs to the Kindergarten students. I will interview you. I will gather data from observations, video recording, and interviews. This data will not include personal information.

Peer modeling can have a very positive influence. I chose you because you show that you love music. I hope to find a way to make singing more acceptable for boys.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate now, you may quit at any time. If you decide to quit early, I will get rid of your data.

By signing below, you agree to be in the study. This includes observation, video recorded observation, and interview. You can talk to me about the study at any time.

I agree to participate in the study.

_____

Printed Name

_____ _____

Signature Date

I agree to be video recorded.

_____

Printed Name

_____ _____

Signature Date

Appendix E

Initial Recruitment Email to Kindergarten Parents

December 17, 2012

Dear Parents,

Greetings from music class! I've been thoroughly enjoying working with all of your students over the past months. I hope they've been having a wonderful time and have been sharing what they've been learning with you. I'm looking forward to a new experience in February that I'm excited to share with them.

I am currently working towards a master's degree in music education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. I attend an intense program each summer for five weeks. At the end of this coming summer I complete my final course work! As part of my degree requirements I will complete a thesis based on original research that I plan to conduct at Shrine. The second chapter for this thesis, my literature review, has already been accepted for publication in one of the Music Education community's peer-reviewed journals, *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*. I'm extremely excited about my research because it is based on a topic that is very near and dear to my heart. I plan to look at upper elementary, male peer modeling in the Kindergarten classroom. I came to this topic because, as the Shrine Knights in Harmony choir director, I experience the common problem of a drastically disproportionate number of boys and girls in choir due to older children viewing singing as feminine. While countless studies investigate the adult male perspective, very few have tried to capture a young child's view. Research shows that peer modeling can be very positively influential. I plan to ask two 6th grade boys who are very committed to singing and music to act as peer models for several weeks in Mrs. Bernacki's Kindergarten music class. I plan to observe their effect on the children. Research will be qualitative in nature, meaning that I will primarily observe and interview the children and try to tell their story in the hopes of discovering a way to make singing a more gender-neutral activity from the early years on up.

I will send home a permission slip in early January. I hope to be able to involve as many students from Mrs. Bernacki's class as possible! They're such a fun group and I'm looing forward to this opportunity. Please feel free to email me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Warzecha

Appendix F

Questionnaire for First Meeting With All Boys Who are in Choir

Guys Choir & Singing Questionnaire

1. Name
2. Grade
3. Homeroom
4. Why'd you join the Knights in Harmony?
5. Do you think you'd be a good singing mentor for Kindergarten boys? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. Would you like to be considered to be a music class peer mentor for Kindergarten boys?

Appendix G

Checklist to Select Peer Models

1. Name
2. Grade
3. Homeroom
4. Number of sessions in choir
5. Participates in singing in classroom activities regularly, sometimes, or never
6. Singing voice is unchanged or beginning to change
7. Positive attitude towards singing in conversation with teacher
8. Positive attitude towards singing in conversation with peers
9. Indicated that he wants to be a peer model on informal survey (Appendix B)
10. Has compelling answers to questions on informal survey (Appendix B)
11. Focused and hard working during choir rehearsal and regular music class
12. Approved by grade-level teachers
13. Completed and returned parent consent form
14. Completed and returned student consent form

Appendix H

Aural/Oral Rote Song Procedure (Bailey, 2005)

1. Teacher sings the whole song for the class. Students audiate.
2. Teacher sings the whole song again, demonstrating macrobeat. Students imitate movement and audiate.
3. Teacher sings the whole song again, demonstrating microbeat. Students imitate movement and audiate.
4. Teacher sings the whole song again, demonstrating macro and microbeat together. Students imitate movement and audiate.
5. Teacher establishes tonality (neutral syllables) and sings the resting tone. Teacher instructs students to listen to the song again and to sing the resting tone each time she stops and gestures. Students listen to the teacher sing the song and sing the resting tone each time the teacher stops.
6. Teacher asks students to audiate the song silently and raise their hands when they are done.
7. [Teacher establishes tonality and students sing song with teacher.]

   Teacher establishes tonality and students sing song alone. The teacher does not sing with the students, rather; listens to them and makes decisions about the teaching/learning sequence to follow.

Appendix I

Interview Protocol: Initial Informal Interview with Male Peer Model

The first informal interview will take place at the end of the initial planning meeting. Guiding questions will attempt to capture the peer model's perceptions of his role in the study and what he anticipates his experience will be like. Data collected will include:

1. Male peer model's name
2. Date
3. My perceptions of his feelings and demeanor entering this study

Guiding questions will include:

1. What are your thoughts or feelings about participating in this study?
2. Do you feel comfortable knowing what you are supposed to do when we begin?
3. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

I will be certain to encourage the student to speak with me at any time during the study if he has any concerns.

Appendix J

Observation Protocol: Observations of Interactions Between Kindergarten Students and Peer Model

This observation will be largely drawn from memory, as I will be acting as a complete participant. Data recorded from this observation will later be triangulated with the video recording for validity (Phillips, 2008, p. 88). Data to record will include (Patton, 2002):

1. Peer model's name
2. Date of observation
3. Number of observation (1, 2, 3, or 4)
4. The physical environment of the classroom, including anything that is different than usual.
5. The human and social environment, including interactions, organizations, communication, characteristics of people, and decision-making patterns.
6. Activities and behaviors of the kindergarten students and the peer model.
7. Informal interactions and unplanned activities.
8. The native language of the participants.
9. Any nonverbal communication.

Anything noticeable that does not happen.

Appendix K

Interview Protocol: Second Informal Interview with Male Peer Model

The second, minimally structured interview will take place immediately following the first interaction between the kindergarten students and the peer model. This interview will assist in depicting the peer model's first impressions of interacting with the students. This will also allow me to ascertain whether or not he is comfortable and to address any issues before continuing. During this interview we will watch the video recording taken during the class period so that the peer model can provide me with the most accurate account. Data collected will include:

1. Male peer model's name
2. Date

Guiding questions will include:

1. What are your thoughts or feelings after this first class with the kindergarten students?
2. Do you feel comfortable with moving forward?
3. Do you have any questions for me before the next class?

I will again encourage the student to speak with me at any time during the study if he has any concerns.

Appendix L

Email Interview Protocol: Email to Solicit Parent(s)' or Guardian(s)' Perceptions Following the Second and Fourth Interactions

These email interviews will be minimally structured to allow stories to emerge. Data collected will include the following:

1. Parent(s)' or guardian(s)' name(s)
2. Childs' name
3. Date of email

Guiding questions for kindergarten parents will include the following:

1. Has your child mentioned the presence of an older, male student in his or her music class?
2. If yes, then has your child shared any stories with you pertaining to this older student?
3. If yes, would you like to share those stories with me?
4. Has your child specifically mentioned the peer model's gender? If so, can you describe the information that your child shared with you about this?
5. Finally, have you noticed anything in your child yourself that may pertain to this experience that you would like to share with me?

Guiding questions for the peer model's parent(s) or guardian(s) will include the following:

1. Has your child mentioned his experience as a peer model in the kindergarten music class that he has visited?
2. If yes, then has your child shared any stories with you pertaining to this experience?
3. If yes, would you like to share those stories with me?

4. Has your child specifically mentioned anything related to his gender in regard to participating in and teaching music class? If so, can you describe this for me?
5. Finally, have you noticed anything in your child yourself that may pertain to this experience that you would like to share with me?

Appendix M

Interview Protocol: Peer Model and Kindergarten Student Group Interview

The following group interview will be a guided discussion, led by the peer model, to gain insight into the kindergarten students' descriptions of their interactions with him in music class. The teacher-researcher will be present during the discussion of the first question and absent during the second discussion of the second through fourth questions. The peer model will not instruct the students as to how to volunteer answers to the questions. This could cause the group interview to provide less-authentic answers. Students will know that the procedure in my class is to raise your hand to answer a question unless we are having an open discussion. In my class I do not typically have reason to instruct them as to how to answer questions after September. Guiding questions for the group interview will include:

1. Can you tell me how you felt about having me as a student and a teacher in your music class?
2. Can you tell me how it was the same or different having me as a teacher instead of Mrs. Warzecha?
3. Can you describe what it was like to have a boy as a music teacher instead of a girl?
4. Would you want to join the Knights in Harmony (the 5th and 6th grade after-school choir) when you are in 5th or 6th grade? Why or why not?

Appendix N

Interview Protocol: Teacher-Researcher and Kindergarten Students Group Interview

The following group interview will be a guided discussion, led by the teacher-researcher, to gain insight into the kindergarten students' descriptions of their interactions with the peer model in music class. The peer model will not be present during the group interview. The teacher-researcher will not instruct the students as to how to volunteer answers to the questions. This could cause the focus group interview to provide less authentic answers. Students will know that the procedure in my class is to raise your hand to answer a question unless we are having an open discussion. In my class I do not typically have reason to instruct them as to how to answer questions after September. Guiding questions for the group interview will include:

1. Can you tell me how you felt about having the peer model (insert name) as a student and a teacher in your music class?
2. Can you tell me how it was the same or different having the peer model (insert name) as a teacher instead of me?
3. Can you describe what it was like to have a boy as a music teacher instead of a girl?
4. Would you want to join the Knights in Harmony (the 5th and 6th grade after-school choir) when you are in 5th or 6th grade? Why or why not?

Appendix O

Interview Protocol: Exit Interview with Male Peer Model

This interview will be semi-structured and will invite the peer model to describe his experience as a student and teacher in the kindergarten music class. He will also be invited to describe any behaviors, attitudes, or actions that he saw in the kindergarten students. This interview will take place the same day as the final classroom interaction. During this interview we will watch the video recording taken during the class period so that the peer model can provide me with the most accurate account. Guiding questions will include:

1. Can you describe for me what it was like being a student and a teacher in this kindergarten music class?
2. Was this experience similar to what you imagined it would be like or different?
3. Did you observe any behavior or attitudes in the kindergarten students that you would like to share with me?
4. How do you think the boy kindergarten students felt having another boy as their music teacher?
5. Can you describe how it might be different for you if you had a male music teacher?
6. Have you ever experienced a time when someone told you that something you liked was "for girls?" Can you tell me about this?

Appendix P

Interview Protocol: Teacher-Researcher and Kindergarten Students Group Interview Following Second Research Cycle

The following group interview will be a guided discussion, led by the teacher-researcher, to gain insight into the kindergarten students' descriptions of their interactions with the peer model in music class. The peer model will not be present during the group interview. The teacher-researcher will not instruct the students as to how to volunteer answers to the questions. This could cause the focus group interview to provide less authentic answers. Students will know that the procedure in my class is to raise your hand to answer a question unless we are having an open discussion. In my class I do not typically have reason to instruct them as to how to answer questions after September. Guiding questions for the group interview will include:

1. Can you tell me how you felt about having the peer model (insert name) as a student and a teacher in your music class?
2. Can you tell me how it was the same or different having the peer model (insert name) as a teacher instead of me?
3. Can you describe what it was like to have a boy as a music teacher instead of a girl?
4. Would you want to join the Knights in Harmony (the 5th and 6th grade after-school choir) when you are in 5th or 6th grade? Why or why not?
5. How was it different having (peer model) as your teacher instead of (other peer model)?
6. Who's singing voice did you like better? Why?
7. Do you think you could sing as well as Joseph? Do you think you could sing as well as Matthew?

Appendix Q

Themes

1. Peer model fraternity
2. High notes/high voice
    - Relates to 4.6, 8, and 13
3. Singing is/is not gendered
4. Peer model characteristics:
    1. Ability to have a positive relationship with Kindergarten students; relationship outside of class
    2. Ability to effectively teach a song using rote method
    3. Ability to engage Kindergarten students
    4. Comfortable with Kindergarten students
    5. Approachable, similar to boys
    6. Vocal quality – changing/inaccurate vs. unchanged/accurate
        - Relates to 2, 8, and 13
    7. Confidence
5. Kindergarten class culture
6. Kindergarten students claim to like or dislike singing
7. A boy teacher is different. No other boy teachers at school.
8. Peer model's voice is different than teacher's voice
    1. Maybe students lack the correct vocabulary to describe the differences they hear in Teacher-researcher's (TR) voice and peer model's voice
    - Relates to 2, 4.6, and 13

9. Peer model's effect
    1. Positive
    2. Negative
10. Future suggestions for peer modeling program (for "Suggestions for Future Research")
11. Peer model's perception
12. 6th grade class culture
13. Maybe Kindergarten students don't realize or care what an accurate singing voice should sound like.
    - Relates to 2, 4.6, and 8
    - Maybe Kindergarten students care more about volume than accurate singing voice (high and low, loud and soft).
    - Maybe this theme explores the way that K students (and people in general) perceive their own voices and the voices of others
    - Could also be a suggestion for future research
14. K students' perceptions
15. TR's perceptions
16. Negative references to homosexuality

Appendix R

Number of Occurrences of Themes in Transcribed Interviews and Teacher-Researcher Journal

Number of Occurrences of Themes		
Theme Code	Transcribed Interviews	Teacher-Researcher Journal
1	0	3
2	7	7
3	11	4
4.1	5	11
4.2	1	3
4.3	0	6
4.4	1	4
4.5	2	4
4.6	0	16
4.7	1	7
5	2	10
6	0	1
7	12	1
8	2	3
8.1	2	3
9.1	12	10
9.2	1	1
10	2	3
11	25	
12	10	
13	1	
14	22	
15	6	
16	1	